

# Unconvincing victory for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Four-time professional league champions Abahani began their King's Cup campaign with an unconvincing 1-0 against Indian regional side Assam Electricity Board at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday.

Guinean marksman Ismael Bangoura struck the decisive goal in the 19th minute of the match to give a winning start to the Sky Blues, who are making their second appearance in this tournament with a short preparation after assembling almost an entirely new squad for the upcoming season.

Amalesh Sen's charges lined up in 4-3-3 formation with Bangoura partnered upfront by Wahed Ahmed and Aminur Rahman Sabij and the three-pronged attack posed constant threat in the opposition defence right from the word go.

The Sky Blues took a deserved lead when former BJMC striker Bangoura latched on to a cross from Sajib and bundled the ball home past the Assam Electricity goalkeeper.

However, the Guinean was wasteful ever since as he blasted a spot kick wide off target and headed wide from inside the 12 yards. National striker Wahed also failed to beat the Assam goalkeeper in a one-on-one situation a few minutes before the break.

The Sky Blues had to endure some nervous moments after their veteran midfielder Prantosh Kumar Das was sent off in the 72nd minute, but the ten-man Abahani managed to keep the Assamese outfit at bay to eke out a single-goal win.

Amalesh was happy to start the tournament on a winning note but believed the margin should have been bigger.

"I am happy with the victory. The boys played the match according to my plan and created a lot of scoring chances even if they availed only one," said Abahani's long-serving coach.

The Sky Blues will play their second match on Tuesday against Bhutanese outfit Ugyen Academy, who were beaten 0-4 by Sheikh Russel KC in the AFC President's Cup group stages earlier this year.



England striker Danny Welbeck celebrates one of his two goals with Arsenal teammate Kieran Gibbs (R) against Slovenia at the Wembley in London on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

# England, Spain get crucial wins

AFP, Paris



England and reigning champions Spain both secured home victories in Euro 2016 qualifying on Saturday as some of the continent's minnows again enjoyed outstanding results.

A turgid Group E encounter between England and Slovenia at Wembley came to life in the second half as Roy Hodgson's side fought back to win 3-1 and make it four wins from four games in Group E.

Spain had a routine 3-0 victory against Belarus in Group C, which saw the current European champions make it three wins from four qualifiers.

Real Madrid midfielder Isco

marked his first start for La Roja by scoring a brilliant first-half opener and Barcelona duo Sergio Busquets and Pedro Rodriguez added further goals.

Meanwhile, after the Faroe Islands recorded a stunning 1-0 win in Greece on Friday, prompting the demise of Claudio Ranieri as coach of the 2004 European champions, San Marino and Liechtenstein claimed famous results of their own.

San Marino, ranked 208th and joint-last in the world by FIFA alongside Bhutan, ended a run of 61 consecutive defeats by holding Estonia to a 0-0 draw at home in Group E.

Liechtenstein fared even better, a second-half goal by captain Franz Burgmeier securing a 1-0 victory in Moldova in Group G.

Europe's largest nation Russia

## RESULTS

Luxembourg 0 **Ukraine 3** (Yarmolenko 33, 53, 56)  
Macedonia 0 **Slovakia 2** (Kucka 25, Nemec 38)  
**Spain 3** (Isco 18, Busquets 19, Pedro 55) **Belarus 0**  
**England 3** (Rooney 59-pen, Welbeck 66, 72)  
Slovenia 1 (Henderson 58-og)  
San Marino 0 **Estonia 0**  
**Switzerland 4** (Arlauskis 66-og, Schaer 68, Shaqiri 80, 90) **Lithuania 0**  
**Austria 1** (Okotie 73) **Russia 0**  
Moldova 0 **Liechtenstein 1** (Burgmeier 74)  
Montenegro 1 (Jovetic 80-pen) **Sweden 1** (Ibrahimovic 9)

went down 1-0 in Austria in the same group to increase the pressure on coach Fabio Capello.

The only goal of the game in Vienna was scored by 1860 Munich's Pakistan-born striker

# Enzo Zidane in Real reserves

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid reserve team coach Zinedine Zidane has drafted his 19-year-old son Enzo into the side for a league match on Sunday, the club have announced.

An attacking midfielder already called up by the French under-19s, Zidane



junior has until now been playing with Real Madrid's third team, but fans will be licking their lips to see if the he gives his eldest son a run out for the second team, known as Castilla.

Zidane has four sons and Enzo, the eldest of them, has been with the Madrid giants since 2004, while Luca (16), Theo (12) and Elyaz (8) are also on the books at Real.

