

SPORT



TRIVIA
Abahani batsmen Anamul Haque and Nazmul Hossain's 236-run opening stand is the highest opening partnership in Bangladesh List A cricket, surpassing the 214-run stand between Mehedi Maruf and Rony Talukdar in the 2014-15 season.
It is also the second-highest stand for any wicket in Bangladesh List A cricket, behind Mominul Haque and Roshen Silva's 276-run fourth-wicket stand for Prime Doleshwar against Abahani.



Jamal, Rugganj keep fight alive

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Legends of Rugganj kept their hopes alive in the title race, registering wins in their Super League encounters over Gazi Group Cricketers and Khelghar Samaj Kallyan Samity respectively. Sheikh Jamal won their match by eight runs in the Duckworth-Lewis method and Rugganj prevailed by 12 runs.

Both teams now have 18 points, two behind table-toppers Abahani, setting up the Dhaka Premier League's second and final phase for a close finish with two more games remaining in the Super League.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur, Gazi managed 217 for seven after 47 overs in chase of a 249-run target when rain stopped play. The D/L par score for the batting side was 226 runs.

Asif Ahmed was unbeaten on 52 off 82 balls while Jaker Ali top-scored with 61 off 78 balls for Gazi.

Chasing the modest target, Gazi however kept losing wickets at regular intervals and were struggling on 84 for four inside 20 overs before Asif and Jaker added 87 runs for the fifth wicket.

Young under-19 right-arm medium pacer Robiul Haque was the pick of the bowlers and bagged three wickets for 27 runs from his seven overs.

Earlier, Sheikh Jamal were all out for 248 in 47.4 overs after being asked to bat. Ziaur Rahman struck some lusty blows at the end and top-scored with 86 off 74 balls with the help of five sixes and six fours, while Shykat Ali and Tanbir Hander also struck fifties.

Left-arm seamer Abu Hider, who picked up three wickets in the 48th over to bundle out the batting side, ended up with figures of four for 57 from his 8.4 overs.

At the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali stadium in Fatullah, Khelghar -- the surprise package of this season -- were unable to chase down a small target of 217 as they were bundled out for 204 in 48.5 overs.

Asked to bat first, Rugganj were in all sorts of trouble on 126 for seven inside 34 overs before number-eight batsman Nazmul Hossain smashed a brilliant, unbeaten 66-ball 63 with two sixes and three fours. Along with Asif Hasan, Nazmul added 50 runs for the eighth wicket and, after the former's dismissal, helped Rugganj past the 200 mark.

In reply, apart from opener Mahidul Islam's 77, none of the Khelghar batsmen were able to score significantly, with skipper Nazimuddin's 45 being the second-highest score.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SHEIKH JAMAL V GAZI GROUP Sheikh Jamal DC: 248 all out in 47.4 overs (Shykat 51, Tanbir 50, Ziaur 86; Hider 4-57, Mominul 2-37, Raza 2-57) Gazi Group Cricketers: 217 for 7 in 47 overs (Jahurul 29, Imrul 36, Jaker 61, Asif 52 not out; Robiul 3-27) Result: Sheikh Jamal DC won by 8 runs (D/L method)	LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ V KHELGHAR Legends of Rugganj: 216 for 8 in 50 overs (Naeem 33, Mosharraf 26, Nazmul 63 not out, Asif 20; Tanvir 3-44, Saddam 4-39) Khelghar SKS: 204 all out in 48.5 overs (Mahidul 77, Nazimuddin 45, Masum 27; Asif 2-36, Rasool 2-39, Mosharraf 2-41, Rasel 2-43) Result: Legends of Rugganj won by 12 runs.
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Abahani opener Nazmul Hossain (L) and Anamul Haque (R) hit centuries and were in murderous mood during a 236-run opening partnership in their Super League match against Prime Doleshwar at the BKSP in Savar yesterday. PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

Raining records at BKSP 'No clue about the milestones'

SPORTS REPORTER

At the end of a game that saw four centuries shared equally by batsmen of either team, Bangladesh's highest ever List A total of 393 for four and the country's highest List A opening partnership between Anamul Haque and Nazmul Hossain, table-toppers Abahani clinched a 20-run win in the Duckworth-Lewis method against Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club in a rain-affected Super League encounter at the BKSP yesterday.

Interestingly, Doleshwar were 30 runs ahead in the D/L par score, chasing a mammoth 394 to win when rain first stopped play. The batting side were 217 for two in 30 overs after a brilliant partnership between Marshall Ayub and Fazle Mahmud for the third wicket.

There was confusion when the on-field umpires decided to restart the game at 5.28 pm as Doleshwar were arguing that the light was insufficient. The by-laws allow for a 30-minute extension on the umpires' discretion after the official cut-off time of 5.15 pm.

Doleshwar were given the revised target of 278 runs from 35 overs but despite both Marshall and Fazle reaching their centuries,



Prime Doleshwar skipper Forhad Reza remonstrates with the umpires when asked to resume play after a rain-enforced break while chasing Abahani's 393 in Savar yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

TOP 5 TOTALS IN BD LIST A CRICKET

Team	Score	Opp	Date
Abahani	393/4	Prime Doleshwar	Mar 2018
Abahani	371/5	Mohammedan	Jun 2016
Abahani	366/5	Mohammedan	May 2017
Legends of Rugganj	357/6	Old DOHS	Nov 2014
Prime Bank	353/3	Kalabagan	Oct 2014

SCORES IN BRIEF

Abahani: 393 for 4 in 50 overs (Anamul 128, Nazmul 121, Vihari 66, Mithun 47 not out; Salauddin 2-81)
Prime Doleshwar SC: 244 for 3 in 34.1 overs (Mahmud 100, Marshall 108 not out; Taskin 3-62)
Result: Abahani won by 20 runs (D/L method)

the batting side lost momentum and ended on 244 for three in 34.1 overs when rain once again stopped play, this time for the final time with Doleshwar 21 runs behind the par score.

The 207-run third-wicket stand was eventually broken after with Fazle's wicket (100 off 87 balls with four sixes and nine fours), while Marshall remained unbeaten at the other end on an 88-ball 108 studded with three sixes and nine fours.

None of the Doleshwar were willing to comment about the confusion regarding playing conditions, but those present there said there was enough light for the match to go on.

Earlier, the record opening stand of 236 between Anamul and Nazmul, Abahani posted 393 for four in 50 overs.

Anamul, who struck his second hundred of the season, was eventually run out after scoring 128 off 126 balls with seven fours and six sixes. Nazmul struck his third hundred of the league and was more aggressive in his 106-ball 121 which featured 12 fours and two sixes.

After the departure of the two centuries, Indian recruit Hanuma Vihari's blistering 36-ball 66 and Mohammad Mithun's quick-fire 24-ball 47 propelled Abahani to the highest score on Bangladesh soil.

SPORTS REPORTER

"Was it a record opening partnership? Is it the highest total? I was not aware about the records; just learned of them from you now". Both Anamul Haque and Nazmul Hossain responded with surprise when asked about their record 236-run opening stand and Abahani's record total of 393 for four against Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club in the Super League match at BKSP yesterday.

They also echoed similar sentiments when explaining the reasons behind their brilliant batting display, saying it was down to a good understanding when rotating the strike, taking calculated risks and a batting-friendly wicket.

"If it is a record opening partnership and a record total then it's really good news. We failed to perform to our potential; you can understand Abahani's strength as a team if you look at our resources, so we have a plan and we executed it in the middle," said Anamul, who scored 128 off 126 balls with seven fours and six sixes.

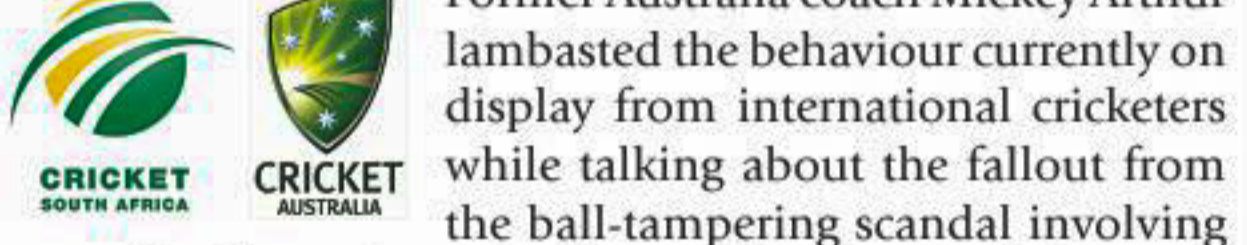
"The wicket was really fantastic for batting but still we didn't think about a total nearing 400 and we should thank the batsmen who followed -- Hanuma Vihari and Mohammad Mithun -- for making it possible," Anamul, who is now the league's top scorer, added.

"I think good communication and calling and calculated risks made it possible to score big in the opening stand but we didn't think about 400. We really enjoyed batting on the true batting track," said Nazmul, who hit 121 off 106 balls, an innings that contained 12 fours and two sixes.

Anamul however did not forget to credit the two opposition batsmen Fazle Mahmud (100) and Marshall Ayub (108 not out). "They batted brilliantly and I must say they lost the momentum because of the rain, otherwise anything could have happened," said Anamul, referring to Doleshwar's strong position of 217 for two in 30 overs when rain interrupted proceedings.

Abysmal conduct in cricket: Arthur

AFP, Karachi



Former Australia coach Mickey Arthur lambasted the behaviour currently on display from international cricketers while talking about the fallout from the ball-tampering scandal involving Australia skipper Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft. He named a number of recent incidents, including Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan's calling back of his batsmen after being displeased with an umpiring decision in the recent Nidahas Trophy triangular in Sri Lanka.

"I think over the last few months the behaviour has been abysmal in international cricket," Arthur, who is currently Pakistan's head coach, said.

"We have seen Bangladesh captain [Shakib] calling players off the field, we have seen Bangladesh breaking a window in the dressing room, we have seen dances on the ground," said Arthur, referring to the tri-series.

