

SPORT



Dhaka Metro skipper Mahmudullah Riyad (L) gets his dancing boots on after getting rid off Dhaka Division's Myshukur Rahman, one of the four batsmen to fall in the last session of play in Fatullah yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Sanjit shines on bowlers' day

SPORTS REPORTER

Players from the current Bangladesh under-19 team continued to shine in the ongoing National Cricket League. After Nazmul Hossain Shanto and Mehedi Hasan Miraz put in fighting performances for their respective divisions in the first two days, it was 17-year-old Sanjit Saha's turn to grab the spotlight with his turners on Day Three.

The off-spinner from Rangpur almost singlehandedly dismantled hosts Khulna's batting lineup in their second innings with figures of 7 for 64 yesterday. It gave bottom-placed Rangpur a great opportunity to beat Khulna, who are in second position. Rangpur were set with a modest target of 200 runs to win.

However, Sanjit's under-19

colleague, Miraz, and veteran left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak had other plans in mind. Right after Khulna were dismissed for 208, Miraz and Razaq brought on a mighty collapse for Rangpur, reducing them to 58 for 6 by stumps. The fact that Nasir

SCORES IN BRIEF			
Chittagong v Barisal Chittagong: 467 for 7 dec Barisal: 345 for 9 (Al-Amin 72, Salman 51, Saifuddin 3-59)	Dhaka v Dhaka Metro Dhaka: 327 and 65 for 4 (Rakibul 21 not out, Shahidul 2-9) Dhaka Metro: 352 all out in 124 overs (Shamsur 138, Shariqullah 52, Mosharraf 5-120)	Khulna v Rangpur Khulna: 211 and 208 all out in 74.5 overs (Mahedi 41, Miraz 33; Sanjit 7-64) Rangpur: 220 and 58 for 6 (Nasir 17, Razzak 4-44, Miraz 2-13)	Sylhet v Rajshahi Sylhet: 328 all out in 128.5 overs (Imtiaz 154; Sanjamul 4-73) and 14 for no loss Rajshahi: 380 all out in 117 overs (Farhad 145, Forhad 54; Rahatul 5-80)

Hossain's side needed 38 overs to score those 58 runs further illustrates the haphazard state the Rangpur batting was in.

While Razzak took four wickets, including the crucial one of Nasir, Mehedi's off-spinners removed opener Saymon Ahmed and two-down Tanvir Hayder. With a day to go, Khulna will hope they can secure their first win of the competition.

The day got better for Razzak and

a slender lead over Dhaka, with left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain scalping five Metro wickets, his third consecutive five-wicket haul in the campaign. He bowled a mammoth 49 overs for figures of 5 for 20.

Mosharraf, however, might feel a little aggrieved with the tame reply that the batsmen of his side came up with later. Dhaka slumped to 65 for 4 in the last session and will have to work hard to save the match on the last day.

Metro's Shahidul Islam took two wickets while spinners Mahmudullah and Arafat Sunny took one each.

The game between hosts Chittagong and Barisal has arguably been the least entertaining of the lot in this round. After the port city declared at 467, Barisal's batsmen made came up with an equally good reply, ending the day at 345 for 9.

Big test for Lopez

Booters face Kyrgyzstan in chilly Bishkek today

SPORTS REPORTER

We are not sure if Italian coach Fabio Lopez had wished the kind of adversity he had experienced so far on way to making his Bangladesh debut in a World Cup and Asian Cup qualifier against hosts Kyrgyzstan today.

Over the past one month, the 43-year-old had to battle with a number of injury and fitness issues of some key players, came under scrutiny for trying something different involving captain Mamunul Islam and received a chilling reception when he landed in the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek last Saturday. And as if that was not enough, his wish to have a feel of the Dolen Omurzakov Stadium, also known as the Spartak Stadium, the venue for today's game, was thwarted by rain accompanied by gusty wind yesterday -- the only day the visitors were allowed to train at the match venue.

Snubbed by rain, Lopez now has got a bigger challenge in hand -- a game against a team that convincingly beat their South Asian rivals 3-1 when they toured Bangladesh in June. Although a defeat for Bangladesh, who have so far won one point from their previous four Group B qualifying games, appears a foregone conclusion, Lopez can inspire his charges by telling them about the adversities he faced ever since he took over.

Barring the outcome of the match, football fans back at home will however keep a close eye on the tactic Lopez employs and the formation he chooses for a team which arguably lacks necessary skills and stamina to perform at the top level.

With the mercury in Bishkek falling below 10 degrees, the unkind weather is also going to pose another threat for Mamunul and Co, who are unaccustomed to such cold conditions.

Lopez was understandably a bit worried with the weather in Bishkek. He however hoped that his charges would be trying to do their best to make their fans happy with an inspired performance.

The Italian, while speaking at a pre-match briefing yesterday, did not reveal anything regarding the tactical aspects of today's match. He only said that he wants his charges to concentrate for the full 90 minutes and stick to his plan.

The coach also tried to spread a belief among his charges that if Tajikistan can produce a 2-2 draw against Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek, then Bangladesh can also do the same as there is very little difference between Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

It has been learnt that Lopez will start with a 4-1-4-1 formation.

Captain Mamunul, who also spoke at yesterday's briefing, said that they are confident of doing something good.

"We all are in good shape and are committed to doing well under the new coaching staff, who worked hard for the match against Kyrgyzstan," said Mamunul.



Bangladesh coach Fabio Lopez (L) and skipper Mamunul Islam speak at the pre-match press conference in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan yesterday. Bangladesh will take on the hosts in their World Cup qualifying fixture at the Spartak Stadium at 8:00pm (Bangladesh time) today. PHOTO: BFF

ODIs or Tests?

SPORTS REPORTER

What actually awaits Bangladesh next month? After a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) meeting on last Wednesday, its president Nazmul Hassan Papon informed that Zimbabwe Cricket had 'agreed in principle' to comply with Bangladesh's request to shift the dates of the two-match Test series, from January 2016 to November this year after Australia postponed its series.

Soon after that though BCB cricket operations committee chairman Naimur Rahman hinted about the possibility of an ODI or a tri-nation series involving Zimbabwe and West Indies instead of the two Tests.

And finally, yesterday, BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus said that there was a good chance for Bangladesh to host Zimbabwe for three ODIs and as many T20is in November.

"Zimbabwe will be busy till October 29. We have a plan to start the BPL on November 20. So there's a 20-day gap next month and we want to arrange something that fits the schedule.

"A Test series may take more time, so there is a possibility for the limited overs matches to take place before hand. Nothing is confirmed yet but the possibility of playing ODIs is high," said Yunus.

Everything however can only be cleared after the return of Papon and BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury from the ICC meeting in Dubai.

MSCs, Abahanis in separate groups

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Clubs of Dhaka and Kolkata were pitted in the same group while Abahanis of Dhaka and Chittagong were placed in the other group when the draw for the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup was held at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday. The logo of the tournament, to be hosted by Chittagong Abahani from October 20 to 30 at the MA Aziz Stadium, was also unveiled during the program.

Drawn in Group B, the two Abahanis will also face Kolkata league champions East Bengal FC and Pakistan premier league champions Karachi Electric FC, while in Group A, the two Mohammedans will play against Afghan premier league champions De Spin Ghar Bazan FC and Sri Lankan premier league Champions Solid FC.

Even though the complete schedule of the tournament is yet to be released, it was disclosed that there will be 15 matches played in nine matchdays, with the group stages featuring two matches each in six matchdays.

The champions and runners-up teams will receive 25,000 dollars and 10,000 dollars respectively while winners of each

match will receive 1000 dollars. There will also be rewards for the spectators, in the form of motorcycles, selected from lottery on entry tickets on each matchday, informed Tarafder Ruhul Amin, chairman of the football committee of Chittagong Abahani.

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin hoped for a successful tournament, which has been named after the eldest son of Bangabandhu

Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup	
Group A Dhaka Mohammedan SC (BAN) Kolkata Mohammedan SC (IND) De Spin Ghar Bazan FC (AFG) Solid FC (SL)	Group B Dhaka Abahani (BAN) East Bengal FC (IND) Karachi Electric FC (PAK) Chittagong Abahani (BAN)
Schedule: October 20-30 Venue: MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong Organised by: Chittagong Abahani	

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. "Sheikh Kamal was a sports lover and organiser. He loved football, cricket and all the other sports. I think this tournament is a perfect tribute to him," said Salahuddin. The president of the standing committee for youth and sports, Zahid Ahsan Russel MP, mayor of Chittagong City Corporation, AZM Nasiruddin, and senior officials of BFF were also present in the program.



Organisers and football officials unveil the logo of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: STAR



Younis set to topple his idol

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Younis Khan is poised to surpass Javed Miandad as Pakistan's greatest Test match run scorer, but refuses to be considered the equal of a man he describes as a "legend and an idol".

The 37-year-old needs just 19 more runs in the three-Test series against England starting on Tuesday to pass Miandad's tally of 8,832 runs scored in 124 matches during an illustrious career which stretched from 1976 to 1993.

Younis has so far scored 8,814 runs in 101 Tests, with a Pakistan record of 30 centuries.

"It would be great to achieve the record. I never thought I would do it at the start of my career," said Younis.

"Passing Miandad would be great but I am in no way close to the great man who is a legend of Pakistan cricket."

He added: "Even after passing his tally of runs I would not be able to attain the heights that Miandad achieved. He was idolised by millions."

Pak sweat on Yasir's fitness

1st Test against Eng starts today

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Pakistan's chances of defeating England in Tuesday's opening Test match in Abu Dhabi suffered a blow on Monday when key leg-spinner Yasir Shah suffered a back spasm during practice.

The 29-year-old Shah stumbled in his follow-through and apparently hurt his back.

"Yasir's injury is a concern and could be a jolt," skipper Misbahul Haq told a press conference on Monday. "We are looking into it and hope that he is okay by tomorrow morning."

Pakistan are relying heavily on Shah and fellow left-arm spinner Zulfiqar Babar to win the three-match series in the United Arab Emirates.

Shah took 24 wickets in Pakistan's 2-1 win in the Tests in Sri Lanka in July and was seen as the danger man for England, who were routed 3-0 by spinners Saeed Ajmal and Abdul Rehman here in 2012.

"Obviously he (Shah) is a key player for us but we are hoping for the best," said Misbah. "We are looking into calling one of the two left-arm spinners who played in the warm-up game in Sharjah."

Pakistan are already without key batsman Azhar Ali, ruled out of the match with a foot infection. His place is likely to go to Shoaib Malik, who has not played a Test for five years.

England skipper Alastair Cook admitted Shah's loss could be crucial for Pakistan.

"You never know with these things," said Cook. "Of course it would be a loss for them. As always, the day before a big series we're concentrating on matters which are important to us."

"He is clearly a fantastic bowler who not many of us have faced. He's had a good start to his Test career," said Cook of Shah.

England were also hit by injury to paceman Steven Finn, who took four wickets in the second warm-up game, also in Sharjah.

"It's a bitter blow for him, he bowled really well in that warm-up match," said Cook. "Over the last 12 months he's made huge strides back to where we would like him to be."

England's answer to Pakistan's spin challenge will likely be underwhelming. Leg-spinner Adil Rashid is set to make his Test debut, six years after playing his first one-day international.

Moeen Ali is favourite to play as opener in a makeshift arrangement, with additional duties of bowling off-spin, despite never having opened the innings even in a first-class match.

If that happens, Moeen will be Cook's seventh partner since Andrew Strauss retired in 2012.

Joe Root and Ben Stokes -- England's leading performers with the bat -- will be tested against quality spin.

Reshma's double bronze

SPORTS REPORTER

Jahura Akter Reshma won two bronze medals in the Junior & Youth Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships in Pune, India yesterday.

Reshma won bronze medals in the 48kg category of both junior and youth events, according to a press release from the Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation. The press release added that Indian weightlifters won gold and silver medals in junior category while Sri Lanka weightlifters grabbed gold and silver in youth category.

'I fixed games for Cairns'

AFP, London

Former New Zealand cricketer Lou Vincent told a London courtroom on Monday that he had helped to fix matches under "direct orders" from his captain, Chris Cairns.

Speaking at Cairns' perjury trial, Vincent, 36, said that Cairns persuaded him to take part in match-fixing while they were playing for the Chandigarh Lions in the Indian Cricket League in 2008.

"I was under direct orders from Chris Cairns to get involved in fixing," said Vincent, who claimed Cairns promised him \$50,000 per game to under-perform.

Former New Zealand captain Cairns, who is also accused of perverting the course of justice, denies the charges facing him.