

# SPORT

## 'It's a dream to play for Abahani'

SPORTS REPORTER



The last few months haven't been the best for Taskin Ahmed. In fact, they might have been some of the most frustrating times for the young pacer.

At 21, the pacer has already been forced to overcome several obstacles. His injuries have been a constant thorn in his career, which is yet to take off in earnest.

In the recent past, every time Taskin looked good and seemingly had taken one step forward, he would be pushed back because of an injury. Last year, he had gone through a number of matches without getting injured and seemed to be doing really well. Boosted by the confidence the pacer had even talked about making a Test debut, but soon after the India series, he was injured.

He did come back in the Bangladesh Premier League in November but injured himself in the process yet again. He managed to find a place in the national team for the World Twenty20 in the nick of time by getting fit and playing the Zimbabwe series right before the World Cup. When all seemed well, his action was deemed illegal.

Once again, with his back to the wall, Taskin hopes to make a quick recovery. His first task will be to prove himself with his slightly modified action in the Dhaka Premier League, due to begin on April 22.

"That [bowling action] is obviously a big factor for me. I have to go for a test after the DPL. But I am not that worried because I don't have to make any major change in my bowling action. I have been doing some remedial work with the BCB [Bangladesh Cricket Board] and Abahani officials are observing me closely as well. They are all helping me," Taskin told reporters following his training session at Mirpur yesterday.

Proud to be signed up by one of the bigwigs of the tournament, Abahani Limited, the pacer hopes he can have a successful DPL.

"This is the biggest league of the country and everyone knows that if you perform here it will count. More importantly, I have been hearing about club rivalries in the Premier League since I was a kid. Abahani- Mohammedan for instance is a big rivalry.

"So I want to thank God that I am playing for Abahani. I have never played for them. It's a sort of a dream for me. Even my father wanted me to play for Abahani this time. So I'll try to do something good for them this time," he added.

### DUBAI OPEN CHESS

## Rakib shares third spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Abdullah Al Rakib earned three points from four games to share the third spot with 32 other players in the 18th Dubai Open Chess in UAE on Thursday.

Grandmaster Enamul Hossain Razib and IM Minhaz Uddin Sagar bagged 2.5 and 2 points respectively from four matches.

In the fourth round, Rakib draw against GM Safarli Eltah of Azerbaijan while Razib beat Saleh Nagueb of the UAE and Minhaz drew against Godarz Kasra of Iran.

### Rift between

## Simmons and WICB?

IANS, Bridgetown

West Indies head coach Phil Simmons on Thursday hinted at a strained relationship with both West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) president Dave Cameron and its director of cricket Richard Pybus ever since he was suspended for controversial comments last September.

"Relationship is a difficult word. He communicates via e-mails but he has not spoken to me since the suspension," Simmons was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo in reference to Pybus.

Simmons said he had a similar relationship with Cameron.

"It is the same thing. It was good when I first came in, but since my suspension there has been no communication and no congratulatory message."



Muktijodha Sangsad's Nigerian striker Ahmed Kolo Musa strikes on the half-volley during their KFC Independence Cup fixture against Uttar Baridhara Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Musa scored all three goals as Muktis ran out comfortable winners.

PHOTO: STAR

# Musa treble fires Muktis

SPORTS REPORTER



Ahmed Kolo Musa slammed the season's third hattrick to power Muktijodha Sangsad KS to a 3-0 win over Uttar Baridhara Club in their KFC Independence Cup encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Nigerian striker scored twice in the first half and completed his hattrick ten minutes after restart to take himself to the top of goal-scorers' chart alongside Fikru teferra of Sheikh Russel KC. This was the third hattrick of tournament after Sheikh Jamal's Wedson Anselme and Sheikh Russel's Fikru had hit the first two.

The third straight win for Muktis means they are in a fierce battle with Sheikh Jamal DC and Chittagong Abahani for the two semifinal spots from Group A. The All Reds, who have played a

match more than their group mates, will play their last match against Sheikh Jamal. The Dhanmondi giants will have to face Chittagong Abahani in their last match while the port city outfit will face-off against Mohammedan SC before the match against Sheikh Jamal.

The All Reds, who came into the match on the back of a 2-1 win over Mohammedan SC, looked threatening from the outset, with Mobarak Hossain and Touhidul Alam whipping crosses from either flank. They came close to breaking the deadlock in the 16th minute when Javed Khan, after availing a cutback from Mobarak, rattled the crossbar.

