


# 'I believed in him'

SPORTS REPORTER

 Taskin Ahmed was the reason Chittagong won their crucial game yesterday. He ran through Duronto Rajshahi's top-order by scalping four wickets and laid the foundation for a comfortable chase in the second innings. The lanky bowler however was barely used in the tournament. The reason behind that, said skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, was the lack of opportunity. "It wasn't a risk playing Taskin. He didn't get much opportunity. Our plan was that since it was a night game, we would play one less spinner and put in a pacer and because Shaun Tait is injured and has gone back we played Taskin. And he responded quite well," said Riyad at the end of the match. "I believed in him. The whole team believed in him. We knew that Taskin would play well. When I saw the wicket I wanted to field and I knew that Taskin could swing and cut the ball and ultimately he did it. If he can perform he will be a very good prospect for Bangladesh cricket," he added. Despite Rajshahi's low total the game was headed for a close finish almost similar to the teams' previous meeting at the beginning of the tournament, a match which saw Rajshahi defend 99. "Everyone who played the first game for us was there in the team. Everybody was telling themselves that it was a similar kind of wicket. So we all wanted to keep wickets. We had a good start and the best part was that Ravi Bopara was there till the end," said Riyad. With the all-important semifinal clash against the Sylhet Royals scheduled to take place today, Riyad believes that the key to success would be not to take any sort of pressure.

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Duronto Rajshahi opener Charles Coventry loses his timbers to a vicious inswinger from Chittagong Kings paceman Taskin Ahmed in their BPL T20 First Semifinal yesterday. Coventry was the first of four wickets for young Taskin who restricted Rajshahi to a paltry 107, which Chittagong overtook with four wickets and 16 balls to spare.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# 'Now we can look to the future'

 SPORTS REPORTER

Shane Jurgensen, who is just a contract signature away from officially becoming the head coach of the Bangladesh cricket team, returned to the country recently after a short break. Speaking to reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Jurgensen stated that he was going to try and take the positive momentum from Bangladesh's ODI series win against the West Indies into the tour of Sri Lanka. Jurgensen, who has been serving as interim head coach since Richard Pybus's departure in May, was recommended for the permanent role to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) by the cricket operations committee. It is believed that only formalities remain for Jurgensen to assume the role. "For me it's going to be a continuation from the West Indies series (in November-December last year). I had plans in place in case I wasn't in Sri Lanka or Zimbabwe. But for now we can look to the future. "I am looking forward to working on some long-term planning now. Obviously the West Indies series was more about that series, but now with an extended period we can start thinking about long-term development. We want to improve in Test

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# Taskin seals it for Kings

## Chittagong v Sylhet in today's second semi

SPORTS REPORTER

 After a highly entertaining match on the previous day, the first semifinal saw a one-sided affair as young paceman Taskin Ahmed tormented Duronto Rajshahi to script a comfortable four-wicket victory for Chittagong Kings at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night. The semifinal victory however didn't confirm Kings' place in the February 19 final against Dhaka Gladiators, as



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according to the new format they will now vie for the final when they meet the formidable Sylhet Royals, the losing team of the 'Race to Final', today in the second semifinal at the same venue at 6pm. A four-wicket haul by Taskin set an easy target for his side after Rajshahi could manage only 107 runs for seven wickets. But Chittagong got a jolt in the middle of their chase after a 43-run opening stand between Jason Roy (30) and Nurul Hasan (14) but Ravi Bopara (34 not out) held his nerve as Chittagong reached the target with 2.4 overs to spare. The young prospect Taskin, who already drew enough attention to get a place in the previous national camp, hogged all the spotlight in the match with a fiery opening spell that virtually

SCORES IN BRIEF

DURONTO RAJSHAHI: 107-7 in 20 overs (Coventry 15, Munaweera 12, Ervine 47 not out, Mukhter 18, extras 7; Taskin 4-31, Oram 1-18, Riyad 2-6).

CHITTAGONG KINGS: 108-6 in 17.2 overs (Roy 30, Nurul 14, Bopara 34 not out, Oram 10 not out, extras 5; Udana 1-23, Monir 1-21, Nayeem 2-24, Mukhter 1-20).

Result: Chittagong Kings won by four wickets.

sealed the fate of the match. The 17-year old Taskin finished with figures of four for 31, which earned him the man-of-the-match award.