# India whitewash SL

PTI, Ranchi



Skipper Virat Kohli led from the front with a gritty unbeaten century as a dominant India completed a resounding 5-0 whitewash over Sri Lanka by winning the fifth and final One-day International by three wickets here on Sunday.

Opting to bat, Sri Lanka rode on their skipper Angelo Mathews' unbeaten 116-ball 139 to put up a challenging 286 for eight at the JSCA International Stadium Complex, before Kohli (139) guided India home with eight balls to spare.

Kohli struck 12 fours and three sixes during his 126-ball captain's knock as India boosted their confidence ahead of the tough upcoming tour of Australia.

A screaming Kohli sealed the issue by hitting Mendis for a six over long-on after completing his 21st century and the fourth this year.

Incidentally, Mathews too scored the same number of runs runs in setting up respectable score, but the day belonged to his Indian counterpart as India geared up to the Australia tour before the World Cup with a memorable series triumph.

Watched on by his GCA president Amit Shah, Axar Patel played a perfect cameo remaining unbeaten on 17 from 14 balls in an undefeated 57-run partnership from 32 balls.

Chasing a fighting 287, India looked in firm control with Kohli and

Rayudu (59 from 69 balls) putting on 136 runs for the third wicket, but the latter was unfortunately run out by the skipper triggering a mini collapse.

Lanka almost had the twist in the tale after Mendis (4/73) claimed the wickets of Stuart Binny and R Ashwin in successive deliveries as Kohli remained stranded at the other end.

The collapse that began with Rayudu's wicket meant India lost five wickets for 81 runs but Kohli held his nerves and took on Mendis, stepping out to hit a big six and a four to turn the match in India's favour.

Scripting yet another run chase, Kohli brought back the memories of his 77 not out in their run chase against England in January last year, in the first match at the venue.

It was their best ever fight on the gruelling tour that came up suddenly, and heavy dew played a big role in their narrow defeat.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**SRI LANKA:** 286 for 8 in 50 overs (Dilshan 35, Jayawardene 32, Mathews 139 not out, Thirimanne 52; Kulkarni 3-57, Patel 2-45, Ashwin 2-56)

**INDIA:** 288 for 7 in 48.4 overs (Rayudu 59, Kohli 139 not out, Uthappa 19, Jadhav 20, Patel 17 not out; Mathews 2-33, Mendis 4-73)

**Result:** India won by 3 wickets and sweep series 5-0.

**Player-of-the-match:** Angelo Mathews.

**Player-of-the-series:** Virat Kohli.

# Advocaat quits

AFP, Belgrade

Much-travelled Dutchman Dick Advocaat resigned as Serbia coach on Saturday, a day after a 3-1 Euro 2016 qualifying defeat at home to Denmark, the national football federation said.

I regret that our joint work ends in this way," Advocaat said in a Serbian Football Federation statement.

The 67-year-old was only appointed coach of the Balkan country in July.

Serbia are currently at the bottom of Euro 2016 qualifying Group I with just one point.

# War on beards!

AFP, Istanbul

The chairman of Turkish football club Genterbirliigi has vowed to fine any of his players who have beards after claiming some looked like students of an Islamic school.

"I'm 80 and I shave every day," said Ilhan Cavcav.

"Is this an imam school? You are a sportsman. You should be a model for the youth," he said in an interview with the Dogan news agency.

Genterbirliigi will fine any player who takes to the pitch with a beard 25,000 Turkish lira (around 9,000 euros).

Cavcav said he had appealed to Yildirim Demiroren, the Turkish Football Federation chairman, to bring in a nationwide ban on footballers having beards.



# SA make it 1-1

AFP, Perth



South Africa struck back with a vengeance in the second one-day international against Australia at the WACA Ground in Perth on Sunday, leveling the series with a three-wicket win.

Proteas skipper AB de Villiers had vowed his side would be seeking redemption after being beaten by 32 runs in the series opener on Friday.

His team backed those words with a superb bowling display as the home side were dismissed for just 154 in 41.4 overs on what appeared a good batting wicket.

South Africa overcame some anxious moments and reckless batting to edge to the victory target, reaching 157 for seven in just 27.4 overs.

Paceman Josh Hazlewood was one bright light for the Australians, with career-best figures of 5-31.

Towering paceman Morne Morkel led the way for South Africa with 5-21, his second five-wicket haul in one-day internationals and career-best figures in a man-of-the-match performance.

The South Africans made an impact with the ball from the outset, destroying the Australian top order to have the home side in deep trouble at 34-4.

It was Morkel who struck the first blow with David Warner caught down the leg side by wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock for a duck.

