

# SPORT



Legends of Rugganj's top-order batsman Soumya Sarkar pulls one through mid-on during his 89-ball 84, his second 50-plus score in his last 45 appearances, against Abahani at Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## DPL's exciting run continues

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier League continued its exciting run yesterday as the fifth round began with a couple of upsets and some noteworthy individual performances. Victoria Sporting Club snapped Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club's winning streak, Abahani surrendered to Legends of Rugganj and Brothers Union beat Prime Bank Cricket Club in a rain-interrupted match.

In terms of individual performances Mominul Haque's run-a-ball hundred hogged the spotlight as the left-hander's effort, which was followed by left-arm spinner Chaturanga de Silva's five-wicket haul, ended Prime Doleshwar's unbeaten run at Fatullah.

But for the national team management and selectors the most pleasing aspect was that Soumya Sarkar finally got back among the runs to help Rugganj secure a win at Mirpur. Selector Minhajul Abedin, who watched Soumya's 89-ball 84, however said that the left-hander must take the confidence from this innings to play a few more big knocks to get his rhythm back. "Soumya's off form was a big headache for us. It was nice to see he got back among the runs. He initially struggled and got a life but later looked good. Now he has to cash on it. It's more of a mental problem than technical. One innings may not be enough to reach a conclusion but Soumya can take the confidence from here to overcome the mental block," said Minhajul.

It was also a good day for the national discards, as most of them posted big scores. Former national opener Shahriar Nafees hit an unbeaten 84 that helped Brothers win courtesy of the Duckworth-Lewis method after rain stopped Brothers' chase.

Another former national player, Rakibul Hasan scored 73, but his effort was not good enough to cancel out Mominul's stroke-filled hundred and Abdul Mazid's 94.

Runs also came from the bat of two young batsmen: Nazmul Hossain Shanto (72) and Mosaddek Hossain (67). Their knocks helped their team Abahani put up 255 runs on board after their skipper Tamim Iqbal scored 54. But Mohammad Mithun's 75 and Soumya's innings helped them ease to their target.

In terms of bowling effort, Sri Lankan Chaturanga de Silva stood out as the best bowler of the day as he managed a match-winning figure of 5 for 36 in 7.4 overs for Victoria. Prime Doleshwar paceman Al-Amin Hossain also showed character under scorching heat by taking three wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF	
<b>VICTORIA SPORTING CLUB:</b> 270 for 3 (Mominul 104, Abdul 94, Al-Amin Hossain 3-57)	
<b>PRIME DOLESHWAR SPORTING CLUB:</b> 211 all out in 43.4 overs (Rakibul 73, Imtiaz 43; De Silva 5-36, Kamrul 2-41, Al-Amin 2-31)	
<b>Result:</b> Victoria won by 59 runs.	
<b>ABAHANI LIMITED:</b> 255 for 6 (Nazmul 72, Abu Hider 3-48)	
<b>LEGENDS OF RUGGANJ:</b> 245 for 5 (Soumya 84, Mithun 75; Saqlain 2-34)	
<b>Result:</b> Rugganj won by 21 runs (D/L method)	
<b>PRIME BANK CRICKET CLUB:</b> 249 in 49.3 overs (Shehan 63, Shana 42, Nur Alam 3-25)	
<b>BROTHERS UNION:</b> 193 for 3 (Shahriar Nafees 84 not out, Tushar 41, Zakir 35; Shehan Jayasuriya 2-25)	
<b>Result:</b> Brothers Union won by 7 runs (D/L method)	



Victoria Sporting's Mominul Haque scored a one-day century after two-and-half years yesterday. His run-a-ball 104 floored league leaders Prime Doleshwar at Fatullah. PHOTO: STAR

## 'Low scores made me nervous'

SPORTS REPORTER

The way Soumya Sarkar reacted after he was trapped in front for 84 at Mirpur yesterday was worth the watch. After the umpire raised his finger, he merely stood there for a minute—seemingly disappointed with himself—before forcefully dragging himself off the pitch.

The Legends of Rugganj were cruising at that point and his fall wasn't that big a setback.

However, the 23-year-old had every reason to be disappointed. He had got an opportunity to score a century after a long time but he thwarted it. It was something that he admitted after the match.

"I couldn't score big knocks in the last four games. I got out in the 20s. The ball came on to the bat well in this game and I knew I could have done well here."

