

Abahani fined

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani have been fined Tk 25,000 for rowdy behaviour from its supporters after their Bangladesh League match against Rahmatganj MFS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

A group of Abahani supporters damaged the players' tent and referees' room as well as wounding their own players following Abahani's 1-0 defeat to Rahmatganj on Monday.

The decision was taken yesterday at the BFF disciplinary committee meeting in light of the referee and the match commissioner reports, after the Bangladesh League committee referred the matter to the disciplinary committee.

The Committee also warned the defending champions of the Bangladesh League not to repeat the indiscretion in the future.



Arambagh's Nigerian striker Subair Muhammed is ready to take off after pulling his side in front with a 24th minute goal in their Bangladesh League match against Feni SC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Draws leave table unchanged

SPORTS REPORTER

An injury-time goal from Rowland Ikechukwu helped visitors Feni Soccer Club hold hosts Arambagh KS to a 1-1 draw in the Grameenphone Bangladesh League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Away at the Cox's Bazar Stadium, Chittagong Mohammedan and Chittagong Abahani fired blanks in the Chittagong derby, as they played out a 0-0 draw in their first meeting.

The stalemates, however, did not have any bearing on the 12-team standings as Arambagh stayed in their previous eighth position with 17 points from 16 matches followed by the ninth-placed Feni Soccer Club who have 13 points from 16 matches.

Both Chittagong Mohammedan and Chittagong Abahani face the threat of relegation, languishing at the 11th and bottom positions with 12 and 5 points respectively.

Subair Muhammed put his side ahead in the 24th minute through his third league

goal as the Nigerian striker headed a cut-back from Ismael Bangoura home.

After taking the lead, Arambagh went into a defensive shell and the strategy almost paid off before Feni pulled back in the second half. The sides also played out a draw in their first meeting.

After resumption, Feni controlled the game throughout the second half and created a good number of scoring chances but they struggled to beat Arambagh goalkeeper Biplob Kumar Bishnu, who thwarted two good chances from opponent striking partners Nche Francis and Abakaporo Rowland.

However, Rowland, a new player signed during the mid-term players' transfer window, broke the resistance of Arambagh's defenders as well as Bishnu in the stoppage time.

Rowland struck his sixth league goal in five matches to level the margin as the Nigerian striker rose high to head a curling free-kick from Kubaya Dominic inside the box past the Arambagh goalkeeper three minutes into the stoppage time of the second half.

TT in Bangladesh

HEMAL UDDIN AHMED

The genesis of table tennis in independent Bangladesh was spectacular to say the least. After the Liberation War in 1971, it took some time before the sports organisers of Bangladesh could regroup themselves at the national level in the war-ravaged land.

The gap was, however, swiftly filled up by various sports clubs and academic institutions in different places, where sports lovers wasted no time in re-launching their programmes. It was in 1972 when the first Bangladesh Open Table Tennis Tournament was organised in Dhaka by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) as an unofficial national championship. The tournament was quite a success in terms of participants and spectators, where Kazi Nasiruddin Alim of BUET emerged as the men's champion by beating Uday Shankar Das of Chittagong.

The young organisers of BUET led by Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury hosted the second edition in September 1973, which turned out to be a massive success. Held at the BUET gymnasium, the galleries of spectators were full to the brim during the weeklong event, which was quite unprecedented in Dhaka. This time, it was the turn of teenager Enamul Haque Dulal of Swamibag Table Tennis

Sangstha to steal the show, when he won both the men's and boys' singles crowns by defeating Kazi Nasiruddin Alim and Helal Uddin Ahmed (the writer) of Dhaka Residential Model School respectively. Another teenager Munira Rahman Helen not only clinched the women's title but also won the hearts of the audience through her skilful exploits. The tournament received wide coverage in the mass media including radio and television and prizes were distributed by none other than the war-time Prime Minister (then holding the portfolio of finance ministry) of Bangladesh Tajuddin Ahmed.

Another event that drew the attention of table tennis enthusiasts during 1972-74 was the Akhtar Memorial Tournament in Rangpur. It used to be organised by the legendary sports organiser of the locality Taj Bhai. Apart from leading players from Bangladesh, outstanding table tennis players from neighbouring West Bengal also used to take part in it including Nachchu Mukherjee (West Bengal No. 1) and his sister Rupa Mukherjee (Indian women's champion and world no. 5).

The Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation was established in 1974 with the then education minister Prof. Md. Yusuf Ali as its president

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Dhaka: Second best, by a mile

The 12th National Cricket League has concluded on May 14, bringing an end to the country's first-class season. Eight months ago, The Daily Star Sport ran previews of all six divisional sides taking part in the competition and now as part of its evaluation of the campaigners, today it is publishing the fourth episode, that of Dhaka's. Tomorrow, the sixth and final part of this series will be published.

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

The 16-point gap between Dhaka and Rajshahi at the end of the second phase of the National Cricket League prompted questions on the legitimacy of a final.

A league can't have a final, many said. But the Bangladesh Cricket Board's warped idea to reduce the number of first-class matches to raise "quality" meant that despite winning only two games out of the eight, Dhaka contested the final last week. Though they fought back hard in the second innings, the inability to break Rajshahi's resolve on the final day reminded everyone of the gulf of quality between the two teams.

Rajshahi not only won a hatrick of titles, they equalled Dhaka's record of four first-class trophies as well as being almost untouchable this season through six wins from eight games.