Warner was initially given not out, but replays showed clear contact with the glove and Llongoverturned the initial decision.

Stand-in skipper George Bailey and emerging all-rounder Mitchell Marsh raised Australian hopes briefly when they added 58 for the fifth wicket before Bailey was brilliantly caught by a diving du Plessis from the bowling of Vernon Philander (1-16) for 25.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**AUSTRALIA:** 154 all out in 41.4 overs (Bailey 25, Marsh 67, Wade 19; M Morkel 5-21, Steyn 3-35)

**SOUTH AFRICA:** 157 for 7 in 27.4 overs (Du Plessis 19, Rossouw 30, De Villiers 48, Miller 22 not out; Hazlewood 5-31)

**Result:** South Africa won by three wickets.

**Player-of-the-match:** Morne Morkel.

PREMIER DIVISION CHESS

# MSC, Navy in joint-lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champion Mohammedan and runners-up Bangladesh Navy shared the lead in the Walton Premier Division Chess League at the close of the fifth round at the Bangladesh Olympic Media room yesterday.

Mohammedan beat Bangladesh Navy Junior Chess Team by 3.5-0.5 points while Bangladesh Navy defeated Leonine Chess Club by 3-1 points in the day's matches. With four straight wins, both Mohammedan and Bangladesh Navy have eight points each to top the nine-team table.

GM Merab Gagunashvili, GM Ziaur Rahman and GM Niaz Murshed of Mohammedan beat Masum Hossain, CM Mahtabuddin Ahmed and Sharif Hossain of Navy Junior team while FM Mohammad Javed held Mohammedan's GM Mikheil Mchedlishvili to a draw.

GM Abdullah Al Rakib, GM Enamul Hossain and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed of Bangladesh Navy defeated Leonine's FM Mehdi Hasan, CM Sohul Chowdhury and CM Monir Hossain respectively while FM Nasir Ahmed lost to Uten of Leonine.

In the day's other matches, overnight joint leaders Titas Club lost to Pritam-Prism Chess Club and Sreejan Chess Club beat Fire-Service & Civil Defence Sports Club by 3-1 points.

ASIAN BEACH GAMES

# Basketball team in last 16

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's beach basketball team moved into the pre-quarterfinals of the 4th Asian Beach Games in Thailand yesterday.

Bangladesh team defeated Afghanistan by 13-10 points before beating Turkmenistan by 10-7 points to ensure their last-16 berth, where they will meet Oman today.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's volleyball and handball teams failed to follow the footsteps of the basketball team. Volleyball team suffered 0-2 sets (13-21, 19-21) defeat against Oman while handball team conceded 0-2 sets (14-17, 10-18) defeat against India to be eliminated from the group stages.

Wrestler Sheikh Shepon, competing in the -80kg freestyle category, beat Trazona Smael of Philippines by 2-0 points before losing by 0-2 points against Bayramow Didar of Turkmenistan and Amri Husnul of Indonesia to quit the competition.

# Comeback Roger way

AFP, London



Roger Federer will face Novak Djokovic in the final of the ATP Tour Finals after the world's top two both survived dramatic semifinals at London's O2 Arena on Saturday.

Federer the world number two, saved four match points before defeating Stan Wawrinka, 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (8/6), while world number one Djokovic emerged from his first serious test of the tournament with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-0 victory over Japan's Kei Nishikori.

Federer looked down and out when Wawrinka served for the match in the final set, but the six-time champion responded superbly and eventually booked his ninth appearance in the final of the season-ending event.

Djokovic had swept through the group stage in imperious style, but he was pushed harder by Nishikori, who became the first player to take a set off him since October,

before a strong finish secured the Serb's fourth appearance in the final.

Djokovic, who has lifted the Tour Finals trophy three times, remains on course to become the first man to win the event three years in a row since Ivan Lendl in the 1980s.

The 27-year-old has now won 31 successive indoor matches, including 14 at the Tour Finals.

"Kei was playing great and this has been the best season of his life but he made some crucial double faults in the third set," Djokovic said.

Federer held his nerve impressively despite an erratic performance in the best match of a tournament sorely lacking memorable encounters this year.

The 33-year-old has now saved 11 match points in three winning causes this year, with the others against Gael Monfils at the US Open and Leonardo Mayer at the Shanghai Masters.

The 124th final of Federer's illustrious career is a rematch of this year's Wimbledon final, which Djokovic won in five sets.

লক্ষীপুর শাখা

আর বি টাওয়ার, হোল্ডিং নং-১২৫

থানা রোড, লক্ষীপুর

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