



STILL WON'T LET IT GO: Ashgabat FC's Dowlit (No. 21) tries to clear the ball against Mohamed Murshid of Sri Lanka Army during their AFC President's Cup Group B qualifier at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Shakib back smiling

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan made a welcome return to top-level cricket with a three-wicket haul in one of two Twenty20 warm-up matches at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

The world's No 1 all-rounder in one-day cricket has been out of action since end of February due to an inflammation at the front of the pelvis within the pubic bone and muscle attachments. The condition is known as Osteitis Pubis (OP) and can cause acute and chronic groin pain.

Chief selector Rafiqul Alam expressed his satisfaction seeing Shakib back in the field. "Actually he has been batting and bowling for the last 15 days in the nets but today he came out to bowl and field. He says he feel okay," said the former national cricketer.

The 22-year-old sounded relieved to be back to cricket after such a long time and was confident of a quick recovery. "It felt good out there. The pain was originally on the right side but it has receded a lot. I have been doing everything in the nets but this is the first time I have bowled in a match situation in over two months," Shakib told TigerCric.com.

"I have to speak to the physio and see when I can bat because that involves running. Hopefully it will be

against the Maharashtra team next week. I am batting in practice however and haven't faced any problems. The rehab programme will continue but I am definitely feeling much better already."

Shakib's left-arm spin accounted for Bangladesh A batsmen Sharifullah, Suharwardi Shuvo and Mahbul Alam Robin in the second Twenty20 tie that the national team won by 49 runs.

Apart from Shakib's return, the two matches gave some good signs for the Tigers including the form of Tamim Iqbal and Syed Rasel, who

picked up five wickets in the two matches.

"Tamim (Iqbal) has been good in every match and (Syed) Rasel looks to be in good form," pointed Rafiq who added that among the two new additions, only Mithun Ali is showing promise, scoring 25 off 20 balls with in the second match.

But the Chittagong left-hander seems to be the only batsman who is scoring big in the 20-over version but Rafiq pointed out the condition of wicket and the players' fitness level.

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PHOTO: STAR  
Bangladesh stars Shakib Al Hasan (R) and Tamim Iqbal (2nd from R) and coach Jamie Siddons (M) watch the proceedings of a warm-up Twenty20 match between Bangladesh and Bangladesh A at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## MCA arrive tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) arrive in the capital tomorrow for a three-week tour.

The day after MCA arrive, they will play three Twenty20 matches from May 17 to 19 against Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Eleven.

Their next destination is Khulna where they three one-day matches against Bangladesh A from May 22 to 25 before moving to Bogra to play the first four-day match from May 28. The second and final four-dayer between the two sides will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from June 3.

Harshad Khadiwale will lead a side that boasts of no Indian internationals.

Bangladesh left-arm spinner Enamul Haque played

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## Ashgabat fell SL Army

SPORTS REPORTER



Ashgabat Football Club overpowered Sri Lanka Army 5-1 in their AFC President's Cup Group B qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The victors were vastly superior to the Lankan army in physique, technique, stamina and proficiency as validated later by Lankan head coach, Shanmugam Pathmanathan. Mirzoyev Arif scored two goals for Ashgabat while Amanov Arslanmyrat, Allaberdiyev Ahmed and Urazov Dayanchgylch netted one each. Skipper Priyankara clinched the lone goal for the Army.

Two minutes after kick off Turkmen midfielder Serdar took a freekick from the left side and an unmarked Arif scored his first goal heading the ball past Lankan custodian Ruwan Fernando.

Ashgabat doubled their lead in the 36th minute after dominating possession for most of the first half.

Left-back Rustam took a long throw-in which deflected off a Lankan defender onto Arif who volleyed it in with his left foot to make it 2-0.

Ashgabat took their two-goal advantage into the break and clearly looked a more potent and dominant side.

There was no let-off for the Army after the break.

Five minutes after resumption the hatrick seeking Arif went on a long sprint along the left flank before unselfishly squaring the ball for his strike partner Amanov who chipped it over a hapless Fernando to make it 3-0 on the night.

But just as the Army were looking like crumbling they were hauled back into it by skipper Priyankara who arrived in the opposition box and took a low ball into the far left corner to salvage a consolation for his side.

With the game over as a contest both sides chose to make substitutions. But it hardly made any difference for Ashgabat as super-sub Urazov lobbed in a through pass from Amanov to make it 4-1 for the team from Turkmenistan in the 74th minute.

And the rout was well and truly complete

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## 'ECB wants to host Pakistan'

PTI, Karachi

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have invited Pakistan to tour there next year instead of the Englishmen travelling to the sub-continent nation as per the ICC Future Tours Programme.

A Pakistan Cricket Board official today said the ECB had invited Pakistan to play four Tests, five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 match in 2010.

"Under FTP England are due to tour Pakistan next year but apparently they feel the best possible solution is that instead we go to England," the official told PTI.

