



39  
DAYS  
TO GO



## Brothers sink Ctg Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union moved up to fourth position in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League after they came from behind to beat relegation-battlers Chittagong Abahani 2-1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The All Oranges, who had won two of their last three matches -- against Abahani and Sheikh Russel, while losing a close encounter against Sheikh Jamal DC in between -- repeated the same margin of victory over the Chittagong outfit to take their points tally to 20 from 13 matches, one behind third-placed Mohammedan SC and twelve adrift of leaders Sheikh Jamal.

However, it was the port city outfit who got the opening goal in the 13th minute when midfielder Ismail Jahed headed in a cross from Guinean forward Osmanc Cherif. Brothers were a bit fortuitous to get level within two minutes as Simon Ezeodika's shot from inside the box was deflected onto the net by Chittagong Abahani captain Nazrul Islam.

After the initial flurry, the match appeared to be destined for a stalemate for a long time as both teams showed a lot of effort in midfield with little outcome. But in the 87th minute, Brothers' Haitian forward Augustin Walson made sure his side's mini-revival continued with a placing shot from inside the box after dancing past two defenders.

With 13 games still remaining, Brothers look like they are still in the reckoning for a title challenge, while Chittagong Abahani look doomed to relegation as they are placed in ninth position with 7 points, just above Uttar Baridhara on a superior goal difference.

## Agrani beat Victoria

SPORTS REPORTER

Agrani Bank moved to the third position of the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League after a 2-0 victory over Victoria Sporting Club at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. Tenjin and Mannaf scored the two goals in the second half for Victoria, who took their tally to 13 points from 10 matches.

### ERRATUM

In our yesterday's introduction of the countdown to the 2014 FIFA World Cup, we erred in calculating the days left to the showpiece event in Brazil, which begins on June 12. The countdown should have read 40 days instead of 39. We regret the slip.

-Sports Editor



PHOTO: STAR

North Zone batsman Forhad Hossain cuts the ball late during his 109 against reigning Bangladesh Cricket League champions Central Zone at the BKSP yesterday. Forhad's century took his side to a strong 287 for 4.

## BCB's race against time

SPORTS REPORTER



While an official decision regarding Bangladesh coach Shane Jurgensen's resignation is expected to be taken this Monday, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) might already have to start preparing find themselves their next head coach. BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon

yesterday stated that the board would start their hunt depending on the way things go in the meet on Monday.

The word around the BCB headquarters at Mirpur is that there are very slim chances for Jurgensen to reconsider his decision, as the Australian has reportedly made up his mind. The board however will have a meeting with him this Monday to take a final call. The meeting might also decide on whether Jurgensen will coach the national team for the Indiaseries in June.

The focus has gradually shifted from Jurgensen's resignation to the search for Bangladesh's next head coach. Papon, during his interactions with the media in the past week, did say that the board might hire a local coach to replace the Australian. That statement has led to the eruption of several opinions. While a section of the board reckons that it is time for a Bangladeshi coach to take over, many feel that local coaches lack the necessary qualifications.

With nine months to go for the 50-over World Cup, finding a foreign coach in such a short period of time is likely to be a difficult task.

## Forhad resists turn

SPORTS REPORTER



The spinners had their share of success on typical Bangladeshi surfaces but it was

Forhad Hossain who shone with the bat during his four-hour batting stint on the first day of the last-round matches of the franchise-based Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) at BKSP-3 yesterday.

Forhad Hossain's 109-run knock helped BCB North Zone finish the day on top with 287 for four against Walton Central Zone. Before left-arm spinner Elias Sunny sent him back to the dressing room, the right-hander clobbered 14 fours and a six in his 199-ball essay.

Hamidul Islam and Junaed Siddiqui gave a good start after North Zone decided to bat first as the opening pair contributed 88 runs before left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain, who returned to cricket after an anti-corruption tribunal cleared him of any wrongdoing, dismissed Junaed for 65. Another fruitful partnership between Hamidul and Forhad came for the second wicket but Marshal Ayub broke it by removing Hamidul for 60 runs.

Sunny picked up the wicket of Naeem Islam.

In the day's other match at BKSP-4, Abdur Razzak along with Shohag Gazi shared seven wickets to wrap up Islami Bank East Zone for 135 runs and put Prime Bank South Zone on top.

Pacer Ziaur Rahman initiated the collapse by removing Nazimuddin, who made a 21-ball duck, and then Gazi wrecked the top order before veteran Razzak finished the job in style.

Razzak claimed four wickets and Gazi took three. "On typical Bangladeshi wickets, Gazi bowled at a good length and his bowling was encouraging," said selector Habibul Bashar.

