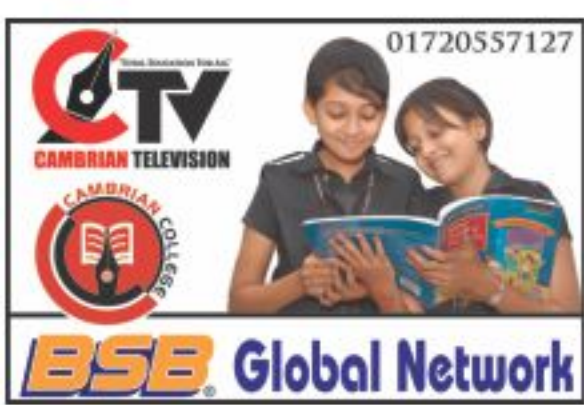


SPORT

THE YEAR OF OF

CELEBRATING 2014

BATTLE ASIA



BD-IND SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH	R	B	4s	6s
Anamul b Aaron	77	106	5	3
Shamsur c & b Shami	7	12	1	0
Mominul st Karthik b Ashwin	23	29	4	0
Mushfiquir c Sharma b Shami	117	113	7	2
Naem c Ashwin b Shami	14	19	1	0
Nasir c Karthik b Shami	1	6	0	0
Ziaur c Aaron b Kumar	18	12	2	1
Shohag not out	3	4	0	0
Mashrafe not out	1	1	0	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, w-12, nb-2)	18			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs)	279			
Did not bat: Razzak, Rubel.				
Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-49, 3-182, 4-231, 5-241, 6-270, 7-276.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Kumar	8	1	41	1
Shami	10	1	50	4
Aaron	7.5	0	74	1
Ashwin	10	1	50	1
Jadeja	10	0	37	0
Rayudu	3	0	17	0
Kohli	1.1	0	6	0
INDIA	R	B	4s	6s
Sharma b Ziaur	21	29	1	1
Dhawan lbw b Razzak	28	44	5	0
Kohli b Rubel	136	122	16	2
Rahane c sub (Kaye) b Shohag	73	83	7	1
Rayudu not out	9	15	0	0
Karthik not out	2	2	0	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-9, nb-1)	11			
Total: (For 4 wickets in 49 overs)	280			
Did not bat: Jadeja, Ashwin, Kumar, Shami, Aaron.				
Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-54, 3-267, 4-272.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	9	1	44	0
Rubel	10	1	63	1
Razzak	10	0	55	1
Ziaur	5	0	20	1
Shohag	8	0	49	1
Mominul	2	0	13	0
Naem	1	0	15	0



India captain Virat Kohli (C) led his side from the front as did Mushfiquir Rahim for Bangladesh in their Asia Cup opener at Fatullah yesterday. However, Kohli's 136 overshadowed Mushfiquir's 117 as India cruised to a six-wicket win.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Dew at the death again?

NAIMUL KARIM

That both Virat Kohli and Mushfiquir Rahim were going to play crucial roles in their sides' opening encounter of the Asia Cup was expected from their respective performances in recent past. Coming into this match, Kohli had an average of 122 against the Tigers while Mushfiquir seemed to be the only consistent batsman for the hosts.

At the end of the day it was Kohli's 136 that triumphed over Mushfiquir's 117 -- his highest score in ODIs. And the one major aspect, as put by Bangladesh left-arm

spinner Abdur Razzak, which led to the result was the dew factor. Bangladesh spinners were frequently seen trying to keep the ball dry with their towels towards the latter half of the Indian innings in an attempt to grip the ball better.

"There was plenty of dew in the evening. I personally think that it did play a huge role in the match. It began affecting us from after the half-way mark," said Razzak in the post-match press conference.

In a way the dew on the ground caught the hosts a bit unaware. Right before the match on Tuesday, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had told the media that the team did not expect

dew to be much of a factor since it didn't affect the previous match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The slow left-arter however, took nothing away from Kohli's brilliant knock and described it as a special innings.

"I don't think a lot went wrong with our game today. Our bowlers bowled well. But one can't do much when someone plays such a special innings," he said.

"There were times when we tried to apply pressure by putting an extra fielder inside the circle, but he [Kohli] got the singles despite that. Both the batsmen played very well for their runs," he added.

Razzak further informed that Mushfiquir, who hurt his right shoulder while attempting to save a boundary, would undergo an MRI scan today. The Bangladesh skipper did have an X-ray yesterday, but that did not reveal anything serious.

Contrary to Razzak's opinion, India's half-centurion Ajinkya Rahane felt that the dew factor could not have hindered the hosts' bowling much.

When asked if the dew factor turned out to be an advantage for the visitors, he said, "I don't think so. I think it only started affecting the bowlers in the last ten to twelve overs."

