



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN  
 A HERCULEAN EFFORT: Record-breakers Habibul Bashar and Rajin Saleh embrace each other in delight after the latter completed a century during the fourth and final ODI against Kenya at the Fatullah Stadium on Saturday.

## Rajshahi close in on title


**ISPAHANI MIRZAPORE TEA**  
 7th National Cricket League

### SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahman led the charge as Rajshahi dominated Dhaka, while title contender Chittagong slipped further in their contest against Barisal on the second day of the Ispahani Seventh National four-day Cricket League. Rajshahi made Dhaka follow on in their first innings after Dhaka were bundled out for 286 runs. Barisal took a 115 runs lead after they scored 381 runs in their first innings against Chittagong.

Chittagong could have sealed the deal in the previous round but opted to play for a draw against Rajshahi. Now they are in danger of conceding the title to Rajshahi. Now, all eyes will be on the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium as Rajshahi look to finish off a lacklustre Dhaka while Chittagong must now make an improbable comeback against Barisal.

Golam Mabud held the innings together as Sylhet also took a 61 runs first innings lead over Khulna

by ending the day on 309 for 8. **RAJSHAH V DHAKA** Rajshahi added 43 more runs in the morning before being bowled out for 460 in their first innings. Rafiqul Islam was unbeaten on 111.

In reply, only Al Shahrir's bat did the talking as he hit a rapid 60 off 62-balls, which included 13 boundaries. Dhaka were all out for 286 with Arafat Sunny stranded on 49. Mushfiqur Rahim picked up 4 wickets for 47, following his 61 in the first innings, while Shuvo chipped in with 2 wickets.

Following on, Dhaka suffered an early setback in their second innings as they lost opener Anwar Hossain in the penultimate over of the day with the score on 15.

**CHITTAGONG V BARISAL** Hannan Sarker cracked a brilliant 121, as he shared a 178-run stand with Imran Ahmed. Hannan was the more aggressive partner as he struck 15 fours and a six in his 135 ball knock. Imran scored a patient 85 while Marshal Ayub also scored 73. Barisal now leads by 115 runs at the end of day two at the Barisal Divisional Stadium.

Saju Datta took four wickets for

Chittagong but his effort was not enough as Barisal scored at a rapid pace. Off-spinner Yasin Arafat and part-timer Dhiman Ghosh took 3 wickets each.

Chittagong in reply were 7 for no loss in their second innings, with Barisal still leading by 108 runs.

**KHULNA V SYLHET** Golam Mowla hit a diligent century as Sylhet took a 61 run lead over Khulna at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium. Sylhet will begin day 3 on 309 for 8 as Rezaul Haque also struck a patient knock of 71.

Jamaluddin Babu, Sadik Khan and Ziaur Rahman picked up two wickets each for Khulna.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**RAJSHAH V DHAKA:** First innings (overnight 417 for 7) 460 all out in 98.2 overs (Rafiqul 111\*, Mushfiqur 61, Naim 59, Talha 5/83, Sunny 2/58)  
**DHAKA:** First innings 286 all out in 71 overs (Al Shahrir 61, Sunny 49\*, Mushfiqur 4/47, Shuvo 2/53) and Second innings 15 for 1 in 8 overs (Uttam 12 batting, Shahzada 1/14).

**CHITTAGONG:** First innings 266 all out in 69.3 overs (Tamim 76, Masum 10, Salahuddin 17,

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

## Perseverance pays off

### SPORTS REPORTER

Compared to his teammates, Rajin Saleh's batting average in the one-day game is quite decent. However, the stockily-built middle-order batsman's is still not a permanent fixture in the side.

After disappointing in the first two games against Sri Lanka at Bogra, the national selectors retained him in the squad but only gave him a chance in the fourth match of the series against Kenya when the home team had already confirmed series victory with an unassailable 3-0 lead.

But the 24-year old Sylhet right-hander, who has an average of 21.90 in his previous 33 encounters, grabbed the opportunity with both hands and became only the third batsman in the country after Mehrab Hossain and Mohammad Ashraful to make a one-day hundred with a scintillating unbeaten 108-run knock. It is also the highest individual score in the shorter-version for Bangladesh.

The day belonged to Saleh as he pulled off almost everything that he attempted. With the scoreboard reading 62 for 3 the opener, who replaced Javed Omar in the match, not only kept his nerve to finish the game but also produced some quality shots which is not a common feature of his batting.

"No doubt it is my best innings because the first century is always special. I was included in the playing side after a five-match gap, that's why I tried my best and thankfully I was successful," said the soft-spoken Rajin.

"I never wasted time when I was out of action. I always believe that only hard work can help me to get back my place," explained Rajin about his strategy towards success.

He was excited with his comeback hundred but he was especially happy because his efforts had helped Bangladesh to an emphatic victory. "The hundred was never in mind during my stay at the middle because my main concern was to help my team. It was especially satisfactory for me that I was able to finish the game by batting through," he added.

Rajin agreed that luck also favoured him to make his maiden one-day hundred. "It is not unlikely to see one or two chances in a big knock and it was also the case for me. I thoroughly enjoyed the day in the middle," he said adding that his mid-wicket boundary against pace-man Tony Suji on his way to hundred was his best shot in the 113-ball 108 unbeaten innings.

