

SPORT

CELEBRATING 2014

LIONS IN TIGERS' DEN



Tigers refuse to learn

Sri Lanka take series 2-0

BISHWAJIT ROY

Sri Lanka corrected their mistakes but Bangladesh continued their poor approach to lose the three-match ODI series with one match in hand after suffering a 61-run defeat in the second game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night.

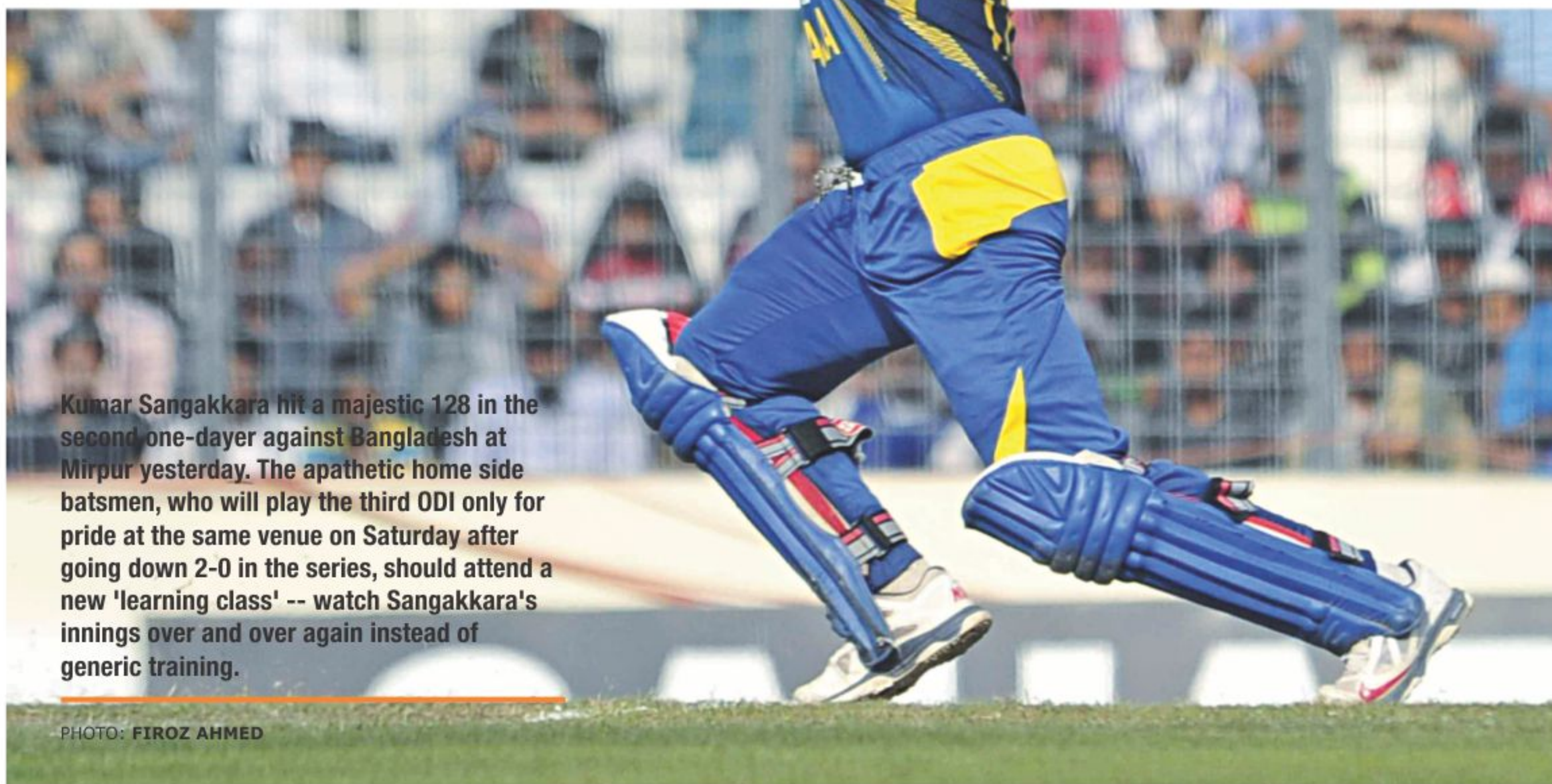
Unlike in the first match, Sri Lanka did not have to rely on the Tigers' generosity on the field but rode on an magnificent hundred from master batsman Kumar Sangakkara.

