



(Anti-clockwise from L) Mossadek Hossain took Abahani to a win in style with a last-over blitz against Prime Doleshwar SC at the BKSP yesterday, dispatching the penultimate ball for six and following up with a four. However, there was plenty of controversy just before that as an apparent run-out against his batting partner Taskin Ahmed was waived off by the leg umpire even though it appeared that his bat was not grounded when the bails were taken off. Meanwhile Shakib Al Hasan made an imperious return to the league with a fine all-round performance, smashing 45 and picking up a wicket.

PHOTOS: FROZ AHMED

Abahani survive intense finish

NAIMUL KARIM

Prior to yesterday, Abahani skipper Tamim Iqbal had repeatedly spoken about the importance of Shakib Al Hasan and how crucial his return to the Dhaka Premier League would be for the side. As Tamim and a number of others expected, Shakib put in a commendable all-round performance to lead Abahani to a crucial three-wicket win over Prime Doleshwar at the BKSP yesterday. Shakib scalped a wicket followed by a cautious 45 with the bat before young Mosaddek Hossain sealed the intense chase with a game-changing half-century.

Chasing 192 in a match that was reduced to 28 overs-a-side due to the morning showers, Abahani required eleven runs off the last over with four wickets in hand. That equation came down to ten runs off the last three balls, courtesy of some defiant bowling from Forhad Reza. However, Mosaddek managed to steal a double off the fourth ball, smacked a gut-wrenching six off the fifth and followed up with a brilliant boundary through covers off the last ball to take Abahani home. He ended up scoring 57 off 35 balls. The brilliant chase though was marred by a run-out controversy in the last over. In the fourth ball of the last over, Mosaddek drove Forhad to the cover fielder. It ideally should have been just a single, however

Mosaddek was keen on a second. His partner, Taskin Ahmed, was a little late to react. Forhad received the ball and dived to take off the bails. It seemed as though Taskin was well short of the crease and the Doleshwar players even started celebrating. However, much to their surprise, leg umpire Rezwan Parvez decided not to give it out. Since domestic matches are not officially recorded, umpires are forced to take decisions like these on the ground. Recordings and photographs captured by the media though suggested that the umpire's decision was questionable as the batsman's bat was seemingly in the air when the bails were dislodged. The issue though can't take anything away from the manner in

which Mosaddek batted. He arrived at the crease after Shakib's departure, with Abahani struggling at 119 for 4 and needing 73 runs off 54 balls. While trying to build a partnership, he then lost Rajat Bhatia. Mosaddek was stuck with the tail and required 46 off 30 balls. However, he didn't back out. He began the charge by hitting Nasir Hossain for a six down the ground off the last ball off the 24th over. Two overs later he sweetly timed Al-Amin Hossain for two consecutive fours and then finished it off brilliantly in the last over. Earlier, a brilliant 72 from Nasir Hossain and some poor fielding from Abahani -- which saw them drop four catches -- led Doleshwar to 191 in 28 overs. Doleshwar were struggling at 58 for 4 after 11 overs,

but Nasir's calm half-century, along with Sanjamul Islam's 40, turned the tide in their favour. As a result of the win, Abahani moved to fourth spot with ten points and greatly increased their chances of making it to the Super League. Doleshwar remain second with 12 points. The day's other games were pushed to the reserve day due to the incessant rainfall. The game between Cricket Coaching School and Mohammedan at Fatullah was reduced to 25 overs. Salman Hossain scored a half-century to lead CCS to 149. Mohammedan will have to chase that total today. At Mirpur, Kalabagan Cricket Academy were bundled out for 89 runs in a 21-over game. Prime Bank Cricket Club will have to chase the target today.

