

## Players sold to IPL

AFP, Goa

List of the 17 cricketers bought by franchises at the second auction of the Indian Premier League yesterday:

- Andrew Flintoff (ENG) - Chennai Super Kings, Kevin Pietersen (ENG) - Bangalore Royal Challengers 1.55 million dollars
- Jean-Paul Duminy (RSA) - Mumbai Indians 950,000 dollars
- Tyron Henderson (RSA) - Rajasthan Royals 650,000 dollars
- Mashrafe Mortaza (BAN) - Kolkata Knight Riders 600,000 dollars
- Ravi Bopara (ENG) - Kings XI Punjab 450,000 dollars
- Shaun Tait (AUS) - Rajasthan Royals 375,000 dollars
- Owais Shah (ENG) - Delhi Daredevils, Paul Collingwood (ENG) - Delhi Daredevils 275,000 dollars

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

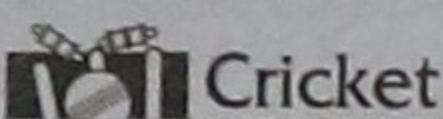


PHOTO: STAR

IT TAKES A LARGE ARM-SPAN TO RAKE IN \$600000! Bangladesh paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza gestures during a photo-shoot at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Friday. After an intense bidding war, Mashrafe was snapped up by Shahrukh Khan's Kolkata Knight Riders for an astonishing \$600,000.

## \$600000 Mashrafe

Ashraful also joins IPL



AGENCIES, Goa

England's Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff joined the Indian Premier League on Friday as its most expensive players after being auctioned for 1.55 million dollars each.

Pietersen was bought by liquor baron Vijay Mallya's Bangalore Royal Challengers at a televised auction in his popular holiday resort at Goa, while Flintoff went for the same price to Chennai Super Kings.

Both players broke the existing record of Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who was purchased by the Chennai franchise for 1.50 million dollars last year.

Pietersen and Flintoff will however receive only half their money, as England players are available for just the first three weeks of the lucrative six-week Twenty20 tournament.

Tournament rules stipulate that payments are made on a pro-rata basis for matches played. This year's contracts are for a two-year period.

"A player like Kevin is a great buy for us," said a beaming Mallya, whose team finished

seventh out of eight teams in the inaugural edition of the tournament last year.

"He is one of the most explosive batsmen in the world and will bring a lot of class to our team."

Indian cricket board secretary N. Srinivasan, who owns the Chennai Super Kings, said he was delighted to have all-rounder Flintoff on board.

"Twenty20 cricket is a game for all-rounders and Flintoff is one of the best in the business," said Srinivasan, whose team entered last year's final where they lost to the Shane Warne-led Rajasthan Royals.

But, the most dramatic sale at the auction was that of Tiger's speedster Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's. Mashrafe who was the first player up for sale from Pool F was not bided for initially but just before the hammer went down, Kolkata made an offer at his base price of \$50,000.

Kings XI Punjab entered the race, competing against Kolkata for Mashrafe. The bids spiralled slowly towards \$400,000 and when the auctioneer asked Punjab if they want to bid \$410,000, Priety Zinta nodded. With teams largely sticking to raises of \$10,000, the bidding went on and on and on. Kolkata finally touched the \$500,000 mark, which enticed Punjab to go

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## Thakurgaon stun Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

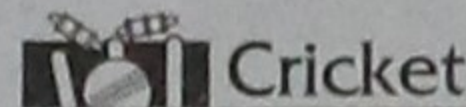
After the initial goals galore, normalcy returned to the Citycell Women's National Football Championship with five goals in two matches yesterday.

And surprisingly, Thakurgaon who crashed to a 14-0 defeat in the Buriganga zone opening match two days earlier, bounced back in the group stage when they defeated hosts Dhaka 2-1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Mousmi shot the visitors ahead after 12 minutes while Dhaka super star Pinky equalised in the 35th but the north-Bengal got a winner through Jafara in the 44th to stay in contention for a berth in the finals.

The other match between Tangail and Madaripur ended in a 1-1 draw at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur. Tangail took the lead in the third minute through Binu but Sheul levelled just with five minutes.

## Unbelievable!



BISHWAJIT ROY

When the news first broke, Mashrafe bin Mortaza's first reaction was astonishment, which goes to explain his first words. "This is totally unexpected," said the man who has been dubbed the Narail Express by adulating fans.

"The most I thought it (the bidding price) would go is 70,000 dollars. But never in my dreams did I think I would fetch 600,000 dollars! It's unbelievable," said the excited Bangladesh fast bowler expressing his delight after a sensational bidding war in the Indian Premier league (IPL) auction in Goa saw him snapped up by Bollywood superstar Shahrukh Khan's Kolkata Knight Riders yesterday.

