

# SPORT

## Hasan celebrates call-up

SPORTS REPORTER



Abul Hasan celebrated his return to the national side with a match-winning all-round performance as Islami Bank East Zone posted a comfortable 98-run victory over Walton Central Zone at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night.

Away at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, national colours like Mushfiqur Rahim, Sabbir Rahman and Nasir Hossain sparkled with the bat as BCB North Zone secured an 88-run victory against Prime Bank South Zone to set up a final clash with the East Zone for Sunday at Mirpur. The date was changed for the final match as the Bangladesh Cricket Board has arranged a reception for the Tigers on Saturday at the Manik Mia Avenue.

Hasan, called up for the first two ODIs against Pakistan later this month ahead of Al-Amin Hossain for his batting ability, helped East Zone get

past the 200-run mark as he scored 51 off 53 balls with three fours and a six batting at number eight and then tormented his opponents' top order by taking the first three wickets that included Rony Talukdar and Mahmudullah Riyad.

Central Zone finally failed to recover from the damages as left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny then took the

charge and took four wickets to dismiss them for 120 runs.

At Fatullah, the North Zone showed a strong batting display after recovering from early hiccups to set a 322-run winning target for their opponents, who ultimately were bowled out for 233.

World Cup hero Rubel Hossain gave the early breakthrough removing Junaed Siddiqui, who made a hundred in the previous game, but Naeem Islam joined Mahmudul Hasan to repair the innings, sharing 83-run for the second wicket. Hasan missed his half-century for two runs while Naeem hit highest 80 off 107 balls. Mushfiqur, Sabbir and Nasir then made full use of the good platform to keep the strong South Zone bowling attack, led by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, at bay.

Mushfiqur hit 78 off 66 balls with five fours and four sixes while Sabbir smote seven boundaries and three over boundaries during his 34-ball 66 and Nasir smashed six fours in his 22-ball 39-run knock.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE:** 218-8 in 50 overs (Liton 22, Irfan 22, Nazmul 39, Abul 51, Sunny 27 not out; Taskin 3-45, Hom 2-38, Sunny 2-35)

**WALTON CENTRAL ZONE:** 120 all out in 37.3 overs (Dhiman 19; Abul 3-21, Arafat Sunny 4-11)

**Result:** Islami Bank East Zone won by 98 runs. **BCB NORTH ZONE:** 321-7 in 50 overs (Mahmudul 48, Naeem Islam 80, Mushfiqur 78, Sabbir 66, Nasir 39; Mashrafe 2-69, Rubel 2-53, Zia 2-35)

**PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE:** 233 all out in 44.1 overs (Saykat 25, Mithun 38, Gazi 39, Mashrafe 69; Delwar 2-46, Forhad 2-57, Tajjul 2-25, Sanjamul 2-29) **Result:** BCB North Zone won by 88 runs.



If Abul Hasan's selection to the national team is something to pay back, then the pace bowler has already started doing so to the selectors, who drafted him in for his batting abilities, with a 51 in a BPL one-day match at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Bangla Games called off

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday postponed next month's Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games for indefinite period after the West Bengal Olympic Association refused to take part citing lack of preparation.

The fourth edition of the competition featuring nine disciplines was scheduled to be held in Dhaka over May 7-14, some five years after the third edition was held in Kolkata in March 2010.

"They are lacking in preparation following the demise of West Bengal Olympic Association's treasurer and have also some internal problems and that's why we postponed the Games at their request," said Mizanur Rahman Manu, the BOA vice-president and co-coordinator of the event.

"However, I talked to their president this [Thursday] afternoon and they wished to take part in the Games during Winter," said Manu, adding that they were a bit disappointed with such a decision and hopeful to stage the Games in the middle of January next year.

Bangladesh had started their preparation in February in a bid to regain supremacy that they had lost in the third edition where the hosts won 32 gold, 27 silver and 26 bronze medals against Bangladesh's 28 gold, 29 silver and as many bronze. The BOA already spent Tk 50 lakh for the preparation.

With the announcement of postponement, the athletes also expressed their frustration.

"The preparation is going on at good pace and I have improved my timing. But the postponement disappointed me. However, I think this will help me in the SA Games," said sprinter Mezbahuddin.

## INA NUTSHELL

### 'PCB destroying Umar'

FIRST POST, Karachi

Experienced wicketkeeper-batsman Kamran Akmal's scathing attack on the Pakistan team management could hurt his chances of making a comeback to international cricket. Kamran lashed out at the team management for making his younger brother Umar Akmal a sacrificial lamb.

