

## Tamim gives Premier T20 a kick-start

SPORTS REPORTER

Flamboyant national opener Tamim Iqbal struck a blistering 60 to give defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club an easy ride over Victoria Sporting Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

His knock also ensured a kick-start to the Big Boss Premier T20 League that saw six matches being played at three different venues.

Tamim, who joined Mohammedan this year from Abahani with a record-equalling transfer fee, was arguably the chief entertainer on the opening day of the season's curtain-raiser, hammering 13 fours.

The Tamim thunderbolt struck the lush greenery of country's home of cricket moments after Mohammedan were put into bat. He made batting look ridiculously simple as he flayed the Victoria bowlers, pacers and spinners alike, to all corners of the ground. Tamim was not hundred per cent fit to start and soon he had to opt for a runner. But his batting showed no signs of pain as he raced to 60 runs off just 26 balls in just six overs, while his partner at the other end, Shamsur Rahman, was a mere spectator as he was yet to open his account. And it was Rahman's wrong judgement on a single that drew the curtains on a thoroughly entertaining knock from Tamim. Mohammad Ashraful strode in and played some innovative shots and gave

good company to Rahman who played a sedate yet effective knock of 42 runs off 48 deliveries. Ashraful lasted 23 runs and all-rounder Aftab Ahmed scored 30. Power hitting in the last five overs yielded 54 runs and lifted the score to 174 for the loss of four wickets after 20 overs.

The score proved more than enough for Mohammedan as their opponents never kept in pace with the run rate after a very cautious first five overs where they scored only 29 runs. Captain Mohammad Sharif's 42 and Ashraful Aziz's 26 were the only notable contributions in a lost cause. Mohammedan spinner Nabil Samad took two wickets conceding only 16 runs. Tamim Iqbal, for his extravagant batting, was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Abahani, without their inspirational captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and world's best all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, laboured to a three-wicket win against Kalabagan Krira Chakra under lights at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

National captain Mashrafe and his deputy Shakib sat out the match, nursing injuries.

Chasing a modest Kalabagan total of 107-9, the popular Dhanmondi outfit crawled to 109-7 with nine balls to spare. Nasir Hossain scored a match-winning unbeaten 22. Abahani pace-man Subashih Roy was adjudged man-of-the-match for picking up three wickets for 13 runs.

There were fireworks at Fatullah also where all-rounder Alok Kapali blasted 48 off just 20 balls and then took three wickets for 13 runs to

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PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan and national opener Tamim Iqbal sweeps one over square leg during his blistering 26-ball 60 against Victoria Sporting Club in the opening match of the Premier Twenty20 League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## Sky Blues scrape through

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Abahani confirmed their Citycell Federation Cup semifinal berths with a 3-1 shootout win against Sheikh Russel KC in the last quarterfinal tie at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mehdi Hasan Ujjal put Abahani ahead in the first half before Mohammad Rony cancelled the lead with a last-gasp strike to force last year's runners-up, Abahani, into the penalty shootout the third time in four quarterfinal clashes.

However, Abahani goalkeeper-cum-captain Biplob Bhattacharjee hardly endured any labour under the post as two out of four Sheikh Russel players sent the ball wide from the spot. Biplob did stop a Maruf Ahmed shot after failing to resist Abdullah Parvez's left-footer in front of some 5,000 spectators at the big bowl.

Abahani's Samad Yousuf, Sherif Deen Mohammedan and Enamul Haq easily

converted the first three shots to set the Sky Blues' semifinal tie with Beanibazar Sporting Club on Sunday.

Abahani coach Amalesh Sen, however, was not happy with the team's performance and stressed on the midfield, which looked shaky to allow the Sheikh Russel forwards to attack throughout the second-half.

"We played well in the first half and the midfielders also looked impressive but there was clear a lack of combination in the second half as the players might have thought the lone goal was enough to seal the victory," said Amalesh.

"However, the defenders erased the pressure smoothly, excepting a blunder by Samad, who should have cleared the ball in the first chance," said Abahani's long-serving coach.

After the first two quarterfinal ties were settled by the tiebreakers, Abahani had prepared for the shootouts and easily came out on top of the achievement.

Despite losing the semifinal fight,

Sheikh Russel KC coach Kamal Babu had no disappointment, but felt better thinking of the spirited performance showed by his charges.

"I had no pain after going down in tiebreaker, but I am happy to have seen the boys playing their natural game.

"I think the players were over excited after levelling the margin in stoppage time and they could not get much time to get out of their excitement and squandered the spot kicks," said Kamal.

