

## Bangladesh A take small lead



**IN FULL SWING:** Bangladesh A batsman Rokibul Hasan follows the path of the ball after playing it towards thirdman on the second day of the three-day practice match against England at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. He was batting on 50 in the second innings after hitting an unbeaten century in the first.

PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

### Rokibul holds fort



**Cricket**

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong

National discard Rokibul Hasan led from the front again with a 91 ball 50 that helped the Bangladesh A team post a 52 run lead over the visiting England in the second day of the three-day practice match at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here yesterday.

Rokibul was partnered at the crease by Mohammad Ashraf, and the former skipper was on 14 not out when stumps were drawn for the day.

Bangladesh finished the second day on 131 for the loss of three wickets after the visitors had declared on 281 for seven, courtesy of Jonathon Trott's 101, in reply to Bangladesh A's first innings 202 all out.

For England, wicketkeeper Matt Prior also chipped in with a brisk unbeaten 71-ball 73 while Ian Bell also contributed a half-century before the visitors decided to declare their innings to give their bowlers a go at the hosts.

However, Bangladesh A started brightly in their second innings, with Zunaid Siddiqui and Shamsur Rahman striking up a good opening partnership.

James Tredwell gave England their breakthrough when he had Shamsur caught behind by substitute wicket-keeper Davies for 23. And Tredwell continued where he had left off in the first innings as he soon had Mehrab Hossain Jr edge one to Alastair Cook at slip to capture his eighth wicket in the match.

However, Rokibul joined Zunaid to steady the ship with a 53 run partnership that took the score to 102 before part time spinner Kevin Pietersen ended the left-handed Zunaid's innings by trapping him leg before.

Rokibul however held sway at the other end, mixing caution with periods of endeavor to bring up his half-century. He hit four boundaries and hoisted two huge sixes in the 40th over which was bowled by Tredwell.

But the focus was very much on Mohammad Ashraf, when he stepped out to bat at the fall of Zunaid's wicket. But the former captain did not let the pressure get to him as he dispatched the second ball he faced to the fence. Soon after, he hit Tredwell for two fours in an over to encourage the crowd and bring back his confidence.

Both men comfortably negotiated the final overs and will be looking to get in vital batting practice in the third and final day today.

The crowd went home expectant of a good showing to the sight of Ashraf, having a go in the nets soon after stumps had been drawn for the day.

#### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGLADESH A:** First innings 202 all out (Zunaid 16, Shamsur 21, Mehrab 9, Rokibul 107 not out, Ashraf 1, Shuvagoto 9, Sahagir 12, Dollar 0, Noor 6, Rasel 1, Robiul 4; Shahzad 1-26, Plunkett 1-35, Finn 2-13, Tredwell 6-95) and second innings 131-3 (Zunaid 37, Shamsur 23, Mehrab 4, Rokibul 50 not out, Ashraf 14 not out; Tredwell 2-50, Pietersen 1-16)

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



England's Jonathon Trott pulls one on the on-side on way to hammering 101 in the first innings on the second day of the practice match at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

### Trott fired up for first Test

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Ctg

England batsman Jonathon Trott all but confirmed his spot in the England side for the first Test against Bangladesh after scoring a sparkling 101 in their practice match against the A side at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

Trott's innings was the perfect riposte to Rokibul Hasan's similarly composed century on the first day. The lanky Englishman was perhaps slightly more cavalier as he carved out 14 boundaries to reach his century and showcase his class.

Trott added 69 to his overnight score of 32 before retiring on 101 made off 134 balls to give the other batsmen a go

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

### ICC chief due here March 22

SPORTS REPORTER

International Cricket Council (ICC) president David Morgan is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on March 22 for a three-day visit.

During his visit Morgan will meet the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal and board of directors.

He is also expected to witness the second Test match between Bangladesh and visiting England, which will start from March 20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

### What to WATCH

- ATN Bangla**  
National Cricket League  
Final, Day Four  
Chittagong v Rajshahi  
Live from 9:30am
- SuperSport2**  
New Zealand v Australia  
Third ODI  
Live from 7:00am
- ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live from 8:30pm
- English Premier League**  
Portsmouth v Birmingham City  
Live from 1:40am (Wednesday)
- STAR Sports**  
English Premier League  
Sunderland v Bolton  
Live from 1:40am (Wednesday)
- SuperSport3**  
UEFA Champions League  
Arsenal v Porto  
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)
- SuperSport7**  
UEFA Champions League  
Fiorentina v Bayern Munich  
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

## Ashraf to be recalled?

SPORTS REPORTER



The Test future of the out-of-form Mohammad Ashraf has come to the spotlight ahead of the team selection for the two-match Test series against visiting England. The Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel is likely to announce the squad today, as the first Test will start from March 12 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

It seems that the selectors are in a tight spot about the selection of Ashraf. There is a consensus that his omission from the Test squad will mean he will go into the wilderness for a long period of time and this may jeopardise his rehabilitation altogether.