### SPORTS REPORTER



When Bangladesh started their campaign against Kenya there was a clear feeling among the cricket fraternity that 'it is your duty to win as you are now a Test playing nation and a defeat would ruin your reputations.'

And after twelve days during which Habibul Bashar's men completed a comprehensive 4-0 series whitewash of their once perennial East African rivals not only enhanced their reputation but showed, emphatically, just how far they had pulled ahead of Kenya. There were few things better than the manner in which Bangladesh clinched a seven-wicket victory in the fourth and final game at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The home team finished their job from where they had started it with a record-breaking 131-run victory at Bogra where they achieved two one-day milestones by scoring their highest total (301) as well as man-

aging the biggest ever margin of victory.

In the second game they had another achievement, a nine-wicket success, which was their biggest victory in terms of wickets, but they fell short of their own lofty goals in the third game as they got a narrow 20-run victory.

And yesterday, even after an early hiccup, Rajin Saleh and Habibul Bashar got together to post an unbroken fourth wicket stand to complete the 232-run chase in style and in the process also set the highest ever partnership for any wicket for Bangladesh.

Rajin Saleh staged a brilliant

comeback, as he became only the third batsman from the country to reach the magical three-figure mark (108 not out). Bashar too, kept his word that they will come down hard on their opponents in the last game, with a well-made 64.

Although Bangladesh completed a series whitewash for the first time in their history there was no feeling of complacency amongst the players as everyone seemed focused on achieving far loftier goals in the near future.

"It would be really great if we can carry the tempo into our next home assignment against Australia next month. We know how tough it would

be against the World champions but if we can carry the good work to the next series, I think it will be a real success for us," said Bashar.

The 33-year old Bangladesh captain, who made his tenth fifty after a 20 match hiatus and executed a straight six against Tanmay Mishra to finish the game in style, said that it was not easy for them to pull off a clean sweep against their rivals.

"We came into this series right after the one against Sri Lanka, so it was not easy for the guys and you are all aware about the prevalent hot and humid conditions. I think that the Kenyan bowling was also good. If we take all the matters into account you must say that we have played a very good series," explained Bashar.

"We have lot of positive things in the series but at the end what made me most happy that at least one player carried his knock through the innings. Rajin played brilliantly to achieve it. We have a problem in that some of our top order batsmen got a handsome score but fail to finish the game," said a delighted Bashar.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR  
 TEAM BANGLADESH: The victorious Bangladesh team pose for a group photo after completing a 4-0 series whitewash against Kenya at the Fatullah Stadium on Saturday.

## What to WATCH

### TEN Sports

Sri Lanka vs Pakistan  
 First Test, Day One  
 Live at 10:30 am

### ESPN

New Zealand vs West Indies

3rd Test, Day Two

Live at 4:30 am

South Africa vs Australia

2nd Test, Day Three

Live at 2:00 pm

### STAR Sports

English Premier Football League

Charlton Athletic vs Newcastle United

Live at 7:00 pm

Man United vs Birmingham City

Live at 9:00 pm

## DAY'S EVENT

7th National Cricket League

Four-Day Matches (Day Three)

Rajshahi vs Dhaka

Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium

Sylhet vs Khulna

Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium

Barisal vs Chittagong

Venue: Barisal Divisional Stadium

# Aussies grab initiative

## Cricket

AFP, Durban

Australia claimed two early wickets after Michael Hussey guided them to a competitive total on the second day of the second Test against South Africa at Kingsmead here on Saturday.

South Africa were 43 for two at tea in reply to Australia's first innings total of 369.

South African captain Graeme Smith's poor form against Australia continued when Brett Lee had him caught at third slip for nought off the first ball of the innings.

Herschelle Gibbs was dropped by Australian captain Ricky Ponting at second slip off Lee two balls later but made only nine before he had his off stump knocked out of the ground by Michael Kasprovicz.

Hussey held the Australian innings together, making 75 as the world champions added a valuable 141 runs to their overnight total of 228 for five on a pitch which Ponting described as two-paced with variable bounce.

Hussey and Shane Warne added 56 for the eighth wicket, with Warne the aggressor in making 36 off 31 balls with six fours and a six, then Hussey was the dominant partner in a last wicket stand of 42

with Stuart Clark, who made 13 not out.

It took Hussey 135 balls to reach his fifty but he faced only 20 more deliveries in adding another 25 before he was last man out, leg before wicket to Jacques Kallis when he padded up just outside his off stump.

Hussey hit ten fours and a six. He seldom looked like getting out, although his hooked six off Makhaya Ntini only just cleared Shaun Pollock on the fine leg boundary.

Ntini and Andre Nel took three wickets each, with Nel dismissing overnight batsman Andrew Symonds and Adam Gilchrist in successive overs. Symonds batted with four stitches in his upper lip after being hit by a bouncer from Ntini Friday.

The normally attack-minded Symonds took 83 minutes and 53 balls to make 13 before he was leg before wicket to Nel immediately after the morning drinks break. Only 25 runs had been added in an hour.

Gilchrist was dropped on nought at point by Ashwell Prince four balls later but the lapse was not costly, as Gilchrist flashed at a lifting ball from Nel in the next over

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3