

SPORT



Young Bangladesh pacers Mustafizur Rahman (L) and Taskin Ahmed share a light moment at the National Cricket Academy yesterday. Had Mustafizur been fit, he would have been pitted against Taskin in the Mohammedan-Abahani Super League match at the BKSP today.

PHOTO: STAR

ABAHANI-DOLESHWAR MATCH Decision likely in next BCB meeting

SPORTS REPORTER



The fate of last Sunday's Super League fixture between Abahani and Prime Doleshwar, which was postponed as the umpires had reportedly 'fallen sick' in the middle of the game, is likely to be decided by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) within this week.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM), the organisers of the league, forwarded the match referee's report to the BCB's disciplinary committee yesterday. According to the BCB's CEO, Nizamuddin Chowdhury, a decision regarding the match will be taken based on the recommendations provided by the disciplinary committee ahead of Sunday's board meeting.

"Our board meeting is scheduled to take place on Sunday. I am positive that the disciplinary committee will be able to provide us with a recommendation ahead of the board meeting. A decision may be taken during the board meeting," Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, the member-secretary of the BCB's umpire committee, Sailab Hossain Tutul has said that they will assess the incident with an internal fact-finding committee. "Our main aim is to find out why the umpires left the field and what the exact situation was. In my 40 years of cricketing experience, I have never seen two umpires leave the field at the same time," said Tutul.

The game between Abahani and Prime Doleshwar was stopped midway on Sunday with the umpires deciding to leave the field. In the 17th over of the second innings a stumping decision went against Abahani. The decision angered Abahani skipper Tamim Iqbal, who then got into a highly animated discussion with the umpires. The skipper seemed extremely angry.

Following that episode the game continued for eight more balls, after which the umpires decided to leave the field. The match referee told reporters that both the umpires had fallen sick and that they would not be able to officiate. Many expected the game to continue on the reserve day on Monday with different umpires. However, there was no action on the reserve day.

Usha back on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha KC regained the lead in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a 5-2 win over Sonali Bank at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Pakistani recruit Aleem Belal struck three goals from penalty corners while Hasan Jubair Niloy and Pushkor Khisa Mimo scored one goal each to take Usha to 28 points from 10 matches, two ahead of Abahani.

Rabbi Salehin and Ishan Ullah Khan reduced the margin for Sonali Bank, who have 10 points from nine matches.

In the day's other match, Dhaka Wanderers Club and Bangladesh SC shared the honours with a 2-2 draw to keep their hopes alive of moving into the Super Six stage with 15 and 14 points respectively from nine matches each.

India eye whitewash

PTI, Harare

The series already pocketed, India would look to hand Zimbabwe a third successive whitewash while testing more youngsters when they take on the lacklustre hosts in the third and final one-day international on Wednesday.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni gave enough hints on changes in the playing eleven after two easy wins against the hosts, who have proved no match even for a second string Indian team.

Lee Tucks Abahani through; MSC out

SPORTS REPORTER



Lee Andrew Tuck scored the quickest goal of the Walton Federation Cup to put Abahani into the quarterfinals after a single-goal win over Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The English forward scored after just 45 seconds which proved decisive in the do-or-die affair of Group A as the Sky Blues set up a quarterfinal clash against Group C champions. The Group C champions will be decided between Sheikh Jamal DC and Brothers Union.

Abahani came into the match with their backs to the wall following a 0-1 defeat to Arambagh and they had no alternative but to beat Feni Soccer, who were looking for a draw to secure a place in the last eight.

Abahani's Austrian coach George Kotton backtracked from the plan of fielding three foreign forwards and strengthened the defence by drafting in long-serving Samad Yussif to the starting eleven. The move proved vital as the Sky Blues efficiently kept the opposition forwards at bay.

"There was an instruction to the players to press hard in the first 15 minutes to score as many goals as they could, but they looked relaxed once they took the lead. I am not satisfied with the way the players played throughout the game," Kotton said after the match.

