

**Mashrafe scare for Tigers**

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
 An injury to pace ace Mashrafe Bin Mortaza gave a scare to the Bangladesh team ahead of their all-important Grameenphone Tri-nation Cup final against Sri Lanka today.  
 But after a scan on the injured left knee at a local hospital immediately after he complained, it looks as if Bangladesh could well go into the match with Mashrafe taking the newball.  
 "The scan revealed no serious damages but there was swelling in the left knee. He has been asked to ice the area and hopefully he will be ready for tomorrow (Friday)," informed chief selector Rafiqul Alam last night.

During the last practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium nets in Mirpur, Mashrafe stopped halfway through his run-up and complained of pain on his left knee. After the team physiotherapist Michael Henry took a look, he was immediately taken for the scan.

The Narail Express has been outstanding with ball and bat in the past twelve months and the Tigers would sorely miss him if the injury does not improve and he fails the fitness test this morning.



OH NO! Bangladesh team's physiotherapist Michael Henry (L) takes a look at paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's left knee (R) during training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

**Mahela's men ready**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene said that his team were ready to put aside their disappointing defeat to Bangladesh in the last group match when they meet the spirited hosts in the final of the tri-nation ODI tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.  
 The Lankan skipper was also not much concerned with his top order batsmen's performance as well as his own poor showing with the bat.  
 "Not really (worried about lack of runs from the top order). As I had said before considering the challenges that we have been given, I think they did a good job. We had one bad game after a long time. This can happen in cricket. We just need to pull our socks up. We have quality players and I am sure that they

will be up and ready for the big match," replied Jayawardene when asked whether he was concerned about his top order.  
 There was a lot of talking about the pitch and the weather and that is why many thought that the toss would be important for the teams but Jayawardene was not ready to focus too much on these issues.  
 "It all depends on how the morning stands and how the preparation has been for the wicket. Any wicket or any game is a challenge and no wicket is perfect. We like challenges but I just hope that the toss doesn't become a factor because it is very unfair. We should be playing a match where there is good competition between bat and ball," he said.

Praising the Tigers, Jayawardene said that the people in Sri Lanka would realise the situation why they lost the match against Bangladesh for second time after a four-wicket defeat in Bogra in 2006.  
 "It's not something

unusual. People realise that we have been beaten by a team that played better cricket than us on the day. Credit should go to them," said the Lankan skipper when asked about reactions in his country after Wednesday's five-wicket defeat.

"Some of the Bangladesh players had great games, Mortaza (Masrafe) in bowling and Shakib (Al Hasan) in batting and we made a lot of mistakes and when you come across performances like Mortaza and Shakib's on such a day you are bound to lose. It was a bad day at office," he opined.

The right-handed batsman was also not bothered with his lack of form.

"I'm comfortable although I know that the big runs are not there. Unfortunately I have had a couple of good balls and got out. I am trying to stay longer at the wicket and working hard like I have been for the last ten years," said a confident Jayawardene.

**Opportunity beckons for Bangladesh**

**BISHWAJIT ROY**

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons gave a long look at the pitch prior to his charges' practice session ahead of the today's tri-nation final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

It's however the same surface where Bangladesh pulled off the scintillating five-wicket victory over their fellow finalists Sri Lanka in the last league match to confirm the final berth.

Siddons would definitely love to see his captain Mohammad Ashraful call the toss correctly again to allow his bowlers to take the early advantage in the foggy conditions.

The Australian however was more concerned with his poor top order batting and it seemed that the Tigers coach was well aware with the fact that it would be unwise to expect special efforts in every match like Shakib Al Hasan and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza did in the last league match to achieve a tough challenge.

Rather there would be need for all the players to play their part and thus respond as a team if the Tigers want to rewrite history by winning the tri-nation tournament as previous record

suggests that the Bangladesh goes into long hibernation after one good win.

Which was the reason why despite the victory the Bangladesh coach sounded cautious with the poor top order batting and the poor running between wickets, which has become a new headache for the team. It's too tough for any team to afford the luxury of two to three run outs in every match and the way Tamim Iqbal fell victim it was really ridiculous.

"May be it happened because of nervousness but we should ensure one thing that we will not lose wickets in the first 20 overs," said Siddons while talking with the reporters yesterday.

The Bangladesh coach however was optimistic about his team's chance in the final. "Hope everything will fall into place tomorrow (Friday)," he hoped.

On the eve of the final the question remains: can Bangladesh win two big matches on a trot to make a history? And Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful had to face the harsh question whether they will take a long leisure after a fine win against Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

"We are not thinking about what we did in the last match rather we want to take it as a new game. It has not happened that we have won

**A rare incident**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

When the Sri Lankan cricketers got off from a local transport at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, everybody present there was taken by surprise.

They were supposed to turn up on a designated bus but the Lankan players got down from a double-decker bus, a rare incident that had hardly happened in Bangladesh's cricket history.

It was then learnt that in the absence of driver someone without enough driving skill took the bus from Sheraton Hotel to the street and immediately made a slight clash with another vehicle which scared the Lankan cricketers who hurriedly got off the bus and boarded a local bus.

Fortunately the Lankan cricketers were not too much disturbed by the unprecedented incident rather they looked happy while getting off the bus.

"There have been a couple of mishaps but nothing serious. The driver didn't turn up



Members of the Sri Lankan cricket team ride a double-decker public transport after the players found out that the wrong person was driving their team bus as they left the hotel on way to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.



**Did U Know?**  
 David Houghton captained Zimbabwe in their inaugural Test match against India at Harare in 1992-93. He made 121 and 41 not out in that match. In 1996 he became coach of the national side.



**Virender Sehwag**  
 (Explosive India opener)  
 "I have not seen an attacking batsman of his calibre in my career. The game of cricket has lost a great player. Crucially enough, Australia have lost a rare cricketer."  
 After Matthew Hayden's retirement.



**BTV**  
 Bangladesh v Sri Lanka  
 Tri-Nation Cup Final  
 Live from 9:00am  
**STAR Cricket**  
 Australia v South Africa  
 1st One-Day International  
 Live from 9:15am  
**ESPN**  
 Sportscenter India  
 Sports News  
 Live at 8:30pm



**Tri-Nation Cup (Final)**  
 Bangladesh v Sri Lanka  
 Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur  
 Citycell B. League  
 Rahmatganj v Ctg Abahani  
 Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium  
 Time: 4:00pm

**Dhaka on top, Ctg's 1st win**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Dhaka shot to the top of the Women's National Cricket League with a massive 202-run victory over hapless Sylhet at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

In the other match of the day, Chittagong claimed their first win after trouncing Barisal by 69 runs at the Dharmondi Women's Complex.

In Chittagong, Dhaka captain Ayesha Akhtar cracked 90 with the help of six boundaries. She was last out and although she missed her century, Ayesha ensured her team posted a massive 265-9 from 50 overs. The Sylhet bowlers were errant, giving away 65 runs as extras including 54 wides.

In reply, Sylhet were bundled out for 53 runs from just 34.1 overs with only Shahnaz Parvin top-scoring with 14. Shamima Akhtar took four

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

**Niaz tastes 1st defeat**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh Grandmaster Niaz Murshed suffered his first defeat in the 7th Parsvnath International Open Chess Tournament in Delhi, India when he went down to local player Vishnu Prasanna yesterday.

Niaz, who defeated Shantharam of India in the fifth round, has four points after six rounds with three wins and two draws.

Bangladeshi player Debaraj Chatterjee also had four points while Mohammad Ali and FIDE Master Mohammed Javed were level on 3.5 points.

In other sixth round games, Javed beat Shivesh Mishra of India, Debaraj lost to Indian IM Sudhakar Babu and Ali lost to MS Thej Kumar of India.

**Enamul's high five**

**SPORTS REPORTER**



Farashganj recorded their biggest ever victory in the top flight of domestic soccer when Enamul Haque fired five goals in the riversiders' 7-0 thrashing of visiting Khulna Abahani in the Citycell B. League yesterday.

The Khulna outfit, who arrived in Dhaka in the afternoon by a detour after being halted for hours at the river port due to heavy fog, continued their miserable run and slumped to 14 successive defeats after beginning the league with a victory.

Farashganj topped their old-Dhaka rivals Rahmatganj in the table with 20 points, thanks to their fifth win, while Khulna Abahani remained bottom of the table with three points.

Farashganj began brightly in the embarrassingly one-

sided affair at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but their marksmen failed to use the series of chances against the understrength side, who had conceded 41 goals in their previous 14 outings.

Enamul, discarded from the national team after his first tour last year, finally broke the deadlock in the 36th minute when he shot home inside from the box off a deflection of Khulna defender Shahin.

Leading 1-0 at the break, Farashganj opened the floodgate after resumption when Enamul helped on a pass by Kenyan player Dominic to Shahed who doubled the lead in the 48th minute.

Enamul then sped past Shahin with a through from Rajib to score his second in the very next minute and completed the sixth hatrick of the league in the 62nd when he beat an offside trap to finish a move that began from their own half.

The others to have scored hatrick in the ongoing compe-

tion are Sheikh Russel veteran Alfaz, Brothers' Kenyan striker Nicodemus who got the treble in the first leg while playing for Arambagh, Mohammedan's Nigerian goal poacher Bukola, Emily of leaders Abahani and Rahmatganj's Ugandan forward Idris. All the hatricks except the one by Bukola have been scored against Khulna Abahani.

