



Mushfiqur Rahim and Mosaddek Hossain embrace each other after striking half-centuries to guide Abahani to a seven-wicket victory over Gazi Group Cricketers in the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier Division T20 League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. (Inset) Veteran left-arm spinner Sunzamul Islam took three wickets for one run to deliver Legends of Rugganj their first victory of the campaign. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Results galore despite rain

SPORTS REPORTER



Despite the rain halting the majority of the six games of the fourth round in the Dhaka Premier League T20 competition, all the matches eventually ended with a result yesterday.

Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club continued their unbeaten run in the league as they handed the second consecutive defeat to Shakib Al Hasan's Mohammedan Sporting Club by 22 runs on a six-over curtailed match at BKSP.

Doleshwar rode on the blistering start from the two openers Imran Uzzaman and Shamim Hossain to post 78 for 4 in six overs where Mohammedan in reply, ended up on 56 for 4. Followed by a long wait due to rain, the match finally began with a flurry of sixes and fours by Imran who struck five sixes and two fours for his 14-ball 41 while Shamim remained unbeaten on 29 off 16 balls, thus Doleshwar had the momentum.

Mohammedan in reply, faced a double blow from pacer Shaiful Islam in the first over of the innings who removed Parvez Hossain and Shuvagata Hom- both out on a duck.

Shakib Al Hasan attempted a comeback with his 14-ball 21 before he became Shaiful's third victim and Mohammedan fell well short of the target eventually. With four wins in five

games, Doleshwar sits at the top of the table with nine points while Mohammedan slips down with three wins and two defeats in five games.

Unlike Mohammedan, their archrival Abahani Limited returned to the winning ways, courtesy of skipper Mushfiqur Rahim's unbeaten fifty to register a seven-wicket win over Mahmudullah Riyad's Gazi Group.

Despite a flying start from the openers Soumya Sarkar and Mahedi Hasan, adding 78 runs for the opening stand in nine overs, things changed dramatically for Gazi afterwards.

Mahedi was the first to depart on 43 off 32 balls while Soumya scored his second consecutive fifty before being dismissed on 67 off fifty balls laced with two sixes and six fours.

Since then, Gazi kept losing wickets at regular intervals where Shohidul Islam and leg

spinner Aminul Islam bagged two wickets each for the bowling side.

In reply at one point, Abahani were struggling on 48 for 3 inside nine overs, before Mushfiqur along with Mosaddek Hossain added an unbeaten, match-winning 105 runs on the fourth-wicket stand.

Mushfiqur's 53 off 35 balls included four boundaries and a six while Mosaddek's fifty off 28 balls featured three sixes and four boundaries as Abahani reached the target with two overs to spare.

Elsewhere, Prime Bank Cricket Club extended their winning run and registered a comfortable seven-wicket win over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

Sheikh Jamal kept losing wickets at regular intervals right from the start and eventually posted 133 for 9 in 20 overs, courtesy of Sohrawardi Shuvo's 34. Pacers Mustafizur Rahman and Rubel Hossain grabbed two wickets each for the bowling side.

In reply Rony Talukdar top-scored with 48 while Anamul Haque added 35 runs to reach the target with ease as Prime Bank remains in second place with eight points in five games.

On the other three matches Brothers Union clinched a 33 runs win over Partex Sporting Club, Legends of Rugganj beat Shinepukur Cricket Club by 14 runs and Old DOHS Sports Club sealed a 16 run win over Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity.



'Such defeat is not acceptable'

SPORTS REPORTER



Neighbouring India may have comprehensively edged over Bangladesh football team in

terms of the result but their outstanding ball possession display against the men in red and green in their reverse fixture of the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers in Qatar on Monday remains unprecedented.

Historically, India had capitalised with genuine strikers against Bangladesh and the 27th encounter between the two sides in Doha was no exception, with veteran striker Sunil Chhetri once again taking the match in favour of India by scoring a brace.

Apart from their 74 percent of ball possession against Bangladesh's 26, India's latest dominant display was superior in terms of passing accuracy as well, where they hit 83 percent compared to Bangladesh's 54.

"I've also played against India and watched a lot of games but never saw a one-sided affair of this manner. You can go down 5-0 with a fight but such defeat is not acceptable. I can't get over it," national team manager Iqbal Hossain told The Daily Star

stated that they failed to play their own game and conceded two goals due the lack of concentration in the last moments.

After a resurgent display against Afghanistan, Bangladesh was expected to carry the momentum to the India match and they did get off to a fine start within the first 10 minutes before handing over the upper hand to India for the remaining time.

"The first 10 minutes went well but I think we could have done better had we pressed them some 10 to 15 meters up instead of defending deeper. I think we lacked fresh legs against India," explained captain Jamal Bhuiyan.

Asked if they were under pressure to win the match, Jamal said, "We wanted to win this prestigious match which is equivalent to El Clasico of South Asia but we made plenty of errors and could not create many chances against India compared to Afghanistan match. We must improve our ball possession, and have to do better in pressing the opponents in future."

Manager Iqbal believes India have not played that extraordinary rather they kept the ball in their control.