"Abahani is a big team and I wanted to score a big one against them. I missed the century because of my own mistake. It would have felt a lot better if I had scored the hun-

dred," said Soumya.

While he didn't reach the three-figure mark, the left-hander though will be relieved to finally get some runs. Soumya's 84 is the highest score that he has posted since July 2015. This was also only the second time that he managed to cross the 50-run mark in his last 45 outings. Having struggled in the first four games of the league, Soumya admitted that he was a bit nervous leading up to yesterday's game.

"When everyone around you is scoring and you are not, you do feel nervous. When you see the scoreboard, you feel disappointed. I needed to contribute to my team and do something alongside them. I was looking for an opportunity and I am glad I got one. I just hope I can continue the form," said Soumya.

The national selectors were also happy to see Soumya smack some runs and hit form. According to them, the left-hander was in a mental block and they were happy to see him battling it well. They hope he can score a few more good knocks.

## 'The only platform to show my ability'

SPORTS REPORTER

When it comes to interactions with the media, it is a well-known fact that there are certain cricketers who need to be asked an excessive number of questions before a reporter can go ahead and start framing the story.

These are the soft-spoken, shy players who find life extremely difficult in front of the camera and prefer keeping their answers limited to a line or two.

Pace bowling sensation Mustafizur Rahman, for instance, is a perfect example. Another player who could belong to this category is Mominul Haque. While it's a lot easier to extract answers from Mominul compared to Mustafizur, the top order batsman though is known for his calm and crisp replies.

However, yesterday the left-hander defied the traditional notions attached to him and seemed extremely excited after scoring his first one-day hundred in two-and-half years. The left-hander scored a match-winning run-a-ball 104 to lead Victoria Sporting to a fabulous win over league leaders Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club.

The 24-year-old almost jumped words while

answering questions related to his knock.

"The wicket wasn't so easy to play on at the start. And so my target was to get set first and then play a long innings. I am really happy I managed to do that," Mominul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Even though a regular in the Test team, Mominul hasn't been in the probables for the one-day side for a long time. While he hopes to return to the ODI side in the future, he believes that he needs to improve a lot more.

"When you compare my current form to that I had in 2013, it's obvious that I need to improve a lot. I think I need to better my game by at least 70 percent," said Mominul.

"For me the Dhaka Premier League is as important as the Bangladesh Cricket League or any other four-day tournament. People think that I prefer the four-day tournament more because I play Tests. But that's not true.

"The fact is that Bangladesh play very few Tests and if I don't perform in the Dhaka League then I can't show how capable I am in this format," added the left-hander.

The last time Mominul scored a century was in September 2013, in the Dhaka Premier League.



However flamboyant and unique Tabariz Shamsi's (L) 'bus driver' celebration may be, not everyone in the cricketing fraternity seems to be impressed. PHOTO: COLLECTED

## 'Bus driver' triggers a twitter feud

AGENCIES, Undated

Royal Challengers Bangalore spinner Tabraiz Shamsi has hit back at Adam Zampa after the Australian criticised his post-wicket celebration last Monday. Following the dismissal of Sunrisers Hyderabad captain David Warner -- caught in the deep by Virat Kohli for 92 -- Shamsi sprinted towards his skipper and started performing his trademark 'bus driver' dance. Zampa, who plays for Rising Pune Supergiants, tweeted his disapproval with a tweet: "Shamsi's wicket celebrations are no good."

On Sunday Shamsi responded by tweeting: "Pretty disappointed 2 see someone who doesn't even know me at all n wasnt even involved in that game making comments about me... and I think Adam Zampa shud focus a little bit more on himself and ALOT LESS on me and my celebrations"

Now Australia coach Darren Lehmann has weighed in by tweeting: "Just watch the shamsi carry-on. Concentrate on bowling mate. Win games and then everyone will respect you and win?" Warner himself spoke about the celebration: "I was looking at Virat and I don't think he was too impressed until he [Shamsi] got a bit closer. I think it's a bit hard for a captain to stand there and not go (through) the motions. In my team, if someone does that at 150 off 15 overs, I wouldn't accept that at all. I think it's a bit fancy to be honest."

## Fizz sparks BBL franchise interest

IANS, Melbourne

Bangladesh's Mustafizur Rahman could ignite a bidding war between several Big Bash League (BBL) cricket franchises as the promising pacer has caught the eyes of many in Australia.

