

## Mashrafe not the one who gives up

SPORTS REPORTER

Making comeback has been Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's forte. He has made so many of those in an otherwise long career that the premier pace bowler has already emerged as a symbol of hope to many, a symbol of how to fight against injuries.

But there are many too who have been doubting his fate in competitive cricket after he suffered the latest injury. Mashrafe last played a competitive match on February 19 - in the BPL final -- when he picked up the latest injury, a fat pad contusion in his left heel that had ruled him out of the Tigers' one-day series in Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

The 29-year-old pacer, nicknamed the 'Narail Express', who so far has played 36 Tests and 128 ODIs since making international debut in November 2001, however was not ready to give up his fight yet, rather he was looking forward to getting back his fitness so that he could be available for the Tigers' next international assignment against New Zealand at home in October,



but for the limited-overs series only as he is no longer interested to take the huge workload of the longest-version of cricket.

"I have started running after a break of more than three months. My fitness level is not as good as the others. I have recovered from the injury and now got the chance to work on my fitness and I'm hopeful that I will be able to reach a certain fitness level before the next tour," hoped Mashrafe while talking to reporters on the second day of the special fitness camp that is being conducted with the introduction of Speed Light Gate, a new training device.

"I have a good chance to make a comeback for the New Zealand series as there is still three months to go before it starts," he added.

Mashrafe also believed that the hi-tech fitness training would bring positive results to the cricketers.

"Few things are really new. Right at the moment we are going through an experiment and I hope it will bring positive things to the players though it's very tough," Mashrafe said.

## SA thru' after tie

REUTERS, Cardiff



South Africa scraped into the Champions Trophy semi-finals after their Group B match against West Indies in Cardiff on Friday was declared a tie on the Duckworth-Lewis method for determining rain-affected matches.

West Indies, who were 190 for six off 26.1 overs chasing a target of 231 in 31 overs when the game was abandoned, would have been declared the winners had Kieron Pollard not been dismissed off what turned out to be the final delivery.

If Pollard had kept his wicket intact, West Indies would have been the winners and advanced along with India from Group B.

West Indies and South Africa finished the group stages on three points. With Pakistan already eliminated, South Africa got the second semi-final spot because of their superior net run rate.

Marlon Samuels gave West Indies real hope when he blazed 48 off 38 balls with two sixes after opener Chris Gayle had failed for the third time to convert a good start into a big score.

After hitting JP Duminy into the stands for a six, Gayle guided a tame catch to point and was out for 36.

South Africa welcomed back leading paceman Dale Steyn, who missed the first two matches because of injury, and he bowled with venomous pace and intent.

## County's new low is Essex's 20

AFP, London

English county side Essex on Friday posted their lowest total since 1901 after Lancashire bowled them out for just 20.

Essex were already behind by 125 runs after the Red Rose made 398 in their first innings in a Second Division County Championship match at Chelmsford.

But Lancashire ripped through the Essex batting, dismissing six batsmen for ducks. Top scorer was opener Jaik Mickleburgh with 10.

Veteran seamer Glenn Chapple took five for nine from 7.2 overs while Kyle Hogg took four for 11.

Essex captain James Foster was run out.

Lancashire won the game by an innings and 105 runs.

Essex's previous worst was 30 against Yorkshire 112 years ago.

## Div I b'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Josephites beat The Shawons by 66-51 points in their Citycell First Division Basketball League match at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Boney scored highest 19 points for Josephites while Shayer scored the same number of points for The Shawons.



Winger Zahid Hossain (L) scored one goal in Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra's 2-0 win over Feni Soccer Club on the opening day of the Grameenphone Super Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Sheikh Russel fly, Abahani stumble

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC's bid for a historic quadruple started in style as they outplayed Feni Soccer Club 2-0 while defending champions Abahani stumbled to a 0-0 draw against Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC on the opening day of the Grameenphone Super Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani, the champions of the second edition and the runners-up of the first, came unstuck against a dogged Muktiyoddha side who have thrashed them once already in the Premier League this season. So going by the record books, it might be one point won by Abahani, but they should have come out with three full points, given the number of chances they created. Abahani had a goal disallowed in the first half due to offside. Other than that their attempts were undone by the

Muktiyoddha keeper Ziaur Rahman. Abahani missed the services of their prolific striker Shakhawat Hossain Rony due to a groin injury, while national discard Enamul Haque, who took Rony's place failed to justify his inclusion.

The attention was though firmly focused on the day's first match where Sheikh Russel took on Feni SC. Unlike the Abahani strikers, the Sheikh Russel's forwards were very incisive and penetrative and justified the football governing body's decision to keep this tournament an all-local affair, to give the chance to local players showcase their skills.

The absence of Sony Norde and Tareq El Janabi, who had a great role in Sheikh Russel's treble triumph, was hardly felt as the local ones stepped in. National striker Zahid Hasan Emily and winger Zahid Hossain performed tremendously which must have impressed the national coach Lodewijk de Kruif and his deputy Rene Koster, who were keeping a close eye on the proceedings as well as some

4000 spectators who turned out on the holiday afternoon.