Siddikur fires five under

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman shot a five-under-par (67) in the first round of the SAIL-SBI Open, the first event of the 2014 Asian Tour season, to place himself in third position yesterday. The 29-year old two-time Asian Tour winner traded seven birdies against two bogeys at the venerable Delhi Golf Club, where he won his second Asian Tour title -- the Hero Indian Open last year. Siddikur was one shot behind Mithun Perera of Sri Lanka and Anikori Tani of Japan and five shots adrift of local lad Rashid Khan, who fired nine birdies and an eagle.

Bangladesh's Jamal Hossain Bhuiyan, who finished seventh in the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) last season, was in joint 39th position with one-under-par (71) while Shakhawat Hossain Sohel was in joint 82nd position with one-over-par (73).

Anirban Lahiri of India, who won this co-sanctioned event of the Asian Tour and PGTI the last two times, was in joint 31st position with two-over-par (74).

Bolt, Williams on Laureus short-list

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Jamaican sprint ace Usain Bolt has been nominated for what would be a record fourth Laureus Award, while US tennis player Serena Williams is also in the star-studded short-list, organisers said Wednesday.

Joining Bolt as nominees for the prestigious "Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award" are British distance runner Mo Farah, US basketball star LeBron James, tennis ace Rafael Nadal of Spain, Portuguese football player Cristiano Ronaldo and German Formula One champion Sebastian Vettel.

Bolt has previously won a Laureus award in 2009, 2010 and 2013.

BPL SPOT-FIXING

6 of 9 cleared of charges

ICC 'surprised'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bowlers Mosharraf Hossain (Rubel) and Mahbubul Alam (Robin) and former national player Mohammad Rafique were cleared of all corruption charges brought by the ICC -- pertaining to the second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League -- by a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) tribunal yesterday.

However, Dhaka Gladiators co-owner, Shihab Chowdhury was found guilty 'for being a party to an effort to fix the Chittagong match (February 2)'.

Also cleared of the charges were English cricketer Darren Stevens, Gladiators owner Salim Chowdhury, CEO Gaurav Rawat who had pleaded not guilty.

The ICC through a press release expressed their surprise regarding the outcome.

"The ICC and the BCB have received the determination and are surprised and obviously disappointed with the outcome. Both organisations await the Tribunal's detailed written determination setting out the reasons for the outcome and will consider it carefully before determining the next steps, including whether to appeal any aspect(s) of the judgment," stated the press release.

The fate of the other individuals accused -- namely Mohammad Ashraful and Kaushal Lokuarachchi -- who had already confessed to their crime, will be known in two weeks time. Both Ashraful and Lokuarachchi were asked to submit a mitigation brief depending on which the sanctions will be imposed by the tribunal.

While there were initially nine individuals accused of spot-fixing, it was learnt that a foreign player, who played in the BPL confessed during the hearing and pleaded guilty. He also had to follow a similar process and will know his fate in two weeks.

A press release sent from the tribunal yesterday stated in detail the charges made by the ICC against the accused.

According to the press release, Shihab and Salim Chowdhury, apart from being charged of fixing in the BPL were also charged of soliciting (Joshua) Cobb, (Darren) Stevens, (Ian) Pont and Tolchard to help fix Friends Life T20 (T20 tournament in the UK) matches. Both of them however, were found not guilty on that count.

The press release further stated that the provisional suspension that was imposed upon Mosharraf and Mahbubul was lifted yesterday and that the three-member tribunal would give its 'full reasons for their determination within the next two weeks'.

The hearing into the fixing scandal began on January 19. The three-member tribunal is being headed by former Supreme Court Judge Justice Khademul Islam. Justice Islam, former cricketer Shakil Kasem and Barrister Ajmalul Hossain have been attending the hearings.

History for Afghans

SPORTS REPORTER

History will be in the making at Fatullah today afternoon when Afghanistan finally make their debut in the big league when they take on neighbours Pakistan in their first game of the Asia Cup.

Led by Mohammad Nabi, the Afghans who have scaled various peaks in the last couple of years will want to make the most of this competition and gain as much experience as possible ahead of the ICC World Twenty20. Statistically there is not much to speak of. Australia and Pakistan are the only two top-notch teams that Afghanistan have played against and while they did lose those matches, they made quite an impression.

Against Australia at Sharjah in 2012, they scored 206 with Asghar Stanikzai scoring a fighting half-century. While the only ODI against Pakistan did not go too well, the Afghans almost beat them in a recent T20 encounter, a game which went right down to the last ball, in Sharjah.

That six out of the eight players in their current squad took part in the domestic league, including Nabi himself, is an aspect that the Afghans are looking to count on.

"It's a tough tournament. Our challenge is to prove how we can play against full members and show to the world that Afghanistan is the best team among Associate Members. We have no target, just want to give it our best," Nabi said in the pre-tournament press conference.

And their journey will begin with the tough but familiar opponents, Pakistan. Misbahul Haq and company must be gutted at having wasted a golden opportunity to win the first game. Despite some good performances from Umar Akmal and Misbah, a string of wickets in the end led to their down fall and they will be looking to make amends.