The 20-year-old is one of the hottest T20 bowlers in the world right now, dominating the Indian Premier League (IPL) at the Sunrisers Hyderabad with lively left-arm pace, deceptive slower balls, hostile yorker and cutters.

Seven BBL clubs have at least one overseas vacancy; only the Melbourne Stars have already filled their quota with English pair Luke Wright and Kevin Pietersen.

The Melbourne Renegades may have got an early jump on their rivals in the race for Mustafizur. The Bangladeshi's IPL coach Tom Moody is a director at the Renegades, who currently have two overseas spots available on their list, although one is expected to be taken by the return of the West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo.

Moody's close connection with Mustafizur could be a deal-breaker for the Renegades should they want to sign the 20-year-old.

Renegades' coach David Saker recently expressed a desire to boost his side's bowling stock after a disappointing campaign last season, which saw them miss the finals for the third consecutive season. "To be fair, we probably need an overseas bowler. We're looking at whether to go down that track or to recruit a bowler from inside Australia," Saker was quoted as saying by theage.com.au.

Recently described as a "little genius" by Sydney Sixers captain and Sunrisers teammate Moises Henriques, Mustafizur could also be swayed to the SCG with the Sixers having room for two international signings.

Musatfizur could be an option to replace legendary all-rounder Jacques Kallis at the reigning champions Sydney Sixers, who are expected to re-sign West Indian all-rounder Andre Russell.

If Mustafizur does find a team in the BBL he would be the second Bangladeshi to play in Australia after Shakib Al Hasan, who turned out for the Strikers and Renegades.

The 20-year-old claimed nine wickets in three matches for Bangladesh in the World T20 in India in March, including a haul of 5-22 against semi-finalists New Zealand.

## AFC Cup Sheikh Jamal up against Ceres today

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club will be looking to complete their AFC Cup campaign with a win when the three-time Bangladesh Premier League champions take on Ceres La Salle FC in their final group match in Bacolod City, Philippines today.

The match will get underway at 5:00pm (BST).

Sheikh Jamal DC were already out of contention for the knockout stages after having lost their first four matches. However, a victory over Tampines Rovers in Dhaka last month have given them hope of finishing their debut campaign in Asia's second-tier club competition on a high.

With Ceres La Salle already on top of the group with nine points and having already qualified, Sheikh Jamal will be hoping that they can catch the Philippines outfit off-guard and win against a side they had lost to by 2-0 goals in the home fixture back in March.

The Dhanmondi giants left Dhaka on Sunday and had only a day's time to train in Philippines. They were boosted by the inclusion of defender Yeasin Khan, who served suspension.

Meanwhile, in the other match of the day, second-placed Selangor FA will play away to Tampines Rovers to decide which of those two teams grab the second qualifying spot.

## Fed Cup from May 15?

SPORTS REPORTER

The professional football league committee of Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday fixed May 15 as a tentative date to start the Federation Cup, with participation of 12 teams of the Bangladesh Premier League.

The Federation Cup was supposed to start in the middle of the premier league, but the game's governing body wants to bring it forward in a bid to give room to the national team for the Asian Cup Qualifier play-offs to be held on June 2 and 7. The national team's camp will begin from tomorrow under the supervision of Saiful Bari Titu while the arrival date of re-appointed coach Lodewijk de Kruij is

yet to be finalised.

"We wanted to start the league after the completion of the Asian Cup play-offs, but the clubs did not want to keep their players idle for that time and they wanted to play a tournament. That's why we have decided to start the Federation Cup from a tentative date of May 15. We will finalise the participating teams after being ensured by them as we will invite 12 teams of the premier league tomorrow [Tuesday]," said BFF senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy after the meeting where representatives of Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan SC and Abahani were not present.

Replying to a query, Murshedy said: "The clubs have agreed to release their players for the national camp and the players, who will be called for the national team, will join their respective clubs just a day before their match

of the Federation Cup and return to the national team after playing the match."

Murshedy also hinted that the clubs might get their national players only up to the quarterfinals, which are supposed to be held on May 25 and 26, because after that the national team will travel to Tajikistan for the first play-off match.

The committee is also considering increasing the number of venues for the 9th Bangladesh Premier League to at least five. The probable venues are Rajshahi, Mymensingh/Jamalpur, Sylhet and Chittagong apart from Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka. The committee wants to start the league by 10 June and it is mulling to provide accommodation and transport to clubs for trips outside the capital, Murshedy said.