

SPORT

'Underdogs' hold hosts

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh huffed and puffed to a 1-1 draw against supposed rank outsiders Bhutan in their second match of the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers yesterday as their hopes of a finals berth became bleak.

The hosts had to work their socks off in front of a thousand frustrated spectators at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and needed a last-ditch equaliser from skipper Mashuk Mia Johnny to salvage a point after conceding the lead in the sixth minute.

With four points from two matches, Bangladesh would need at least a draw tomorrow -- which would be some sort of a miracle given the performances so far -- against favourites Uzbekistan, who are sitting pretty at the top with six points and a positive goal difference of 10. Despite the draw, Bangladesh are in second position with four points.

Coach Saiful Bari Titu rued his charges' listless performance, especially in the first half, but gave full credit to the Bhutan players for turning up with a spirited display.

"This is my failure. My players failed to play their natural game in the face of pressing football from the opposition, which is remorseful. Our players played with whole-hearted effort in the second half, but the Bhutan players were technically better," conceded the coach in his post-match analysis.

Titu and his charges had sounded out their intentions of winning this match by a big margin, but they started the game like underdogs,

chasing the ball against pressing football of the opposition. Bangladesh's defence looked nervous and it didn't take long for the hosts to go a goal down.

Left-back Mohammad Emon, under pressure from the Bhutan forwards, conceded a corner in the sixth minute. Nima Wangdi's low attempt was tucked in on the second attempt by an unmarked Sonam Tobgay.

Bangladesh took time to gain a foothold in the game, and their first shot on goal, a weak attempt by Mannaf Rabbi, was cleared off the line by a Bhutanese defender in the 19th minute. Bishwanath Ghosh then made a last-ditch tackle to deny Bhutan from doubling their lead before speedy forward Sarwar Zaman Nipu replaced Saad Uddin on the half-hour mark. Bhutan goalkeeper Gyaltsen Zangpo kept his side's lead intact by blocking a powerful shot from Rohit Sarker before Ibrahim's toe-poke missed the crossbar by a whisker just before the half-time whistle.

Another effort from Rohit was kept out by the Bhutan goalkeeper, but the hosts largely found it hard to penetrate the five-man Bhutan defence, which had leaked in seven goals against Uzbekistan on Friday.

The persistent pressure paid off when Johnny headed home a perfectly-weighted free-kick from Ibrahim in the 78th minute, however, any hopes of a heroic late winner for the hosts did not materialise as the Bhutanese defence held firm.

UZBEKS AMBLE PAST SRI LANKA
In the first match of the day, Uzbekistan eased to a 3-0 victory against Sri Lanka. The Central Asian side romped to a 3-0 lead within the half-hour mark, but failed to further increase the lead, thanks to two goalline saves from the Sri Lanka defenders on either side of the break.



Bangladesh forward Rohit Sarker (C) hangs his head in dejection during their AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers fixture against Bhutan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

'It's not that easy!'

SPORTS REPORTER



By the looks of it, Mosaddek Hossain can score double hundreds at will. He has already reached the milestone thrice this year and has every chance of crossing that mark many more times in the on-going National Cricket League; at least that's what the statistics suggest.

In his last eight first-class matches, this 19-year-old has scored 1385 runs at an astounding average of 115.4. He has grinded centuries in his last four matches and yesterday's unbeaten 200 against Sylhet meant that the youngster had posted his eighth consecutive 50-plus score.

Only into his 12th first-class game, it wasn't always bright and shiny for the Barisal middle order batsman. His first-class debut was a nightmare as he started with a pair of ducks and had scored just 34 runs in the next three matches. However, the tides changed from his fifth game onwards. He scored a cautious 250 and ever since, the player has been on a high.



MOSADDEK HOSSAIN

"I don't think I am dreaming," laughed Mosaddek. "But yes, I have dreamed of performing like this and I am glad that it's coming true."

Speaking on the unbeaten 200 he scored yesterday, Mosaddek claimed that he was lucky to reach the mark. "When we were seven down, I had just scored 70 runs. It wouldn't have been possible for me to reach 200 if it wasn't for the tail. They batted brilliantly."

"I think you need a combination of things to be able to play long knocks. You need to practice at the nets for long periods of time... that's one thing I do. And you also need luck on your side; fortunately for me, I am going through a good phase at the moment," said the 19-year-old while speaking to The Daily Star yesterday.

Despite making a brilliant mark in the longer version of the game, Mosaddek prefers one-dayers and T20s to Test cricket.

"I enjoy the limited overs a lot more. I love to play strokes. But because I am in good form right now, I seem to be playing well in all formats," said Mosaddek.

So does this mean he has more double hundreds planned for this year? Mosaddek laughs off the question. "I don't know. It's not that easy! But yes, there is a sense of determination. I always want to play better than the previous game. Because I know that it takes just one bad performance to be criticised."

