

Abahani through

SPORTS REPORTER

 Defending champions Abahani became the first team to qualify for the quarterfinals of the Grammenphone Federation Cup when they fashioned a 2-1 victory over Arambagh KS in their Group B encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Ntim Twum Frank put the Sky Blues ahead in the first half and Otafe Lucky Paul made it 2-0 in the second before Abrambagh substitute Mohammad Mamun scored a consolation goal.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Police bounced back from their 6-0 defeat against Abahani by beating top-tier side Feni Soccer Club 1-0 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur to keep their hopes of the last eight alive.

Police were awarded a penalty kick when Mofizur Rahman was fouled inside the box by Mostafa kaba in the 56th minute and Mofizur himself converted the kick to confirm all three points.

At the BNS, Abahani started with a new formation of 3-4-1-2 and looked a bit shaky compared to their first match but striking duo Frank and Paul and attacking midfielder Ibrahim ensured they were on the money as both goals came through a combination of the trio.

With right-back Nasirul Islam and left-back Wali Faisal playing up the flanks, three defenders Ghanaian Samad Yussif, Mohammad Sujam ad Mamun Mia struggled uin their bid to foil Arambagh attacks and the lone goal Abahni conceded could be attrib-

uted to both Mamun Mia and Samad Yussif.

Abahani launched the first fruitful attack through left flank when Wali put a cross for Frank whose header was punched out by Arambagh goalkeeper Biplob Kumar. However, the weak clearance fell to unmarked Paul inside the box and the Nigerian striker did not hesitate to fire home from close range to put Abahani 1-0 in the 17th minute.

Abahani kept on creating chances and came close to doubling twice, but Paul drove his shot over the crosspiece in the 25th minute and then could not get the better of the keeper in the 54th minute.

Frank doubled the lead combining with Paul and Ibrahim and deceived the goalkeeper from the edge of the six-yard box to find the near post in the 66th minute. The Ghanaian striker seemed to dummied a lob for his strike partner Paul before himself taking the shot at goal.

Arambagh striking duo Kevin Igor and Eleta Kingsley looked lethal in the first half though could not break the Abahani backline. Their attacking edge was reduced in the start of the second half when Kevin picked up an injury to be substituted. That worked as a boon for Arambagh as Mamun, coming in place of Kevin, reduced the margin eight minutes from time when took advantage of a Samad fumble inside the box.

"Compared to the first match, we played better today. I hope Abahani will put even

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Abahani's Ghanaian midfielder Awudu Ibrahim (yellow jersey) tries to manoeuvre his way through a pack of Arambagh defenders during their Federation Cup encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Grades for BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Four national cricketers were singled out as Grade A players for the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) players' auction. The list of the local cricketers for auction, to be finalised on Monday, will feature 80 players divided into four grades: A, B, C and D. The four players selected for Grade A are: Mahmudullah Riyad, Abdur Razzak, Nasir Hossain and Mashrafe Bin Mortoza.

Grade B will have 15 players, Grade C 30 players and 25 more will be selected from among 75 more cricketers.

Six players who have already been categorised as icon players are: Mushfiquir Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mohammad Ashraf, Alok Kapali and Shahriar Nafees.

Meanwhile, three more foreign players have confirmed their availability for the BPL players' auction yesterday. They are: Stuart McGill of Australia, Jerome Taylor of West Indies and Wahab Riaz of Pakistan.

Khelaghar, Baridhara power on

SPORTS REPORTER

Khelaghar defeated Azad Sporting Club by 78 runs in their Super League match of the Dhaka First Division Cricket League at the BKSP-3 ground yesterday.

Batting first Khelaghar made 187 for eight in 39 overs buoyed mainly by Neaz Morshed Poltu's knock of 74 runs.

In reply Azad were bowled out for 109 in 35.3 overs with Mahmudul Islam doing the bulk of the damage taking 3-17.

In the other match, Baridhara defeated Uttara by 32 runs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

After yesterdays matches Khelaghar lead the table with eight points while Uttara, Baridhara, and Azad all with two points after four matches.

Al-Amin destroys Lions

But will miss next 2 games



SPORTS REPORTER

An excellent opening spell by Al-Amin Hossain and Imrul Kayes's steady half-century guided Bangladesh A to a resounding six-wicket win over England Lions in the first one-dayer in Chittagong yesterday.

The home side now lead the five-match series 1-0 after the visitors collapsed early in the piece after deciding to bat first at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, making only 139 in 39 overs before being bowled out. Bangladesh A took 33 overs to trek down the target, losing four wickets in the process. But they are still in a disadvantaged position as most of the performers will not be available for the next two matches.

Al-Amin Hossain, who impressed with a burst of wickets at the top and was later adjudged man-of-the-match, will accompany skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, Imrul Kayes, Noor Hossain Munna and three others back to Dhaka as their Premier League clubs wants them back.

To return to the game, Jason Roy was

the first to go, edging Alauddin Babu at the end of an eventful first over. Joe Root, skipper James Taylor and James Vince all became Al-Amin's victims as the paceman found his groove after the seventh over. England Lions were 38 for four before Jonny Bairstow and Jos Buttler added 46 for the fifth wicket.

