

## SPORT

## Siddikur misses cut in Manila

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman missed the cut in the Resorts Manila World Masters after finishing the second round tied for 91st position yesterday.

Having started the day at 87th, Siddikur exchanged three bogeys for two birdies at the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club on Friday to settle for a one-over (73) and an aggregate score of three-over (147). That put him three strokes short of the cut-mark, 144, with 67 golfers making the weekend rounds.

This was the seventh time that the two-time Asian Tour winner failed to make the cut this season, which makes this the most number of times since he became a regular on the tour. Having struggled in the earlier part of the season, Siddikur had shown signs of resurgence recently, having made the cut in all six events since the start of October. He had even put himself in a winning position twice this month, but eventually failed to break his two-year title-drought.

The ace golfer will get almost two weeks to get his composure back before taking part in the Ho Tram Open in Vietnam, beginning on December 3.

## BFF calls emergency meeting

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will have an emergency meeting of its executive committee at the BFF House today to discuss the different aspects of Bangladesh's World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifying home match against Australia which was held on Tuesday.

"The meeting has just one agenda, which will be to discuss the match Bangladesh and Australia. The meeting will inform the executive body about the revenues which the game's governing body generated from the match and will also issue letters of thanks to the different stakeholders and different departments of the government," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

However, it has been learnt that the meeting is also likely to discuss the matter of Sheikh Jamal DC, who took their nine national players to its club president's office in Gulshan just the day before Bangladesh's match against Australia. The meeting may also discuss the statements made by Sheikh Jamal president Manzur Kader's towards the game's governing body.



**WE'RE NOW ENEMIES:** With the BPL all set to kick-off, friends become foes. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza captures that sentiment as he seemingly tells Mushfiqur Rahim to watch his back during the BPL opening ceremony at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Gala concert ushers in BPL 3

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon has said that he hopes the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) will help local players hone their skills and improve ahead of next year's T20 Asia Cup and World Twenty20. The BCB boss was speaking at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium last night during the official inauguration of the franchise-based Twenty20 tournament, with matches scheduled to get underway in Dhaka from tomorrow, as a gala concert ushered in the third edition of the money-spinning event.

"Even though we are a very good team in ODIs and are all-but-unbeatable at home in that format, the truth is that we have not yet achieved the same status in Twenty20s," Papon said. "That is why, with the Asia Cup and the World T20 coming up, I think BPL will be specifically beneficial for our cricket. By playing alongside more than 140 foreign players, our boys will get the opportunity to develop their skills."

Papon asked the BCB selectors to try and

unearth at least a couple of promising players from this tournament and consider them for the national team.

Papon's speech was followed by the official inauguration of the tournament by Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, before six Tigers -- Soumya Sarkar (Rangpur Riders), Tamim Iqbal (Chittagong Vikings), Nasir Hossain (Dhaka Dynamites), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (Comilla Victorians), Mushfiqur Rahim (Sylhet Superstars) and Mahmudullah Riyad (Barisal Bulls) -- delivered impromptu speeches on behalf of their respective BPL teams.

Although they all wear the Red and Green when playing as Tigers, the six cricketers said that their brotherhood will be set aside for the next 24 days as their goals will be to see their respective teams succeed in the BPL.

Earlier, the show had started after a little hiccup as a technician, working with the lighting on top of the stage's scaffolding, fell some twenty meters down to the ground before being quickly taken away to an adjacent hospital.

But the 15,000-something crowd, which had gathered to enjoy a gala night full of music, and

of course to see Bollywood superstars Hrithik Roshan and Jacqueline Fennandez up close, were soon immersed in a music fest. The music-fest kicked off with an as-usual powerful performance by legendary rock band LRB, led by the evergreen Ayub Bacchu, after a brief prelude by Sadia Islam Mou and her dance troupe.

Fusion-band Chirkut followed LRB and was preceded by veteran singer Momtaz Begum, who intelligently pitched in a couple of folk songs in between her popular numbers.

