

## Rafique injured

TIGERCRICKET.COM, undated

Mohammed Rafique was carried off the field with a broken nose during the second one-day international against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club yesterday.

Rafique was hurt when he collided with Zimbabwe's top-scorer Vusi Sibanda (93 not out) in his follow-through. The impact left the veteran Bangladesh spinner bleeding from the nose and he was immediately taken to a hospital for X-ray, according to team management sources.

## B. League now from March 2

SPORTS REPORTER

Country's inaugural Professional Football League -- the B. League -- suffered another delay as the organisers yesterday decided to start it in March instead of February 15.

The 11-team competition -- with Sylhet DSA's withdrawal now official -- will now kick off on March 2 as Dhaka-based Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra and Mohammedan Sporting Club, Chittagong Abahani and Mohammedan and Khulna Abahani appealed to defer the league.

Dhaka Mohammedan, however, were the only team to appeal in paper, which reached the federation yesterday.

The executive committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) took the decision in its adjourned meeting which lasted about ten minutes yesterday.

BFF's marketing agent Leisure

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JUST A WORRIED LOOK? Padded up and next man in, Old DOHS captain Akram Khan was having a hard time watching his side slump against Victoria in the Premier League at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

## Tigers felled at Harare

### Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Zimbabwe bounced back strongly to level the four-match series at 1-all when they inflicted an eight-wicket defeat on Bangladesh in the second one-day international at the Harare Sports Club ground yesterday.

After a comfortable 45-run victory in the first game, Bangladesh's brittle batting surfaced again as they were bowled out for 153 in 46 overs after skipper Habibul Bashar decided to bat.

Opener Vusi Sibanda struck an unbeaten 93 as Zimbabwe reached 156 losing the wickets of Terence Duffin and Hamilton Masakadza with nearly 15 overs to spare.

It was Zimbabwe's best performance in more than a year that put an end to their 13-match losing streak while it was the first time that the Tigers have lost an ODI after nine wins in a row, seven of which came against Zimbabwe.

Lanky paceman Christopher Mpofu started the carnage in the Bangladesh innings removing openers Shahriar Nafees (1) and Mehrab Hossain (2) before third seamer Gary Brent joined the party, tearing apart the visitors' middle-order with figures of 4-30.

Veteran Mohammad Rafique, however, salvaged some pride for

the Tigers as his 41-run knock and a 56-run eighth wicket stand with wicketkeeper Mashfiqur Rahim enabled Bangladesh to recover from a precarious 81-7.

Rafique smote five fours and a six in 49 deliveries while Mashfiqur scored second best 27 off 73 balls.

It was not easy to know the details about the match in Zimbabwe but the team sources confirmed that there was nothing wrong with the pitch, rather it was poor batting which caused Bangladesh's humiliating defeat.

The defeat issued a warning that it would not be an easy task for Habibul Bashar's men to fulfil their dream of beating them in their own den.

Following Bangladesh's convincing first match success, many believed that the visitors were going to avenge their 3-2 series defeat in July-August last year heavily but they got a wakeup call by badly losing the second game.

There is no doubt that poor batting was fully responsible for the disaster but the question was also raised whether the toss was also raised.

Dashing batsman Aftab Ahmed (24 off 40 balls) and Sakib Al Hasan (22 off 34 balls) got starts but couldn't convert their innings to big scores to give a platform for a big total. Then skipper Habibul Bashar, who made a duck after career best 78 in the first game, dragged the most successful Zimbabwe paceman Gary Brent's delivery into stumps to almost kill the visitors' hope.

quality paceman like Mashrafe bin Mortaza and Shahadat Hossain at their disposal.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed was also surprised by the team's decision to bat first against Zimbabwe in their own soil.

"Honestly speaking, I was also surprised by the decision because of the past records," said the former national skipper without elaborating.

"It was not easy to know what actually happened but I was informed that the pitch was good for batting. What I also learned was that most of the batsmen skied the ball to return to the pavilion," said Faruque.

Meanwhile, selector Golam Nawshir Prince is accompanying the team in Harare.

In the recent matches, the two southpaw openers Nafees and Mehrab at least ensured a good start but this was not the case on Tuesday as lanky paceman Mpofu removed them with the scoreboard reading on 5 runs.

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## Victoria crush DOHS

Mohammedan-Sonargaon match tied

SPORTS REPORTER



Victoria handed Old DOHS a morale-sapping nine-wicket defeat while Mohammedan and Sonargaon played out a tie on an action-packed day of the Kai-Altech Premier League yesterday.

With all three matches being curtailed due to heavy fog, Bangladesh Biman endured a thrilling chase from Young Pegasus and won by a run at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium.

At BKSP, Mohammedan opener Rashedul Haque carved eight boundaries and a six to hit 76. He was supported by Indian batsman Sandeep Sharma who struck a quickfire 33.

Earlier, Mohammedan captain Sabir Khan put the under-pressure DOHS into bat after the match, like the other two on the day, started two hours late.

Javed Omar played a typical anchor role as his 74 off 93 balls gave Biman the launching pad. Discarded Tigers all-rounder Forhad Reza struck five fours and a six in his 30-ball 37.

Pegasus lost early wickets but in-form opener Rabul Karim and national vice-captain Shahriar Nafees' younger brother Iftekhar Naim stuck around to score 46 and 44 respectively. Young Naim hit six boundaries in his 52-ball essay.

With eight needed off the final over, tail-enders Fahim Muntasir and Mahbubul Alam crashed Manjur through the in-field but failed to find the fence, settling for only two. With three needed off the final ball, Mahbubul again went after Manjur, but only collected two runs to secure a point.

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