Kapali made sure that East Zone cross the 100-run mark with 56.

Anamul continued his good form with an unbeaten 59 as South Zone finished the day at 108 for one.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE:** 135 all out 69.4 overs (Sadman 33, Kapali 56; Razzak 4-34, Gazi 3-41)

**PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE:** 108-1 in 34 overs (Imrul 38, Anamul 59 not out, Soumya 6 not out; Enamul 1-45)

**BCB NORTH ZONE:** 287-4 in 90 overs (Hamidul 60, Junaed 65, Forhad 109, Naeem 38, Nasir 11 not out, Tanvir 1 not out; Sunny 2-57)

### AFC PRESIDENTS' CUP

## Troubled Russel fly off today

SPORTS REPORTER

Last season's treble winners Sheikh Russel KC will fly to Colombo today to participate in the AFC President's Cup with the hope of becoming the first Bangladeshi club to reach the final round of Asia's third-tier club competition, which will be scrapped after this year.

Sheikh Russel, who are participating by dint of becoming the Bangladesh Premier League champions last season, will be the second Bangladeshi club to make their debut in the competition after Abahani, who played five times in the tournament and failed every time to make it to the second round.

The treble-winners are not in a comfortable position at the moment, having already relinquished both the Federation Cup and Independence Cup titles and languishing in fifth position in the Bangladesh Premier League table. They have a new coach in

Montenegrin Dragan Djukanovic, who joined on April 19 after last season's successful coach Maruful Haque was unceremoniously sacked for the club's poor performance. Under Djukanovic, Sheikh Russel have played two matches, losing one and drawing the other. However, the Montenegrin tried to put on a brave face during the press conference arranged at the BFF House yesterday to announce Sheikh Russel's tournament participation.

"In the league, I had little time to change things. But now things are different and our target is to win the tournament. I believe in local players. We must make use of the available players that we have and we must have success with them," said Montenegrin, who will take midfielders Pascal Millien of Haiti and Ivan Kurtusic of Serbia as the two foreigners in the squad of 20.

Sheikh Russel -- who have been pitted in Group A alongside with last edition's runners-up KRL (Khan

Research Laboratories) Academy of Pakistan, debutantes Sri Lanka Air Force SC and Ugyen Academy of Bhutan -- are hoping that the knowledge about teams of the South Asian region will serve them well in the competition.

"We are in a better position compared to the opposition teams. We have info about Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. Our football is in much better shape than those countries," said Sheikh Russel goalkeeper and captain Bilpob Bhattacharjee, who has played four times in the tournament so far.

However, there will be two qualifiers for the next round from each group this time instead of one previously, which gives Sheikh Russel some hope of making it through.

Sheikh Russel will begin their campaign with the game against KRL FC on May 7 before taking on Sri Lanka Air Force SC on May 9 and Ugyen Academy on May 11 -- all at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo.

## TT team knocked out

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's table tennis team were knocked out of the World Table Tennis Championship in Tokyo, Japan yesterday when they lost in 0-3 games against South Africa in their 97-100 places-deciding match.

Manash Chowdhury lost in 3-0 sets, Javed Ahmed lost by the same margin while Mohammad Tuhin lost in 4-1 sets against their respective South African counterparts. Earlier, Bangladesh had moved into the knock-out round by finishing runners-up in the fifth division by beating Congo, Botswana, Guernsey and Madagascar while losing only against Jamaica.

## URUGUAY 1930

### Where it all began

And seventeen days after it all started, on the 30th July, the hosts were in the final, waiting to take on their South American counterparts Argentina at the colossal Centenario stadium. Both Uruguay and Argentina had crossed their semifinal barriers with flying colours with identical 6-1 wins over Yugoslavia and USA respectively.

At half-time, Uruguay were down 2-1, but fought back bravely and put three second half goals passed the stunned Argentines, ending the game with a 4-2 victory.

If FIFA needed any assurance about the decision to bring the tournament to Uruguay, they got it just before the final. Argentine player Luis Monti received a death threat.

Belgian referee John Langenus demanded guarantees of protection and planned a quick escape route to his ship. He later admitted to feeling genuine fear. On the day of the final, he was put under extra pressure, both camps wanting to use a ball manufactured in their own country. Langenus ordered each half to be played with a different ball. Dressed in his usual cap and plus fours, he went out to play the part of gamekeeper.

Naturally the day of the final was declared a national holiday. Someone died in the celebrations, a mob stoned the Uruguayan embassy in Buenos Aires, and the two FAs broke off relations. It really did matter. Even the Europeans were about to believe it.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Winner: Uruguay

Runner-up: Argentina

Teams: 13

Matches: 18

Goals: 70

Leading Scorer: Guillermo Stabile (ARG)--8

Attendance: 434,500

## MSC-Abahani crucial tie today

SPORTS REPORTER



Archivals Abahani and Mohammedan SC will look to close the gap on leaders Sheikh Jamal DC when they face off for the fourth time this season in their second-leg match of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today. The high-voltage match will kick off at 6:00pm today and will be telecast live by BTv.

The Sky Blues are in second position on 25 points, six behind leaders Sheikh Jamal, and five ahead of their archivals. The two sides have met four times this season, with Abahani winning twice, drawing once and losing the last meeting -- the semifinal of the Independence Cup.

Abahani coach Ali Akbar Pourmoslemi is looking for revenge for their Independence Cup defeat as well as staying in the title hunt.

"We had injury problems during the Independence Cup. But now our players are all fit and I am confident of winning the match, which will be a big pressure match. I am thinking of an attacking strategy, although it may change according to match situation," said Pourmoslemi, who guided the Sky Blues to their fourth professional league title in the 2011-2012 season during his first stint at the club.

Mohammedan, on the other hand, have some concerns with the players' fitness. Winger Zahid Hossain, midfielders Damien Chigozie and Hemanta Biswas are all carrying injuries and not certain for the match. Mohammedan come into this match on the back of a 2-3 defeat against Team BJMC, which broke an impressive unbeaten run of 12 matches. "We have a few injury concerns, but I am going to stick with my game plan. Last match against Team BJMC was one bad day for us, but we are taking inspiration from the Independence Cup victory. We need this victory more than Abahani as we need to get close to them," said Mohammedan coach Rui Jose Capela, who himself suffered from a bout of stomach upset on Friday.



It was on March 22 when Grameenphone players won the SC Trophy 2014 qualifying round at the Handball Stadium and earned the exclusive right to play at Anfield.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

## Dreaming in Red

SPORTS REPORTER

It is a remarkable turnaround for a team to go all the way to hit the jackpot after losing their opening game 4-1. It may be a non-descript event considering that it involved only amateurs whose participation was precisely passion-driven. But the Bangladesh leg of Standard Chartered Trophy 2014 carried immense meaning for the triumphant Grameenphone football team consisting of players who had hardly kicked a soccer ball for more than five years before their enrolment in the tournament.

For the record the enfant terrible of GP won the final against Epylion Group 2-0 at the Handball Court adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium on March 22. And that win suddenly turned out to be a dream-come-true for the lucky GP 7. They are now on their way to Anfield, the home of English football giants Liverpool FC.

The mission of the GP team, which now proudly declare themselves as team Bangladesh in the 5-a-side meet, is to go one better in a day-long rumble along with 13 other SC Trophy 2014 winners on the famous

venue of the Reds in the grand finale on May 13.

Not many people in the world have got the opportunity to enjoy a football match at Anfield, let alone play on the hallowed turf, which is the home of one of the greatest English clubs holding the most European titles.

"It's an amazing feeling. I can't believe that I will be walking on the green top of Anfield. We thank Standard Chartered Bank for providing us this once in a lifetime opportunity," said GP team captain Mahbubul Haque, who is also the lone defender of an attack-heavy side.

"This is an opportunity that even a member of the Bangladesh football team will envy," quipped an excited Mozahidul Islam, who claims to be a winger. If playing in Anfield is something that the lucky seven cannot wait to be a part of, they are equally thrilled to be on the stands on May 11 when Liverpool host Newcastle United in a potentially 'crunch match' of the English Premier League this season.

Liverpool, now sharing the top spot with Manchester City, have the opportunity to win the title after 24 long

years provided that they win their last two games and City lose one point in their last three fixtures.

Standard Chartered is the proud partner in the progress of Liverpool. The six-year partnership that started in 2010 reached dizzy heights this year with Liverpool staging a magnificent run of form much to the delight of its millions of fans across the world.

The Bangladesh head office of the bank in Gulshan is understandably proud to stick a life-size poster of Liverpool's inspirational captain Steven Gerrard, who has been almost perfect in his new role of operating from the deep until a slip against Chelsea a week ago.

This is the third edition of the SC Trophy in which 14 markets of the global bank including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia et al are taking part.

The Bangladesh team is leaving on May 9 with a hope to create a small piece of history or to be a part of history. However, one thing is for sure, that both winners and vanquished will sing the same song once at Anfield: "You will never walk alone".