The concert turned fever-pitch at the other end of the dignitaries' speeches when Krishnakumar Kunnath, better known as KK, mesmerised everyone for more than an hour, rendering some melodious Bollywood numbers as the night at the Home of Cricket was lit up by thousands of cell-phone flashlights.

All that excitement and entertainment building up through the day finally gave way to Jacqueline's entrance, before the showstopper, Hrithik, raised the roof at the SBNS with his incredible performances across three songs.

The day ended just as it began, as a dazzling fireworks display set the sky above the SBNS alight.

## Pakistan smoked by Js

REUTERS, Dubai



A brilliant century by Jos Buttler and a more routine one from Jason Roy fired England to an 84-run win over Pakistan in a high-scoring final one-day international in Dubai on Friday and a 3-1 victory in the series.

England piled up 355 for five thanks to Roy's maiden ODI hundred and Buttler's record-breaking 116 not out.

Pakistan scored quickly in reply but lost wickets steadily and were all out for 271 in the 41st over.

Buttler's extraordinary knock came after being promoted to number four at the end of a year in which he often struggled for runs.

His century off 46 balls broke his own England record and he hit eight sixes -- another national best -- and 10 fours.

Roy's innings, if less spectacular, was equally valuable after his opening partner

Alex Hales fell for 22.

After the exchange, Pakistan kept up with the rate for more than 35 overs but steadily lost wickets.

David Willey snapped up the first two, dismissing openers Azhar Ali and Ahmed Shehzad before running out Mohammad Hafeez, dropped by Hales, for 37.

Babar Azam was another batsman who scored at a run-a-ball, but he was caught off Adil Rashid.

The teams will now play a three-match Twenty20 series, starting on Thursday.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 355 for five in 50 overs (Roy 102, Buttler 116 not out, Root 71; Ali 2-26, Irfan 2-64) PAKISTAN: 271 all out in 40.4 overs (Ali 44, Azam 51, Malik 52; Ali 3-53, Rashid 3-78)

Result: England won by the match by 84 runs and the 4-match series 3-1

Player-of-the-match: Jos Buttler (England) Player-of-the-series: Jos Buttler (England)

## BD youths embarrassed

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19s crashed to an 82-run defeat against their Indian counterparts in the Under-19 Triseries one-day cricket tournament opener at the Jadavpur University Complex in Kolkata yesterday.

Bangladesh appeared to have a good chance of winning, as they restricted India to just 159 runs. Mehedi Hasan took three wickets while Saleh Ahmed and Abdul Halim took two each as the Indian batters failed to find their feet on a tough pitch.

However, a woeful batting performance from Bangladesh saw them fall well short of the mark as they were bowled out for just 76 in 22 overs.

Only two Bangladesh batsmen managed to score double digits, while the top-five Bangladesh batsmen could combined to score a paltry 17 runs.

Bangladesh skipper Mehedi Hasan was fuming at his batsmen after his game for their lacklustre performance.

"We've been playing together for about three years now and this is for the first time, I've seen such an atrocious batting. I totally blame the batsmen," Bangladeshi skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz said.

India now have five points, while Bangladesh are yet to open their account in the tournament also involving Afghanistan. India will take on Afghanistan tomorrow in their second match.

## BPL PREVIEW: COMILLA VICTORIANS

## Out to prove themselves

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is yet to lose a Bangladesh Premier League title. He won it with the Dhaka Gladiators in both the inaugural and second seasons. However, for him to retain that record this time around, it's going to be more than just a challenge.

The Comilla Victorians aren't like the star-studded sides that the Gladiators boasted in the last two editions of the tournament. Nevertheless, courtesy of some clever buys, the Victorians still have the potential to be one of the most exciting teams in the competition.

Outside the field the Victorians have had a grand opening. They have roped in film stars as their ambassadors and the grand launching ceremony of their franchise depicted just how serious they are about the third edition of the BPL.