"We have seen tunnel scuffles [between Warner and Quinton de Kock], we have seen Rabada... we have seen a ball dropped on AB de Villiers' head, so I think behaviours certainly need to be addressed."

It has been a dramatic fall for Smith, 28, who was being compared with the legendary Donald Bradman just a few months ago but who broke down in tears during an apology on Thursday.

"I feel desperately sorry for Smith. I know he eats, sleeps and drinks cricket," said Arthur.

"He loves cricket and everything he did. He loved the job, he was passionate about the job. I think he was a very good leader and an unbelievable cricketer."

However, Arthur wondered whether there would be a way back for Warner, who has been blamed for hatching the plot and has cut an isolated figure as the scandal unfolded.

The 31-year-old batsman, who has issued a statement admitting responsibility for the incident, is due to face media for the first time on Saturday.

"I definitely see the return of Smith, without a doubt. He will be there, he will serve his time, he will train hard and he will come back stronger," Arthur said.

Markram puts SA on top

REUTERS, Johannesburg



Opener Aiden Markram led the way with a career-best 152 as South Africa had the better

of the opening day of the fourth Test against a much-changed Australia, reaching the close on 313 for six on Friday.

The tourists, reeling from their ball-tampering scandal and led by new captain Tim Paine, had to endure chants of "where is Warner?" and "where is your captain?" from sections of the 17,023 home support as a reminder of the bans handed to captain Steve Smith, his deputy David Warner and Cameron Bancroft.

Needing a win to grab a share of the series, the tourists kept themselves in the game as the excellent Pat Cummins (3-53) claimed the wickets of Markram and

home skipper Faf du Plessis first ball.

Debutant Chadd Sayers (2-64) removed AB de Villiers (69) with the new ball and two deliveries later had night-watchman Kagiso Rabada caught without scoring.

Temba Bavuma (25) and Quinton de Kock (7) will resume on the second morning, looking for a sizeable total on a wicket already taking turn and showing widening cracks as they seek a first home series win over Australia in almost 50 years.

After losing the toss, Australia's bowlers have found enough in the wicket to dispel the notion of a flat pitch.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 313 for 6 (Markram 152, Amla 27, De Villiers 69, Bavuma 25 not out; Sayers 2-64, Cummins 3-53)



South Africa opener Aiden Markram scored his second century of the series on the first day of the fourth Test against Australia in Johannesburg yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

'Ball-tampering, not murder'

AFP, Sydney



A wave of sympathy for disgraced Australia skipper Steve Smith gathered pace on Friday after his heart-wrenching apology and as opposition grew to the severity of bans handed out in a ball-tampering scandal.

Smith's tearful appearance in front of media helped trigger the resignation of coach Darren Lehmann and also prompted calls to rein in criticism which has verged on hysterical during an extraordinary week for Australian cricket.

Both Smith and vice-captain David Warner were banned for 12 months and Cameron Bancroft for nine months for ball-tampering during the third Test in Cape Town.

Lehmann -- who had earlier warned about the players' mental state -- said he was convinced to step down by the emotional apologies of Bancroft and Smith, which also drew messages of support.

"Dear Australia, that's enough now," ran a headline in British newspaper The Times. "This was ball-tampering, not murder."

Australia's leg-spin great Shane Warne wrote in Sydney's Daily Telegraph: "We are all so hurt and angry and maybe we weren't so sure how to react. We'd just never seen it before."

"But the jump to hysteria is something that has elevated the offence beyond what they actually did, and maybe we're at a point where the punishment just might not fit the crime."

Former England captain Michael Vaughan said Smith and Bancroft, who also faced media on Thursday, were "decent guys who had a moment of madness".

"They deserve a 2nd chance and hopefully get the right support around them now... Takes a lot of guts to do what they did today," he tweeted.

GLARING ANOMALIES
The Australian Cricketers' Association voiced concern over the welfare of the players, and argued that the sanctions were disproportionate compared to other sanctions for ball-tampering.

"There are a number of glaring and clear anomalies in the process to date which causes the ACA to query the severity and proportionality of the proposed sanctions," a statement said.

Eng fight back after Southee's 5

AFP, Christchurch

Jonny Bairstow was in sight of his fifth Test century after a late run spree with Mark Wood lifted England to 290 for eight at stumps on day one of the second Test in Christchurch on Friday.

England had been in trouble at 164 for seven before Bairstow (not out 97) and Wood (52) put on 95 for the eighth wicket.

Tim Southee and Trent Boult did all the damage for New Zealand with Southee taking five for 60, his seventh five-wicket bag while Trent Boult had three for 79 after New Zealand won the toss and elected to bowl first.

England were in danger of not reaching 200 until Wood joined Bairstow and the pair put on 95 for the eighth wicket before Wood fell to Southee for 52, his maiden Test half century.

After being comprehensively beaten in the first Test, England strengthened their batting line up for Christchurch with the addition of James Vince while Wood and Jack Leach came in for bowlers Chris Woakes, Craig Overton and Moeen Ali.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 290 for 8 (Stoneman 35, Root 37, Stokes 25, Bairstow 97 not out, Wood 52; Boult 3-79, Southee 5-60)