

"It is a great achievement for both getting through to the final. It's been a really successful tournament for our boys. It will be exciting."



Liverpool Coach Jurgen Klopp on Salah and Mane

Shahzad steps over the line

SPORTS REPORTER

Minister Group Dhaka's Afghan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Shahzad was seen smoking an electronic cigarette in the middle of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium ahead of their Bangladeshu Bangladesh Premier League game against Comilla Victorians yesterday.

Dhaka were scheduled to play Comilla Victorians in the night game, which was eventually washed off after the day's first scheduled match between Fortune Barishal and Sylhet Sunrisers endured the same fate.

Shahzad was seen smoking while having a conversation with another Afghanistan cricketer - Karim Janat - of Comilla Victorians. Later, Dhaka opener Tamim Iqbal, along with head coach Mizanur Rahman, had a chat with Shahzad, probably asking him not to smoke on the field.

"Being an international cricketer, Shahzad should be aware of the etiquettes that he needs to follow during a game of cricket," BPL's technical committee convenor Raquibul Hasan told The Daily Star regarding the incident.

It was learnt that later the Afghan batsman was slapped with one demerit point and cautioned about any such incident in future.

"Smoking on the field is not acceptable and we are shocked and disappointed. We are not taking it lightly. The BPL authority is embarrassed over the incident. The BCB has also noticed it and definitely, the board will take a decision soon," said BPL member secretary Ismail Haider Mallick.



Abahani's Brazilian striker Dorielton Gomes (3rd from L) pokes the ball into the net during their 1-0 win over Bangladesh Premier League opponents Muktijoddha Sangsads at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

Abahani, Saif slide off to winning starts

SPORTS REPORTER

Both title contenders Abahani Dhaka and Saif Sporting Club notched identical 1-0 wins in their opening fixtures of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) yesterday.

A first-half strike from Dorielton Gomes helped Abahani edge past Muktijoddha Sangsads at Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi while a stoppage-time strike from Emery Bavisenge saw Saif beat Bangladesh Police at Birshreshtha Ft. Lt. Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj.

Abahani, following successive triumphs of Independence Cup and Federation Cup, initially struggled a bit in the midfield without their Brazilian playmaker Raphael Augusto. And even though the Sky Blues had threatened from both flanks but on a rain-soaked pitch, their forwards, the likes of Brazilian Dorielton, Rakib Hossain, Nabib Newaj Jibon and Colindres had struggled to maintain balance in the attacking third.

Muktijoddha, on the other hand, launched a couple of sporadic counter-attacks early but failed to dismantle the Abahani backline, comprising Iranian

defender Milad Sheikh, Tutul Hossain Badsha, Sushanta Tripura and Nurul Nayeem Faisal.

It was the Costa Rican Daniel Colindres who came close to breaking the deadlock at first, as his drive came off the crossbar, before Dorielton put Abahani ahead by tapping in a well judged cross from Nurul Nayeem Faisal in the 12th minute.

Muktijoddha tried to hit back immediately and came tantalisingly close to equalising when Japanese Tetsuaki Misawa released a defence-split pass for Egyptian Ahmed Ayman but the forward somehow drove his shot wide from inside the box.

Again, Misawa played a decisive pass for his compatriot Soma Otani inside the box but Abahani goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Shohel denied Otani by recovering the ball from his feet in the 28th minute.

Two minutes later, Muktijoddha goalkeeper Mohammad Razib denied Abahani by diving on his left to grab a goal bound header from Milad Sheikh while Muktijoddha were frustrated again as Misawa's flick came off the crossbar in the 34th minute.

The second half promised for more goal-scoring chances but after resumption, Abahani kept their dominance intact and could have widened the margin by a couple more, with Colindres heading Jewel Rana cross wide before the roles were reversed as Jewel himself squandered a Colindres long-center in stoppage time. Eventually, the Sky Blues did not have to pay for the several missed chances as they ensured a winning start on road to achieving a rare treble in a single season.