Sheikh Russel put tremendous pressure on Feni Soccer backline right from the word go, having beaten them in all the three meeting earlier in the season. The favourites yielded a good number of scoring chances, but all of them were thwarted by Feni Soccer goalkeeper Masud Rana.

After the barren first half, a bit of luck unlocked the Feni Soccer goal in the 49th minute. Left-back Nahidul Islam drove an innocuous looking low drive from outside the box which took a deflection off Feni Soccer defender Shimul before going at the back of the net. The referee though credited Nahid with the goal.

Striker Emily, who came into the match with the memory of the death of his newborn child recently, paired up with Anwar Hossain, playing in place of Sony and the national striker rattled upright early in the second half before speedy winger Zahid Hossain doubled the margin with a 25-yard attempt in the 75th minute.

## Tariqul bowls Chuadanga to win

SPORTS REPORTER

A five-wicket haul by Tariqul secured Chuadanga a 34-run victory over Meherpur in the 33rd National Cricket Championship at Satkhira yesterday.

In the rain-curtailed match, the winners scored 146 all out in 33 overs. In reply, Meherpur were bowled out for 112 runs in 33 overs. Tariqul picked up five wickets for 20 runs.

In the day's other matches, also rain-interrupted, Manikganj (69-7) beat Madaripur (76-6) by three wickets in parabola method at Faridpur while Jessore (138-4) defeated Narail (159-9) by six wickets, also in the parabola method, at Kushtia.

## Rating chess

SPORTS REPORTER

12 players shared the lead in Prime Bank 16th International Rating Chess Tournament with full three points at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

They are: GM Abdullah Al-Rakib, GM Ziaur Rahman, IM Minhazuddin Ahmed, IM Abu Sufian Shakil, FM Sk. Nasir Ahmed, FM Kh. Aminul Islam, FM Mehdi Hasan, FM Mohammad Javed, Monir Hossain, Md. Khorshed Alam, Belal Hossain and Abzid Rahman.

## Naveed to become hockey coach

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is all set to appoint former Pakistan national coach Naveed Alam as the coach of Bangladesh national hockey team ahead of the Asia Cup.

"After a fruitful discussion with Naveed, we have reached the final decision to appoint him and a six-month contract is expected to be finalised on his arrival in Bangladesh either on June 18 or 19," BHF member Mamunur Rashid told reporters yesterday.

The game's governing body had initially made a three-member list which included Indian duo Harendra Singh, Rajindra Singh and Naveed before they finally choosing the Pakistani coach, who will be reportedly paid 3500 dollars per month exclusive of his accommodation, transport and other facilities.

After striking a deal worth Tk 90.44 lakh with Janata Bank in March, the BHF was searching for a coach for the national team and they tried to rope in India's AK Bansal and MK Kaushik but Bansal expressed his disapproval after failing to get the one-year leave from the Indian sports authority while the BHF lost their interest in Kaushik after they learnt about his murky past.

## Niaz draws

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Murshed Murshed drew against WGM Padmini Rout of India in the second round of the DYTМ Raja Dr Nazrin Shah Invitational Masters Chess in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia yesterday. Niaz has 1.5 points from two rounds.

## Siddikur still in second

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's finest golfer Siddikur Rahman enjoyed another wonderful day in the Queen' Cup to stay in joint second position, two shots off the leader, after the second round yesterday. The 28-year old golfer played two-under-par (69) to take his aggregate to seven-under-par (135).

Siddikur had just one blemish in an otherwise perfect day at the Santiburi Samui Country Club when he carded a bogey on the 12th hole, while birdying on the 11th, 16th and 18th holes.

Siddikur was placed joint second along with Thailand's Prayad Marksaeng, who fired the day's lowest score of 64. They were two shots off the leader, Japan's Daisuke Kataoka, who held on to an overnight lead with a three-under-par (68) to continue his stranglehold at the 312,000 dollar event.

A total of 74 players made the weekend cut which was set at four-over-par (146).

## INDIA V PAKISTAN

## Meaningless yet explosive

AFP, Birmingham



India and Pakistan clash in a Champions Trophy match in Edgbaston on Saturday that promises high-voltage action despite the academic nature of the contest.

What was expected to be the marquee battle of the eight-nation tournament -- tickets for the match were sold out within hours of going on sale last November -- has been reduced to a dead rubber.

World Cup champions India are already through to the semi-finals after winning both group B matches so far, while Pakistan have crashed out of the race with two successive defeats.

But sporting contests between the arch-rivals are never irrelevant for players and millions of fans across the globe as heroes turn villains -- or vice-versa -- depending on

the result.

As India look to smoothen rough edges ahead of the semi-finals, Pakistan will play for pride hoping to build on the 2-1 series success in India in December-January.

"I don't think the Indian team has ever played a dead game," skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni said, referring to the huge fan following his side enjoys. "The match is also important to improve in the areas we want to."

Pakistan coach Dav Whatmore added: "It's an important match. It's certainly not a dead game for us and we will look to give our best."

Pakistan were let down by poor batting, having been bowled out for 170 by the West Indies and then dismissed for 167 by a depleted South African attack missing frontline strike bowlers Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel.

Skipper Misbah-ul Haq and Nasir Jamshed were the only batsmen to offer resistance in the two games, which put the hard-working bowlers under additional pressure.