

Sunday hattrick powers Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba slotted a hattrick to power holders Abahani to an emphatic 5-2 win over Rahmatganj MFS in the return-leg encounter of Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Sunday became the fourth player to score a hattrick in the ongoing league after Ballo Famoussa of Muktijoddha Sangsads, Zahid Hossain of Arambagh and his teammate Nabib Newaj Jibon, who had scored a hattrick against the same opposition in the first leg at the same venue.

With the treble, the 29-year-old marksman consolidated his position on top of the scorers' chart with 14 goals, three ahead of Jibon, who also scored one in the game. The other goal for Abahani was scored by Jewel Rana.

The win helped Abahani move to 39 points from 16 matches, four behind leaders Bashundhara even though the second-half performance from the Sky Blues might cause a few worries for the coach ahead of their AFC Cup match against Nepal's Manang Marshyangdi Club on June 19.

Abahani took a comfortable 4-0 lead in the first half against Rahmatganj, whom they had beaten 5-1 in their first meeting. However, some sloppy defending saw Abahani concede two goals in five minutes in the second half before Sunday completed his hattrick in stoppage time.

"We played well in the first half but in the second

half, the players were too casual and slow on the back of a 4-0 lead. Rahmatganj also came hard in the second half to score two goals," said Abahani's Portuguese coach Mario Lemos.

"I think the defenders will not make such mistakes in the AFC Cup but we have to fix it in the next three days by working hard because the match against Manag Marshyangdi is very important for us," said Lemos.

Though Sunday is in rich form in domestic league, the Nigerian has only scored one goal in four matches in the AFC Cup.

"I think today's performance will help me perform well on our home match against Manang because it is a very crucial match for us and we need points in the penultimate matchday of the AFC Cup," said Sunday.

Sunday put Abahani tapped home in the ninth minute when Afghan defender Mashi Saighani back-headed a Raihan Hasan throw-in to the far post before doubling the lead with a left-footed shot from inside the box in the 32nd minute after Kervens Belfort released a long ball from his own half.

Then Sunday put a forward-pass for Jewel Rana, who darted into the box to beat goalkeeper Titumir Chowdhury with an angular shot in the 36th minute before Jibon struck his 11th goal of the campaign a minute before the break.

After resumption, Rahmatganj reimbursed two goals as Siyo Zunapio beat goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Shoel in the 65th minute while Didarul Alam made it 4-2 with a 30-yard drive in the 70th minute. However, Sunday wrapped up the victory in the stoppage time.



Abahani's Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba (R) shoots for goal during their Bangladesh Premier League encounter against Rahmatganj MFS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Abdul Khalek passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Alhaj Abdul Khalek, a member of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team, passed away due to old-age complications at his residence in Satkhira on Friday. He was 75.

Abdul Khalek left behind his wife, five sons, three daughters and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

He was laid to eternal rest at his family graveyard in Bharukhali, Mahmudpur in Satkhira yesterday.

The football fraternity, including Bangladesh Football Federation's president Kazi Salahuddin, expressed their condolences at the death of the former footballer.

Giampaolo set for Milan switch

AFP, Milan

Marco Giampaolo has quit Sampdoria and will take up a two-year deal to coach AC Milan, it was widely reported in the Italian press on Saturday.

The 51-year-old will join an ongoing revamp at Milan, who consolidated their management team this week by bringing in former players Zvonimir Boban and Paolo Maldini.

Now Giampaolo will be given the platform of a two-year deal with an optional third after Sampdoria President Massimo Ferrero allowed him to end a contract.

WHAT TO WATCH
GTV, BTV & MAASRANGA ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP INDIA V PAKISTAN LIVE FROM 3:30PM
DAY'S EVENTS
BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE CTG ABAHANI V ARAMBAGH TIME: 4:00PM MOHAMMEDAN V SHEIKH RUSSEL TIME: 7:00PM VENUE: BANGABANDHU NATIONAL STADIUM, DHAKA

Team BJMC taste maiden victory

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Bottom-placed Team BJMC tasted their maiden victory in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League when they surprised three-time champions Sheikh Jamal DC 2-1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Team BJMC, who managed only five points from five draws in their 15 previous outings, registered their first victory courtesy of a goal each from Nigerian duo Samson Illiasu (19) and Eleta Kingsley (53). Shakhawat Hossain Rony reduced the margin for Sheikh Jamal (57).

Under the guidance of new coach Ali Ashgar Nasir, Team BJMC started the league with the promise of getting out of the red zone even though they lost to Mohammedan 2-1 despite taking the lead in their first match before suffering a 3-0 defeat to Saif SC.

But they held Chittagong Abahani to a draw on home ground in Noakhali in the previous match and finally tasted the first win in their 16th match to raise their tally to eight points. Team BJMC, along with Brothers Union (nine points), are still in relegation zone with eight matches left.

Sheikh Jamal remained in eighth position with 15 points from 15 matches.

Coutinho brace gives Brazil winning start

REUTERS, Sao Paulo



Philippe Coutinho scored a second half double and Everton added a cracking third as Brazil recovered from a sleepy start to beat Bolivia 3-0 in their Copa America opener on Friday.

Both sides were poor in the first period but the game briefly came alive five minutes into the second half when Coutinho slotted home a VAR-assisted penalty.

Coutinho grabbed a second with a close-range header three minutes later before Everton rifled home a third from outside the box with five minutes remaining.

