



**TRY TO SPEND TIME IN THE MIDDLE:** England coach Andy Flower (L) gives some tips to star batsman Kevin Pietersen, who is having a lean patch of late, during an added nets session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## SECOND ODI AGAINST ENGLAND TODAY

# Rahim vows better show

SPORTS REPORTER



In a brave move not taken by many of his peers, Mushfiqur Rahim admitted yesterday of his struggle behind the stumps.

The 22-year-old had a wretched time in the first one-day against England on Sunday, missing a straight caught-behind and a stumping chance at crucial times.

"I have batted well in the last few series, but I'm having a few problems in keeping," admitted Mushfiqur during practice yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur ahead of the crucial second one-day at the same venue today.

"I have made a few mistakes at very crucial times which may have cost the team dear. But these things happen in cricket. I'm trying to get over this bad patch," said the diminutive wicketkeeper.

Coach Jamie Siddons pointed out the Bangladesh vice-captain's mental state while keeping but was hopeful that Mushfiqur would bounce back.

"Mushfiqur takes a lot of stress when he is keeping. Probably the pressure of the team not doing well gets on him.

"He has gone through that before in batting and has overcome it. I'm sure he will overcome this bad patch with the keeping. He just needs a bit more confidence when keeping. But he's the best keeper around," said Siddons.

Wicketkeeping apart the Tigers have a major problem, their batting, and Siddons mentioned his displeasure.

"Many of them got starts, but couldn't carry on. It was very disappointing.

"They know how to stick around, especially Imrul [Kayes], Mushfiqur [Rahim] and [Mahmudullah] Riyad are capable of playing long innings," added the Australian coach while also praising the effort of the one man who played to potential.

"One of the boys stepping up, amazing stuff, need to put these efforts together. Tamim is in great form. He knows how to dominate and knuckle down when needed," said Siddons.

The Tigers may opt for left-handed all-rounder Sohrawardi Shuvo in place of specialist batsman Zunaed Siddiqui in the final eleven for today's match but it still isn't clear whether the youngster would be pitched in such a crucial game. Mashrafe

Bin Mortaza, who made a comeback after several months in the last game, could be rested and replaced by Rubel Hossain.

On the other hand, Graeme Swann also suggested that England might go for the second spinner.

"I'm not the one to talk about selection but I will be surprised if there isn't a second spinner included for the second game, again I might be surprised to see the winning combination broken," said Swann, who hinted

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**HOW CAN I GET BACK IN RUNS?** Returning batsman Aftab Ahmed (R) talks to star opener Tamim Iqbal, who hit a marvellous century in the first ODI against England on Sunday, as they head for the nets session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

# Munna saves Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



A late strike from substitute Motiur Munna helped holders Abahani defeat Brothers Union in the Bangladesh League encounter at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The outcome not only let the Sky Blues maintain their winning streak but also extended their unbeaten run to 20 matches, of which 11 matches came in the second edition of the league last season.

With nine straight victories, Abahani raised their point tally to 27, three points ahead of rivals Mohammedan, who with 24 points from eight outings take on third-placed Sheikh Russel KC today.

After a seven-week break following the national booters' engagement in the SA Games as well as AFC Challenge Cup final, the professional football league got underway yesterday and it was hard to understand which teams were playing under the floodlight at an almost empty stadium.

Though both coaches had promised to show an attractive game the day before the battle, there were no signs of that type of performance on the pitch and the ball was mostly confined to the midfield.

However, Abahani were better, compared to a depleted Brothers Union, who took to the field for a point after two successive defeats to Beanibazar and Mohammedan SC in their previous two games.

The first half was almost actionless though Abahani got a good chance after 15 minutes when Ghanaian Sheriff Din Mohammedan took the ball over the head of defender Yousuf Ali Khan to enter the danger zone with goalkeeper Iran to beat, but the Brothers goalkeeper frustrated the league's second-highest scorer Sheriff fisting the ball away after coming out from his goal.

