

# Abahani to the fore

SPORTS REPORTER

**ISPAHANI**  
Premier Division Cricket League

when they beat Old DOHS by 39 runs in the penultimate Super League match at BKSP yesterday.

Although the popular Dhanmondi side did their part by winning the match with apparent ease, they were done the most-needed favour by Cricket Coaching School (CCS) who all but dashed Gazi Tank's hopes.

Alok Kapali hit a brilliant 87 but still could not resist Gazi Tank's narrow one-run defeat in an exciting game at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

Abahani, who lost their previous match to Gazi Tank, again took the solo lead with 24 points while Gazi stayed on 22 for second position.

The day's outcome made the equation only difficult for Gazi as they have to beat Biman in their last game on Saturday while Abahani must lose to archrivals Mohammedan. If these happen, Gazi will consider themselves lucky because, although on same points with Abahani, the title will be theirs' by virtue of head-to-head advantage in the Super League.

In the day's other match, defending champions Mohammedan rode on Pakistani batsman Shoaib Malik's back-to-back hundred to bounce back from their last round defeat as they posted a six-wicket victory against Biman at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi.

Mohammedan's other Pakistani recruit, Azhar Mahmood was fined Tk

20,000 for showing dissent during the match.

## ABAHANI-DOHS

Abahani made a solid start through a 50-run opening partnership between Anamul Haque and Hannan Sarker but they lost some quick wickets to reach at 72 for five.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Sahagir Hossain (39) joined Indian Reshma Ranjan (69) to repair the damages by associating 100 runs for the sixth wicket as they scored 216 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs.

Two opening bowlers Forhad Reza and Moshirul Rahman caused the damages by sharing seven wickets. Forhad claimed three for 43 runs and Moshirul picked up four for 33.

In reply, Old DOHS finished their 50-over quota on 177 for 9. Number eight batsman Tanvir Haider top scored with 42.

Saqlain Sajib was the most successful Abahani bowler with three for 29.

## CCS-GAZI TANK

Kapali returned to the dressing room as the ninth batsman out, leaving his team to score 14 runs from last eight balls to chase down 278. The match reached an exciting position when Gazi required three runs from the last ball but Syed Rasel could manage only one by pushing the ball to mid-off and his attempt for a second run to tie the match went in vain as Robiul caught him short of his ground.

After Mohammad Mithun's 73, Kapali took the charge and smote five sixes and three boundaries during his 69-ball stay.

Earlier CCS put up a challenging total thanks to three half-centuries

from Shuvagoto Hom (89), Atiqur Rahman (62) and Nazmul Hossain, who put the bowlers to the sword during his hurricane knock of 50 off 20 balls that contained four boundaries and as many sixes.

## MOHAMMEDAN-BIMAN

Indian Avishek Mitra slammed an unbeaten 110 with 10 fours and a six in a 143-ball knock as Biman made 222 for eight in 50 overs. The team's second highest 34 runs came as extras.

In reply, Mohammedan overhauled the target making 224 for four thanks to Malik who hit unbeaten 107 off 120 balls that saw 13 fours and a six.

Faisal Hossain was the other notable scorer with a 66-ball 51.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**ABAHANI:** 216-9 in 50 overs (Hannan 24, Reshma 69, Sahagir 39, extras 15; Forhad 3-43, Moshirul 4-33)

**DOHS:** 177-9 in 50 overs (Aftab 36, Mehrab 29, Tanvir 42, extras 9; Tapash 2-17, Lee 2-22, Saqlain 3-29)

**Result:** Abahani won by 39 runs.

**CCS:** 278 all out in 50 overs (Hom 89, Atiqur 62, Nazmul 50, extras 9; Sabbir 3-15, Azmat 2-32)

**GAZI TANK:** 277 all out in 50 overs (Mithun 73, Nasir 35, Kapali 87, extras 15; Bishawnath 3-46, Taposh 3-36)

**Result:** CCS won by one run.

**BIMAN:** 222-8 in 50 overs (Avishek 110 not out, Mosharraf 24, extras 34; Tareq 3-34, Mukter 2-16)

**MOHAMMEDAN:** 224-4 in 41.1 overs (Nazimuddin 25, Malik 107 not out, Shamsur 26, Faisal 51, extras 4; Niaz 3-43)

**Result:** Mohammedan won by six wickets.



Players of Amigos, the Polar Street Cricket Champions, pose for a celebratory photo after their final victory over Cricket Kids at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday.