"In the end, with a bit of patience, we opened things up, we had more of the ball and we created plays," captain Daniel Alves told reporters. "We deserved a big victory."

The match was the first of this year's tournament, which is being held in Brazil for the first time since 1989. All 10 South

American teams are participating along with guest nations Qatar and Japan.

Brazil, who started with Roberto Firmino up front and Fernandinho in midfield in place of the injured Arthur, failed to inspire the strangely subdued crowd of just 46,342 at Sao Paulo's Morumbi stadium.

Wearing white shirts for the first time in more than 60 years, the home side huffed and puffed but rarely threatened and even after they went 2-0 up, they lacked ideas and urgency.

Bolivia, who last won the title in 1963, rarely threatened at the other end after starting brightly.

"Tactically Bolivia played well in the first half, the players responded well and when we got the ball we tried to go forward on a couple of important occasions and that left us positive," Bolivia coach Eduardo Villegas told reporters.

"But it was a game of two halves. We have to be honest and realistic, Brazil beat us and they beat us well."

Brazil's next match is against Venezuela in Salvador next Tuesday.

JFA U-14 football from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER



JFA U-14 National Women's Football Championship will get underway tomorrow in different venues across the country after a one-and-a-half-year gap.

A total of 39 district teams, split into six groups, will take part in the knockout-basis preliminary round.

Jashore, Khagrachari, Gopalganj, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Rangpur will host the preliminary round from June 17 to June 28 before the six venue champions and two best runners-up teams will head to the final round to be held in Dhaka from July 10.

"We have been holding this championship for a long time and it is a tournament for hunting talents from district level. Our coaches will be present at each venue and pick the right players for a final trial to be held in Dhaka," said BFF women's committee chief Mahfuza Akhter Kiron, who informed that some five to six districts withdrew names despite sending entries due to exams of the players.

Japan Football Association is funding the under-14 women's championship since 2015 by providing US\$ 30,000 while Walton came forward as co-sponsors with Tk 5 lakh and home appliances for best players of different venues.



Brazil playmaker Philippe Coutinho (R) is ecstatic after scoring his second goal against Bolivia during their Copa America Group A encounter at the Cicero Pompeu de Toledo Stadium in Sao Paulo on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CR7 served with court papers

AFP, Los Angeles

Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo has been served with court papers related to a rape lawsuit in the United States, according to documents filed by his lawyers on Friday.

Five-time world player of the year Ronaldo is accused of rape by Kathryn Mayorga, who claims the Portuguese soccer star assaulted her in a Las Vegas hotel in 2009.

Ronaldo, 34, the former Manchester United and Real Madrid player, has strongly denied the accusations against him, insisting their encounter was consensual.

The legal process in the civil case

had been held up as "federal court's rules on serving foreigners" meant an identical state-level case needed to be dropped, Mayorga's attorney said last week.

A motion filed in federal court in Nevada on Friday said "the parties have agreed to deem Defendant effectively served," meaning Ronaldo has officially received court documents in the case, allowing it to move forward.

Former model Mayorga made the accusations against Ronaldo, who now lives in Turin, in a complaint filed last year. She said that while she had agreed to a financial settlement with Ronaldo shortly after the alleged incident, her emotional trauma at the

time did not allow her to participate in the mediation process.

Mayorga's attorney added that the model agreed to an out-of-court settlement to keep her name from going public, but was inspired to speak out by the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment.

Ronaldo's lawyers have said that the non-disclosure agreement signed with Mayorga was "by no means a confession of guilt".

Following her renewed accusations, Las Vegas police reopened an investigation last year.

Ronaldo is widely considered one of the greatest footballers in the history of the game.

England, Italy thru'

AFP, Le Havre



Jodie Taylor broke a 14-month goal drought to shoot England past Argentina and into the last 16 of the women's World Cup on Friday after Cristiana Girelli's hattrick saw the Italians through with a 5-0 hammering of hapless Jamaica.

Euro 2017 top scorer Taylor tapped home her first England goal since April 2018 from Beth Mead's inviting low cross just after the hour mark to send England to the top of Group D on six points, two ahead of Japan, and into the next round alongside Italy, France and Germany with a game still to play.

"I'm the first one to admit that I score goals because of my teammates. The Euros I won the golden boot because of the quality of my teammates," Taylor told reporters.

"The ball from Beth today absolutely showed that."

Phil Neville's side now need a point in Nice on Wednesday against Japan, who beat Scotland 2-1 earlier on Friday, to ensure they finish in first place and avoid a

potential clash with European champions the Netherlands in the next round.

They could form part of a powerful group of teams in the knockout stages with the three strong-looking European nations plus the USA.

"To be honest I'm so focused on the group I don't even know who we could face yet," added Taylor about the prospect of facing one of those sides.

Despite the defeat the 'Albicelestes', third in the group with a point, can still qualify for the knockout stages if they beat Scotland in their final game in Paris, although they will have to show more attacking intent than they have in their opening two matches.

The were twice saved by goalkeeper Vanina Correa, who pushed Nikita Parris' 28th-minute penalty off the post and then pulled off a super stop to deny the excellent Mead four minutes before the break.

Italy took their place in the knockout stages following Juventus striker Girelli's treble and a late brace from Aurora Galli, which also gave Bertolini's side a perfect six points and put them top of Group C.



Italy forward Cristiana Girelli (2nd from R) celebrates her third goal with teammates during their Women's World Cup Group C match against Jamaica at the Auguste-Delaune Stadium on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP