

# SPORT



They may be good friends and long-time national colleagues, but both Abahani skipper Tamim Iqbal (L) and Mohammedan captain Mushfiqur Rahim know that when the two take the field at Mirpur today to renew the age-old rivalry, no holds shall be barred.

## Losing its sheen, but still special

Abahani-Mohammedan rivalry to resume today

SPORTS REPORTER



"People say those days are gone but I always feel a different kind of excitement when it comes to an Abahani-Mohammedan match." For 20-year old Abahani batsman Mosaddek Hossain clashing with the traditional rivals is a special occasion because he believes that a performance in that battle is always regarded as a special one even today, when the rivalry has lost a lot of the ferocity that characterized it in the 80s and 90s.

"If you can score big in this match you will get a different feeling. People may not come in big numbers to watch an Abahani-Mohammedan match these days but still the battle is special," said Mosaddek, who was happy to be able to continue his stint with his beloved Dhanmondi-based club.

Abahani captain Tamim Iqbal also echoed his young teammate's sentiment: "The important aspect here is that we know that we are representing Abahani, and the players from Mohammedan know that they are representing Mohammedan. There is a history here. We have to keep that history in mind and the players know how important that is. I hope it will be a good contest tomorrow."

Before that, the national opener explained the reason behind the reduced amount of interest for the archrivals' contest. "Because of the draft system a player can't choose where he will play. For instance, if I play for a team for three to four years I'll definitely have a soft corner for them. I am sure that Akram chacha (Akram Khan), Nannu bhai (Minhajul Abedin), played for one team for nearly 10 years. So the kind of feeling that they would have had for their teams, maybe that feeling is

not present here."

Tamim however will not have to look at the past to be pumped up for today's match; the present situation with his side currently occupying sixth spot in the league and facing the table-toppers should be motivation enough.

Mohammedan captain Mushfiqur Rahim was not available to comment on today's match but coach Sohel Islam judged his opponents highly, although he issued a reminder that his side were in good touch.

"Abahani is definitely a good team. They have formed a good team this time. They have a balanced side. But we have a few advantages. We are also in good touch and we have a good composition. That is a reason to be hopeful of a good game," said Sohel.

Tamim however was well aware of the fact that the good words from the opposition tent would not be good enough for his side; instead they have to play better cricket to win the match.

"I think as a team we must play much better cricket. Although we won some of the matches we haven't been at our best. If we want to stay in the championship race we will have to play much better cricket than this. I believe that we aren't playing good cricket. Mohammedan is a very good cricket team. In order to win against them or even compete against them, we have to play much better cricket," said Tamim.

While Abahani will be looking to their strong batting line-up to click at the right time, the Mohammedan coach issued a warning that they have got the spin strength to stop their opponents.

"Mohammedan is a team that depends a lot on spin. I think our spinners are good. Naem Islam is there and so is Enamul [Haque] junior and Naem Islam junior. We believe that we can do well with our spin team. I believe we can stop

## DPL impresses foreign players

SPORTS REPORTER



With a mere two points separating league leaders Mohammedan and eighth-placed Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, it goes without saying that the ongoing Dhaka Premier League (DPL) this season has started on a very competitive note.

The feature this season has been the brilliant performances of the local players. There was a time when teams used to depend on foreign players to make it big in the league, but this season has witnessed both the national players and the youngsters do well.

The players, according to Tamim Iqbal, have no complaints with regards to the quality of the cricket being played this season.

"I think this league gets as close to international cricket as possible. There is no complaint with the quality. Even the foreign players have had to work hard here. They will tell you how good the quality of the league is. I think I can compare the league to any other domestic league in the world," Tamim told reporters following his practice session in Mirpur yesterday.

With each team allowed to field one foreign player per game, the clubs had to be very cautious in order to make their decision. And like Tamim said, many foreign players have been impressed by the standard of the league this season.

Sri Lankan left-arm spinner Chaturanga De Silva, who is playing for Victoria Sporting Club, hopes that his stint here can give him an opportunity to return to his national team. De Silva, who

took two five-wicket hauls in the last two games here, has played six ODIs for Sri Lanka so far.

"The competition here is very high. People in Sri Lanka know about this league and it's a good thing that I got to play here. I need some experience for my future and that's why I am here," said De Silva.

Zimbabwe skipper Hamilton Masakadza, who plays for Kalabgan Krira Chakra echoed De Silva's sentiments while speaking to a Bangladeshi cricket publication Cricfrenzy earlier.

"The structure of Bangladesh cricket is far better than it was before. Moreover, there is incredible competition going on in the domestic structure of Bangladesh Cricket regularly. As a result, there is the continuation of high productive talented cricketers here," said Masakadza.

PHOTO: STAR

## League promises excitement

SPORTS REPORTER



The participation of Abahani, Mohammedan SC, Usha KC, Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club and all the other established clubs helped produce a healthy and competitive Club Cup after 45 months. Now those clubs are all lining up for another battle in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League, which gets underway today at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

Joint champions Abahani, who regained the club cup title three days ago, will face promoted Railway in the opening match of the league.

Returning to top flight hockey after nearly four years, Mohammedan SC and Mariner Youngs formed strong squads yet they failed to make it to the final of the club cup where Abahani eventually prevailed by thrashing

Usha. Now the title race for the premier league, which is being held after a gap of two-and-a-half years, will likely be a battle between those four teams.

However, Sonali Bank and Bangladesh SC may cause some worries to the title contenders as those two clubs are also set to field foreign players like the giant ones.

"It is good news for all hockey lovers that the premier league will start tomorrow [Thursday] with the participation of all the clubs. We saw a wonderful competition in the club cup tournament which turned into a multi-player tournament due to the participation of foreign players from many countries; now we are expecting a competitive league," said Bangladesh Hockey Federation's general secretary Abdus Sadeque at a press conference yesterday.

However the eligibility of five foreign players for each side in a match has drawn disapproval from different

quarters and many believe Bangladesh hockey would go backwards due to this move. The BHF general secretary however said that they had nothing to do as the clubs took this decision.

"There is a shortage of hockey players and a lack of quality players which is why we could not overrule the decision of the league committee, but we are taking initiatives to increase the number of local players with different initiatives," said Sadeque.

League committee secretary Moinuzzaman Pila informed that the 12 participating clubs would initially play in round-robin league format and top six teams will advance to the super league stage to decide the title while the bottom team of the first-phase would be relegated.

He also informed that the umpires from Oman, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Bangladesh will conduct the league phase by phase.



BJMC players show victory signs after beating Ansar in a tense final of the Walton 9th National Women's Kabaddi Championship at the Outer Stadium Kabaddi Court yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Pollard, Buttler wallop RCB

STAR SPORT DESK

A flurry of boundaries from Kieron Pollard and Jos Buttler guided Mumbai Indians to a six-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bangalore - their sixth victory of the competition - at the Chinnaswami Stadium in Bangalore last night.

Pollard remained unbeaten on 35 (off 19 balls) while Buttler smashed 11-ball 29 as the visitors chased down 151 with six wickets in hand.

Earlier, Lokesh Rahul had struck a superb unbeaten half century to guide RCB to a late recovery. The Bangalore top order batsmen, except for Rahul (68 not out), failed to click but a late flurry of lusty blows from Rahul saw the home side reach fighting total.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE:** 151 for 4 in 20 overs (Rahul 68 not out, Sachin 25 not out; Pandya 1-15)

**MUMBAI INDIANS:** 153 for 4 in 18.4 overs (Rayudu 44, Pollard 35 not out; Aaron 2-37)  
**Result:** Mumbai Indians won by six wickets

## Charlotte calls time

AFP, London



Long-serving England women's captain Charlotte Edwards announced her retirement on Wednesday after a sparkling and pioneering 20-year career.

The 36-year-old led her country to glory in the Ashes, World Cup and ICC World Twenty20, winning a world-record 309 caps and scoring over 10,000 runs across the formats.

"Everyone who knows me -- and how much I love playing for England -- will appreciate what a difficult decision it has been for me to retire from international cricket," she said in a statement.