But if you take a closer look at the two sides, it would seem that Dhaka have more experience and a lot more talent than any team in the competition. They not only have eight international players, batsmen like Shamsur Rahman and Shuvogotohom Chowdhury have won call-ups to the national team. Others like Elias Sunny and Uttam Sarkar have been regular domestic performers while wicketkeeper Anamul Haque Bijoy is touted as the next big thing in Bangladesh cricket.

Take a look at the statistics, they reveal how good a batting line-up Dhaka are supposed to possess. Seven of their batsmen have made more than 300 runs with two of them above the 400-run mark. Sunny won the player-of-the-tournament award for his 498 runs and 24 wickets while Anamul was the man-of-the-final.

But the eight internationals and the several domestic stars rarely played together and that was Dhaka's biggest obstacle.

Only all-rounder Mosharrar Hossain Rubel, skipper Mohammad Sharif and paceman Mahbubul



ELIAS SUNNY

DHAKA

Position in 2010-11: Runners-up (2 wins)
Top scorer: Elias Sunny (498 runs)
Most wickets: Mosharrar Hossain Rubel (34 wickets)
High point: Anamul Haque's centuries
Low point: None of the players available for whole campaign

Alam played eight games for Dhaka and none played all nine. It is always convenient to have the best players in your line-up but it is equally dangerous if the same players are not available at all times.

Internal politics at management level that resulted in poor selection calls was also a hurdle the side had to face.

Though Rajshahi also had some of their players taking off for Academy and A team duties, their next batch pulled them through some tough times. Dhaka didn't enjoy that luxury and the likes of Marshall Ayub, Abdul Majid and Rony Talukdar struggled to match their more accomplished Dhaka teammates.

But this Dhaka campaign will always be remembered for two players Anamul and Sunny.

In two brilliant centuries, Anamul has managed to impress with his technique, shots and crucially, the value he placed on his wicket. Though his wicketkeeping requires

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Shakib returns and impresses

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan showed his Indian Premier League (IPL) side Kolkata Knight Riders what they were missing in the last six matches with a bowling display replete with the guile and cunning that has made him one of the best twirlers in the international game.

Against Pune Warriors at the DY Patil Stadium in Mumbai yesterday, Shakib was a major factor in restricting the opposition to a gettable total, as he bowled four overs on the trot for figures of 2 for 16, fabulous returns for a T20 match.

Before yesterday's match, the Tigers skipper only featured in four of Kolkata's twelve matches. He missed the first two games because of the Australia-Bangladesh series in early April, and after bowling well in the four matches he played in to pick up seven wickets, the 24-year-old had to come back to Bangladesh to be with his ill mother. Upon return, he found it hard to get past the four overseas players quota, finally getting an opportunity after the out-of-form Eoin Morgan was benched.

Brought on in the seventh over, Shakib immediately announced his class as he had Sourav Ganguly on tenterhooks with his last moment changes in pace and line. When the former India skipper charged him in his first over, Shakib smartly dragged the ball down the leg side, almost dismissing Ganguly. The over yielded only three.

It was in his next over that he produced some magic that again highlighted his ability to think on his feet. Those who are familiar with his bowling will know that he is not a big

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PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan is hoisted by Kolkata Knight Riders teammate Yusuf Pathan after dismissing Pune Warriors batsman Sourav Ganguly during their IPL match at the DY Patil Stadium in Mumbai yesterday.

KKR in playoffs

AFP, Mumbai



Skipper Gautam Gambhir cracked an unbeaten half-century as Kolkata Knight Riders thrashed Pune Warriors India by seven wickets on Thursday to book a place in the Indian Premier League (IPL) playoffs.

The left-hander hit seven fours in his 54-run knock off 46 balls as Kolkata overhauled a modest 119-run target with 20 balls to spare at the DY Patil Stadium.

Gambhir promoted himself to the opener's slot after Jacques Kallis picked up an injury while bowling earlier in the game, and anchored the innings following the first-over dismissal of Shreevats Goswami.

Manoj Tiwary chipped in with a run-a-ball 24 and Yusuf Pathan scored 29 to help Kolkata register their eighth win from 13 games.

IPL debutants Pune, already out of contention for a place in the final four, slumped to their ninth defeat in the Twenty20 competition.

Kolkata spinners struck early, removing Pune's top five batsmen cheaply after Gambhir won the toss and decided to bowl on a slow, turning track. Pathan gave Kolkata the first breakthrough when he dismissed Jesse Ryder (one) in the second over.

Shakib Al Hasan heaped further misery on Pune, accounting for Callum Ferguson and Sourav Ganguly. The former Kolkata skipper struck 18 off 22 balls, including the only six of Pune innings off left-arm spinner Iqbal Abdullah.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PUNE WARRIORS INDIA: 118-7 in 20 overs (Yuvraj 24; Balaji 2-7, Shakib 2-16, Pathan 2-23)
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 119-3 in 16.4 overs (Gambhir 54 not out, Pathan 29)
Result: Kolkata Knight Riders won by seven wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Yusuf Pathan.

Inter-District final today

SPORTS REPORTER

The final of the 31st Inter District Cricket Championship will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today. Rajshahi will take on Mymensingh in the final. Mymensingh beat Comilla by two runs through the D/L method in the first semifinal while Rajshahi coasted to a seven-wicket victory over Sylhet in the second semifinal.

School rugby

SPORTS REPORTER

Cambridge High School, St Gregory's High School and Mathertek School and College won their respective matches in the opening day of the Cooline School Rugby tournament at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Cambridge blanked Rahmatullah Model High School 12-0, St Gregory's defeated Nawabpur Govt High School 10-5 after the first half was locked at 5-5, while Mathertek thrashed Nabokumar Institute 15-7 after leading the first half 10-0.