On the other hand he is not deserving of a call-up if considered on current form.

The former national skipper was dropped from the team for the just concluded three-

match one-day series due to a poor run of form. And the mercurial Ashraf has done nothing since to change the minds of the selectors. He continued his poor form in the domestic circuit as well as in the three-day match against England since he had returned from an unsuccessful trip in New Zealand.

In terms of confidence, Ashraf has hit his nadir and as coach Jamie Siddons said: "He [Ashraf] is going through a tough time in his career."

And the Australian once again said that no matter how talented or experienced a player is rather the question is whether he is in-form or not when it comes to team selection. But Siddons believes that they have to work with the batsman to bring him out from this pale phase as the problem not only lies in his mindset but also with kinks in his technique.

But still there was doubt whether it would be

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

## 100TH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY Golden girls awarded

SPORTS REPORTER

To mark the 100th International Women's Day, Nari Uddug Kendra, a non-government organisation, accorded a reception to female gold winners of the 11th South Asian Games as well as renowned sports organisers and former athletes at the CIRDAP Auditorium here yesterday.

The ceremony virtually turned into a get-together as stars of today mingled with the celebrities of yesteryears, who once ruled their respective sports.

Female athletes from weightlifting, handball, kabaddi, football, cricket and

other disciplines turned up at the award giving ceremony for sports personalities in the afternoon. A rally was also organised in the morning that started from Mukhtang and ended at CIRDAP.

Bangladesh Handball Federation's senior vice-president Hamida Ali, who is also the former president of Bangladesh Women's Sports Association (BWSA) and principal of Viqarunnisa Noon School, national sports award winner and former BWSA vice-president Jinat Ahmed, who also won gold in high jump in Pakistan Olympics in 1955 and the country's lone WFM Rani Hamid were given life-time

award by Nari Uddug Kendra. The organisation introduced such awards for the female sports personalities last year. Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique handed over the crests to the recipients as the guest of honour.

Besides, prominent athletes Dolly Kathryn, Rawshan Akhter Chobi, Sufia Khatun, Shamima Sattar Mimmo, Kamrul Nahar Hiru, Syeda Morium Tareque and Mahub Ara Gini MP were also presented with special awards for their achievements during their sporting days.

Bangladesh achieved their best-ever

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

### NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE

## Chittagong fight back

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazimuddin and Mominul Haque took Chittagong towards a position of relative strength at the end of the third day the first innings of the final of National Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Chittagong were 266 for the loss of six wickets at the end of third day's play in reply to Rajshahi's first innings total of 372. Left-hander Mominul Haque was batting on 72 off 175 deliveries while Elias Sunny was on 29.

Earlier, after starting the day on 21 for no loss, Chittagong soon found themselves two down for 35, courtesy of left-arm spinner Sohrwardi Shuvo who accounted for Gazi Salauddin and Abdullah Al Mamun cheaply.

Nazimuddin then steadied the ship with a

well-compiled 80 off 160 balls that featured 12 boundaries. Nazimuddin found some support in in-form batsman Faisal Hossain who scored 28 runs. Faisal became the fourth dismissal for Chittagong with the score was on 111. Mahmudul Hasan became the third victim of Shuvo on the same score. Then Mominul came on and supported Nazimuddin to build a 90-run partnership that took Chattgong past 200 runs before Nazimuddin fell to spinner Saqlain Sajib. Mominul and Elisas Sunny played out the rest of the day without further loss.

Chittagong will be hoping that the two unbeaten batsman build big partnership to ensure a big total on the fourth day, as anything but a win for them would hand Rajshahi with the title as the northerners will edge them on the points count.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



EQUAL RIGHTS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: PROGRESS FOR ALL: Nari Uddug Kendra, a non-government organisation, brought out a rally in the city yesterday to observe the 100th International Women's Day.