From beginning to the last whistle, Sheikh Russel played with an amazing pace though they could hardly split the Abahani backline marshalled by Ghanaian Samad, Atiqur Rahman Mishu, Ibnul Siraji and Rajani Kanta Barman, who was at the centre of foiling all the Sheikh Russel's efforts.

Abahani almost suffered a setback in the initial moments before onrushing goalkeeper Biplob cleared an effort from striker Mohammad Yousuf while the B. League

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PHOTO: STAR

Teammates congratulate Abahani custodian Biplob Bhattacharjee (2nd from R) after he has just saved one spot-kick in the shootout in their Citycell Federation Cup quarterfinal against Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Younus resigned due to fixing claims

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Disgruntled Pakistan captain Younus Khan said Wednesday that match-fixing claims were behind his shocking offer to resign and that he was hurt by an investigation into his team's Champions Trophy defeats.

Younus tendered his resignation on Tuesday at a meeting of the parliamentary sport's committee, which summoned him to explain why Pakistan lost to Australia and New Zealand in the September-October Trophy in South Africa.

"These last few days were torturous and the allegations hurt me no end," Younus told AFP.

"Ever since we returned from South Africa, I was hiding from people as if I have committed a crime. It was painful because I played my cricket for pride, for my country and not for money."

Pakistan's narrow defeat against Australia in a group match and upset loss to New Zealand in the semifinal sparked allegations that the team had thrown the matches, in part to knock arch-rival India out of the tournament.

Legislator Jamshed Dasti, chairman of the sports committee, summoned Younus, coach Intikhab Alam and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt to explain, with Tuesday's meeting clearing Pakistan's team of any wrongdoing.

Younus, 31, said he was shocked by the initial match-fixing allegations.

"It was the limit and being an honourable Pathan (Pashtun), I felt I must resign. It's not an emotional decision. I am badly hurt," he said.

Younus's initial resignation was rejected by Butt, who told AFP on Wednesday that he would consider the matter further.

"He (Younus) was naturally hurt over the whole affair and I can realise that. The allegations were serious and without evidence they are damaging. I will discuss the matter with him soon," Butt said.

Younus said it was up to the PCB to take a decision on his resignation.

"Ever since I have taken over as captain I have sacrificed a lot. I took the team with me, the management with me, but this is the limit and now it's up to the Board to decide on my

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### LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Ansar moved into the final of the Super Four Women's Football Championship with victory over Jessore DSA where they will play and Narayanganj, who despite drawing against VDP, moved to the final, courtesy of being runner-up in the national championship.

The first semifinal match was a one-sided affair as Ansar beat Jessore 3-0 at the Munshiganj Stadium yesterday. Kabina, Bulu and Swinoflo scored one piece for the winners. Ansar lead the first half by a single goal.

The second match between Narayanganj and VDP, at the same venue, was a hard-fought encounter though, as the two teams slugged out a 1-1 draw. Tahmina Aktar put Narayanganj in front twelve minutes into the game. VDP were quick to respond though as Sabina put them back level five minutes later. And it stayed at that scoreline for the rest of the match. Narayanganj, by dint of their current runners-up status in national championship, were adjudged to have qualified for the final.

### DRU TABLE TENNIS

Syed Mohammed Mamun, a senior reporter of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), captured title of Dhaka Reporter Unity (DRU) Table Tennis competition held at DRU common room yesterday.

Mamun defeated Debashish Chakravarty Uttam of Dainik Janakantha by a straight 2-0 sets to emerge champion three times in a row.

Earlier, Uttam beat Maboob Alam Babu of Diganta Television in a hard fought semifinal match in gruelling 2-1 sets while Syed Mamun defeated Chowdhury Mohammad Ali Kajawl of Bangladesh today on way to the final.

### Vettori mulls a move up

CRICINFO, undated

Daniel Vettori has said he is considering a move up the batting order to fill the No. 6 vacancy left by Jacob Oram's retirement from Tests. Vettori has usually batted at No. 8 for New Zealand and despite the extra workload put on him as captain, strike bowler and crucial lower-order batsman, Vettori said he was not averse to slotting in two places higher.

In an injury-ravaged Test career that spanned seven years for just 33 appearances, Oram filled the No. 6 allrounder's spot. Vettori, who averages 29.77 with the bat, is the most viable option for New Zealand to replace Oram. "I think it is something we'll have to have a look at. It's not something I'm averse to," Vettori told Radio Sport. "I've stepped up in the one-dayers in terms of moving up the order and maybe now is the right time to do that [in Tests] as well."