On the face of it, the Afghans won't be the first team to be discussed on the drawing board, but deep inside everyone's aware of the threat they possess and the good outfit that they can become in the coming years. All that, of course begins today; the first



Mushfiquir Rahim is in agony after being struck on the chest by a Varun Aaron (L) beamer at Fatullah yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Orderly Tigers

BISHWAJIT ROY

Without the two stalwarts Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal, Bangladesh put up a fighting total of 279 for seven against India in their Asia Cup opener at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. The total came about through a welcome return to disciplined batting led by none other than skipper Mushfiquir Rahim, who cracked a splendid hundred, the second by a Bangladeshi against India after Alok Kapali. Bangladesh's top batsmen showed yesterday after India put them in to bat first on the placid track that they know how to pace an innings, which they sometimes forget, with disastrous results.

The lack of discipline was the major issue behind their poor showing in the recently concluded series against Sri Lanka that had resulted in the Tigers entering the Asia Cup with low morale. After close contests in the T20 series a great opportunity in the first ODI against Sri Lanka was squan-



Major portions of these two Mega Projects are built with Crown Cement, the Gold Trophy winner in export. Because of consistent quality, Crown Cement is being regularly used in mega projects like Mogbazar-Mouchak Flyover, Comilla Flyover and extension of Khilgaon Flyover. — Crown Cement.

dered for lack of proper application and that continued in the next two games.

Considering the conditions the home side might have been 15 to 20 runs short from the expected total after a 133-run third wicket partnership between opener Anamul Haque and ton-maker Mushfiquir laid the foundation; but there were reasons for Tigers to breathe a sigh of relief.

It could have been much better had Nasir Hossain regained his rhythm instead of swishing at a slower delivery from India's most successful bowler Mohammed Shami to be caught behind by keeper Dinesh Karthik, who dropped the batsman in the previous over. It was a crucial time for Bangladesh as they needed to accelerate in the last four overs to touch the 300-mark.

The most beautiful part of the Bangladesh innings was the way Mushfiquir and Anamul handled the two spinners in Ravindra Jadeja, who has a tendency of producing breakthroughs at crucial stages of the match, and Ravichandran Ashwin. Also, they did not fall into the trap of playing unnecessary big shots, even though the ferocious cheers from the capacity crowd may have tempted them. This restraint was completely missing in the last series.

Indians had a ploy with short balls and opener Shamsur Rahman, displaying poor technique, was trapped by a short ball from Shami. When one-down batsman Mominul Haque walked back with the score on 49 for two after playing two magnificent cover drives, many anticipated another poor batting show from the Tigers. But the determined Mushfiquir joined young Anamul to write a different story. Anamul started fortuitously but then played with patience and maturity, which was why it must have rankled to miss a hundred as the right-hander was dismissed for 77. On the other hand, except some poor paddle shots, Mushfiquir was brilliant in his innings and those he hit, he made sure that they stayed hit. The 113-ball 117 was a controlled and purposeful innings from Bangladesh's little master; his second ODI hundred.

Regardless of whether they won, after the horrors of the Sri Lanka series, this much-improved performance will stand them in good stead for the tournament.

Substance over brutality

SPORTS REPORTER

Young Indian pacer Varun Aaron had a lesson in cricket from Bangladesh skipper Mushfiquir Rahim yesterday. Mushfiquir showed the youngster how battles in cricket are won, not through malice or dimwittedness, rather through courage and responsibility.

The 24-year old pacer, who is considered one of the fastest bowlers in Indian cricket right now, was taken to task by the Bangladesh batsmen from the beginning of the innings. Having gone for 56 runs in his first seven overs, and the first five balls of the eighth having gone for 17, the frustrated pacer took an ugly route to revenge. He unleashed the meanest weapon that a bowler can use -- a beamer aimed at the batsman's rib cage.

The above-waist-high full-toss, released at a speed of 140k-plus, gave Mushfiquir little time to duck and hit him full on in the chest. The Bangladesh skipper straight away dropped his bat and fell down on the ground in agony. The young bowler, who was barred from bowling any further in the innings by the umpire, apologised to Mushfiquir. However, actions such as these are hardly excusable, as was emphasised by the legendary Indian cricketer-turned-commentator Sunil Gavaskar. "That one seemed intentional. This should not have been the way to stop the batsman and the bowler should be dealt a stricter punishment," Gavaskar said while commenting on the match on TV.

Mushfiquir got back to his feet and went on to stroke a magnificent hundred, showing the young Indian bowler

England's life without KP

AFP, London

England will play their first major match since the controversial decision to call time on Kevin Pietersen's international career when they face West Indies in the first of three one-day internationals in Antigua on Friday.

English cricket is still coming to terms with the decision to dispense with the services of the national side's all-time leading run scorer across all formats.

There is a sense that former England wicket-keeper Paul Downton, now the England and Wales Cricket Board's managing director and Test captain Alastair Cook, rested from the Caribbean series, know they will be judged on the team's results and so would not be as perverse to 'cut off their nose to spite their face' by prematurely ditching a world-class player.