Sangakkara once again stood tall against his favourite team and when he pounded a copy-book drive against pacer Rubel Hossain through extra cover to complete his 17th hundred, it not only re-established his supremacy against the Tigers but also took his team to a position from where they could only lose the match if the Tigers batsmen did something special by applying a commonsense batting approach.

Lessons were not learnt from the clinic Sangakkara provided on innings building when the home side attempted to chase down a substantial target of 290. Luck once again favoured the Lankans to put up a fighting total as the home side dropped as many as four catches including the vital one off Ashan Priyanjan, who capitalised on it to score his second half-century in his fourth game and added 114 runs for the fourth wicket after the visitors had slipped to 63 for 3 in the 13th over. Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews must thank Mahmudullah Riyad -- who despite a poor showing in the first game continued to occupy Naem Islam's place -- for giving him a second chance which he grabbed with a quick unbeaten half-century.

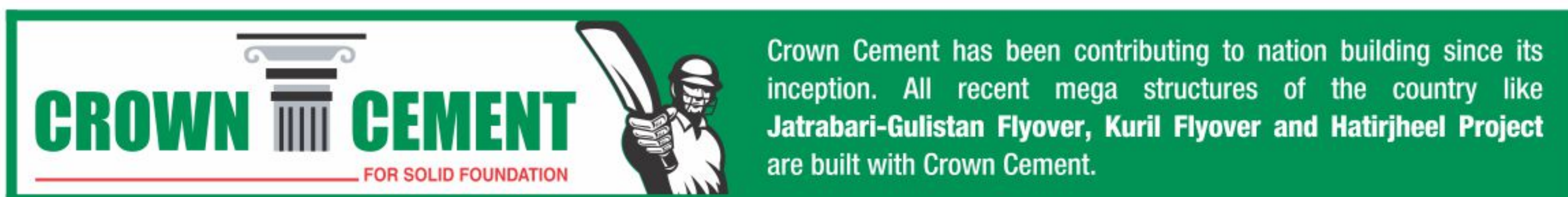
In chase of the mammoth total, Bangladesh required a good start from the openers and would have looked forward to in-form Shamsur Rahman in the absence of Tamim Iqbal, but the right-hander fished outside off stump to gently guide an away swinger from Lasith Malinga to second slip. The left-handed Mominul Haque then tried his best to get out with flashes outside off stump but luck helped him for a while before he was dismissed to end a 55-run stand with Anamul Haque, who was quick to follow his partner to see the home side slip to 63 for three. With a high asking run-rate Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiquur Rahim launched a counterattack to thrill the crowd but Shakib showed an alarming lack of match awareness as he charged down against Priyanjan to walk back to the pavilion with sheer frustration. It was then the same old story from Nasir Hossain and Riyad. Mushfiquur was however still there but his 79-run knock could only reduce the margin of defeat.

Thus a good start by the bowlers after Sri Lanka decided to bat first ended with further proof of dipping confidence and performance ahead of two big events. Tomorrow's third ODI will be their last chance at some sort of redemption.



Kumar Sangakkara hit a majestic 128 in the second one-dayer against Bangladesh at Mirpur yesterday. The apathetic home side batsmen, who will play the third ODI only for pride at the same venue on Saturday after going down 2-0 in the series, should attend a new 'learning class' -- watch Sangakkara's innings over and over again instead of generic training.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



The other side of luck

SAKEB SUBHAN



Sri Lanka's master batsman Kumar Sangakkara took the field under the Dhaka night sky having passed 1,000 runs against the hosts and fresh from another 100 against Bangladesh.

His team's score of 289 for six was built on his 128 and he scored those runs without recourse to the Tigers' generally generous hospitality on the field, relying as much on singles as on boundaries and not at all on sixes. An hour and a half later, he was probably enjoying a quiet chuckle behind the stumps at seeing his opposition designing their own demise as batsmen came, hit and left.

Luck has entered into the current series' discourse too often for comfort as far as sporting contests go. Bangladesh have been spurned by Lady Luck's cold shoulders in losing three close

matches on the trot, it has been said. But yesterday it was Lady Luck who might have felt jilted.

Having lost Shamsur Rahman in the very first over of the chase, Mominul Haque and opener Anamul Haque crawled to 14 after six overs -- seasoned Tigers watchers would have known that some sort of action was around the corner. In the fourth ball of the next over by Lasith Malinga the crowd were on their feet as Anamul advanced and hoicked him high in the air. Yesterday the height carried it to within inches of the long-on fence and it trickled over, but on another day a hail-Mary shot like that could easily have gone to hand.