According to a report in Dawn news Kamran said in an interview that Umar's career was being "destroyed" for non-cricketing reasons.

"Umar has always put the cause of the team ahead of any personal comfort. If there were any [disciplinary] issues then coach and team management need to guide youngsters and help them understand that they have done something wrong."

### A special victory: SRK

THE TELEGRAPH, Kolkata

Kolkata Knight Riders started IPL VIII on a thumping note on Wednesday. But their principal owner Shah Rukh Khan was not ready to over-celebrate the good beginning.

"We have a simple rule at KKR: Till we win the final, be humble," Shah Rukh said after the match.

The Bollywood superstar, however, said that it was a special victory since all his three children were present at the stadium. "Yes, we are happy to start with a win at home... I want my children to enjoy sport... I love IPL. I feel extremely happy that my kids have come and I want them to understand the value of winning and losing."



PHOTO: INTERNET

### Shah Rukh Khan introduced his youngest son Abram to the Kolkata crowd Wednesday night.

On a lighter note, he added: "You can't come with three kids and lose. It was a special victory."

### 'Didn't take much notice of Tendulkar's criticism'

TOI, Mumbai

Former India coach Greg Chappell has been roped in by the Pathan brothers -- Irfan and Yusuf -- for their soon-to-be-launched coaching academy in Baroda and Delhi. In an exclusive interview with the Times of India, the Aussie legend was asked how he felt after Sachin Tendulkar criticised him in his autobiography last year, and a few Indian players who played under him too followed suit.

"That's fine, I don't take much notice of it. I really tend to focus on the more positive things that are happening with cricket in India, and the fact that Irfan and Yusuf are setting up an academy to develop players. I'd rather look forward than backward. If I can impart some of my experience and knowledge to their academy, I'd be pleased."

### Women's League from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier Division Women's Cricket League will kick off today with Mohammedan taking on Orient at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium while Ansar & VDP facing Rupali Bank at BKSP.

Twelve teams, split into two groups, are participating in the 40-over competition.

Group A: Mohammedan, Ansars, Rupali Bank, Jahurul Islam City, Indira Road and Orient.

Group B: Abahani, AV Sporting, Khelaghar, Gulshan Youth, BKSP and Rayer Bazar.

## CSK clinch a humdinger

PTI, Chennai

Pacer Ashish Nehra snapped up three wickets to lead a disciplined bowling attack as two-time champions Chennai Super Kings defeated Delhi Daredevils by one run in a last-over thriller of the Indian Premier League in Chennai on Thursday.

Needing 19 runs off the last over, Albie Morkel blasted two fours and a six off Dwayne Bravo but Delhi still fell short by one run at the MA Chidambaram Stadium.

Earlier put into bat, Chennai were caught in a spin web and could only manage a modest 150 for 7, courtesy contributions by Dwayne Smith (34), middle-order batsman Faf du Plessis (32) and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (30).

Defending the total, Nehra produced a fiery spell of fast bowling, dismissing Chidambaram Gautam (4), Mayank Agarwal (15) and Shreyas Iyer (7) early on to put Delhi on the backfoot. Morkel anchored the chase with a 55-ball 73 but he didn't get the much-needed support at the other end as Chennai eventually restricted them to 149 in their stipulated 20 overs to launch their IPL-8 campaign on a positive note.

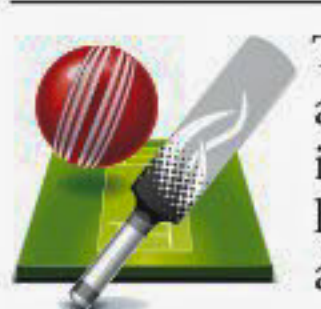
**SCORES IN BRIEF CHENNAI:** 150 for 7 in 20 overs (D Smith 34, du Plessis 32, Dhoni 30, Jadeja 17; Coulter-Nile 3-30, Duminy 1-15)

**DELHI:** 149 for 9 in 20 overs (Morkel 73 not out, Jadhav 20, Agarwal 15; Nehra 3-25, D Bravo 2-36) **Result:** Chennai won by 1 run.

**Player-of-the-match:** Ashish Nehra.

## Tamim's practice pain on

SPORTS REPORTER



Tamim Iqbal was once again sidelined due to injury when the left-handed opener desperately needed some runs under his belt ahead of the coming home series against Pakistan.