Sheriff then provided a fine ball for his compatriot Awudu Ibrahim, who tested his luck from outside the box only to see his powerful drive drifting away past the sidebar just before the break.

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Abahani's Ghanaian Awudu Ibrahim (R) controls the ball with chest during their Bangladesh League clash against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

# New faces in T20 squad



SPORTS REPORTER

Several fresh faces were called up when the cricket selectors yesterday named a 30-man preliminary squad for the upcoming World Twenty20 Championships in West Indies.

It was a first call-up for a number of domestic performers including Jahirul Islam, Elias Sunny, Robiul Islam and Rony Talukdar in the national set-up.

Apart from these four, the Rafiqul Alam-led national selection committee also included Nasir Hossain, Nazmul Hossain Milon, Faisal Hossain, Mohammad Mithun and Shamsur Rahman.

Batsmen Jahirul, Rony, Nasir, Milon, Faisal, Mithun and Shamsur all had a productive time in either of the two top local competitions while all-rounder Sunny has shown good form in the Premier League for Biman as well as now in the National Cricket League.

Pacer Rabiul earned his place through some excellent work over the last two years in both the one-day and four-day versions, picking up wickets in big matches.

Mithun was picked for the previous World Twenty20s held in England last year but was ordinary in the practice games.

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# School hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Armanitola High School of Dhaka and Arjot Atarjan School of Kishorganj qualified for the final round of the Ecstasy School Hockey Tournament after winning their respective matches yesterday.

Arjot defeated Narayanganj High School 3-2 while Armanitola outplayed Paiza High School of Munshiganj 7-0 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

In the day's other matches at different venues, Comilla Model High School beat Rangamati Zilla School 1-0, Chittagong University School overwhelmed Don Bosco School of Bandarban 9-1, Kashba High School of Rajshahi defeated Khanchanpur High School of Joypurhat 4-0 and Dinajpur Poursava Bangla School thrashed Sirajganj Zilla School 12-0.

# Port city gears up for ODI, Test



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Chittagong is all set to host a warm up match, an ODI and a Test match between Bangladesh and the touring England scheduled to begin from March 5 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Both the teams will arrive in the port city tomorrow (Wednesday) and play a practice match on Thursday before meeting each other for the third and last ODI on Friday, said the Tour Organising Secretary Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu at a press conference held at the Chittagong Circuit House yesterday (Monday) afternoon.

To attract more viewer, prices of tickets for the Club House, special enclosures and gallery for the ODI and Test matches have been reduced, he said.

For ODI Tk 200 was fixed for Club House, Tk 100 for special enclosure and Tk 50 for gallery while the rates were Tk 100 for club house, Tk 50 for special enclosure and Tk 20 for gallery for the Test match, he informed adding that the school and college students dressed in uniform will be able to enjoy the Test match free.

Tickets for the matches will be available at the Sales Centres

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# NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE

## Ash, Rasel star

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka tightened the noose around Rajshahi's neck getting them bowled out for 241 in their first innings to take a lead of 159 runs on the second day of the second phase of the 11th National Cricket League match at the Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Out-of-form batsman Mohammad Ashraful was the chief architect of Rajshahi's downfall taking four wickets for 68 runs including those of topscorers Sabbir Rahman (60) and skipper Khaled Mashud. All-rounder Farhad Reza remained unbeaten on 52 runs while Forhad Hossain (41) and Nasir Hossain (42) chipped in with useful contributions.

Earlier, Dhaka added 70 more runs to their overnight score before declaring their innings on 400 for eight. Shubhagoto Chowdhury scored a 50-ball 57 before falling to a run out to Mashud.

In the other match at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra,

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# ICC ODI RANKINGS

## Hussey's chance at hand



ICC MEDIA RELEASE

Michael Hussey has another chance to regain the number-one batting position in the International Cricket Council (ICC) ODI Championship when Australia go head to head with New Zealand in the five-ODI series starting in Napier on Wednesday.

Hussey had briefly claimed the top spot from India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni after a successful series against Pakistan in which he scored 220 runs. But after managing just 95 runs in four ODIs against the West Indies and Dhoni's own contribution of 103 runs in the just concluded series against South Africa, has put the

Australian behind the Indian in second spot.

However, with only 10 points separating the two batsmen, Hussey has a good opportunity not only to retake the number-one position but also retain it for a longer period as India have no ODI commitments until May.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting and vice-captain Michael Clarke also have good opportunities to climb up the ladder.

Ponting currently sits in fifth spot and trails AB de Villiers of South Africa by 46 points who has achieved a career-best third position after back-to-back centuries in Gwalior and Ahmedabad against India. Clarke can potentially return to the top 10 as he trails 10th-placed Kumar Sangakkara of Sri Lanka by 37 points.

Brendon McCullum is the only New Zealander

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# ICC WORLD TWENTY20

## England leave Cook out



CRICINFO, undated

Alastair Cook, England's current Test and ODI captain, has been omitted from England's 30-man provisional squad for the World Twenty20 that starts in April in the Caribbean. Cook's new ODI opening partner, Craig Kieswetter, has been included, alongside Peter Trego and Michael Lumb, after their success on the England Lions tour to UAE.

Cook's omission came as something of a snub after he was named in the recent Twenty20 party that played two matches against Pakistan in Dubai, and although his accumulative style is not best suited to the cut and thrust of the 20-over format, he showed impressive form for Essex in last season's Twenty20 Cup, and was England's most fluent batsman with a brisk 64 in their 50-over victory against Bangladesh in Dhaka on Sunday.

Cook himself had been unaware that the 30-man squad was imminent when asked about it after the first ODI, but said he hoped he had

done enough to demonstrate that he has what it takes to succeed. However, according to Geoff Miller, the national selector, who met with England's coach Andy Flower prior to the team's departure for the UAE, he is still some way short of meriting a place in the set-up.

"We didn't think Alastair was a 20-over player so consequently he wasn't selected," said Miller. "He knows the decision and he's obviously very much improving in 50-overs, and that might develop his Twenty20 too. But there's a dramatic difference between 50-over cricket and Twenty20. We don't feel he has gone over that mark to be part of our Twenty20 squad, but that does not mean he's out of it [for good]."

England's spinner, Graeme Swann, who has been named in the 30-man party, said before the announcement that the gulf between the formats was growing. "I think the games are too different to be honest," he said. "The games in Dubai, we focussed on those as our practice for the World Twenty20. I think 50-over and Twenty20 are completely different games these days. Certainly as a spin bowler, every single ball you know guys are going to try to hit you for

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# Sanath takes up politics

AFP, Colombo

Veteran Sri Lanka batsman Sanath Jayasuriya came under fire Monday for his decision to enter politics while still playing for the national team.

Jayasuriya will contest April 8 parliamentary elections as a candidate for President Mahinda Rajapakse's Freedom Alliance party in his home constituency of Matara.

The 40-year-old, the oldest cricketer still playing at the top

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**BTV & SuperSport2**  
Bangladesh v England  
Second ODI (D/N)  
Live from 2:00pm



Roisin Mullins of Great Britain makes a backhand return against India's Smriti Joon during their girls' singles engagement in the Grameenphone 24th Bangladesh ITF Junior Tennis Championships at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

# ITF JUNIOR TENNIS

## Raisul makes solid start

SPORTS REPORTER

Raisul Islam Ratul of Bangladesh advanced to the second round of the Grameenphone 24th ITF Junior Tennis Championships with a 6-3, 4-1 victory over Arpit Sharma of India at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

The Indian retired midway through the second set due to injury. Other local hopes Biplob Ram and Hasibul Haque both lost their respective matches. Biplob went down 2-6, 4-6 to India's Arjun Kadhe while Hasibul Haque lost 1-6, 0-6 to Korea's Joo-Ho Maeng.

In the girls' section, Bangladesh's Sharda Sharmin and Mamitu Jannat Mou both lost their matches in straight sets.