The other aspect that reflects a similar sentiment is the potential that each of their local players have. In Liton Das and Imrul Kayes they have two, although different, brilliant openers who on their day can easily frustrate an opponent. Imrul has been in good form in both Tests and ODIs this year. It compelled the national team to call him for the T20I series against Zimbabwe. Although he had a dismal outing in the only T20I which he played, the fact that a player who was previously considered just for the longest format of the game managed to comeback in this format goes on to show his resilience.

Liton on the other hand will want to perform in order to keep his place in the upcoming ICC World Twenty20 squad.

Also in the side are two all-rounders who can be extremely effective in these conditions. Both Shuvagata Hom and Mahmudul Hasan Limon have recently toured with Bangladesh A and they both performed quite well. Apart from contributing with the bat, they can also be quite tricky with their off-spinners, which could benefit the team's balance.

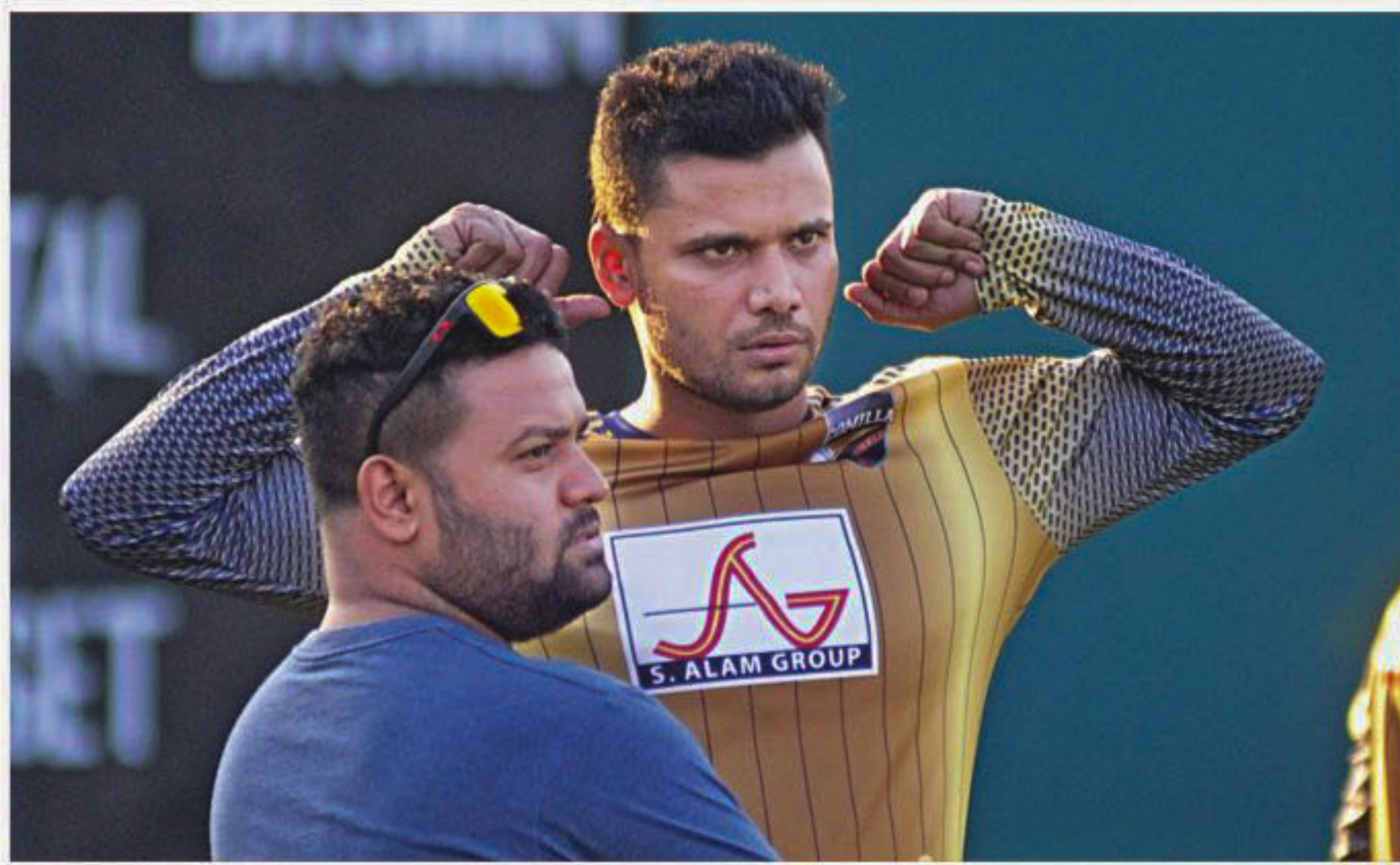
They also have the exciting Kamrul Islam Rabbi in the side who had recently broken through to the national squad for the series against Zimbabwe. The fact that he didn't get a game against the Africans can only increase his hunger and further motivate him to perform.