## Amigos Street Cricket champs

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Amigos became champions of the Polar Street Cricket tournament yesterday at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground. They defeated Cricket Kids in the final by 10 runs.

Rubaiyat Haque was awarded the man of the match for picking up two wickets for the Amigos.

Former national skipper Shafiqul Haq handed over the trophy to the winners while the cheque of Tk 50,000 was given by Polar Ice-Cream CEO Taufiqur Rahman. The runners-up team received a cheque of Tk 25,000.

ASM Faruque, Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury and general secretary of CWAB (Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh) Debabrata Paul were also present on the occasion.

## Table-toppers clash today

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After a two-day break, Grameenphone Bangladesh League will resume when defending champions Abahani face current leaders Mukti Joddha Sangsad in what is expected to be a mouth watering clash at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium today.

Five rounds on, the defending champions are currently in second position with thirteen points, trailing leaders Mukti Joddha by two points.

The Reds will be boosted by the return of national striker Mithun Chowdhury, who served a one-match suspension due to consecutive yellow cards. The diminutive striker leads the scorer's chart with six goals, and will be most likely partnered by another lethal striker, James Moga of Sudan, who returned to action in the last match after returning from his homeland.

However, despite their impressive form, the Mukti Joddha coach Maruful Haque is not

fully satisfied with his team's performance:

"Even though we are winning, we have been far from convincing. Our players need to pull up their socks and make sure we win and win well. Abahani are big on paper, but if our players give their hundred percent, we will win."

Muktis have so far lost a solitary match, winning the rest while the Sky Blues have won four, lost one and drawn one.

Most importantly, the Dhanmondi club are on a three-match winning streak and the manager Satyajit Das Rupu believes they are in the right kind of form to take over the lead from Mukti Joddha:

"We are playing well of late. Good to see the players are showing fighting spirit. In absence of the top two keepers, the third choice keeper (Sohel) is coming to terms with the big league."

Veteran winger Mehedi Hasan Uzzal returns to the side while in attack Abahani have in-form Ghanaian Twum Frank to be partnered by Awudu Ibrahim and Shakawt Hossain Rony.

## MS likes India's rota

AFP, New Delhi

India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Wednesday said the schedule of the upcoming World Cup could prove to be a blessing in disguise for his injury-hit team.

The scheduling of the six-week tournament was recently slammed as "ridiculous" by top England batsman Kevin Pietersen who said the gaps between games were too long.

The Indians have been sweating over the fitness of batsmen Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir, and paceman Praveen Kumar in the build-up to the showpiece event, which starts in Dhaka on February 19.

India, co-hosts of the tournament along with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, are set to play six league matches in the space of 29 days and Dhoni said the gap would allow his players to recoup their energies.

"The schedule may work in our favour," Dhoni said at a promotional event in the Indian capital. "It will help our players relax and take care of niggles and injuries."

"We will be looking to play our best eleven and ensure that we do not miss out on our main players due to injuries. We will try and utilise the gaps in the schedule in the best possible manner."

Dhoni also sounded upbeat about the quarterfinal format of the tournament, which was first used in 1996 before being discarded.

"It is a bit of a relief," said the wicket-keeper-batsman, who led India to their maiden World Twenty20 triumph in 2007.

"Even if we have an off-day and lose one or two matches, we won't get out of the tournament. Teams which will play more consistently will benefit from it."

India suffered a humiliating first-round exit in the previous edition of the World Cup in the Caribbean despite starting as one of the favourites.

The Indian captain was hopeful his team will become the first to win a World Cup on home soil despite the pressure of expectations from fans.

"The 1983 team achieved something really big when they won the World Cup. We have the self-belief. We back each other and have a great dressing room environment."

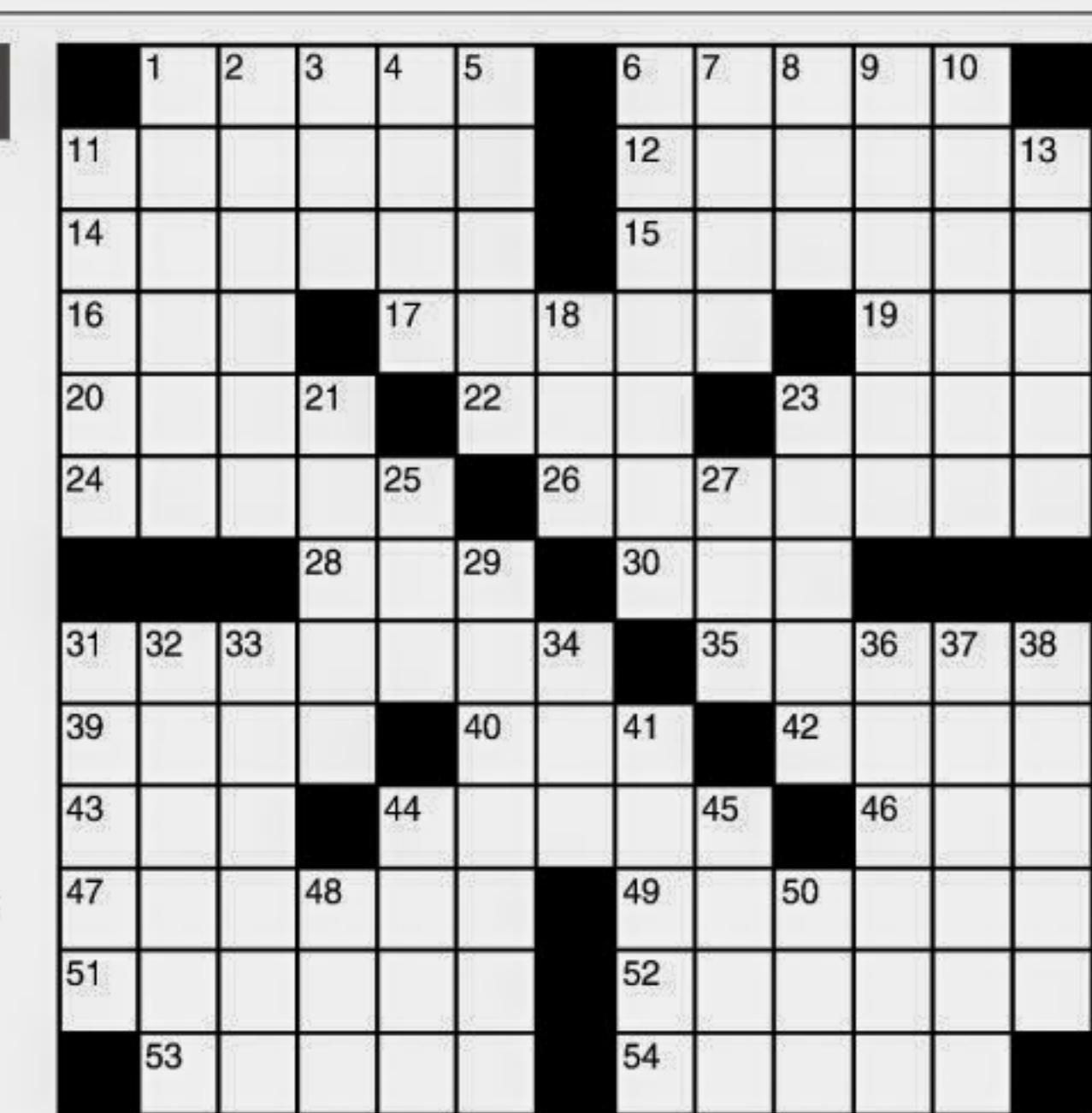
## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Pinochle ploys  
6 "Silence of the —"  
11 Cash in  
12 Harm  
14 Seek a  
15 Tee-hee  
16 Compass dir.  
17 Wood-shop machine  
19 Cake maker's shortcut  
20 Settled down  
22 Same old same-old  
23 Chantilly, e.g.  
24 Church council  
26 Woody Allen movie  
28 Bush league?  
30 Fool  
31 Layer  
35 Confuse  
38 Dregs  
40 High-arc shot  
42 NYC transp.