The Chittagonian did not play yesterday's BCL match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium after suffering injury on his right knee while he was fielding on Tuesday's match, his first appearance in the one-day competition, at Fatullah.

"Tamim (Iqbal) and Mominul (Haque) have been advised not to play today's match as pre-cautionary measures as they have minor injuries. Mominul injury is nothing serious but we will assess Tamim's knee on Saturday to decide on whether he can play the final or need an MRI. However his condition improved a lot now and we hope everything will be okay by Saturday,"

informed national team physiotherapist Bayzedul Islam yesterday.

It seems fitness is a big issue for Tamim. It has become a common scenario for the left-hander to miss the opportunity to take proper preparations ahead of international commitments because of injury. He missed two practice games before the World Cup following a surgery on his left-knee in Australia.

In February last year Tamim had suffered a neck strain after the second

Test against Sri Lanka and missed the three-match ODI series and also the Asia Cup. So, many believe that fitness or the lack of it is an area that might have played a big role for Tamim not performing to his potential.

With the Pakistan series knocking at the door and the opening remains a big concern following Tamim recent poor form, the team management would have loved to see the left-hander get back among runs in the BCL matches. But he scored only ten runs in his first BCL match and missed the second one. Bangladesh as a team played exceptionally well in the World Cup in Australia-New Zealand but Tamim was not at his best except for his 95-run knock against Scotland. And overall the opening was a big problem in the World Cup. Keeping that in mind the selectors have picked up an uncapped player in Rony Talukdar, who in all probabilities will open the innings with a fit Tamim in the first one-day international against Pakistan on April 17.



## Reception on hold

SPORTS REPORTER



As the Tigers were all set to travel to Chittagong this morning to attend a reception for their outstanding performance in the World Cup, the

Election Commission late last night postponed the programme until the city corporation polls are over in apprehension of violation of electoral code of conduct.

The national cricketers were to travel to the port city amidst mixed reactions on whether attending the reception at the Chittagong Outer Stadium at 3:00pm would provide political mileage to BCB vice-president AJM Nasir Uddin or could hamper their preparations for the home series against Pakistan, which is just over a week away.

Talking to the media, Returning Officer Abdul Baten at the Chittagong EC office at 9:30pm said, "We all are respectful to the achievement of the Bangladesh cricket team. We also want the programme to be held. But if the programme is arranged now, there is a possibility of a showdown by [Awami

League-backed mayoral candidate] Nasir that could breach the electoral code of conduct. The programme can be arranged at any time after the elections."

Nasir is the general secretary of Chattagram Jela Krira Sangtha (CJKS) which is one of the organisers of the function along with Bangladesh District and Divisional Sports Organisers Forum and the Chittagong Divisional Sports Association. Nasir on Wednesday spoke at the press conference of the reception programme at MA Aziz Stadium.

The event was scheduled to take place a day before the Bangladesh Cricket Board's own grand reception, which is to take place at Dhaka's Manik Mia Avenue on Saturday. The board planned a reception for the cricketing heroes, who reached the quarterfinals for the first time down under last month, ever since they returned home on March 22 but the delay was due to off the field happenings surrounding AHM Mustafa Kamal, who resigned from the post of ICC president after the controversy surrounding the handing over the World Cup trophy to the champions team.

## Mani fears for cricket

AFP, London

Former ICC president Ehsan Mani on Wednesday expressed grave fears about cricket's future, saying he is "more concerned about the health of the game today than I have ever been".

Mani criticised the world governing body's decision to reduce the 2019 World Cup to 10 teams and said that many of the game's 10 Full Member nations faced serious challenges.

"A year has passed since the changes at the ICC," Mani said at the launch of the new Wisden Cricketers' Almanack at Lord's, in reference to last year's takeover at the ICC by the boards of England, India and Australia.

"I am more concerned about the health of the game today than I have ever been. When I look around, five of the 10 Full countries are in desperate need of help."

"They are faced with two main challenges: one, not enough money;

two, not enough quality cricket."

The five teams referred to by Mani are Pakistan, the West Indies, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, and he expressed particular concern about the health of the West Indian game.

"It is desperately sad to see that some of the West Indian players prefer to play in the IPL [Indian Premier League] and other T20 leagues around the world rather than for West Indies," he said.

"This is simply because of money. This problem must be addressed. It is the responsibility of

the ICC to ensure that the priority for players should be to play for their country before anything else."

Mani expressed concerns over the health of the Associate nations, who may not feature at the next World Cup if the two qualifying berths made available to teams outside the world's top eight are taken by Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.



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