While the locals are no doubt exciting, their main weapon this season could come from the foreign section. Sunil Narine -- who has singlehandedly won games for the Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League -- is already in town and will be looking to continue his brilliant run here.

Apart from Narine they also have the hard-hitting Marlon Samuels to boost their batting. On the whole, it seems Comilla did a good job to sign a number of players who are hungry to prove their worth and that's a good sign.

## SQUAD

**Icon player:** Mashrafe Bin Mortaza  
**Local players:** Liton Das, Imrul Kayes, Shuvagata Hom, Sanjamul Islam, Kamrul Hasan Rabbi, Ariful Haque, Mahmudul Hasan Limon, Naeem Islam Jr, Abu Haider Ronny, Dhiman Ghosh  
**Foreign players:** Nuwan Kulasekara, Andre Russel, Lahiru Thirimanne, Darren Stevens, Sunil Narine, Marlon Samuels, Ahmed Shehzad, Shoaib Malik, Krishmar Santokie  
**Coach:** Salauddin



**Fans were rocked by the news that Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had picked up an injury during training at the National Cricket Academy ground yesterday. However, they breathed a sigh of relief as Mashrafe was cleared by the national team's medical staff.**

PHOTO: STAR

## A scare for Mash

SPORTS REPORTER



Prior to the opening ceremony of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) yesterday, everyone was jarred by the news of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's ankle injury sustained at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

However, it was later revealed that the injury was not serious and that the Tigers skipper is still going to lead his franchise, the Comilla Victorians, in his side's opening fixture against Chittagong Vikings tomorrow.

The news scared a lot of the cricket faithful, because Mashrafe has been playing consistently for a long time after being plagued by injuries throughout his career. And every time he gets hurt, like when he had an accident in late-June or when he recently suffered from dengue, people worry as they wait with bated breath. So when the news that Mashrafe twisted his right ankle during practice at the National Cricket Academy ground yesterday, emotions ran deep.

"There is nothing to be worried about. Hopefully he [Mashrafe Bin Mortaza] will be back in training tomorrow and will play the first game," said national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan. Mashrafe also assured that the injury was not serious.

Another Comilla Victorians pacer, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, also suffered a thumb injury during practice on Thursday and he will not be available for selection for at least the next seven days as the young pacer has been given a week's rest.

## De Lange in as cover for Steyn

REUTERS, Cape Town

South Africa have added fast bowler Marchant de Lange to their squad for the final two Test matches in India as concerns remain over the fitness of attack spearhead Dale Steyn.

Trailing the four-match series 1-0, Steyn missed this week's washed-out second Test in Bangalore and is still working his way back from a groin injury ahead of the third match in Nagpur starting on Wednesday.

"At the moment we only have three fit seamers in Morne Morkel, Kagiso Rabada and Kyle Abbott, so with Dale still struggling with a groin injury, we decided to bring Marchant in as cover," coach Russell Domingo said in a statement on Friday.



**England batsman Jos Buttler scored a devastating 52-ball 116, whacking Pakistan all over the field as he smashed ten 4s and eight 6s.**

PHOTO: INTERNET