PHOTO: STAR

### DAY'S EVENT

- Bangladesh A v England XI**  
(3-Day Warm-up Match, Day 3)  
Venue: Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chittagong
- National Cricket League Final**  
(Five-Day Match, Day Four)  
Chittagong v Rajshahi  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur
- Bangladesh League**  
Ctg Abahani v Arambagh  
Time: 3:30pm  
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong
- Beanibazar v Mohammedan**  
Time: 5:00pm  
Venue: Sylhet Stadium

### School hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

A hat-trick from Mobarak Hossain took Jessore Municipal Preparatory School to the semifinals of the Ecstasy National School Hockey Championship with a convincing 4-0 win over Arjat Atarjan School of Kishorganj at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mobarak found the back of net in the 16th, 42nd and 54th minute to complete the treble while Salman Rashid struck the fourth goal on the 58th minute to seal the fate of the game.



Chittagong skipper Nazimuddin drives one during his 80 in the first innings on the third day of the National Cricket League final against Rajshahi at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

## Manu of Azad Boys: 1952-2010

KHADEMUL ISLAM

Manu had a disarming simplicity of character that won over everybody.

Yusuf Babu, the ex-national cricketer and long-time player for Azad Boys Sporting Club, captured this spirit to a T in his book Sentimental Journey (Dhaka, 2002): "I shall always remember a most courageous yet somewhat amusing incident in the Dhaka league when I was captaining Azad Boys in a match against Mohammedan Sporting Club. The team's batting order was not performing as we had expected, and I was considering a change in the order. One of my favourite bowlers was Monawar Hossain, affectionately called 'Manu'... It was the evening before the game and Manu and I were having a pleasant evening at his home. I was contemplating a change in the opening slot and Manu, despite Gazala's (his wife) appeals and warnings, was coaxing me to move him up the order into the opening slot from his usual lower middle order position at No. 7... The next morning... I informed Manu that I had thought over his request and would try him as an opener if he felt confident enough to do the job. He jumped at the opportunity and agreed to oblige knowing that he would be facing up to Shaju who not only bowled a mean out-swinger but could also intimidate a batsman with his short-of-length deliveries. Our innings started slowly but cautiously... It was in the eighth over of the match when a Shaju short-pitched delivery landed squarely on Manu's top lip cracking it open like a split bean. While Gazala cursed me for sending him to open... Manu in his usual optimistic self insisted that prior to getting hit, he was playing very well. Although he did not take any further part in that game, Manu did come back into the team after a couple of matches and was ready and willing to open the innings again. I dared not go against his wife's wishes again."

Manu, though he was called to the nets, never made it to the national side, but he did come close. Very close. The incident is related by Yusuf Babu in an equally amusing anecdote in his book.

I saw Manu play cricket occasionally at the outer stadium grounds during the late 1970s into the early '80s. He always wore his floppy white hat and his tall gangly figure made him stand out among the other cricketers on the field. Manu played when Bangladesh cricket was still in a nascent stage, but even then the domestic league competition among the sporting clubs was intense. I would watch Manu bowl his off-breaks, using his height to make them fast-ish ones. He got wickets on a regular basis. Manu was popular with his teammates, known for his light-hearted banter on and off the field. The banter actually concealed a sound cricketer's brain. I remember

once being taken aback while listening in on a conversation between him and another cricketer about the relative merits and demerits of then Abahani left-arm opening bowler Dipu Chowdhury. Manu's close examination of Dipu's run-up, his left-arm bowling and the way he angled in the ball to the right-hand batsmen for the edge to the waiting slip cordon was pure cricketering insider stuff. It was an instinctive, on-the-field, in-the-trenches examination that arm-chair hacks (like me) sitting far from the pitch would rarely be capable of. Interested as I am in Bangladesh's cricketing history, I have to wonder how much he could have told us about those crucial formative years of Bangladeshi cricket if he had only put pen to paper. He had a plain, folksy way of phrasing things that surely would have made for enjoyable reading. And let us remember that if today we Bangladeshis play Test and international level cricket, it is due to players like Manu who during uncertain times kept the home league fires burning so that later ascent and status became possible. If league cricket had died out, if there had been no transition from East Pakistan to Bangladesh cricket, we would not see Bangladeshi cricketers bowling and batting on foreign fields. For this Manu and others of his generation deserve our homage.

My last memory of Manu is his voice on the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8