He said that England's decision was apparently prompted due to the security situation in the country.

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## Rajasthan's tense win

AFP, Durban



Munaf Patel bowled a tight last over under pressure as

Rajasthan Royals posted a thrilling two-run victory over Mumbai Indians in an Indian Premier League match at Kingsmead here on Thursday.

Mumbai needed four runs in the final over to achieve a 146-run target, but seamer Patel conceded just one to boost Rajasthan's chances of making it to the semifinals.

Three wickets fell in the last over, including two run-outs.

Skipper Sachin Tendulkar hit a solid 40 off 30 deliveries and Abhishek Nayar an 18-ball 35 to raise Mumbai's hopes of victory following man-of-the-match Shane Warne's triple-strike, but Rajasthan hit back in the closing over.

## Bangalore stay in contention

AFP, Durban

Ross Taylor hit a crucial 46 to steer Royal Challengers Bangalore to an exciting two-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in an Indian Premier League match at Kingsmead here on Thursday.

The New Zealander added 56 for the fourth wicket with Virat Kohli (38) as Bangalore achieved a 130-run target with two balls to spare to keep alive their hopes of qualifying for the last four.

Man-of-the-match Taylor fell in the final over after hitting one six in his sensible 50-

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Former Australian leg-spinner Warne finished with 3-24.

Mumbai's hopes rested on Tendulkar and Sanath Jayasuriya (16), specialist openers batting in the middle order, after three wickets had fallen for 23 runs but skipper Warne removed both the batsmen at the right time.

Delhi lead the eight-team tournament with 16 points

from 10 matches, followed by Chennai (13/11), Rajasthan (13/12), Deccan (12/11), Bangalore (12/12), Mumbai (11/12), Punjab (10/11) and Kolkata (3/11).

The top four sides advance to the semi-finals.

Australian opener Rob Quiney and Indian middle-order batsman Ravinder Jadeja earlier boosted Rajasthan with

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PHOTO: AFP  
RAINBOW HAIR: A fan waits for the start of the Indian Premier League match between Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bangalore at Kingsmead Stadium in Durban yesterday.

## Champagne on ice

AFP, Wigan



Manchester United moved to within a point of a third consecutive Premier League title with a 2-1 comeback win over Steve Bruce's Wigan here

on Wednesday.

Second-half goals from inspirational substitute Carlos Tevez and Michael Carrick overturned a first-half opener from the home side's Hugo Rodallega, meaning United will win their 18th English title if they take a point from either of their two remaining matches, against Arsenal at Old Trafford on Saturday or away to Hull on May 24.

But they know they almost suffered a serious setback at the JJB Stadium as they came up against a spirited and well-drilled Wigan side who attacked at every

opportunity.

Wigan had not won in six matches going into this encounter but were a comfortable - if not surprising - match for the visitors throughout and were the first to go forward after just 90 seconds.

Colombian Rodallega headed a throw-in over United's Jonny Evans which allowed Antonio Valencia to then skip past Nemanja Vidic.

He sped into the box unmarked but shot wide from a good position after Vidic had managed to sprint back and put him off.

United seemed sluggish early on but finally ignited in the 10th minute when they could have scored twice in less than 60 seconds.

Following some superbly fluent passing, Dimitar Berbatov crossed from the right byline but Wayne Rooney could not steer his header on target despite being completely unmarked four metres out.

Within a minute of that action, some slick one-touch football between Rooney, Paul Scholes and Berbatov helped to release Cristiano Ronaldo down the right and his incisive pass back inside was met by Carrick but he shot over.

Valencia then had another fine opportunity courtesy of a free-kick on the edge of the box and although his curling effort was heading for the top corner, United goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar managed to punch it clear at full stretch.

Any United fans believing Wigan would merely lie-down were in for a disappointment and Wigan proved that on 28 minutes as they took the lead.

Lee Cattermole launched the ball into the United penalty area where Rodallega challenged Vidic in the air and after the Serbian defender slipped, the ball fell for the Wigan frontman who slotted comfortably

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Chris Gayle

(West Indies cricket captain) "Tell him, don't sleep with Chris on his mind. Tell him, get Chris off his mind."

Falling prey to the modern disease of cricket captains referring to themselves in the third person as he warns Andrew Strauss to mind his own business.



**STAR Cricket**  
England v West Indies  
Second Test, Day Two  
Live from 4:00pm

**SET Max**  
Indian Premier League  
Delhi Daredevils v Kings XI Punjab  
Live from 8:30pm

**ESPN**  
Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm



PHOTO: AFP  
SUPER-SUB: Manchester United striker Carlos Tevez celebrates after scoring the equalising goal against Wigan during their Premiership match at the JJB Stadium on Wednesday. Tevez came on in the second half to inspire United to a come from behind 2-1 win.

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