Helmet tactic pays dividends

SPORTS REPORTER

The match had hogged the limelight for many reasons; especially the change of venues made many curious about what would happen at BKSP. Despite rain threatening to spoil the party yesterday, a 28-over-a-side affair finally took place and there was no shortage of excitement in the curtailed-over battle between Abahani and Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club. Prime Doleshwar's Nasir Hossain's 72-run knock, Shakib Al Hasan's immediate impact in Abahani's victory and Tamim Iqbal's aggression on the field provided enough entertainment apart from a controversial decision to refuse a run-out appeal. However, in the end it was young Mosaddek Hossain who became the hero with an unbeaten 35-ball 57 and the batsman gave an interesting explanation about why he had taken off his helmet during the last over against pacer Forhad Reza, in which he went on to hit a four and six off the last two deliveries. "I tried to apply a tactic and ultimately I was successful. My intention was to encourage the bowler [Forhad Reza] to bowl short balls. Reza bhai might have thought of bowling yorkers and at that time it would be difficult to hit them. That's why I pulled off my helmet, thinking that might encourage him to bowl bouncers," said Mosaddek. Abahani skipper Tamim was full of praise for Mosaddek. "Rather than an early rush, he dug in deep and finished the match brilliantly. I think he showed lot of maturity," said Tamim, who rued his team's below-par fielding performance, but was a relieved man after victory in the crucial match.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME DOLESHWAR V ABAHAN PRIME DOLESHWAR SC: 191 for 7 in 28 overs (Raquibul 25, Nasir 72, Sunzamul 40; Taskin 2-53, Shakib 1-31, Saqlain 1-16, Mossadek 1-12)	ABAHANI: 194 for 7 in 28 overs (Tamim 10, Shanto 39, Shakib 45, Mossadek 57 not out; Al Amin 2-36, Forhad 2-45)	Result: Abahani won by 3 wkts.	KALABAGAN CAV PRIME BANK CC KALABAGAN CA: 89 all out in 21 overs (Mehedi 19, Sukkur 12, Taposh 12; Jayasuria 1-12, Azim 3-23, Monir 3-12) v PRIME BANK CC	CCSV MOHAMMEDAN CRICKET COACHING SCHOOL: 149 all out in 24.5 overs (Salman 58, Amit 24, Uttam 23 not out; Habibur 2-23, Ariful 3-29)	MOHAMMEDAN SC: 13 for 0 (Ezaz 12 not out, Naeem 1 not out; Nasum 6-0, Saleh 0-7)
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RCB, SRH eye maiden title

AFP, Bangalore

Virat Kohli will be eyeing a fairytale end to a record-breaking season on Sunday when he leads the Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League final against Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M Chinnswamy Stadium in Bangalore.

Kohli has been in the form of his life since the recent World Twenty20, a tournament where the 27-year-old was named player-of-the-tournament after scoring 273 runs across five matches at an average of 136.50, and he has again been in a class of his own in this edition of the IPL.

Kohli has shattered the previous best aggregate in a season by scoring 919 runs, including four centuries and six fifties. Rated as the number one T20 batsman in the world, he has also gained kudos for his captaincy during Bangalore's rollercoaster ride to the final.

After a disappointing start to the tournament left them bottom of the table at one stage, Kohli inspired them to a second placed finish.

He had a rare failure in Wednesday's final four eliminator when he was bowled for a duck but South African AB de Villiers stepped up to the plate with an unbeaten 79 which took Bangalore over the line.

Hyderabad skipper David Warner has had his own fair share of controversy over the years but he has let his batting do the talking this year. Warner's scintillating innings of 93 not out in Delhi on Friday night ensured his team's qualification for the final which is being played in Bangalore.

The Australian's 58-ball blitz against Gujarat Lions was his eighth fifty, putting him second in the scoring chart behind Kohli with 779 runs.

"The final is about not worrying about their players and executing our plans," Warner said after the match.

Hyderabad's seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar is the leading wicket-taker with 23 scalps and he has received crucial support from his young Bangladeshi partner Mustafizur Rahman who has taken 16 wickets.

After previous editions had been marred by fixing and corruption, this year's tournament has managed to avoid any major scandal.

However the venue of the final had to be switched to Bangalore after judges banned Mumbai from hosting matches at a time when the state of Maharashtra has suffered a drought.

Neither of the finalists have ever won the tournament which is now in its ninth year.

'Forget 5-0, only remember 1-1'

De Kruif urges booters ahead of Tajikistan fixtures

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football team's head coach Lodewijk de Kruif wants his charges to forget the 5-0 drubbing at the hands of Tajikistan in a World Cup qualifier last year, instead the Dutchman wants them to remember the 1-1 draw against the same opposition in the home fixture earlier that year. The Bangladesh team will leave for Dushanbe today to face

Dushanbe. Coming here just ten days ago, and with the training camp running for 17 days, the coach feels positive about escaping another drubbing in Dushanbe.

"People may have 5-0 in their mind, but in my mind, I only have the 1-1 draw. And that is what I want to put in their [players'] heads as well," said the 46-year-old coach during the pre-departure press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation [BFF] House yesterday, where the final 23-

member squad was also revealed. Out of these 23, only 12 players were part of the squad in that 1-1 draw last year.

The coach left out defenders Yeamin Ahmed Munna, Shakil Ahmed Jr and striker Aminur Rahman Sajib from the list, finalised after the practice match on Friday where the national team were held to a goalless draw against Sheikh Russel KC. The only new face in the list is the young BKSP striker Syed Rashed Turzo, who has been dubbed as having a 'great promise and possessing good work ethic' by the coach.

The coach, however, admitted that the players were fatigued in 'body and mind' as they hardly got time to recover from heavy training of the last 18 days, which came right after the end of the Independence Cup.

Midfielder Mamunul Islam, who had missed the last World Cup qualifier against Jordan due to suspension, said he was happy to return to the squad.

"I am thankful to the National Teams' Committee for re-instating me into the squad after I sought forgiveness. Now I would try to repay the faith. Even though I was out of action for some time, I have managed to shed weight and gain speed in this training camp and I feel I am 100 per cent fit now," said the midfielder, who has been handed the skipper's armband once again.

The press conference was also attended, among others, by assistant coach Saiful Bari Titu, team manager Satyajit Das Rupu, National Teams Committee chairman and BFF vice-president Kazi Nabil Ahmed, BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, and representatives of Lotto, the kit sponsors of the team for the two matches.

The Bangladesh team will leave for Dushanbe this morning. The away fixture will take place at the Republican Central Stadium in Dushanbe at 8:00pm (BST) on June 2 while the home fixture will be held in Dhaka on June 7.



National football team's skipper Mamunul Islam (L) speaks as coach Lodewijk de Kruif (R) and BFF vice-president Kazi Nabil Ahmed listen intently during a press conference at the BFF House yesterday. The team will leave for Tajikistan this morning. PHOTO: COLLECTED

SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Ashraful Islam Rana, Shahidul Alam Sohel, Rasel Mahmud Liton.
DEFENDERS: Raihan Hasan, Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, Tapu Barman, Nasirul Islam, Mamon Mia, Ariful Islam, Rezaul Karim, Wali Faisal.
MIDFIELDERS: Mamunul Islam (C), Faisal Mahmud, Jamal Bhuiyan, Monaem Khan Raju, Shahedul Alam Sr, Masuk Miah Jony, Emon Mahmud, Sohel Rana.
FORWARDS: Jewel Rana, Rubel Miah, Nabib Newaz Jibon, Syed Rashed Turzo.

Sri Lanka in dire straits

REUTERS, Chester-le-Street

Potent England pace bowling after an unbeaten 155 from Moeen Ali put Alastair Cook's side in complete control on a one-sided second day of the second test against Sri Lanka in Durham yesterday.

The tourists faced almost an certain follow-on after they slumped to 91 for eight at the close, still 407 behind England who had posted an imposing 498 for nine declared.

Sri Lanka's batsmen had no answer to an attack which moved the ball off the seam to provide a conveyor-belt of catches for keeper Jonny Bairstow, who took four, and England's close fielders.

Chris Woakes, who recently took nine wickets in an innings for Warwickshire, led the way in helpful conditions with a particularly unsettling spell to take 3-9, including the wickets of Kusal Mendis and Milinda Siriwardana in one over. Stuart Broad also took three wickets, two coming late on as Sri Lanka's resistance broke.

England's bowlers could not have had a better platform to launch their attack than Moeen's 207-ball innings, which was his best in tests and his second century against Sri Lanka. At times watchful and then belligerent, Moeen became only the fifth England number seven to reach three figures in tests after being promoted one place in the order to cover for the injured Ben Stokes.

The Worcestershire all-rounder moved on from his overnight 28 and made the most of the three lives the tourists gave him yesterday.

Support came from Woakes, who shared a stand of 92, and Steven Finn, who scored just 10 of their ninth-wicket stand of 72.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 498 for 9 decl (Hales 83, Root 80, Vince 35, Bairstow 48, Moeen 155 not out, Woakes 39; Lakmal 2-115, Pradeep 4-107, Siriwardana 2-35)
SRI LANKA: First innings 91 for 8 (Mendis 35; Woakes 3-9, Broad 3-35, Anderson 2-31)



DAVID WARNER VIRAT KOHLI