

## Mashrafe's sudden return

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza made a sudden return to the capital yesterday to visit his ailing mother.

The Bangladesh vice-captain who left Dhaka for Kolkata on Thursday evening reached Mumbai the same night to shoot a commercial for Pepsi as part of promotion for the upcoming Twenty20 World Cup in England. Prior to flying home the paceman also attended a press conference in Kolkata yesterday.

Mashrafe informed The Daily Star that he was yet to sign his contract with the Kolkata Knight Riders. He flies back to Kolkata this afternoon from where he will set off for South Africa along with other members of the team. He is expected to put pen to paper upon his arrival in Cape Town, the base camp of Knight Riders for the billion-dollar event.

"I am home on a very short visit just to see my mother and there is nothing else. I will return to Kolkata tomorrow

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THE QUEEN AND KING: Nazmunnahar Beauty of BJMC (L) and Masudul Karim of Bangladesh Army cross the finish line on way to winning their 100-metre sprints in the 34th UCB National Athletics Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTOS: STAR

## It's Beauty and Masudul

Athletics

SPORTS REPORTER

A new king has taken over the track, but the queen remains the same as Masudul Karim became the fastest man and Nazmunnahar Beauty the fastest woman in the 34th UCB National Athletics Championships which ended yesterday with the same old question hanging: When will modernity come to the country?

In absence of two top sprinters Abu Abdullah and Shamsuddin, who ran away from their camp in Greece last month, the ace Bangladesh Army dasher Masudul regained the crown after a two-year gap as well as achieved a rare feat of 50th national gold medal.

The 31-year-old from Manikganj, who had missed the last national meet due to illness, finished in 10.70s ahead of Emran Bhuiyan of Bangladesh Navy (10.90s) and Golam Mortuza of BKSP (11.00s) in the

day's most attractive event under immense heat at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Masudul was well behind the timing of last year's champion Abdullah who finished in 10.30s and that's why the question was raised whether the absence of two leading sprinters provided him the opportunity to dominate the track as the hurdler-turned-sprinter also reclaimed the 200m crown and the 4x100m relay.

"In their presence I became champion in 100m in 2006 and I have won all the 200m races since 2002 except in 2005 and 2008. Everybody should understand that the world never stops for someone's absence," responded Masudul who has now won five medals in a single championships four times.

He also blasted two leading sprinters for deserting the country and said that it's was great loss ahead of next year's South Asian Games (SAG).

"It's a shame really as both were in service also. I know there are a lot of defi-

ciencies but one can't diminish his country's image. It's a huge loss for our country ahead of the SAG but I am looking forward to leading the sprint team in the biggest regional competition. I feel that we need foreign training," Masudul observed.

The men's 100m was followed by the women's event where it was once again proved that no one could challenge Beauty yet, although her timing declined from last year's national record of 11.60sec.

BJMC's Beauty, who also won the women's 200m gold, won her fifth consecutive 100m title finishing in 11.90s ahead of Shamsunahar Chumki of Ansar & VDP (12.00s) and Israt Jahan Iva of BKSP (12.30s).

"I made a slow start and then went down after reaching the finish line. I have not attended the SAG camps due to my [BA] exams but I came back to the track to prove I am not finished yet," said Beauty after sprinting to glory again.

"It's not true that I kept the supremacy because the young stars are not coming

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## Hannan recalled

BCB names preliminary squad for T20 WC

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday named a 30-man preliminary squad for the ICC Twenty20 World Cup in England this June.

Opening batsman Hannan Sarker has been included in the squad which marked his return to the scene after more than four years. Hannan last played for the Tigers on October 19 in 2004 at Dhaka against New Zealand.

Hannan apart, experienced former national paceman Tareq Aziz also won his place in the preliminary squad from where the 15-man final squad would be announced for the June show-piece event. Both experienced campaigners won the heart of the selectors following their good showings in the ongoing Premier League.

"We thought of two things when forming the squad. There is a need for experience at the top and we also need experience in our attack, that's why we have selected Hannan and Tareq. They have played well throughout the season," said chief selector Rafiqul Alam.

The squad is a combination of experience and youth as several youngsters have also been drawn on the list. Mohammedan batsman Shamsur Rahman, all-rounder Suhrawardi Shuvo, batsman Marshall Ayub, Abahani opener Rony Talukder and all-rounder Nasir Hussain all have been rewarded for their performance since last October.