Two more boundaries followed off the next two -- the first another risky but better connected mow down the ground and the next a more collected flick off the pads. Luck finally seemed to be turning, if it had indeed ever deserted the Tigers.

Mominul however decided to abandon caution and jumped out to off-spinner Sachithra

Senanayake and hit him against the spin. Luck smiled on him when the thick edge was dropped by Angelo Mathews at slip. He tried driving against the spin again off the same bowler three overs later and this time a much thinner edge nestled in Sangakkara's gloves.

Off his 11th delivery, Shakib Al Hasan pulled Mathews uppishly and Kithuruwan Vithanage dropped a difficult chance at short midwicket. In Mathews's next over, Shakib hit a six and two fours off consecutive deliveries and brought the innings run-rate up to required levels.

With the run rate under control however, he stepped out to hit another six in off-spinner Ashan Priyanjan's first over and hit it straight down long-off's throat. An hour later the series was lost.

At the end of the second Test Mominul had said that there is much to learn from Sangakkara's batting. Yesterday showed up one major difference between that aspiration and reality -- Sangakkara makes his own luck while the Tigers

Shakib's utter contempt

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan has finally succeeded in stripping away all notions of decency from his image or that of the Bangladesh cricket team during the national side's series-losing defeat to Sri Lanka in Mirpur yesterday.

His lewd gesture on live television specifically directed at the live TV camera, and by extension at the millions of people tuning in, was so graphic that it was an editorial decision of this newspaper not to publish the TV-grabbed image.

The incident occurred during the 33rd over of the innings, after Shakib had gotten out. He returned to the dressing room and, bare-chested with a towel wrapped around his torso, took a seat at the front of the viewing area. When the camera focused on him for a few seconds, he looked straight at the lens and gestured indecently at his private parts while a fellow cricketer sitting next to him, who was not playing in the match, reacted to the scene with laughter.

Shakib has a track record of misbehaviour, including his rude hand gesture to a section of the crowd during the 2011 World Cup. But coming from a national cricketer, an idol to young children, this gesture to an audience of millions when the much-loved team was in trouble on the field, shows unfettered contempt for his privileged position and most unfortunately for the fans who have made him who he is.



SCOREBOARD					
SRI LANKA	R	B	4s	6s	
K Perera c Shamsur b Rubel	8	7	2	0	
Dilshan c Mushfiquur b Rubel	8	16	1	0	
Sangakkara c Mahmudullah					
b Sunny	128	115	14	0	
Chandimal c Shamsur					
b Shohag	9	14	0	0	
Priyanjan lbw b Shakib	60	97	7	0	
Mathews not out	56	39	6	1	
T Perera c Mahmudullah					
b Rubel	0	3	0	0	
Vithanage not out	13	9	2	0	
Extras: (lb-3, w-4)				7	
Total: (For 6 wks in 50 overs)				289	
Did not bat: Senanayake, Malinga, Mendis.					
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-38, 3-63, 4-177, 5-260, 6-262.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Mashrafe	8	0	52	0	
Rubel	10	0	76	3	
Shohag	10	0	50	1	
Shakib	10	1	46	1	
Sunny	8	1	44	1	
Mahmudullah	3	0	11	0	
Mominul	1	0	7	0	
BANGLADESH	R	B	4s	6s	
Anamul lbw b T Perera	42	46	7	0	
Shamsur c Senanayake					
b Malinga	0	3	0	0	
Mominul c Sangakkara					
b Senanayake	15	32	1	0	
Mushfiquur c Senanayake					
b Malinga	79	83	5	2	
Shakib c Senanayake					
b Priyanjan	24	23	2	1	
Nasir c Vithanage					
b Mendis	22	24	1	1	
Mahmudullah run out	1	4	0	0	
Shohag c Sangakkara					
b T Perera	7	11	0	0	
Mashrafe c T Perera					
b Mendis	17	23	2	1	
Sunny not out	1	4	0	0	
Rubel c sub (K Perera)					
b Senanayake	6	6	0	1	
Extras: (b-3, lb-3, w-7, nb-1)				14	
Total: (All out in 43 overs)				228	
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-57, 3-63, 4-116, 5-153, 6-155, 7-170, 8-217, 9-220.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Malinga	8	2	45	2	
Mathews	8	1	44	0	
Senanayake	8	0	33	2	
T Perera	6	0	40	2	
Mendis	8	0	43	2	

The fielding handicap

NAIMUL KARIM

The one obvious negative that has stood out, apart from the many dubious strategic decisions by Bangladesh in this series, has been there catching on the field. The runs they gave away as a result shows how badly the hosts were affected.