Enamul made it 5-0 with a spectacular drive from the top of the box just a minute after completing the treble and signed off with his fifth goal, the highest by one player in a match this season, in the 70th minute when he drove in low off a Dominic backpass. Enamul now has 14 goals this season including his five in the Federation Cup.

Emily had notched four goals against Khulna Abahani earlier in the league.

Shahed's second goal, made it 7-0 one minute from the final whistle as Farashganj emulated Mohammedan's 7-0 defeat of Muktiyoddha in the biggest win of the season.



Farashganj's five-goal hero Enamul Haque (R) goes past Khulna Abahani goalkeeper Nahid during their Citycell B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

**Barisal fly high**

**SPORTS REPORTER**



A tight one-wicket win over Sylhet kept Barisal in top position of the National Cricket League one-day competition yesterday.

The southern division now have 12 points after eight rounds, two ahead of defending champions Rajshahi and Chittagong.

Both sides also won their matches; Rajshahi beat Dhaka by eleven runs at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium while Chittagong walked past Khulna by five wickets in BKSP.

Chittagong captain Nafis Iqbal kept up his good form with an unbeaten half-century that took his runs tally past the 300-mark. His teammate Tariq Aziz tops the bowling charts with sixteen wickets but the one-time national paceman went wicketless.

Yesterday's matches were also curtailed due to heavy fog in the morning with the worst hit being the Khulna-Chittagong tie that was reduced to 25-overs-a-side.

**BARISAL-SYLHET**

Opting to field after fog delayed the game by an hour at the Dharmondi Cricket Stadium, Barisal left-arm spinners Tariqul Islam and Sajju Dutta took three wickets each as Sylhet were bowled out for 188 in 41.3 overs.

Imtiaz Hossain blasted an 80-ball 65 with ten boundaries, aided by Golam Rahman's 42 off 55 balls. They added 90 for the second wicket but once

that wicket fell, Barisal chipped away with wickets.

After Barisal were wobbling at 69 for three, Nasir Hossain struck a crucial 36 off 55 balls without a boundary. He added 65 runs for the fifth wicket with Raisul Islam who made 27.

In the end it was down to Barisal's bowling heroes Tariqul and Sajju to take them home and they did it off the game's last ball.

**CHITTAGONG-KHULNA**

Nafis Iqbal blazed five boundaries in his 42-ball unbeaten 52 that took his side to victory with one ball to spare in the 25-overs-a-side game.

The captain's work was made easy when Ashraful Hossain and Arman Hossain added 65 runs in just 9.4 overs. Only Murad Khan took three wickets for Khulna.

Earlier, Mukhtar Ali took four for 22 as Khulna struggled to keep the runs flowing.

They were stopped at 146-9 from 25 overs with Amit Mazumder making 51 off 45 balls.

**RAJSHAHI-DHAKA**

It was cloudy too in Fatullah and the game only began at the stroke of noon. Rajshahi rode on man-of-the-match Farhad Hossain's 79 to post 155-7 from 32 overs. The right-hander struck a six and seven boundaries in his 88-ball knock.

Elias Sunny, Arafat Sunny and Marshall Ayub all took two wickets each.

Dhaka found it hard to score the runs as only Shamsur Rahman struck 40 but the rest simply failed.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

**Start of a new era**  
**First Aus-SA ODI today**

**Cricket**

**CRICINFO, undated**

This really has been a season of evolution in Australian cricket. For the past 16 years the sight of Australia crushing whoever visited for Tests was as much a fixture of the Australian summer as the one-day tri-series, which lasted nearly three decades. Now both eras have ended. Friday's ODI at the MCG is the first of a five-match series against South Africa, after which New Zealand will visit separately for the same number of games.

The three-team format was stale. It was a hangover from the 1980s and early 1990s, when there was far less cricket on offer and fans would gladly watch two visiting teams go head to head to get their international fix. Now, in the era of future tours programmes and matches all year round, there will be no more clashes between neutral sides and Ricky Ponting is pleased.

"We and probably the public to a certain degree over the last few years have probably been screaming out to have this sort of series that we've got at the moment," Ponting said on

the eve of the first game. "We've identified with crowds and even viewership on the television that the triangular series had probably reached its use-by date."

The format will not be the only alteration this season. Ponting's men -- and spectators -- must also get used to the new rule that allows the batting team to choose when one of the three PowerPlays takes effect. It is a regulation that has been used in domestic one-day games but never in an ODI in Australia.

It is such a change that Ponting has had to ask for tactical advice from the younger members of his squad, men who have spent more time in their state sides than in Australian colours. However, players like David Hussey, Cameron White and Ben Hilfenhaus are likely to become more permanent fixtures in the one-day side as Australia prepare to defend their World Cup title in 2011.

"It's about that time of our preparations when we do start looking ahead to the World Cup," Ponting said. "We were talking this morning, I think there's about 80 games of one-day cricket for us to play between now and the World Cup. (There's an) opportunity to give

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6