DOWN

43 Literary collection  
44 "The Cosby Show" mom  
46 Last letter  
47 Word-finding game  
49 Multitask, maybe  
51 Answer angrily  
52 Heinz Holliger, e.g.  
53 Hemingway's "The — of Kilimanjaro"  
55 Grammarian's concern  
56 — a feather  
57 Grenoble girlfriend  
58 Est. EPA hwy. —  
59 Illicit  
60 Settled down  
61 Same old same-old  
62 Chantilly, e.g.  
63 Carter's successor  
64 Quartz material  
65 Ostriches' kin  
66 Reed and Harrison  
67 Hemant Patel  
68 Pickle  
69 Alastair Trebeck  
70 Yew Mtn transp.

18 Three-man vessel?  
21 Frat party wear  
23 Boutonniere's place  
25 Speck  
27 Apprehend  
29 Young hens  
31 Thick chunks  
32 Mortises' mates  
33 Carter's successor  
34 Bygone bird  
36 Whirling firework  
37 Ultimatum ending  
38 Welcome  
41 Common theater name  
44 Talon  
45 Mssages  
48 Mailing HQ  
50 — long way


CRYPTOQUIP

G D Q G Z K L Y Y L L Q L U L Y

W G Q G V G Z K E D E Q P G R Z Q P R U

G Z C R W L Y , U P E V U R X S C

C L S S E U L E Y G Z C L S E U E Y L ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: "A TALE OF TWO CITIES" IS SUCH AN ALARMING WORK TO READ. IT SCARED THE DICKENS OUT OF ME!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals I

## The Powerplay riddle

FROM PAGE 16

the batsmen are being given extra time to try big hits, it is clear that coach Siddons is short on options.

If the problem was tackled more than a year ago, Alok Kapali would have been used then and by now become a major force during the Powerplay. But neither happened as the all-rounder failed to make a comeback nor has the team management done anything about the five-over restriction.

It can't be expected that any of the bowlers will find overnight batting talent nor that Riyad and Naeem will be fully confident with the big-hitting duties.

Options for Siddons therefore are very few and it will down to creativity and motivation. The Australian must inspire something out of Shuvu and Shafiq to do well with the bat as both had shown some ability. Otherwise, Mohammad Ashraful could be used down the batting line-up to make full use of the Powerplay. Ashraful's fielding is good enough but if he is asked to bat after Shafiq, he will be required to fill in the overs as he would be replacing Riyad or Shuvu, but that might not be something the team management is confident about.

And it is here that Bangladesh might rue most the absence, through injury, of Mashrafe bin Mortaza.

While heralded for his bowling talents, Mashrafe is a more than useful lower-order bat who boasts a strike rate of 80 and above and can strike a few lusty blows when the need arises. But with Mashrafe out, the onus is now on the team management to think out-of-the-box and find a solution to this area.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

## BATTED FIRST, WON GAME

Powerplay#3	Opposition	Ground	Year
43 for 3	West Indies	Roseau	Jul 2009
62 for 2	Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	Aug 2009
38 for 1	England	Bristol	Jul 2010
30 for 4	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010
15 for 4	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010
NOT USED	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010
42 for 2	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Dec 2010

(\* denotes the match was won before the end of Powerplay)

## BATTED SECOND, WON GAME

Powerplay#3	Opposition	Ground	Year
32 for 0	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010
NOT USED	Sri Lanka	Dhaka	Jan 2009
NOT USED	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Jan 2009
42 for 3	West Indies	Roseau	Jul 20