Khulna, Dhaka on track

SPORTS REPORTER



Top tier teams Khulna and Dhaka were in firm control at the end of the second day's play of the National Cricket League yesterday.

Guided by a measured 186 from Mohammad Mithun, Khulna posted a powerful 455 in their first innings against Dhaka Metro in Mirpur. After the exchange, a brilliant three-wicket burst from Mustafizur Rahman ripped Metro's top order and they reached stumps at 78 for 4.

Mithun, who had an overnight score of 87, made no fuss about reaching the three-figure mark as he was up and going in the morning session. The middle-order batsman wasn't satisfied with a mere century and gritted out through the next two sessions. He received ample support from

Bangladesh Under-19 skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz-- who scored 67 in a century stand. Mithun, who hit 24 fours, eventually got out at the stroke of tea.

Meanwhile, at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, a century from number seven Nadif Chowdhury helped Dhaka recover from 255 for 6 to post 449. It wasn't just Nadif's century, but also a fighting display from Dhaka's tailenders that further frustrated Rangpur. Saghir Hossain, Mosharraf Hossain and Mohammad Sharif, Dhaka's number eight, nine and ten had scores of 31, 36 and 30 respectively.

After scoring a fighting 36, Mosharraf came back to take three wickets as Rangpur finished the day on 98 for 3.

The highlight of Day Two though was 19-year-old Mosaddek Hossain, who scored an unbeaten 200 to take Barisal to 527 for 9 against Sylhet at the



MITHUN...186

The match at Rajshahi is set for a close finish with Chittagong gaining a 75-run first-innings lead over the hosts. A four-wicket haul from leg-spinner

SCORES IN BRIEF		
KHULNA V DHAKA METRO KHULNA: 455 all out in 112.1 overs (Mithun 186, Mehedi 67, Shahid 4-84, Sharifullah 2-76) DHAKA METRO: 78 for 4 (Marshall 27 not out, Asif 25 not out; Mustafizur 3-19, Al-Amin 1-14)	DHAKA V RANGPUR DHAKA: 449 all out in 139.3 overs (Nadif 111; Suhrwadi 3-120, Tanveer 2-31) RANGPUR: 98 for 3 (Liton 51; Mosharraf 3-33)	BARISAL V SYLHET BARISAL: 527 for 9 dec (Mosaddek 200 not out, Fazole 103; Abul 3-45, Enamul 3-110) SYLHET: 112 for no loss (Shanaj 58 not out, Imtiaz 51 not out)
CHITTAGONG V RAJSHAHI CHITTAGONG: 383 all out in 95.3 overs (Irfan 102, Yasir 91, Mominul 90, Saifuddin 74 not out; Shafiq 3-40, Muktar 3-75) RAJSHAHI: 308 all out in 71.4 overs (Junaid 81, Farhad 69; Jubair 4-104, Nabil 3-50)		

Siddikur finishes at seventh

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Golfer Siddikur Rahman grabbed his third top-ten finish of the season as he ended the Mercuries Taiwan Masters joint-seventh yesterday.

The two-time Asian Tour winner, who had earlier finished seventh in the Indian Open in February and third in the Queen's Cup in Thailand in June, ended this 650,000-dollar event at three-over-par (291), six shots behind eventual winner Malaysian Danny Chia.

Siddikur missed cuts in the six other Asian Tour events that he has taken part so far this season.

Starting the day at two-under-par (218) in ninth position, Siddikur traded two birdies for three bogeys for a one-over-par (73) in the challenging Taiwan Golf and Country Club on Sunday.

Overnight leader Liang Wen-Chong of China relinquished his place and finished two shots behind Chia at one-under-par (287) while Brazil's Adilson da Silva was a further two shots behind.

The 30-year-old golfer is expected to take part in the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship, beginning in Chinese Taipei on October 8.

Rumana runs close

Bangladesh women lost by 20 runs

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh women were close but not close enough to avoid yet another defeat against their Pakistani counterparts at the Southern Club in Karachi.

After losing the two-match T20I series, the visitors appeared more competitive in the first of their two one-day internationals against Pakistan yesterday. They bowled the home side out for 214 with one ball to spare and then created an opportunity to run down that target with Rumana Ahmed hitting a composed 70.

The 25-year-old Khulna cricketer led the late charge in company with Jahanara Alam (23), putting on 46 runs for the eighth wicket. With the visitors needing 25 runs from the last 12 deliveries, Rumana went for the final flourish but was caught off player-of-the-match Bismah Maroof. Her departure effectively dashed Bangladesh's hopes as the visitors

eventually finished on 194-9, conceding a 20-run defeat. Rumana's second ODI fifty in 17 appearances included fours boundaries. She was also involved in a 44-run fourth wicket stand with Farzana Haq (26) after almost a run-a-ball 24 by opener Shamima Sultana. But Bangladesh collapsed after that, losing four wickets for 40 runs. Captain Salma Khatun again flopped with the bat, scoring only three. However, Salma led the Bangladesh attack with the ball, claiming three wickets for 31 runs in 10 overs.

Veteran Pakistan player Maroof hit a fine 92, her eighth fifty in 72 games, in a competitive home side total. She struck eight fours in her 128-ball knock.

The second and final ODI will take place at the same venue on Tuesday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 214 all out in 49.5 overs (Maroof 92, Abidi 27; Salma 3-31)	BANGLADESH: 194 for 9 (Rumana 70, Farzana 26, Jahanara 23, Sultana 24; Amin 3-25)
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Result: Pakistan won by 20 runs



Bangladesh's women's cricket team has generally starved for runs at the highest level. However, Rumana Ahmed defied those odds yesterday by scoring a composed 70 and almost took Bangladesh over the line against Pakistan in the first ODI in Karachi. PHOTO: AFP FILE

Final Pak-Zim ODI today

CRICINFO, Harare

It scarcely seemed possible after their crushing defeat in the first ODI, but Zimbabwe will go into the third match today focused on what could be their first one-day series win over a top team for more than 14 years.

To do that, though, they'll have to fire on all cylinders against a Pakistan side who will feel that the momentum was on their side before the inclement weather tipped Saturday's second game in Zimbabwe's favour.

Zimbabwe remain perennial underdogs and though they wobbled noticeably in the face of Shoaib Malik's death-defying brilliance, they showed during the second ODI what they are capable of as a team when it all clicks. But on the flip side of that, there was also the omnishambles of the late afternoon where it all threatened to fall apart, and inconsistency of performance is still a problem for the hosts.

Pakistan, on the other hand, have been consistent in both their successes and failures during their trip to Southern Africa. In every match their top order has failed, their lower middle has rallied, and their bowlers have kept them in the game. Their defeat on Saturday means Pakistan have slipped to No. 9 in the ODI rankings - if they had been No. 9 three days ago, they would not have qualified for the

Manohar new BCCI chief

AFP, Mumbai



Shashank Manohar was unanimously elected president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Sunday, vowing to restore the governing body's image after a series of scandals.

The Nagpur-based lawyer succeeds veteran administrator Jagmohan Dalmiya, who died last month, in what is arguably the most powerful job in world cricket.

"Mr Shashank Manohar elected," the BCCI said in its official twitter account @BCCI after a special general body meeting at its headquarters in Mumbai.

Manohar, who had earlier served as BCCI president from 2008 and 2011 and was the lone candidate in the election, will remain at the helm for two years.

Dalmiya's death on September 20 had triggered a bitter succession battle within the faction-ridden BCCI, with former chief Sharad Pawar being a key contender for the post.

But Pawar, a veteran politician, backed out of the race after reportedly being opposed by the nation's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, paving the way for Manohar to emerge as a consensus candidate.

Manohar, who has a squeaky-clean image and a no-nonsense approach to cricket administration, will be charged with restoring the BCCI's image and credibility after a string of corruption scandals over the past few years.

The cash-rich BCCI, which generates huge revenues due to its vast television audiences, enjoys a pre-eminent position in world cricket and effectively runs the International Cricket Council (ICC) with its allies, Australia and England.

"The BCCI is a huge brand which has been created by the love of fans," Manohar, 58, told a news conference after his election.

"The confidence of the fans has been shaken in recent times by some unpleasant things that have taken place. The duty of the board is to rebuild its image on a priority basis." Manohar said he planned to appoint an independent ombudsman -- or an ethics officer -- to take up any dispute

India look to bounce back

PTI, Cuttack

Handed a defeat in the first Twenty20 International, a determined India will look to plug the loopholes in bowling and bounce back in a must-win second T20 of the three-match series against South Africa.

It's an unfamiliar situation for India to start a home series on a losing note, and the manner of the defeat in Dharamsala would put the hosts under tremendous pressure, especially the bowlers.

Back after a break of three months, the onus would be on limited overs skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni to bring the team out of the rut and ensure India get back to winning ways.

Unlike Dharamsala, the conditions are expected to be ideal for Dhoni's men here and the third T20 in Kolkata as the surface is likely to be low and slow in nature with rains and thundershowers in past few days.

The stadium was under a pool of water after rain and thundershowers in the afternoon when the team landed in State capital Bhubaneswar.

Going into Monday's match, there would be concern over the ground conditions. The Met department has also forecast a few spells of rain in the next 48 hours and possibility of a curtailed match cannot be ruled out.