"We've been talking about the workload on Jacob and I suppose the workload on me

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## India reveals WC venues

AFP, New Delhi



Mumbai will host the final and Mohali one of the semifinals, according to the allocation of

India's share of matches in the 2011 cricket World Cup announced on Wednesday. India, which co-hosts the showpiece event with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in February-March 2011, will organise 29 matches at eight venues, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a statement.

The full schedule of the 14-nation tournament is due to be announced in Mumbai on November 9.

The Wankhede stadium in Mumbai, being renovated for the World Cup, will host three matches, including the final, while Mohali will stage one semifinal and two other games.

The one quarterfinal allotted to India will be held in the western city of Ahmedabad, which will also host two more matches.

New Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Nagpur and Kolkata will each stage four matches, including one fea-

turing the home team.

Sri Lanka will host 12 and Bangladesh eight of the remaining 20 games in the 49-match tournament after Pakistan were removed as co-hosts by the International Cricket Council due to security concerns.

Sri Lanka will stage the other semifinal and one quarter-final, while Bangladesh will host the opening ceremony on February 18 and two quarter-finals.

The 14 teams have been divided into two groups with the top four from each qualifying for the quarterfinals.

Group A features defending champions Australia, Pakistan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Canada and Kenya. Group B comprises India, South Africa, England, West Indies, Bangladesh, Ireland and the Netherlands.

### VENUES

Mumbai: Final plus two matches

Mohali: Semifinal plus two matches

Ahmedabad: Quarterfinal plus two matches

New Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Nagpur, Kolkata host four matches each.

## 'It's an Indian propaganda'

ANI, Lahore

Pakistan National Assembly's Standing Committee on Sports has rejected all match-fixing allegations levelled against captain Younus Khan and coach Intikhab Alam, saying it was all Indian propaganda to tarnish Pakistan cricket's image. The committee, which had summoned Khan and Alam along with the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ijaz Butt to explain the reason behind the team's defeat in the ICC Champions Trophy, said there was no authenticity in the match-fixing allegations.

It blamed the Indian media for fanning the issue and said it was an Indian propaganda to tarnish Pakistan cricket's image.

The committee pointed out that that the level of umpiring in the Pakistan New Zealand was poor, and blamed umpire Simon Taufel for Pakistan's defeat in the match.

The members of the committee decided to report the issue to the International Cricket Council (ICC), by asking it to take appropriate action against Taufel, The Daily Times reports.

It may be noted that the standing committee's chairman

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### PRIME BANK ATF UNDER-14 TENNIS

## Ali, Ram set sight for double

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi boys continued to upstage their more illustrious opponents to book their places in both singles and doubles finals of the Prime Bank ATF under-14 Tennis Tournament at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

In the singles semifinals, Rustom Ali of Bangladesh overcame the challenge of Dhankar Shaurya of India 6-3, 7-6 while another local boy Biplob Ram had little trouble ousting another Indian Pranav Malhotra 6-4,

6-0 to set up a all-Bangladesh final. This is the first time that Bangladeshi players have made it to the final of an under-14 ATF tournament.

Rustom Ali later teamed up with his singles opponent Dhankar to beat the Bangladeshi pair of Delwar Hossain and Tanjir Ahmed 2-6, 6-2, 6-2 to move into the doubles final.

Biplob Ram also set his sight for a double like Rustom when he made it to the doubles final. Ram and Jamil Bhuiyan beat their Indian counterparts Mehrotra Raghav and Malhotra Pranav

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Rustom Ali (L) and Biplob Ram are all smiles after ensuring their final berths in the Prime Bank ATF under-14 Tennis Tournament at the National Tennis Complex yesterday.



### STAR Sports

Champions League T20  
Royal Challengers v Victoria  
Live from 9:30pm



Premier Div T20 Cricket  
Gazi Tank v Surjo Torun (2:30pm)  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium  
Old DOHS v Abahani (10:30am)  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Kalabagan KC v Cricket Coaching School (10:30am)  
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium  
Mohammedan v BKSP (6:30pm)  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium  
Biman v Parlex (2:30pm)  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Khelaghar KS v Victoria (2:30pm)  
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium



Jacob Oram

(New Zealand all-rounder)

"For the sake of longevity I have had to make a decision that will decrease my workload, so I can concentrate all my efforts on the shorter forms of the game."

While announcing his retirement from Test cricket on Tuesday.