Meanwhile in Munshiganj, the Saif side playing without Jamal Bhuiyan, faced a stern test against Police. On the water-logged pitch, both sides fought on level terms and wasted a number of clear-cut chances, the noticeable misses were from Police's Afghanistan forward Amiruddin Sharifi, who twice had failed to convert despite finding Saif's goalkeeper alone on both occasions.

With the game heading towards a stalemate, it was the Rwandan defender Emery who found the back of the Police net at extra-time with a dipping free-kick from 30 yards to drive Saif off to a winning start.

Ariful, Ripon silver linings in dismal campaign

SPORTS REPORTER

Batting heroics from Ariful Islam, once again, was not enough for Bangladesh as the defending champions lost the seventh-place play-off encounter against South Africa and ended their disappointing ICC Under-19 World Cup campaign in West Indies on Thursday.

Ariful's second century of the tournament, and that too in succession, did drive Bangladesh to amass a fighting total of 293 for eight, their tournament-highest by a margin. But South African young sensation Dewald Brevis, also known as 'Baby AB', countered with a ton as well to successfully chase the target for his side with two wickets and seven balls to spare.

Previously, Bangladesh had kick started their campaign with a thrashing seven-wicket defeat against England, in which they were bundled out for a mere 97 runs.

Still, Rakibul Hasan and his troop featured in the quarter-final as runners up from group A, after having comfortably beaten, as expected, the two associate nations - Canada and the UAE.

But batting, the predictable culprit, let Bangladesh down against India in the quarter-final. The young Tigers were all out for a dismal 111, eventually leading them to a five-wicket defeat.

Despite lack of match preparation compared to what the previous World Cup-winning side went through, the

likes of Aich Mollah, Prantik Nawrose and Rakibul, who all had tasted world-cup glory, could not live up to their reputation.

"Obviously, we didn't want to finish eighth in

the tournament and yes, it was a disappointing result for us. Being the defending champions, we couldn't perform as per expectations and batting remained the biggest area of concern for us," age-level selector Sazzad Ahmed told The Daily Star.

However, in the end, a premier youth competition ideally becomes more about unearthing potential world-class talents, ones that can likely serve the nation in the long run. Thus, it can be argued that the salvation of this bleak campaign has somehow, and rightfully, clung to Ariful's consecutive centuries against Pakistan and South Africa. Indeed, the right-hander had punched well above his weight, showing great maturity and potential for the national side in the coming days.

Furthermore, pacer Ripon Mondol could be considered as the only worthy member of Ariful's supporting cast, as the right-arm seamer scalped 14 wickets in six games and remained handy with the bat in the latter stage of innings.

Which is why selector Sazzad finds the duo to be the biggest, if not the only, takeaway in an otherwise gloomy campaign.



Beijing Olympics underway

A general view shows performers dance under the Olympic rings during the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics at the Bird's Nest in Beijing Friday. The event, filled with imagery of snowflakes and ice, marked the culmination of Games preparations that were beset by the Covid-19 pandemic and criticism over human rights in China that led several countries to mount a diplomatic boycott.

PHOTO: AFP

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

PSL

Islamabad vs Lahore

Live from 3:30 pm

Peshawar vs Multan

Live from 8:30 pm

FA Cup

Tottenham vs Brighton

Live from 2:00 am

(Sunday)

STAR SPORTS 1 & STAR

SPORTS SELECT 2

U-19 World Cup

Final

England vs India

Live from 7:00 pm

SONY SIX

FA Cup

Chelsea vs Plymouth

Live from 6:30 pm

TEN 2

Bundesliga

Bayern Munich vs Leipzig

Live from 11:30 pm

MTV INDIA

La Liga

Elche vs Alaves

Live from 7:00 pm

Mallorca vs Cadiz

Live from 9:15 pm

Celta vs Rayo

Live from 11:30 pm

Osasuna vs Sevilla

Live from 2:00 am

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