The man was over the moon and why not? The Bangladesh vice-captain has just landed the biggest deal in the country's sports history. And if anyone deserves it, the man known for his brave-heart attitude definitely does.

"The amount is no joke. I never thought I could earn such a big amount of money by playing cricket. But it's also a great honour. Aside from the money, just think, I will be playing under a great captain (Sourav Ganguly) and be surrounded by my favourite players like Ricky Ponting, Chris Gayle and Brendon McCullum," said Mashrafe adding with a smile: "And there is

also my favourite actor (Shahrukh Khan)".

The paceman was showered with greetings once the news broke and his parents even broke into tears of joy at their beloved son's amazing success: "My father was just crying while talking over phone from my home district (Narail)," said Mashrafe, who had showed the courage to refuse a US\$150,000 negotiation proposal from the same team to try his luck in the bidding.

It was a busy day at Mashrafe's simple Mirpur apartment, which he shares with his wife. And the one question that was on everyone's lips was: is there any special plan with the huge money?

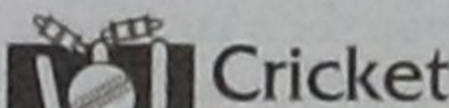
"It still feels surreal to me", the smiling Mashrafe responded.

"I want to thank my family, friends and the board because of their support throughout my injury-hit career but I must also thank Yuvraj Singh who, I think, made it possible. Nothing would have been better than if I could play in his side. However, Kolkata Knight Riders is my favourite team," he said.

"I have lots of friends and fans in India and that's why I am excited. I love being there and it is a pleasure to play in India. Kolkata is just next-door and I know how much people there admire Bangladeshi cricketers. Everything is perfect for me. And the auction is over now and my challenge is to go over there and prove my worth," he added.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## Bangladesh lose opener



SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan made a flying start in the Grameen Phone tri-nation women's cricket tournament beating Bangladesh by seven wickets at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium (SCS) in Bogra yesterday.

Winning the toss and electing to bowl first, the Pakistani bowlers dominated throughout the Bangladesh's innings and bowled the hosts out for a small total of 109 in 46.1 overs.

Only four Bangladeshi batters -- opener Shathira Zakir (16), skipper Salma Khatun (16), Lata Mandal (26) and Shohely Akter (22) -- reached double digits in the face of some strict bowling by the Pakistan bowlers.

Javeria Khan claimed three wickets for 20 runs and Qanita Jalil captured two wickets for 17 runs while Almas Akram, Sana Mir, Sajida Shah and skipper Urooj Mumtaz took one apiece.

In reply, Pakistan easily reached the target in 33.4 overs for the loss of just three wickets.

Opener Nain Abidi, who was later adjudged woman of the match, top scored with 65 runs off 96 balls with 11 fours while Bismah Mahroof and Sajida Shah added 12 and 17 runs respectively.

Shuktara Rahman and Champa Chakma grabbed one wicket each for 6 and 12 runs respectively.

Bangladesh captain Salma Khatun said that her team fell in a crisis from the beginning.

"Basically our promising batters couldn't play well, which is the reason why we collapsed to such a small total," said Salma.

When asked about the gains from the match, Salma added, "We don't say that we are satisfied since we lost the match but we will have to wait for the upcoming matches and I hope our girls will do better in the next matches".

Pakistan team captain Urooj Mumtaz Khan was satisfied with her team's performance and admitted that her team worked very hard to bowl the hosts out for 109, despite dropping two catches but believed Pakistan could have won the match by a larger margin.

"Yes, it is a great rehearsal for us before the World Cup where Sri Lanka is also in the pool. Bangladesh is also a very good side and they played very well in the last Asia Cup. This is the first victory of the tournament and we will get another warm up match tomorrow with Sri Lanka and hopefully we will win," said a contented Urooj at the post-match press conference in Bogra.

When asked about the cricket lovers of

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Komol salvages Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER



spot for the second time in the B. League when they edged their Chittagong counterparts by a solitary goal yesterday.

Abdul Baten Komol notched the match winner in the 67th minute at the Bangabandhu National Stadium as Mohammedan reached 38 points after 18 matches, nine behind Abahani who have already sealed the championship with a match in hand.

The Black and Whites went three points clear of nearest rivals Sheikh Russel while Chittagong Mohammedan

remained at fifth place with 27 points.

In the day's earlier match, Farashganj defeated Muktijoddha also 1-0 with the old-Dhaka side's leading scorer Enamul Haque separating the teams on the hour.