The selectors however overlooked

Mohammedan left-arm paceman Sajidul Islam and Surjo Torun middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh in the context that they were more suited to the longer version than the slam bang T20.

The selectors were quick to include slow left-armer Abdur Razzak, who has recently been cleared by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to play international cricket.

The chief selector however expressed concern in Bangladesh's ability to produce good players behind the stumps and have included two full time keeper batsmen in addition to the regular Mushfiqur Rahim.

Since Twenty20 games demand all-rounder more than specialised batsman or bowler, the national selectors took this into consideration while selecting the squad.

"Twenty20 cricket demands all-rounders and there is no doubt we have some talented ones out there. And having all-rounders in the side creates an even balance which is very important in the shortest version," said the chief selector.

**SQUAD:** Mohammad Ashraf, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Zunaed Siddique, Roqibul Hassan, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Naeem Islam, Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Raseel, Mehrab Hossain Jr, Imrul Kayes, Mahmud Ullah, Nazmul Hossain, Mahbubul Alam, Rubel Hossain, Dollar Mahmud, Ziaur Rahman, Tarek Aziz Khan, Hannan Sarker, Shamsur Rahman, Md. Sohrawordi, Sahagir Hossain, Marshall Ayub, Md. Mithun, Rony Talukder, Nasir Hossain, Arifat Sunny, Robiul Islam.

## India inch closer

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

India took a big step towards winning their first Test series in New Zealand since 1968 after racking up a 233-run lead early in their second innings of the third Test at Wellington on Saturday.

India were on 51 for one at stumps on the second day after dismissing New Zealand for 197 in reply to the tourists' first innings total of 379.

Pace bowler Zaheer Khan did most of the damage to New Zealand, taking five for 65 with a mixture of swinging full pitched balls and a barrage of shorter deliveries.

New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor, who top-scored with 42, paid tribute to Khan, saying the 30-year-old opening bowler seemed more venomous than usual in taking his seventh five-wicket haul.

"He had an extraordinary on him - looking up at the screen it was his normal speed but he bent his back and hurried the batsmen up a little bit," Taylorsaid.

"He bowled extremely well."

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh was another of India's heroes, bowling 23 consecutive overs at a scoring rate of less than two an over to end with three for 43.

Wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni played a captain's role, taking six catches behind the stumps to support his bowlers on a Basin Reserve pitch which offered more bounce than the flat deck in the drawn second match in Napier.

New Zealand's plan late Friday as India's innings came near an end had been to bat for a day and a half to build a lead that could set them up for a series squaring victory.

The Kiwis had renewed confidence after drawing the second Test in the wake of their 10-wicket drubbing in the first match, but their plans unrav-

elled soon after their opening batsmen came to the crease.

Taylor admitted the odds were against New Zealand turning the match around but added there was still hope.

"If we can come out tomorrow and knock off three or four wickets early on then we give ourselves a big sniff," he said.

"It's very difficult, but we have to have a positive frame of mind into tomorrow."

"There's going to have to be a lot of things go our way but if we get any turn up tomorrow and get some early wickets we are a chance."

There were only limited signs of resistance from New

Zealand, mostly from Taylor before he was given out caught behind by umpire Daryl Harper.

An attempted leg glance off Harbhajan ended in Dhoni's gloves and Harper's finger went up. While replays suggested Taylor did not get bat on ball, the batsman admitted later he had got a faint nick.

Opening batsman Tim McIntosh made a scratchy 32 before he was surprised by a rising short ball from Khan, which ballooned off the top of his bat to Yuvraj Singh at first slip.

Soon after lunch, New

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PHOTO: AFP

India pacer Zaheer Khan sends down a delivery on the second day of the third and final Test against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday.

## Flintoff takes treble

England's maiden series win in WI

Cricket

AFP, St. Lucia

Andrew Flintoff grabbed a hat-trick to lead England to a 26-run victory over West Indies on Friday and a first ever one-day international series triumph in the Caribbean.

Flintoff claimed his hat trick when he removed Denesh Ramdin, Ravi Rampaul and Suleiman Benn off successive balls in the 27th over, before finishing with career-best figures of five wickets for 19 runs from five overs.

His spell swung the match decisively, as England bowled West Indies out for 146 in 28 overs in a match reduced to a 29-over-a-side clash after rain delayed the start of the fifth and final game at the Beausejour Stadium by four hours.

The result meant that England won the

series 3-2.

"It has been a long hard tour and to come out at the end with something is pretty special," said England skipper Andrew Strauss, whose side lost the Test series.

"We would have liked to have won the Test series -- we played some good cricket but kept coming out with nothing."

Strauss also paid tribute to Flintoff who has struggled with injury over the winter.

"Freddie has had a tough tour but he showed his quality today. That is why he is one of the best bowlers in the world because under pressure he can deliver," said the captain.

West Indies captain Chris Gayle said he was disappointed with the result especially after his side had thrown away the first match in Guyana when their coach John Dyson embarrassingly miscalculated the Duckworth-Lewis ruling.

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## Khelaghar & Baridhara's vital wins

SPORTS REPORTER

Khelaghar and Baridhara Dazzlers brightened their chances of promotion after winning vital Super League matches of the First Division Cricket League yesterday.

Khelaghar handed a 48-run defeat to Jatrabari at the Jahangirnagar University ground. With the victory the winners improved their tally to 20 points while Jatrabari remained on 18 points from 14 games.

Niaz hit 53 as Khelaghar scored 193 runs in 50 overs.

In reply, Jatrabari were bundled out for 145. Saker claimed four wickets for 33 runs.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Baridhara registered a 38-run victory over Kalabagan. With the victory Baridhara kept their hope alive by securing 19 points from 14 matches while Kalabagan stayed on 20 points from same number outings.

Baridhara thrived on two half-centuries from Kamrul (81) and Noor Hossain (53) to pile up 256-9 in 50 overs.

In reply, Tareq made 61 runs and Motalleb added 58 but still Kalabagan were bowled out for 218 in 46.5 overs.

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

A four-day regional talent hunt programme sponsored by Grameenphone in collaboration with Special Olympics Bangladesh (SOB) for the intellectually challenged athletes came to an end yesterday at the BKSP Regional Training Centre in Chittagong.

Under the guidance of specially trained coaches, some 161 athletes and officials from nine special schools and other organisations participated in seven disciplines -- swimming, athletics, badminton, bocce, football, table tennis and cricket.

The winners from the regional hunts will participate

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## Hosts group champions

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh became champions in Group A when they beat group rivals Qatar 3-0 in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group IV qualifiers at the National Tennis Complex yesterday.

Bangladesh's Shibu Lal wiped out Qatar's Jabor Al-Mutawa 6-0, 6-0 and Amol Roy beat Abdulla Al-Haji 6-2, 7-5 in their respective singles. In the doubles, Ranjan Ram and Shibu Lal beat Qatar's Jabor Al-Mutawa and Mousa Zayed 6-0, 6-1.

Bangladesh will now join Group B champions to be decided in today's UAE vs Vietnam match in the next phase of Davis Cup later this year.

In other matches, Jordan continued their good run of form by beating Turkmenistan 3-0 and Vietnam outplayed Yemen 3-0. UAE got another walkover against Iraq.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh's Shibu Lal executes a forehand against Jabor Al-Mutawa of Qatar (not in picture) during their Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group-IV match at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.



## Did U Know?

American RA Gonzalez is the oldest player ever to be seeded at Wimbledon at 41 years 45 days in 1969.



## What to WATCH

- TEN Sports**  
South Africa v Australia  
Second ODI  
Live from 2:00pm
- STAR Sports**  
English Premier League  
Everton v Wigan  
Live from 7:55pm  
Primera Liga  
Sporting v Racing  
Live from 2:00am (Monday)
- ESPN**  
English Premier League  
Man United v Aston Villa  
Live from 8:55pm
- NEO Cricket**  
New Zealand v India  
Third Test, Day Four  
Live from 4:00am (Monday)



## TALK TURKEY



## Lionel Messi

(Argentine soccer superstar) "While I don't want to contradict Diego [Maradona], it is impossible to play in La Paz. That's my opinion after playing there and some of my teammates think the same." After his team's 6-1 defeat to Bolivia in the FIFA World Cup qualifier on Wednesday.



- Premier Division Cricket (Super League)**  
Partex v Gazi Tank  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
- Biman v Mohammedan  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
- Abahani v Surjo Torun  
Venue: BKSP, Savar