The Tests and the two ODIs have seen at least 15 drops so far. A rough estimate shows that the spilled chances led to the hosts giving away at least 400 runs in Tests and 176 runs in the first two ODIs.

The performance in the first Test was perhaps the worst of the lot. Kaushal Silva's 139 was based on at least three easy chances, the first of which was dropped by Mushfiquur on 39. Mahela Jayawardene would not have reached his double century if he was stumped

by Mushfiquur on nine.

While the second Test was not as bad as the first, the hosts did have an opportunity to dismiss Kumar Sangakkara, who went on to score a triple century, on 36. The same Test saw Angelo Mathews get a life, when on 19.

With a fine performance on the field in the T20s, many reckoned that the hosts' catching woes were over. However, the ODIs just brought them back to square one.

Just yesterday, the hosts dropped four catches at crucial moments. Ashan Priyanjan, who came into bat at number four with the visitors struggling at 63 for 3 was put down by Nasir for three. He went on to score 60. Mahmudullah Riyad dropped a sitter, which allowed an aggressive Mathews to complete his half-century.

The first ODI was far worse. Thisara Perera, whose fighting 80 rescued the visitors from a precarious 67 for eight, was dropped thrice, the first being when he was on seven. His partner Sachitra Senayanake was put down on six.

The major worry is that it's been the most trustworthy fielders who have been at fault. Mushfiquur gave away four in the first Test alone, Nasir -- considered the Tigers' best fielder -- dropped three, and Mominul and Riyad each dropped two.

The irony behind all this is that in an attempt to improve the fielding before this series an assistant fielding coach was hired.

Whatever the reasons -- pressure, fitness issues -- with the Asia Cup and ICC World Twenty20 around the corner, an intervention is direly

Tigers low on confidence

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Mushfiquur Rahim blamed the hosts' first series defeat at home since 2012 on the team's 'low confidence'. Mushfiquur claimed that the players were 'mentally weak' after going through close-defeats in the T20Is and the first ODI.

"We probably tried to be a bit cautious. We concentrated too much on not making mistakes and that's when they happened. There is a bit of a mental block because of the way we lost the last three games. It can make any team weak," said Mushfiquur at the post-match conference yesterday.

"As a whole, we are low on confidence and we need a win to get out of this phase. But to get that one win, we need to put in double the effort than what we did in the last one and a half years. We need to give more than 100 per cent in the last ODI," he added.

The captain, who scored an 83-ball 79, ran out of partners during the chase, all of whom threw their wickets away under

pressure. It was an aspect of the game that the captain was disappointed about.

"We made too many mistakes at critical times. You don't expect these sorts of mistakes from certain players. We needed two set batsmen in the middle overs, our batsmen got out quickly; Shakib (Al Hasan) and Nasir's (Hossain) wickets put us on the back foot," he said.

The exclusion of Naem Islam, Bangladesh's highest-run scorer in the last series, in both the ODIs raised plenty of questions regarding the hosts' strategies, especially when Mahmudullah Riyad failed to contribute with both bat and ball in both games. Mushfiquur however, defended the tactic.

"Naem generally bats at number five and we have Shakib there. At number seven we need an all-rounder, where we are still trying to get an appropriate input from the player. Having said that I don't believe in immediately dropping a player without giving him another chance," said Mushfiquur.

TT C'ships kick off

SPORTS REPORTER

South East Bank 34th National Table Tennis Championships got underway at the Rajshahi Women's Complex Gymnasium yesterday. 224 players will fight it out in seven events -- men's team, doubles and singles, women's team, doubles and singles and mixed doubles. On the opening day Bangladesh Ansar, Jessore, Dinajpur, Munshiganj, Chapainawabganj, Khulna, Narail, Feni, Narayanganj, Bogra, Faridpur, Bramhanbaria, Chandpur and Jamalpur won their respective games in men's team event while Ansar, Patuakhali, Rajshahi, Narail, Dhaka, Naogaon, Shariatpur and Comilla posted wins in women's team event.

একুশ মানে বাংলা ভাষা
ছিনিয়ে আনার গান
একুশ মানে দৃষ্ট শপথ,
সাহসী শ্লোগান...

সাহসী শ্লোগান বুকে ধরে এক একটি বাংলা অক্ষর ছিনিয়ে আনা
সেইসব ভাষা শহীদদের অন্তরের অন্ত:স্থল থেকে শ্রদ্ধা জানাই।

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
(একটি রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন ব্যাংক)

প্রধান কার্যালয় : ৮ রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ

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