"It's a decision I've reached after much thought and detailed discussion with [England coach] Mark Robinson and [director of England women's cricket] Clare Connor about what is best for the team going forward.

"I have given 20 years to playing for England and I leave very proud of the standing in which the women's game is held and of my contribution as a player and captain."

Edwards led England on 220 occasions, with the highlights of her captaincy including three Ashes triumphs against Australia -- in 2008, 2013 and 2014 -- and a World Cup/World Twenty20 double in 2009.

In 2008, she was named the International Cricket Council's Women's Player of the Year and in 2014 was selected as a Wisden Cricketer of the Year.

She will continue to play domestic cricket as captain of Kent and the Southern Vipers, in this year's inaugural Super League.

The ECB is expected to name a successor to Edwards as captain in due course.



## Clarke to play HK T20

AFP, Hong Kong

Former Australia captain Michael Clarke will headline Hong Kong's Twenty20 Blitz this month as he pursues a comeback in cricket's shortest form.

Clarke, affectionately known as Pup, will star at the four-team tournament from May 28-29 in a rare appearance since his retirement.

"While I have never been to Hong Kong before, I have heard so much about what a great place it is for sport," he said in a statement from organisers on Wednesday.

"I can't wait to meet my teammates and experience the city, while also hopefully contributing to cricket in Hong Kong which I know has been coming on leaps and bounds in recent years."

Injury-plagued Clarke, 35, retired last August.

Clarke returned to action in a Sydney club game in February, and he has also held talks with the Sydney Sixers about playing in Australia's Twenty20 Big Bash League.

Organisers said they were delighted to welcome Clarke to the T20 Blitz.

## Toni Cozier no more

ESPNCRICINFO

Tony Cozier, the West Indian cricket writer, commentator and journalist, has died in his home country, Barbados, at the age of 75 after an illness. He had been admitted to hospital on May 3 for tests related to infections in the neck and legs.

Cozier began writing on cricket as a teenager in 1958 and, despite never having played the game, he became one of its most distinguished voices. His last column on these pages was published on May 1.

"Deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Tony Cozier today," the ICC said on Twitter. "One of the truly great voices of cricket. A huge loss for the cricket community."

Cozier, whose father Jimmy was also a cricket writer, began his commentary career during Australia's tour of West Indies in 1965. Over five decades, Cozier grew into an accomplished media professional across mediums all over the world. He worked in radio and television, wrote books, and was published in newspapers, magazines and on the internet.

He edited the West Indies Cricket

Annual between 1970 and 1991, and in 1978 wrote the acclaimed book, The West Indies: 50 Years of Test Cricket. In 2011, the MCC awarded Cozier life membership for his services to the game.

It was estimated that Cozier was among the most prolific watchers of Test cricket anywhere. Wisden in 2003 reported that he had watched 266 Tests in his 40-odd years of covering the game up to that point.

Sambit Bal, ESPNcricinfo's editor-in-chief, said Cozier was one of the most credible voices in West Indies cricket. "To say Tony loved cricket would be somewhat shallow; cricket was his life, and it was a life of great distinction. He cared for the game deeply and absolutely,

and his heart bled for West Indian cricket, which he served as a broadcaster, writer and conscience-keeper for five decades. His was the most credible voice from the region and, in the last decade-and-a-half, an anguished one. He gave the game as much as he got from it and it can safely be said that he will be impossible to replace, on ESPNcricinfo and elsewhere."



## BJMC retain women's kabaddi title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) won the Walton 9th National Women's Kabaddi Championship with a never-wracking 13-12 win over Ansar in the final to retain their title at the Outer Stadium Kabaddi Court yesterday.

Ansar were studded with national players mostly, but BJMC put up a great fight and edged the first half before finishing on top at the end of the final.

Jamalpur thrashed Rajshahi 23-14 in the third-place deciding match of the championship, which was held after a gap of three years.

A total of 12 teams took part in the championship.

Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation president and inspector general of police AKM Shahidul Haque witnessed the final and distributed prizes among other officials of the federation and the sponsors company were present.