Buttler hung around till almost the end of the innings before becoming the ninth batsman to be dismissed in the 37th over. He made 45 off 81 balls with the help of three boundaries and a six, while Bairstow scored 22.

Munna quickly hastened Lions' end with three wickets while Sohrawardi Shuvo picked up two wickets in addition to Al-Amin's 3-18.

Imrul then provided Bangladesh A with the platform, hammering six boundaries in his 83-ball 53. In the process, he added 47 for the first wicket with Rony Talukdar, 44 for the second with Jahurul Islam before falling to Nathan Buck just when victory was in sight.

Riyad was unbeaten on 38 off 42 balls with six boundaries, but both batsmen will be unavailable alongside Jahurul Islam, Alauddin Babu, Tasamul Haque and the two bowling heroes (Munna and Al-Amin).

All this chopping and changing

didn't however bother A team coach Stuart Barnes, who put a positive spin to the whole matter.

"In an ideal world, a group of cricketers would stay together so that it performs better. But I'm not frustrated as another group of players will get the chance to play against the second best cricketers of England," said Barnes after the match.

"It also gives me and [Tigers' coach] Stuart Law the chance to look at this group," he added.

Barnes, a former Gloucestershire fast bowler, was impressed by Al-Amin. "He has stepped up to the plate. He has some pace but most importantly, he bowled straight and the wicket here is where you bowl straight," he said.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND LIONS: 139 all out in 39 overs (Buttler 45, Bairstow 22, Brothwick 17; Al-Amin 3-18, Noor 3-32, Shuvo 2-27).

BANGLADESH A: 141-4 in 33 overs (Imrul 53, Riyad 38 not out, Rony 23; Buck 2-0, Briggs 2-45).

Result: Bangladesh A won by six wickets, lead five-match series 1-0.

Man-of-the-match: Al-Amin Hossain.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh A bowler Al-Amin Hossain successfully appeals for an lbw decision against an England Lions batsman in the first one-dayer at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Duo's hearing 'inhuman'



SPORTS REPORTER

Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) have slated the Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision yesterday to summon two cricketers for not turning up in the practice game against England Lions.

Asif Ahmed and Mominul Haque, both of whom play for Gazi Tank Cricketers in the ongoing Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League, have been asked to report to the BCB's disciplinary committee after they didn't play the game in Chittagong last Friday.

It is very hard to imagine if these two young cricketers would have had any say in the matter. Even technically, they are contracted to Gazi Tank and are playing in a BCB-sanctioned tournament so it would entirely depend on the club or the cricket board to decide their availability.

A source close to Asif and Mominul has said that when they were informed by the board's operation committee about their selection in the Bangladesh A team, they told the Gazi Tank manager who instantly told them that they cannot travel to Chittagong.

Consequently, the selectors had to make do with two other cricketers from Premier League side CCS (Cricket Coaching School) to make up a playing eleven for the practice game.

CWAB, the players' representative body in the country, has said that it is a "bad decision".

"It is absolutely a bad decision. They are not BCB

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Walkover in hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

The Trust Bank-Viyellatex 28th National Hockey Championship produced a walk-over on Sunday as Gaibandha did not appear against Chittagong Division at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Chittagong Division were declared to victorious 2-0 margin, but their win was not enough to see them through to the second round as Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP), who defeated Chittagong Division 11-0 on Saturday, emerged Group C champions with a better goal difference.

"After finalising the fixture, Gaibandha informed us that they were not taking part but we had no option to reschedule the fixture. Gaibandha will have to pay Tk 20,000 fine as per the bylaws," said tournament committee secretary Alamgir Kabir.

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Abahani take on Torun on Jan 11

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani take on winless Surjo Torun in the fourth round of the Premier Cricket League at the BKSP-2 on Wednesday.

The fourth round matches will continue up to January 12 while there will be a break the next day to accommodate for the match between Bangladesh A and England Lions in Chittagong. The fifth round matches will once again commence from January 14 to 15.

With the ongoing problems between the BCB and the Premier League clubs regarding the Bangladesh A players' availability, it will once again be interesting to see if the clubs will allow the selected players to play for the A team.

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EYES ON OLYMPIC PLACES

Shooters go to Doha today

SPORTS REPORTER

With the hope of securing quota places for the 2012 London Olympics, national shooters leave here for Qatar today to take part in the Asian Shooting Championship scheduled for January 11 to 22 in Doha.

A total of 35 shooters from Asia will earn the opportunity to take part in the Olympics dependent on their performances in the championship's 12th edition and Bangladeshi women shooters, who have been performing better than their male counterparts, have a good chance to secure quota places this time. Bangladesh have never earned any quota places for the Olympics and have always played through the wild card system.

Initially, there was a possibility to reduce the nine-member squad because of a financial crisis in the National Shooting Federation Bangladesh. The crisis was resolved when some local clubs provided funds, and six shooters are expected to leave here today and the remaining will leave on January 13.

Coach Shoaibuzzaman will accompany shooters Sharmin Akhter Ratna, Tripti Datta, Sadia Sultana, Sharmin Akhter, Asif Hossain Khan and Abdullah Hel Baki, who are to compete in the 10m Air Rifles event.

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