Abahani got off to a fine start as Sunday Chizoba played through Lee on the left flank and the Englishman darted into the box to finish off the move with a curling left-footed effort.

Sunday then squandered a gilt-edged chance by hitting wide of the target in the 18th minute while defender Tapu Barman saw his close-range header gathered comfortably by Feni Soccer goalkeeper Sujjan Chowdhury.

Abahani upped the ante in the second half and created three good chances but Sujjan easily thwarted the efforts from Nabib Newaz Jibon and Tuck while Faisal Mahmud's goal-bound shot was blocked by Uche Felix.

Feni Soccer were reduced to ten men on the hour-mark after defender Ifekharul Alam Shakil's dismissal and they also had a penalty appeal turned down by referee Jashimuddin in the 77th minute.

Meanwhile, there was a big upset later in the day as Team BJMC sent Mohammedan SC packing from the group stages with a 2-1 win, thanks to a brace from Mehdi Hasan Tapu, who scored a goal either side of Ahsanul Haq Milon's strike for Mohammedan.

The win saw Team BJMC through to the quarterfinals as Group D champions, with Rahmatganj MFS following them as runners-up.

Tapu broke the deadlock with a volley in the 33rd minute before a 45-yard stunner from Milon in the 66th minute got things back on level terms. But Tapu scored again eight minutes from time to ensure the elimination of the Black and Whites.

FENI SOCCER	- 0
ABAHANI	- 1
MOHAMMEDAN	- 1

DPL giants set to face off

SPORTS REPORTER



The Dhaka Premier League's Super League round is set for two exciting encounters today. At the BKSP in Savar, Mushfiqur Rahim's Mohammedan will take on Tamim Iqbal's Abahani while league leaders Victoria Sporting Club will take on second-placed Legends of Rugganj, with just a point separating the two, at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah.

The match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, when compared to the other two games, is expected to be a little less intense with Nasir Hossain's Prime Doleshwar taking on Sabbir Rahman's Prime Bank. It's a game that Prime Doleshwar are expected to win, going by the recent form of the sides.

Although the face-off between the traditional heavyweights Abahani and Mohammedan always garners plenty of attention, the match between Victoria and Rugganj will be a lot more crucial as far as the championship is concerned.

The last time these two teams met, Rugganj's Tajjul Islam hit a six off the last delivery to dramatically tie the game. Ever since then, both sides have shown a balanced approach and it is therefore not a surprise that these two sides are leading the table at the moment.

Victoria seem to be the favourites to win the game. Their batsmen Abdul Majed and Al-Amin have both been in divine touch. With 610 runs, Majed is currently the highest run-getter of the competition. And then there is the young Al-Amin, who has 530 runs but has a better batting average, 53.

Al-Amin is quite a handful with the ball as well. His off-breaks

earned him a five-wicket haul in the crucial game against Gazi Group Cricketers on June 9.

And then there are the likes of Chaturanga de Silva, the highest wicket-taker of the competition, Mominul Haque and Nadif Chowdhury who provide further stability to the team.

Rather than depending on individual players, Rugganj have played as a unit throughout the competition and that is the reason they have done well despite the fact that their top batsman, Soumya Sarkar, has not fired as yet.

Their bowling front is led by Alauddin Babu, Abu Hider and Mosharraf Hossain. While both Alauddin and Abu have 13 wickets each, Mosharraf has 12. On the batting side, their hopes lie on Mohammad Mithun. They have not been doing too well with the bat, which is why they will need Soumya to hit form. He looked

good in the last game when he scored a 40 against Prime Bank, but he needs to continue scoring in order to regain confidence.

The last time Abahani and Mohammedan met, the latter, against the odds, beat a strong Abahani outfit. This time though, the scenario is the opposite. Abahani aced their last few games and seem to be doing well. Mohammedan on the other hand have not been able to find their rhythm. They were bundled out for just 128 in the last game against Rugganj.

Prime Doleshwar will hope they can beat Prime Bank in Dhaka and put the BKSP blues behind them. Doleshwar were on the ascendency when the umpires decided to get off the field during their last game against Abahani. Nobody knows when that game will resume and it could lead to tense scenarios. And the best way to overcome that is to win.



Lee Andrew Tuck (L) celebrates with his Abahani teammates after scoring only 45 seconds into their Walton Federation Cup match against Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Samuels helps Windies to clinical win

AFP, Saint Kitts and Nevis

Marlon Samuels produced his best batting effort in One-Day Internationals against Australia to lead the West Indies to a six-wicket victory in the fifth match of the Tri-Nation series at Warner Park in St Kitts on Monday.

Set a challenging target after Usman Khawaja's 98 and supporting half-centuries from skipper Steve Smith (74) and George Bailey (55) lifted the visitors to 265 for seven batting first, the enigmatic Samuels stroked 92 to ensure that the target was reached with 20 deliveries to spare.

"It's all about delivering for the team and keeping us in contention in the competition," player-of-the-match Samuels said.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 265 for 7 in 50 overs (Khawaja 98, Smith 74, Bailey 55; Holder 2-44, Brathwaite 2-60, Pollard 2-32)

WEST INDIES: 266 for 6 in 45.4 overs (Charles 48, Fletcher 27, Bravo 39, Samuels 92, Ramdin 29; Coulter-Nile 2-67, Zampa 2-60)

Result: West Indies won by 4 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Marlon Samuels.

'England ready for Pakistan'

REUTERS, London

England Test skipper Alastair Cook believes his batsmen are well-prepared to deal with Pakistan's fiery attack next month after getting plenty of practice in the middle against a weakened Sri Lanka side.

England crushed Sri Lanka 2-0 in the three-Test home series that concluded on Monday, facing little resistance from a team shorn of frontline pacemen Dushantha Chameera and Dhammika Prasad through injury at different stages during the tour.

However, Cook's side can expect a

far bigger challenge from a formidable Pakistani pace attack spearheaded by left-armers Mohammad Amir and Wahab Riaz, supplemented by tricky leg-spinner Yasir Shah.

"They've got a very good pace attack, backed up with spinners," Cook said after the rain-hit final Test against Sri Lanka ended in a tame draw at Lord's.

"But we're ready for them. We scored a lot of runs against Australia's attack here last year. I think it's going to be a brilliant series."

Amir will be returning to Test cricket after serving a five-year ban following a spot-fixing scandal in England, while the four-Test series will be Shah's first

since he served a three-month suspension for a doping violation.

Cook will also be delighted to have finally found a stable opening partner in Alex Hales, who finished the series against Sri Lanka as the second highest scorer on 292 runs from five innings.

His performance marked a significant improvement by the 27-year-old Hales, who averaged just 17 in his debut Test series in South Africa earlier this year as he struggled to make the transition from limited-overs cricket.

"Three scores of 80 and above from Alex Hales was really pleasing," Cook said of his eighth opening partner since Andrew Strauss retired in 2012.

India still keen on D/N Test

REUTERS, New Delhi



Plans to host a first day-night Test in India later this year remain intact, the country's cricket board (BCCI) secretary said on Tuesday, dismissing a local media report that prospective opponents New Zealand had rejected the idea.

In April, the BCCI decided that one match of a three-Test series against New Zealand would be a day-night affair, pending trials of the pink-ball in a domestic tournament, with Kolkata's Eden Gardens a popular choice for the contest.

A local media report claimed New Zealand Cricket (NZC) were wary of the dew

factor and ground conditions in India during the series scheduled to start in September and had conveyed their reluctance to BCCI officials.

BCCI secretary Ajay Shirke, in a text message to Reuters, said the plan remained very much on.

An NZC spokesman confirmed New Zealand, who played the first pink-ball Test against Australia in November, were committed to a day-night Test in India.

"NZC has taken the precaution of contacting the BCCI to advise statements in the article regarding a day-night Test are in no way representative of our position, and that no such comments have been made by our Board," the spokesperson told www.stuff.co.nz.