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# Make-or-break battle today

SPORTS REPORTER

 League leaders Abahani will take on title contenders Sheikh Russel KC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today in what could go a long way towards deciding the outcome of this season's Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League. Four-time champions Abahani (27) have a two-point lead over Sheikh Russel, having played a match (12) more, and an outright victory would put them in a commanding position with only four matches remaining. A victory for Sheikh Russel, on the other hand, will see them go one point past Abahani having played a match less and will surely make them the favourites for the title. The other title contenders, Sheikh Jamal, will be the beneficiaries if today's match ends in a draw. Both teams come into this match on the back of victories, Abahani having doused Sheikh Jamal 1-0 and Sheikh Russel winning 2-0 away at Muktiyoddha Sangsad. Abahani coach Ardesheer Pournimat has a full-strength side at his disposal as veteran defender Mohammad Sujan returns from injury. "We'll have to repeat the performance we put in against Sheikh Jamal in this match as they are a very good side. They have good strikers including Sony Norde," felt Ardesheer. Sheikh Russel however will not have a full-strength side as they might miss the services of strikers Zahid Hasan Emily (rib injury) and Bukola Okalelan (ankle injury). The good news for coach Maruful Haque is that midfielder Mamunul Islam and striker Mithun Chowdhury returns from suspension. "If we lose this match, we will fall back. A draw would


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Pakistan batsman Azhar Ali, along with his captain Misbahul Haq, did the repair job in the second innings of the second Test against South Africa at Newlands yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Newlands nicely poised

 AFP, Cape Town

Robin Peterson and Dale Steyn led a South African fightback which left the second Test against Pakistan evenly poised at the end of the third day at Newlands on Saturday. Pakistan were 100 for three in their second innings at the close, a lead of 112. Peterson hit 84 to enable South Africa to get within 12 runs of Pakistan's first innings total of 338 and Steyn bowled at blistering pace to take two wickets as Pakistan lost their first three second innings wickets for 45 runs. At that stage South Africa were slightly on top but Azhar Ali and captain Misbahul Haq shared a largely cautious unbeaten partnership of 55 to see Pakistan through to the close without further loss. South Africa were hampered by a recurrence of a hamstring injury to Morne Morkel, who left the field after bowling one ball in his second spell. He had to stop bowling because of the same injury in the first innings as well

SCOREBOARD				
PAKISTAN: First innings 338 (Younis 111, Shafiq 111, Tanvir 44, Ajmal 21 not out; Philander 5-59, Morkel 2-59)				
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 139-5)				
Smith lbw b Ajmal	19			
Petersen c Azhar b Ajmal	17			
Amla lbw b Ajmal	25			
Du Plessis c Younis b Ajmal	28			
Kallis lbw b Ajmal	2			
De Villiers c Gul b Irfan	61			
Elgar c Younis b Ajmal	23			
Peterson c Gul b Hafeez	84			
Philander c Jamshed b Irfan	22			
Steyn c Sarfraz b Irfan	10			
Morkel not out	8			
Extras: (lb-12, lb-8, nb-7)	27			
Total: (All out in 102.1 overs)	326			
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-50, 3-84, 4-102, 5-109, 6-164, 7-210, 8-277, 9-303				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gul	20	5	74	0
Tanvir	10	4	26	0
Irfan	21	1	86	3
Ajmal	42	9	96	6
Hafeez	9.1	1	24	1
PAKISTAN: Second innings				
Hafeez lbw b Steyn	0			
Jamshed lbw b Philander	0			
Ali not out	45			
Younis b Steyn	14			
Misbah not out	36			
Extras: (lb-2, w-3)	5			
Total: (For 3 wks in 44 overs)	100			
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-7, 3-45				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	9	2	24	2
Philander	11	4	26	1

and seems unlikely to take the ball again in the match. Peterson led a fighting performance by South Africa's lower-order batsmen as they recovered from an overnight 139 for five to reach 326 all out. Pakistan's first innings lead of 12 runs was soon shown to be negligible as Steyn and Vernon Philander both took wickets in their first overs. Mohammad Hafeez was comprehensively trapped leg before wicket by a ball which swung into him. After the briefest of consultations with opening partner Nasir Jamshed he walked off without seeking a review. In the next over Jamshed fell in similar fashion to Philander. After discussion with new partner Azhar he started to indicate he wanted a review but appeared to be told by umpire Steve Davis that he had taken longer than the 15 seconds allowed. Replays showed the ball would have clipped his bails so the decision would

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