The All Reds grabbed the lead in the following minute when Towhidul's cross from the left flank was headed in by Musa, with Baridhara goalkeeper Razib failing to stop the powerful header.

Musa doubled the lead in the 34th minute,

availing a defensive fumble of the opposition as a back-header from Sylla Mohamed to the goalkeeper fell on Musa's feet, and the Nigerian just dinked it into the empty net.

Muktijodha Sangsad kept playing attacking football and ensured their third victory in fourth match just ten minutes after restart. Mobarak ran down the right flank to release a low cross for Towhid, who drove a shot to the near post only to be blocked by goalkeeper Razib, but Musa was right in front of goal to tap it in.

Meanwhile, Arambagh KS and Rahmatganj MFS played out a goalless draw in a dull affair in the second match of the day.

Both teams found one opportunity each but neither team managed to capitalise. It was the third successive draw in four outings for Arambagh while Rahmatganj moved to four points from as many matches.

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# Can Shakib help KKR decode Mustafizur?

Hyderabad take on Kolkata today

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan has not featured in any of Kolkata Knight Riders' games in the Indian Premier League so far. And there is a chance that he may not be included in the squad for the franchise's third game against the Sunrisers Hyderabad today as well.

Regardless of whether he is chosen, there is no doubt that KKR's team management will have a long chat with the allrounder prior to the game in order to help decipher the Mustafizur Rahman mystery.

The left-arm pacer was the only player to put up a good show in Hyderabad's last game against the Royal Challengers Bangalore. On a batting paradise, Hyderabad conceded more than 200 runs and their team economy rate was above 11. Under such circumstances Mustafizur recorded astounding bowling figures of two for 26 in four overs with an economy rate of just 6.5. His cutters were hard to read and his fuller length deliveries were on the mark.

Hyderabad skipper David Warner had decided to hold the bowler back until the end and paid the price for it. It will not be a surprise if Mustafizur is given a few more overs in the middle stages of the game today. In order to decode Mustafizur, KKR's best

weapon would be Shakib. The left-armer has played Mustafizur in the nets and will know best as to how to tackle him.

While Shakib will probably be able to understand Mustafizur's mentality and predict the kind of deliveries he comes up with during the game, he too can have a tough time understanding Mustafizur's variation.

The word is that the pacer does not bowl too many slower deliveries in the nets during Bangladesh's training sessions and instead focuses more on his line and length. As a result, Shakib too may have to work hard to read the left-armer's deliveries.

It will be interesting to see the way the two teams pan out their strategies for the game which begins at 4:30 BST today. Both teams lost their previous games and will be raring to go for a win.

Mustafizur has already impressed his team management quite a bit. Hyderabad mentor VVS Laxman had a few encouraging words regarding the bowler yesterday: "You can see he's got a lot of confidence in his skills. He practises all his deliveries religiously in the practice sessions, which means he's not only talented but working hard to control his variations."

Shakib, on the other hand, is yet to fit the team's strategies, but he might be of great help to KKR from his place on the bench.

## IPL final moving to Bangalore

PTI, New Delhi

Its schedule thrown haywire after the Bombay high court ordered the shifting of 13 IPL matches out of drought-hit Maharashtra, the cash-rich league picked Bangalore as the venue for its finale and offered four alternate home options to the state's affected franchises.

In a meeting between IPL chairman Rajeev Shukla and representatives of the Rising Pune Supergiants and Mumbai Indians, it was decided to allot IPL's final and the first Qualifier to Bengaluru.

The second Qualifier and the Eliminator have been proposed to be moved to Kolkata to implement the Bombay high court's order that asked the BCCI to shift all the IPL matches after April 30 from Maharashtra due to the acute water crisis in the state.

In Friday's meeting, the two affected franchises were asked to pick from Raipur, Jaipur, Visakhapatnam and Kanpur as their alternate home base.

While Pune opted for Visakhapatnam, Mumbai Indians sought two days' time to choose their new base.

"We will propose before the Governing Council that Final and Qualifier 1 be shifted to Bengaluru, while Qualifier 2 and Eliminator to Kolkata," Shukla told reporters after the meeting. "Pune has given Visakhapatnam as its preference. We will put the proposal of Pune team before the Governing Council."

