

Mashrafe lifts the lid?

SPORTS REPORTER

The 'opting out' or 'rest' of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza for the last two ODIs against England has raised more questions than answers.

The most interesting part of this episode was that Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday came up with a statement that the player himself withdrew from the remainder of the ODI series as he had to be by the side of his ailing mother though chief selector Rafiqul Alam confirmed that it was a 'collective' team management decision to give him a rest.

"It was a collective decision and taken to make sure his (Mashrafe Bin Mortaza) slow and steady progress," was Rafiqul's explanation about the omission.

The bewildering decision of giving rest has however upset the Narail Express, since it was done without consulting him. And this happens to be the reason behind his decision to withdraw from the remainder of the series as well as leave the team hotel on Monday. And there is hardly any chance that the board high-ups would be able to change the piqued cricketer's mind.

Under coach Jamie Siddons, the country's premier paceman was once dropped against South Africa for the first ODI in 2007 at home but that time it was because of his performance in the Test series. At that time it was acceptable to Mashrafe but this time the treatment he got from the team management hurt him.

The whispering was there that coach Siddons and captain Shakib Al Hasan played key roles behind the decision and Mashrafe was shocked by the way the two treated him after his return to the team. It was learnt that he was given a cold shoulder when he needed support from the team management to get back to his full rhythm after recovering from the injury.

"It's really unfortunate the way the decision about Mashrafe was taken. They either made a mistake by considering him in the team if he was not fully fit or by giving him a rest without any real cause. No one can play with a player like Mashrafe because he is an asset for the country," responded former national skipper and chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who was highly praised for his gutsy role during his tenure especially the way he handled the temperamental DavWhatmore.

"Everybody should understand that even a half-fit Mashrafe is more effective than some of our bowlers. We can't produce a Mashrafe overnight and he has had a great contribution in our cricket and most importantly still we need his services. So it would be suicidal for our cricket if his career comes to an premature end for any wrong decision from the people concerned," he added.

"The better thing is to talk with a player before taking any decisions about him. I don't know whether the team management maintained this simple practice in this issue. And I can't understand why you give Mashrafe rest when he needs more games to get back his

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Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim, who scored team highest 76, here flicks one towards fine-leg during the second one-day international against England at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

BD-ENGLAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day international between Bangladesh and England in at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Tuesday:

BANGLADESH			
Tamim c Cook b Broad	30		
Imrul c Collingwood b Swann	63		
Aftab b Bresnan	4		
Mushfiqur c Wright b Bresnan	76		
Shakib c & b Swann	14		
Mahmudullah b Bresnan	27		
Nayeem not out	18		
Sohrawardi not out	14		
Extras: (b-4, lb-3, w-7)	14		
Total: (For six wickets in 50 overs)	260		
Did not bat: Razzak, Shafiq, Rubel.			
Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-56, 3-146, 4-166, 5-211, 6-235.			
ENGLAND			
Cook c Mushfiqur b Shakib	60		
Kieswetter c Kayes b Shafiq	4		
Pietersen lbw b Razzak	18		
Collingwood lbw b Razzak	7		
Morgan not out	110		

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Rating Chess tournament, organised by Leonine Chess Club in connection with Bangladesh Chess Federation, will begin at the National Sports Complex in the capital next Saturday.

Interested participants are requested to contact the organisers and enrol their names by Friday.

UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

National University became champions in the 15th Inter-University Athletics competition at the Jahangirnagar University ground yesterday.

They notched up 90 points from both the men's and women's section. Rajshahi University came second in the men's section with 61 points while hosts Jahangirnagar University was runners-up with 12 points in the women's draw.

Titoo Dewan of National University was the fastest man in the competition and Nazmun Nahar Beauty bagged the fastest woman award.

FENI GOLD CUP

Our Correspondent adds: Munshirhat crushed Anandapur 5-0 in the Master Nurul Haque Memorial Gold Cup football tournament at the Fulgazi Pilot High School ground here yesterday.

Mahiuddin and Ripon scored two goals while Munna added another for Munshirhat.



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
SuperSport3
England v Egypt
Int'l Friendly
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)
SuperSport5
Portugal v China
Int'l Friendly
Live from 2:30am (Thursday)
SuperSport6
France v Spain
Int'l Friendly
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)
SuperSport7
Italy v Cameroon
Int'l Friendly
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)

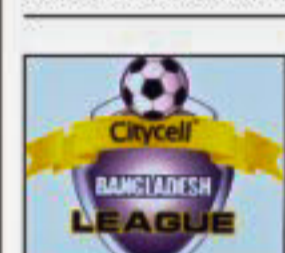


National Cricket League (Four-Day Match, Day Four) Khulna v Chittagong Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra
Rajshahi v Dhaka Venue: Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium, Khulna
Bangladesh League Rahmatganj v Shukhtara Time: 6:00pm Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

BANGLADESH LEAGUE

MSC held to a draw

SPORTS REPORTER



Title contenders Mohammedan SC dropped points in the Bangladesh League when Sheikh Russel KC held them to a goalless draw in an interrupted game following poor light at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The first draw in nine matches meant the Black and Whites slipped from the top position in the 13-team point table to stay in the second position with 25 points, two point less than rivals Abahani.

On the other hand, Sheikh Russel with their second draw in nine outings took their points to 23.

Mohammedan went into the game on the back of eight consecutive victories and dominated the match from the word go but they could hardly make any scoring chances throughout the game and left the field to boos from the spectators, who threw bottles towards the tent and blocked the way to the dressing room after the game.

Without Nigerian duo Alamu Bukola and Emeka Christian, Mohammedan attacking line-up comprising of off-form Zahid Hasan Emily and Nasir looked blemished in the first half though Emily came close to opening the account in the 38th minute, but saw his grounder inside the box blocked by Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Mazharul Islam Himel.

Nasir struck the follow-up only to be cleared by Mobarak Hossain from the goalline to deprive Mohammedan in a game that remained sus-

pending for a few minutes in each half following poor light.

After the resumption, coach Maruful Haq sent on both Bukola and Emeka but they could not change the fate of Mohammedan in the face of stiff challenge from the Sheikh Russel backline marshalled by Kamal Hossain, Zahirul Islam, Abbas Inusah and Aminul Islam.

However, Emeka came close to breaking the deadlock in the 70th minute, but once again it was goalkeeper Himel, who thwarted Emeka's effort

while Hasan Al Mamun tried his luck with a long-rang shot that was drifting away in the 75th minute.

Away at the Shaheed Salam Stadium in Feni, visitors Farashganj SC beat hosts Feni Soccer Club 1-0, thanks to a goal from Arafat Ronny in the 69th minute.

It was the first win for Farashganj after three successive defeats and they raised their point tally to nine from eight outings while Feni stuck to their previous nine points also playing eight matches.



Mohammedan's Nasir (in white jersey) is tackled by Rajon Miah of Sheikh Russel during their Bangladesh League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

ODIS AGAINST ZIMBABWE

No Sarwan, Bravo

Cricket

AFP, Georgetown

Ramnareh Sarwan and Dwayne Bravo will remain on the sidelines for the first two One-Day Internationals against Zimbabwe, the West Indies Cricket Board announced late Monday.

Media reports indicated that Sarwan and Bravo were excluded from a 14-member West Indies squad because the team management wants the two players to prove their fitness before clearing them for action.

This follows a slew of injuries over the last three months that has gnawed away at the fabric of the side, and has been advanced as a contributing factor to their drab performance in Australia, where they were swept in four of five ODIs and two Twenty20 Internationals.

Sarwan has been out of commission for the last three months with a back injury that he sustained on the Test tour of Australia last December.

But he made a hundred for his native Guyana against Windward Islands in a domestic first-class match over the weekend that appeared to show he had regained some degree of form and fitness.

Bravo has been sidelined with a thumb injury he picked up during the Twenty20 Big Bash in Australia which forced him to miss the recent ODIs and T20Is there.

The livewire all-rounder practised with the side on the eve of Sunday's T20 match against the Zimbabweans in his native Trinidad, but he admitted in a television interview he would prefer a few club matches before returning to the hotbed of international competition.

The home team still has fast bowlers Jerome Taylor and Fidel Edwards under treatment. Both have been battling back injuries.

Taylor may return in the middle of the year for the home series against South Africa, but Edwards is likely to miss the rest of the year following surgery last month.

West Indies will benefit from the return of their captain and talismanic opener Chris Gayle, after he was allowed to miss the T20I against the visitors on compassionate grounds to visit his ill mother.

He will have to help West Indies restore their confidence and plummeting reputation, after they sunk to a shocking 26-run defeat to the African side.

Narsingh Deonarine has been drafted into the squad to replace fellow left-hander Darren Bravo, Dwayne's younger brother, in the only change to the squad that played in the T20I.

The first ODI is on Thursday at the Guyana National Stadium, where the second match is also scheduled for Saturday.

SQUAD
Chris Gayle (captain), Adrian Barath, Sulieman Benn, David Bernard, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Narsingh Deonarine, Andre Fletcher, Nikita Miller, Kieron Pollard, Denesh Ramdin, Ravi Rampaul, Kemar Roach, Darren Sammy, Dwayne Smith.

ITF JR TENNIS

Indians advance

SPORTS REPORTER

India's Adnya Naik moved into the third round of the Grameenphone 24th Bangladesh ITF Junior Tennis Championships with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Tanaporn Thongsing of Thailand at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

Adnya was joined by Ratnika Batra, Rimpledeep Kaur, Ankita Raina and Sowjanya Bavisetti in the next round of the girls' section after all won in straight sets.

In the boys' section, Bangladesh's Raisul Islam Ratul was sent packing after he was defeated 6-2, 6-2 by China's Xin Gao in the second round.

Rishabdev Raman and Arjun Kadhe of India, Phassavit Burapharitta of Thailand and Chinese Taipei's Ting Yu Chung were the other winners in the boys' section.

SCHOOL HOCKEY

Armanitola zonal champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Armanitola High School of Dhaka emerged zonal champions in the Ecstasy School Hockey Tournament with a massive 8-1 win over Arjot Atarjan School of Kishorganj at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other matches at different venues, Chittagong University School blanked Rangamati Zilla School 5-0, Don Bosco School of Bandarban beat Comilla Modern High School 2-1, Latif Municipal Seminary School of Patuakhali recorded a 2-0 win over Borguna Zilla School, who later beat Barisal Town High School 2-1, Sirajganj Zilla School beat Bisnuprasad High School of Panchagargh 2-0 and Khanchanpur High School of Joyprahat thrashed Rangpur Zilla Keramoti School 5-2.

NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE

Ctg smell victory

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong require another 139 runs to win their second phase National Cricket League match after they restricted Khulna to 268 in the second innings on the third day at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

The port city side will begin today with their score on 63 for two with Abdullah Al Mamun and nightwatchman Kamrul Islam at the crease.

Earlier, the Chittagong bowlers ensured their fourth innings chase could be kept under the 250-mark.

Elias Sunny and Iqbal Hossain picked up two wickets apiece while Mamun took three. Only wicketkeeper-batsman Sahagir Hossain stood firm for Khulna, scoring a stodgy 79 that was punctuated by nine boundaries.

Away at the Khulna Divisional Stadium, Rajshahi thrived on three half-centuries from Jahurul Islam, Khaled Mashud and Forhad Reza in their effort to salvage a draw with Dhaka.

The northern division lead by 110 runs with four wickets in hand and it is up to the Dhaka bowlers to ensure an easy ride on the final day.

Rajshahi's right-handed opener Jahurul, who was named in the Tigers' 30-man World Twenty20s squad, slammed ten boundaries in his two-and-a-half hours essay, before a rush of

blood ended his stay when he missed Mehrab Hossain's left-arm spin and was stumped by Nadimuddin Mintu.

Rajshahi captain Mashud was at his very best, making 57 off 146 balls with eight boundaries.

But it was Forhad who ensured Rajshahi made Dhaka bat again with his strokeful 53. He will come out to bat today with all-rounder Sabbir Rahman, who was unbeaten on 32.

Among the Dhaka bowlers only Mohammad Sharif, with three wickets, and Mehrab Hossain, who picked up two, were the successful bowlers.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DHAKA v RAJSHAH
DHAKA: First innings 400-8 declared (Nadimuddin 147, Shamsur 63, Marshal 72, Roni 27, Shuvagoto 57; Delwar 2-79, Saqlain 2-76, Sanjamul 2-102)

RAJSHAH: First innings 241 and second innings 269-6 (Jahurul 73, Mashud 57, Reza 53 not out; Sharif 3-53, Mehrab 2-88)

KHULNA v CHITTAGONG
KHULNA: First innings 241 and second innings 268 all out (Amit 35, Sahagir 79, Rasel 32; Mamun 3-20, Elias 2-35)

CHITTAGONG: First innings 308 and second innings 63-2 (Mamun 25 not out, Kamrul 2 not out; Dollar 2-22)

Howard to head ICC

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Former Australian Prime Minister John Howard, a cricket lover seen at Test matches around the world, was Tuesday set to lead the sport internationally from 2012 after winning the nomination for the job.

Howard, 70, said he was honoured and humbled to be Australia and New Zealand's candidate to take over the rotating International Cricket Council (ICC) presidency when it next becomes available.

"I look forward to working in the interests of the game that I've loved all my life and is very dear to me," Howard told reporters in Sydney.

Howard, the preferred candidate of Cricket Australia, won the nomination following months of debate between Australian and New Zealand cricket officials over who would be their joint candidate.

New Zealand had reportedly wanted to tap former New Zealand Cricket chairman John Anderson for the role which involves juggling the political and cultural considerations of 10 diverse cricketing nations.

The bodies ultimately asked business leader Rod Eddington, a former chief executive of British Airways, to act as an independent member on the selection committees each board formed.

"We are pleased that an eminent candidate in John Howard has agreed, after an exhaustive process, to take the role of joint Australia-New Zealand nominee for the ICC presidency, Cricket Australia and New Zealand Cricket said in a statement.

"It was an extremely difficult decision and ultimately relied on the input of Sir Rod Eddington, whom both cricket boards respect enormously."

The joint statement noted that the ICC faced "significant and complex internal and external challenges in its quest for cricket to become a genuinely global sport."

Howard, Australia's prime minister from 1996 to 2007 whose only official position since losing power has been as director of the Bradman Foundation which honours the legendary Don Bradman, said it would be presumptuous to speak about the role of president ahead of his official appointment.

But he told Sky News that finding a balance between all forms of the game would be a focus.

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Abdullah Al Mamun (2nd from R) of Chittagong celebrates with a teammate after trapping Khulna's Sahagir Hossain (on the ground) before during the third day's play of the National Cricket League at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR