



A disappointed Mushfiqur Rahim walks back to the pavilion after scoring a painstaking 32, for which he spent two hours at the crease in Rajshahi on the second day of the NCL yesterday. It wasn't a good day for the other national players as well, most of whom lost their wickets after getting starts.

PHOTO: STAR

SCORES IN BRIEF

BARISAL VS RAJSHAHI
BARISAL: 302 and 160 all out in 44.4 overs (Mahmud 35, Mosaddek 40, Gazi 25; Reza 3-31, Sanjamul 4-49, Farhad 3-20). **RAJSHAHI:** 93 all out in 44 overs (Mushfiqur 32; Towhidul 6-31, Kabir 3-11) and 25-0 in 6 overs (Nazmul 16 not out, Jahurul 9 not out)

DHAKA VS KHULNA
DHAKA: 187 all out in 66 overs (Saif 68, Nadif 36; Mustafizur 4-29, Razzak 4-72). **KHULNA:** 168-4 in 49 overs (Imrul 29, Mehedi 53, Shakib 13, Tushar 26, Mithun 21 not out, Nurul 25 not out; Nazmul 2-67)

DHAKA METRO VS RANGPUR
DHAKA METRO: 238. **RANGPUR:** 266-5 in 92 overs (Tanveer 31, Imtiaz 37, Rajin 74, Ruman 80, Naeem 46, Mahmudul 41, Dhiman 85 not out, Ariful 48 not out; Shahid 2-63, Elias Sunny 2-63)

SYLHET VS CHITTAGONG
SYLHET: 352-8 in 120.2 overs (Imtiaz 37, Rajin 74, Ruman 80, Rahatul 56 not out, Abul 32; Merajul 2-42, Nabil 3-78, Saifuddin 2-64). **CHITTAGONG**

Stalwarts fail to make impact

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim and Imrul Kayes got starts on the second day of the National Cricket League (NCL), but could not capitalise. As matches continued at four venues across the country, it was pacer Tawhidul Islam who hogged the limelight, demolishing Mushfiqur's Rajshahi for 93 runs.

At the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi, wickets fell like ninepins, with 18 wickets falling on the day after hosts Rajshahi were bundled out for 93 runs, which put Barisal on top. Barisal were dismissed for 160 runs in their second innings, setting a 371-run target for their opponents, which out-of-favour opener Shahriar Nafees believed was good enough to secure full points for Barisal.

"There is a grass and movement in the pitch and Tawhidul used the conditions brilliantly. It would be better if we had some more runs in the second innings but still in this condition a 370-run lead is good enough," said Nafees.

The chief destroyer was Tawhidul, capturing



Tawhidul Islam... 6/31

six wickets including the one of Mushfiqur, who top scored with 32.

After Dhaka's dismissal for 187 runs, hosts Khulna reached 168 for four in the rain-

interrupted day at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium, which might force many to think that there was something for the bowlers in the pitch. However, selector Habibul Bashar, who was in Khulna to watch the match, gave a different opinion and expressed his frustration over the surface.

"Batsmen lost their wickets through their own faults and the reason might be that they were playing their first match this season. But there was nothing for the bowlers in the pitch. I am really frustrated that nothing has changed though we gave a lot of effort, talked a lot and had several meetings regarding green-top wickets. But in reality it's the same old story. I am not sure whether the story is same for the other venues also," said a frustrated Bashar.

National opener Kayes was dismissed for 29 while Shakib Al Hasan returned to the dressing room after making 13 runs, thereby missing the opportunity to get some batting practice ahead of Australia's visit.

A 133-run unbeaten sixth wicket stand between Dhiman Ghosh and Ariful Haque put Rangpur on top against Dhaka Metro at the Shahid Chandu Stadium in Bogra, while in the rain-interrupted day at Fatullah, Sylhet finished the day at 352-8 after resuming the day on 240-4.

Hemanta told not to join camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Hemanta Vincent Biswas, the midfielder of the national team who was served a show-cause notice by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) on Friday, returned to Dhaka yesterday, but has been told by the national team management not to join the camp until a decision is taken about his transgression. The 20-year-old midfielder, who had opted to stay out of the camp in a bid to recover from a hamstring injury, had reportedly taken part in a local football match in his hometown of Dinajpur recently without taking permission from the game's governing body.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said the midfielder came with his reply to the show-cause, where he apologised for his transgression, claiming he took part in the match due to a request from the local organisers, without realising the consequences. The midfielder has also been asked to stay away from the camp until a decision on the matter is taken by the National Team's Committee.

Oz hires Indian expert

AGENCIES, Melbourne



Australia have called on a secret weapon to help end their spin woes on next month's tour of Bangladesh, enlisting the services of former India all-rounder Sridharan Sriram as a coaching consultant.

Sriram, who currently coaches in the Indian Premier League, shared his subcontinent expertise during Australia A's tour of India in July and August and will be used again for next month's two-match Qantas Test tour of Bangladesh.

His expertise will be a powerful tool for Australia's new-look Test squad, which boasts just 207 Test caps between them -- none of which have come in Bangladesh -- and only four players who have ever played on Bangladesh soil in any format.

"Working with the Australian Test team is

a great honour," Sriram said. "I've played international cricket for India and I'm looking forward to sharing my experience and knowledge of subcontinental conditions with the squad."

"The Australian cricket team talks about 'one-percenters' and my role will be to contribute that one percent to help the team adapt to the conditions and opponents quickly, which can ultimately influence the outcome of the game."

"In the long run, I see myself as someone who can help the Australian batsmen become better players of spin bowling and also help spinners understand the psyche and technique of different batsmen and adapt to different conditions."

Sriram has been coaching in India, England and New Zealand since 2008. Several members of Australia's Test squad have already flourished after working with Sriram during the Australia A tour of India.

'Boys lack tactical sense'

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh under-16 football team has seen both sides of the coin

in a matter of a month. On August 18, they were lifting the title of SAFF U-16 Championship, after beating India in the final in Sylhet and soaking in all the accolades that were flowing in. On September 18, the same team, albeit with a few changes, was licking the wounds of a 6-1 defeat against United Arab Emirates following a 5-1 drubbing by Saudi Arabia as their AFC U-16 Championship qualifying campaign came to a sorry end.

What went wrong in a matter of a month? Is the gulf of difference between the South Asian teams and those from across the Arab Gulf that vast at the age-group level? Bangladesh Football Federation's technical director, BA Zobayer Nipu, who has overseen these boys over the last two months, feels that even though the margin of defeat could have been a bit more respectable, there is no denying the huge difference in the facilities provided and the preparation-time between these sides.

"Most of the Bangladesh players were selected from various regions and trained over a month-and-a-half for the two events. Where they are coming from, there is a big lapse in the way they

are coached. These boys are not bad technically, but they lack the tactical sense of positioning, of how to get back to defend when you lose possession and things like that. And these things cannot be overcome in months, you need long-term training for that," Nipu told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

Nipu informed that UAE players have been together since the under-13 level and they have taken part in a 27-team competition in Italy recently. "If you give our players 2-3 years and keep them at the BFF academy under a good foreign instructor, you can expect much better results," said Nipu, adding that the BFF has asked Japan and the FIFA for sending a good coach to groom the age-group teams at the academy.

COMMONWEALTH KARATE Borna wins silver

SPORTS REPORTER

Moun Zera Borna of Bangladesh earned a silver medal in the -48kg karate category in the 8th Commonwealth Karate Championship in New Delhi yesterday. A Sri Lankan participant won the gold while an Indian participant won the bronze medal in this event, said a press release from Bangladesh Karate Federation yesterday. The championship, organised by the Karate Association of India, will conclude today.

Milestone beckons Mominul & Co

Series decider against India A today

SPORTS REPORTER



With the series tied at one each, Bangladesh's second string side are within touching distance of achieving a brilliant milestone. These may just be unofficial one-dayers, but scoring a series victory over India's second-best team in their own backyard can catapult the confidence levels of these Bangladeshi players to even higher heights.

There's no doubt that this is a strong Bangladesh unit. A number of these players have been a part of the national side's sensational run this year and they have overcome many a hurdle. Despite all that, travelling to India and beating them in their own den is a perilous mission that no team can ever be certain of accomplishing.

And so, if Mominul Haque and co can eke out a win in the final one-dayer in Bangalore today, one can expect the celebration levels to match that of an official ODI series win.

But in order to accomplish the feat, the visitors need to improve in a number of areas.

For starters, Bangladesh's top order needs to find runs. With Anamul Haque, Soumya Sarkar and Mominul Haque in the top four, better results are expected. These are players who have shown their calibre at the top level time and again and there's no reason why they can't light up the M Chinnaswamy Stadium today.

After levelling the series on Friday, coach Heath Streak spoke about the need for Bangladesh's top order to be cautious.

"It's an excellent track to bat on if you can stay at the wicket for 10 to 15 overs," he had said.

That's advice the batters will want to follow, unless they want to leave everything on the shoulders of Liton Das and Nasir Hossain for the third consecutive time.

A lot more is expected from the talented Sabbir Rahman as well. A powerful hitter of the ball, the comparatively small-sized ground in Bangalore could turn out to be paradise for him if he gets his eye in.

While the bowlers struggled in the first one-dayer, they came back brilliantly in the second. 250-odd was always going to be a difficult total to defend on that wicket, but the bowlers stuck to their line-and-length and never let the pressure subside.

The partnership between Rubel Hossain and Nasir Hossain with the ball on Friday depicted how to put the opposition under pressure. While Rubel bowled with sheer pace, Nasir maintained his accuracy to perfection.

Bangladesh are likely to field their best side for the final one-dayer. They may include an extra spinner in the side. Leg-spinner Jubair Hossain, slow left-armed Saqlain Sajid and off-spinner Shuvagata Hom are the three players who are yet to feature in the series.

Coach Heath Streak hopes that the confidence gained from the win in the second one-dayer will encourage the players.

"In the first game our bowling didn't help us and we also lost early wickets. We are working hard on these aspects, so hopefully we can improve on that."

"For a lot of these players, this is a big opportunity to integrate their careers and be selected in the one day and Test formats," Streak told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.



Skipper Mamunul Islam leads his teammates during the national team's training session at the BFF artificial turf yesterday. The camp will be halted for Eid vacation on September 24 and will resume two days later at BKSP in Savar.

PHOTO: STAR

Booters grumble about BFF dorm

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh booters are apparently unhappy with the facilities of the dormitory on the third floor of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House, where they are currently staying for the camp.

The simplistic dormitory, with eight rooms and a dining hall, is devoid of many of the modern facilities which are expected for housing any national team. The game's governing body sees it as a temporary accommodation as the national team is often sent to the BKSP in Savar for long-term training. However, when the team's coach is reluctant to move to BKSP, as is the case now, due to the available practice facilities at the BFF turf and its vicinity to the Bangabandhu National Stadium, it becomes somewhat of a permanent abode for the booters. The situation worsens when the BFF runs camps of several teams simultaneously.

And the current scenario compelled a senior member of the national team to express his displeasure over the condition of the dorm.

"Facilities are not good here. Four players are accommodated in each room, which are not very clean. We have to buy our own breakfast from the nearby shops and we have to do gym at a different place," said the player on condition of anonymity.

When contacted, the BFF general secretary, Abu Nayeem Shohag, admitted some of the shortcomings of the federation, but rubbished the claim of substandard food being served.

"It is true that the present dormitory cannot accommodate more than 30 players. That is why we have made arrangements for seven players at the Mohammedan Sporting Club nearby," said the BFF general secretary. "The accusation about food is baseless, but you cannot expect the facilities to be as good as what they get at FARS Hotel (where the national team usually lodges during international matches)."

Shohag said that the federation realises the need for renovation of the dorm, but it cannot do so due to too many accommodation issues.

"At least three weeks' time is needed for renovation, which we cannot get at the moment due to assignment of various teams. As far as the gym is concerned, it is not being built due to financial constraints," said Shohag.

Cricket at grassroots

SPORTS REPORTER

Speakers at a seminar yesterday emphasised on the formation of regional cricket associations to improve the country's cricket. Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) arranged this seminar titled "Our Cricket at Grassroots Level" at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium.

Former national captains, Khaled Masud and Khaled Mahmud, and vice-president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Mahbul Anam, along with 13 other sports personalities gave their opinions about how to improve cricket at the grassroots level.

Anam said that there was no alternative than decentralizing the game for improvement and added, "I will consider myself a failed organizer if I cannot witness the formation of regional cricket associations."

Khaled Mahmud, BCB's director and chairman of game development committee, alleged that they would face repercussions even if they took action against a small-time coach, sometimes receiving calls from ministers who rebuked them.

"To me it was more difficult to contest the BCB election than to face Bret Lee. Despite giving them money, divisional teams were reluctant to pay their staff," said Mahmud.