Enamul scored his 11th league goal when he pounced home after Mamun controlled a freekick by Khokon Das with his chest and poked the ball near the goalmouth.

Farashganj pushed their collection to 26 points with seven wins while Muktijoddha's relegation fears remained as they stuck to second-from-bottom with ten points, just five ahead of Khulna Abahani.

Mohammedan, who were also runners-up of the inaugural B. League, were supposed to play this match -- Chittagong Mohammedan's

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



A combo picture shows, (L) Pakistan's Nain Abidi playing on the leg side during her match-winning innings of 65 against Bangladesh at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday. (R) Cricket lovers turned out in droves to support the Bangladeshi ladies in the tri-nation opener.

PHOTO: COURTESY

## Abahani visit PM's new residence

SPORTS REPORTER

B. League champions Abahani booters and officials yesterday afternoon called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her new residence Jamuna.

Sheikh Hasina is a patron of the club, founded by her late brother Sheikh Kamal, and sent flowers and sweets to the club tent after Abahani sealed their championship for the second successive season on Thursday night.

It was also the Prime Minister's first day at Jamuna where the members of the team congratulated her and presented flower bouquet.

Abahani chairman Salman F Rahman, director-in-charge Col (retd) Kazi Shahed Ahmed and director Kazi Nabil Ahmed also accompanied the team.

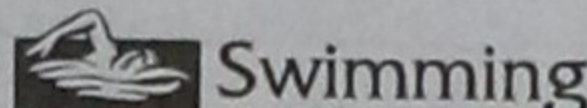
It was learned that club officials told her about different problems of the club including the barriers of becoming a full professional side. They also informed her about the club's wish to build a sports complex at the Dhanmondi ground.



PHOTO: STAR

Two-time B. League champions Abahani footballers and officials present a flower bouquet to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her new residence yesterday.

## Phelps suspended, loses sponsor



IHT, Washington

The Olympic swimming star Michael Phelps, who was photographed inhaling from a marijuana pipe, has lost a major sponsorship deal and has been suspended from competition for three months.

Kellogg, a U.S. food company, said Thursday that it would not renew its contract with Phelps when their deal expires at the end of February. It would not disclose the value of its contract.

Later Thursday, USA Swimming suspended Phelps for three months.

"Michael's most recent behaviour is not consistent with the image of Kellogg," Susanne Norwitz, a spokeswoman for the company, said in a statement.

USA Swimming publicly reprimanded Phelps, who won eight medals at the Beijing Games, temporarily withdrawing its financial support to him and barring him from competition through early May. Phelps receives a monthly stipend of \$1,750 from the organization. The national and world championships will be held in the summer.

"We decided to send a strong message to Michael because he disappointed so many people, particularly the hundreds of thousands

of USA Swimming member kids who look up to him as a role model and hero," the organization said in a statement.

Phelps's agent, Drew Johnson, also released a statement, saying that Phelps accepted and understood the decisions. "He feels bad he let anyone down," the statement said. "He's also encouraged by the thousands of comments he's received from his fans and the support from his many sponsors. He intends to work hard to regain everyone's trust."

Darryl Seibel, a spokesman for the U.S. Olympic Committee, said that USOC officials were willing to work with Phelps to ensure that he does not repeat his misstep.

Kellogg, which has featured Phelps on its Frosted Flakes and Corn Flakes cereal boxes, is the first company to drop Phelps after a British tabloid last weekend published a photograph of him inhaling from a marijuana pipe.

Phelps, 23, admitted that the photo, taken at a student party, was authentic. He subsequently apologized, calling his behaviour "inappropriate."

Several of his sponsors - including Speedo and Omega - have accepted his apology. Others, including Visa and Subway, have not taken a position.

Phelps's actions have already put a dent into his sponsorship money, which some marketing experts say could reach \$100 million in his lifetime.

## Pak-Aus on neutral venue

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan will play Australia in five one-day matches on neutral ground in the Middle East later this year, a top official of PCB said yesterday.

"We have decided to play the five-match one-day series against Australia in Dubai and Abu Dhabi from April 24 to May 7," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt told reporters.

Australia postponed their full Test and one-day tour of the country in March last year.

Lingering security and safety fears prompted Australia to refuse once again to tour Pakistan, forcing the PCB to arrange the rescheduled series at neutral venues in the United Arab Emirates.

Butt said the first two matches will be played in Dubai, while the remaining three will be played in Abu Dhabi.

Pakistan was forced to play their three-match one-day series against the West Indies at Abu Dhabi in November last year.