"I admit, India did well in set-pieces and created a couple of good chances but the first goal Bangladesh conceded was



Bangladesh players reflect on previous night's defeat against India at the team hotel in Doha yesterday. PHOTO: BFF

over phone from Qatar yesterday.

"I talked to the players last night [Monday] and today [Tuesday] but they can't justify such a poor display, despite putting up a better show against Afghanistan," said former national midfielder Iqbal.

"Players had no pressure from the management to win, but I think they had put pressure on themselves by being too serious about the India match and tried to play better than the Afghanistan match."

Finland-born defender Tariq Raihan Kazi

unacceptable. There were three defenders inside the box and Tapu should've marked Sunil well while goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico should've come out from his line or made a call for the defenders when the ball was drifting into the six-yard box but none of the players did their job. I have nothing to say about the second goal," Iqbal expressed his frustration.

Finally Jamal urges all to forget the match against India for now and look forward to the match against Oman for a better show.

Top-ranked Belgium at a disadvantage

REUTERS



Belgium are at a disadvantage in the European Championship as they will not play any home games in the tournament, defender

Thomas Vermaelen said on Tuesday.

Brussels had been one of the 13 original venues picked to host games for Euro 2020, which kicks off on Friday, but after numerous delays to a planned new Euro stadium, was removed from the list by UEFA in 2017.

It means that if the top team in the FIFA rankings are to go on and win a major trophy for the first time, all their matches will be on foreign soil -- in contrast to other contenders like England, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

Of the 24 teams at Euro 2020, nine get to play in front of home fans.



Romelu Lukaku scored the only goal as Belgium beat Croatia 1-0 in a warm-up match for the European Championship at the King Baudouin Stadium in Brussels on Monday night. PHOTO: REUTERS

GPS to track foreign journos in Tokyo

AFP, TOKYO

Overseas journalists covering the Tokyo Olympics will have their movements tracked by GPS, the Games president said Tuesday, and could have their passes revoked if they break the rules.

Organisers of the pandemic-postponed 2020 Games, which open in just over six weeks, are trying to reassure a sceptical public that the mega-event can be held safely under strict virus rules.

The about 6,000 reporters visiting Japan for the Olympics must provide a detailed list of areas they will visit for their first two weeks in Japan, such as sports venues and hotels.

And Tokyo 2020 chief Seiko Hashimoto said tracking technology would be used to make sure they only go where they are supposed to.

"To make sure that people don't go to places other than the places where they are registered to go, we will use GPS to strictly manage their behaviour," Hashimoto said before a Tokyo 2020 executive board meeting.

Reporters will be urged to stay in designated hotels rather than private lodgings, she added.

The number of hotels will be reduced from an originally planned 350 to around 150, she said.

Outsider Zidansek into semis



AFP, PARIS



World number 85 Tamara Zidansek became the first woman from Slovenia to reach the semifinals of a Grand Slam at the French Open

on Tuesday.

The unheralded Zidansek advanced 7-5, 4-6, 8-6 against Spain's Paula Badosa and will play Kazakh 21st seed Elena Rybakina or 31st-seeded Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia for a place in Saturday's final.

"I'm really, really happy to be in the semi-finals," said Zidansek, who had never gone beyond the second round of a Slam before this year's Roland Garros.

Zidansek recovered from 3-0 and a double break down in the first set and then saved three break points at 6-6 in the decider against Badosa, the 33rd seed with the most clay court wins (17) on the WTA tour this season.

The Slovene took her second match point to continue her breakout

performance. She is two wins away from emulating Maribor-born Mima Jausovec, who won Roland Garros in 1977 while representing Yugoslavia.

World number 22 Rybakina, who denied Serena Williams in her latest bid for a record-tying 24th Grand Slam title, is the highest-ranked player left in her half of the draw.

The 21-year-old made the final at four of her first five events in 2020, but her momentum was then stalled by the Covid-19 shutdown.

Born in Russia, but representing Kazakhstan, Rybakina has advanced here without losing a set. She next meets doubles partner Pavlyuchenkova, back in the French Open quarter-finals for the first time since 2011.

"The end goal is always to win the tournaments and dream and go of course to win the Grand Slam," said Rybakina.

"So every time I step in on court I try not to think against who I play. Just try to do my work, follow the plan which we have. If it works well, I'm winning, and if it's not, I'm just learning."

Spain squad to be vaccinated

REUTERS, Madrid

The Spanish soccer squad's players will get a COVID-19 vaccine shot on Wednesday, less than a week before their opening Euro 2020 match, after captain Sergio Busquets tested positive, Sports Minister Jose Manuel Rodriguez Uribes said on Tuesday.

Busquets' positive has thrown Spain's tournament preparations into chaos with the remaining 23 players going into isolation along with the coaching staff. An Under-21 side led by their coach Luis de la Fuente will face Lithuania



on Tuesday in what was supposed to be the nation's final warm-up game before the Euros.

Coach Luis Enrique called up a group of six players, including Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga, to complement the squad. They will train separately in "parallel bubble" away from the main Euros squad with a view to them being added should the need occur. So far, all the other players and staff have tested negative.