Shukla also stated that the BCCI will plead before the HC to allow the May 1 clash between Mumbai and Pune to go ahead in Pune.

# Mishra spins Delhi to big win

STAR SPORT DESK



A stingy and incisive spell from Amit Mishra set up an eight-wicket win for Delhi Daredevils over Kings XI Punjab in their Indian Premier League (IPL) match at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in Delhi yesterday.

After Delhi chose to field first, Mishra, playing his 100th IPL game, ripped through the Punjab middle order with a spell of four for 11 from three overs. Delhi opener Quinton De Kock then struck a 42-ball 59 to help his side eclipse Punjab's meagre total of 111 for nine with 39 balls to spare.

Delhi lost their first wicket on nine, but that flicker of hope was quickly extinguished by De Kock's strokeplay and his 91-run second-wicket partnership with Sanju Samson.

Earlier, brought into the attack after the Powerplay overs with Punjab on 37 for one, Mishra lured Shaun Marsh out of his crease and had him stumped down leg. In his next over he trapped Punjab skipper David Miller leg-before and had Glenn Maxwell caught at long-off for a duck. Mishra then made it four in three overs by bowling Punjab's highest scorer, opener Manan Vohra, for 32.

Late-order efforts from Axar Patel, Mohit Sharma and Pardeep Sahu helped Punjab stutter to 111, but that was never going to be enough on a good batting pitch.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

PUNJAB: 111 for 9 (Vohra 32, Sahu 18; Mishra 4-11, Zaheer 1-14). DELHI: 113 for 2 in 13.3 overs (De Kock 59, Samson 33; Sandeep 1-6)

Result: Delhi won by 8 wickets.

## Acting harder than cricket: Tendulkar

AGENCIES, Mumbai

Following the release of the teaser of his upcoming film "Sachin The Film", India's batting legend Sachin Tendulkar on Thursday said acting is a more challenging task for him than playing the game which comes to him naturally.

The teaser was scheduled for release on Thursday afternoon and Tendulkar shared it through his Facebook and Twitter pages at 1pm.

Mumbai-based production company 200 Not Out is making the film with London-based award-winning writer, director and producer James Erskine directing, while the score was given by A.R. Rahman.

"For so many years, I did whatever I wanted to do and camera captured that. But suddenly, I was asked to do particular things, and then camera captured that," Tendulkar said after he was named as a face of the IDBI Federal Life Insurance Marathons.

"That was a bit difficult for me. But believe me the first option was a better option. Acting is not something which I dreamed of. Without any doubt it is more challenging for me than playing cricket, I enjoyed that [cricket] more," the 42-year-old said.

The former India skipper, who is currently a mentor for the Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League, also tweeted about his film saying, "A journey made special by your support and wishes. Presenting the teaser of Sachin The Film."

### PCB invites

## WI for ODI tour

AGENCIES, Karachi

Pakistan's cricket authorities are hoping to convince the West Indies Cricket Board to play limited-overs fixtures here later this year, in an attempt to end the country's seven-year hiatus as an international venue.

No major Test-playing nation has toured Pakistan since 2009 when militants attacked the Sri Lankan squad on their way to the ground, killing seven policemen and injuring as many players.

West Indies are currently set to play Pakistan in two Tests, five One Day Internationals, and two Twenty20 Internationals in the United Arab Emirates in September, but the Pakistan Cricket Board plans to ask for a couple of these games to be shifted to Pakistan.

"We have had some verbal discussions with them and we are now waiting and watching the improvement in the security situation in Pakistan," the Press Trust of India quoted a PCB source as saying.

## Starc, Healy tie the knot

AGENCIES, Sydney

Australian cricket power couple Mitchell Starc and Alyssa Healy have tied the knot, the fast bowler calling "mine" in a social media post to celebrate their nuptials.

Starc and Healy were wed yesterday at an undisclosed waterfront location, with several of Starc's New South Wales teammates attending.

The pair celebrated their wedding with by using the hashtag #stealy -- an endearing portmanteau of their surnames Starc and Healy.

Healy's Instagram post included the caption "Marry your best friend" and the couple looked blissfully happy posing on a beach. They have a house together in Breakfast Point.



Australian cricketers Mitchell Starc and Alyssa Healy wed at an undisclosed location yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED