

# SPORT



**RAINING SIXES:** Drives over cover, hits straight down the ground and pulls over deep mid-wicket -- Kalabagan KC captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had a ball at Fatullah yesterday as he launched 11 sixes around the park during his 50-ball 104 against Sheikh Jamal in their Dhaka Premier League match.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

## 'All is possible from this man'

SPORTS REPORTER



He was not comfortable physically; but when has that ever mattered to the lion-hearted cricketer? Fitness was not an issue for him to create domestic cricket history at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah yesterday. With the continuous fights with injuries that have dogged his 15-year career -- during which he has won many glorious battles -- when has he ever been comfortable with his body?

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was feeling weak before the match as he had been suffering from fever a few days back, but the man forgets the rest of the world when he enters a cricket field and that unmatched spirit unleashed a tornado from Mashrafe the batsman at Fatullah. A 50-ball hundred which contained two fours and 11 massive sixes was a domestic record but Mashrafe was little bothered with the record; instead it was the fact that his Kalabagan Krira Chakra won the match against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club that made him happier.

"It feels good as the team won the match. If I could have played better we could have won more matches, but today we won so it feels good. I didn't think about the century but was thinking of increasing the run-rate, we still have five matches left and we will try to do something good and do well," was the reaction from the consummate team man.

He was happy that his innings gave his team -- currently in 10th position in the 12-team table -- some much-needed momentum. "All matches were vital from the start, but we managed to win today, and at least we managed to create some sort of a momentum."

Mashrafe might only have looked at his own score when he reached 97 as the team run-rate was his only concern, but even those who were on the receiving end enjoyed the hurricane batting from the Bangladesh ODI skipper.

Pacer Shafiqul Islam who finally got the wicket of Mashrafe the ball after the Narail Express hit a six to bring up his ton, said that Mashrafe looked like a proper batsman during his 104. "He [Mashrafe] played all proper cricketing shots. It was a nice exhibition of clean hitting. It was a good batting track and he fully capitalised on it. And who does not know everything is possible from this man," said Shafiqul, who however did not feel the heat as much as left-arm spinner Wahidul Alam, who was hammered for four sixes in the 48th over including the one which Mashrafe smote over long-on to reach the magical three-figure mark.

Marshall Ayub who took the catch to dismiss Mashrafe, echoed the sentiment. "If you didn't see the innings you may think that it's a fluke but no, he played all the cricketing shots. His innings was chanceless. And he might have just now gotten his maiden hundred but he has played some vital hurricane knocks previously. So, you cannot say it's unexpected."

In the end, Mashrafe just showed that he can produce magic anytime.

## Fed Cup likely from June 10

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday confirmed the deferral of the Federation Cup for an indefinite period after a majority of the 12 clubs denied to participate.

"We asked all the clubs to send entry to the Federation Cup, but most of the clubs didn't agree to play before the national team's matches next month," BFF's senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy said after a meeting of the professional league committee yesterday.

"The Federation Cup will not start from tomorrow [today] for the interest of the national team. We have to consider the interests of the clubs as well, as they [clubs] sacrificed a lot by releasing their players," said Murshedy.

Murshedy hinted that the Federation Cup may begin from June 10, three days after the national team's Asian Cup qualifying play-offs second-leg match against Tajikistan at home.

Meanwhile, it has been learnt that national team's head coach Lodewijk de Kruijff will arrive here on Tuesday morning to take charge of the training camp.

## WICB part ways with Ambrose

AFP, St. Johns

West Indies great Curtly Ambrose has been replaced as bowling consultant for the Caribbeans by Roderick Estwick, the West Indies Cricket Board said on Friday.

Estwick, the Barbados Pride bowling coach, joins the West Indies technical team in time for the upcoming tri-nations one-day series against Australia and South Africa.

Estwick, who featured in the West Indies first class circuit, is due to join the West Indies camp on Thursday of next week.

# The Mash bash at Fatullah

SPORTS REPORTER



When Mashrafe Bin Mortaza arrived at the crease for Kalabagan Krira Chakra (KKC) yesterday his side were poised at a rather uncomfortable 169 for four in 36 overs. Mashrafe, however changed the scenario with a magical effort. He not only scored his first List A century but also the fastest among Bangladeshis in this format. He hammered 11 sixes, the second-highest by a batsman in List-A

cricket in Bangladesh and the highest by a batsman in the Dhaka Premier League.

His 100, which came off 50 balls, completely reversed the momentum of the game and almost single-handedly destroyed the Mahmudullah Riyad-led Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

The first ball he faced was a wide. The second was a four and the third was a six. He reached his half-century in the 44th over off 35 balls with the team score poised at 238 for five.

If Mahmudullah and Co were shocked by Mashrafe's half-century,

they were probably devastated by what happened in the overs that followed.

After reaching his 50, the braveheart cricketer completely let go and started smacking sixes -- a few over mid-wicket, a few over long-on -- almost at will. He just needed 15 balls to score his next 50 runs.

He hit medium-pace Muktar Ali for three sixes in the 46th over and then hammered four maximums against left-arm spinner Wahidul Alam in the 48th, the last of which brought up his century. He got out off his very next ball, to pacer

Shafiqul Islam in the 49th over for 104, and left the field amidst handshakes and hugs from the Sheikh Jamal fielders.

His knock helped Kalabagan reach 316. The pressure turned out to be too much for Sheikh Jamal and they were bundled out for 295, although they did explode at the end with Zabid Hossain and Wahidul adding 53 runs in the last three overs.

A century from Shahriar Nafees at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur helped Brothers Union post a 38-run victory over Cricket Coaching School (CCS). Nafees hit 14 fours and five sixes in his 147-ball 134. While the margin seems comfortable on the scorecard, it was a lot closer than it seemed. Chasing 253, CCS were cruising at 164 for 2 in 35 overs. Saif Hassan and Salman Hossain scored half-centuries and shared a 129-run stand for the third wicket. However, once Salman was dismissed for 68, CCS crumbled. They lost their last eight wickets for just 51 runs and were bundled out for just 215.

At the BKSP, Shamsur Rahman's unbeaten 95 led Gazi Group Cricketers to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Kalabagan Cricket Academy. Kalabagan were bowled out for 186 in 47.3 overs courtesy of a five-wicket haul from Alok Kapali. After the exchange, Gazi Group raced home in 40.2 overs.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>KALABAGAN KRIRA CHAKRA:</b> 316 for 7 (Mashrafe 104, Jashimuddin 64, Masakadza 45; Gazi 2-39, Riyad 2-56)	<b>Result:</b> Kalabagan Krira Chakra won by 21 runs.	<b>KALABAGAN CRICKET ACADEMY:</b> 186 all out in 47.3 overs (Jatin 44, Mahmudul 41; Kapali 5-44, Saeed 2-27)
<b>SHEIKH JAMAL DC:</b> 295 all out in 50 overs (Zabid 52 not out, Muktar 51, Wahidul 49, Gazi 47; Masakadza 4-37, Tanveer 1-25, Dewan 1-35, Mashrafe 1-42)	<b>BROTHERS UNION:</b> 253 for 6 (Nafees 134, Imrul 49; Shawon 4-45, Mehab 1-39)	<b>GAZI GROUP CRICKETERS:</b> 187 for 2 in 40.2 overs (Shamsur 95 not out, Mahedi 39; Mehedi 1-31, Jatin 1-42)
	<b>CRICKET COACHING SCHOOL:</b> 215 all out in 47.2 overs (Saif 86, Salman 68; Milind 2-27, Asif 2-34, Nabil 2-53)	<b>Result:</b> Gazi Group Cricketers won by eight wickets.



Shahriar Nafees (L) scored 134 while Alok Kapali scalped a five-wicket haul.

PHOTOS: STAR

## In search of the best swimmers

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) and Bangladesh Navy have joined hands to search for the best swimming talents from across the country in a bid to produce quality swimmers for the future. The talent hunt programme, titled 'Bangladesh, in search of the best swimmers', will hunt from 25,000 swimmers of 489 upazilas in 64 districts, beginning on May 19.

The programme will be carried out over four age-groups (11-12, 13-15, 15-17, and 18+) and will run up to the beginning of October when a total of around 1000 swimmers will be finalised for a three-month training period in Dhaka. After the final round, some 60 swimmers will be rewarded and prepared with further training.

Park Tae Gun, the Korean swimming coach appointed by the BSF for the national team, will play the lead role, aided by the other coaches, in selecting the talents. It has been learnt that the whole programme is expected to require an expenditure of Tk 6 to 7 crore, the lion's share of which will come from the sports ministry.

However, Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) president and Navy chief Rear Admiral Mohammad Nizamuddin Ahmed, who is believed to be the chief patron of this unique initiative, said that they have had positive discussions with a number of sponsors as well.

## Kolkata dump out Pune

ESPN CRICINFO

A sharp bowling performance allied to Yusuf Pathan's cameo ensured that Rising Pune Supergiants, in their debut season, were the first team to be knocked out of the tournament, after a rain-hit contest at Eden Gardens.

Andre Russell and Morne Morkel thrived in the Powerplay, Piyush Chawla and Sunil Narine, returning from a finger injury, twisted Rising Pune Supergiants into knots in the middle overs, before rain arrived with the side at 103 for 6.

It resulted in a delay of more than two hours and Knight Riders' target was revised to 66 from nine overs. R Ashwin struck twice in the first over to give Supergiants a silver of hope, but Pathan muscled the hosts home with an unbeaten 37 off 18 balls.

## AB, Kohli decimate Gujarat

AGENCIES, Bangalore



Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) smothered Gujarat Lions (GL) to a 144-run defeat in a lopsided Indian Premier League (IPL) contest at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Saturday.

Requiring 249 runs in 20 overs with an asking rate of 12.45 runs per over, Gujarat Lions could only manage 104 runs by the 19th over, losing all 10 wickets.

Royal Challengers added two more points to their tally and now have a total of 10 points. They are at the unchanged sixth position in the points table while Gujarat Lions hold on to the second position with 14 points.

South African superstar AB de Villiers was adjudged the man of the match for his scintillating century for RCB.

De Villiers plundered an unbeaten 129 off 52-balls while Virat Kohli pummelled 109 off 55, powering the



PHOTO: AFP

**AB de Villiers and Virat Kohli (R) ran riot against the Gujarat Lions yesterday, putting on a record stand of 229 runs. Kohli hit 109 and de Villiers plundered 129 as the pair eclipsed the previous record partnership of 215 which also belonged to them.**

team to 248 for 3 in 20 overs. Their 229-run partnership set a new record, eclipsing the previous record, also set by the duo, against the Mumbai Indians in 2014.

De Villiers smashed 12 sixes and 10 fours while Kohli blasted eight sixes and six fours.

Altogether, RCB cracked 17 fours and 20 sixes. Of the total 248 runs scored, 188 emerged from boundaries alone. Other than the two centuries, only Chris Gayle hit a four.

De Villiers and Kohli built a partnership of 229 runs in 97 balls. At one time in the last stages of the innings, the duo plundered 47 runs off 14 balls.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGALORE:** 248 for 5 in 20 overs (Kohli 109, de Villiers 129 not out; Kumar 2-45)

**GUJARAT:** 104 all out in 18.4 overs (Jadeja 21, Finch 37; Jordan 4-11, Sachin 2-4)

**Result:** Bangalore won by 144 runs. **Player-of-the-match:** AB de Villiers.

## Tri-series to make history

AFP, Bridgetown

The upcoming tri-series between the West Indies, South Africa and Australia will be the first series in history to see all matches played under floodlights, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) announced on Saturday.

All 10 of the one-day internationals will be day/night affairs, with the first match on June 3.

"This is a major series with three very attractive teams featuring some of the world's best players," WICB Operations manager Roland Holder said.

"They are accustomed to playing under lights all over the world so we look forward to some very entertaining cricket."

"We looked at ways to enhance the appeal and the spectator experience and it is accepted that fans like the day/night matches."

International cricket will return to Guyana for the first time in two years, to coincide with the country's 50th anniversary of independence, for the opening fixtures.

After three matches in St Kitts, the last group games and the final will be held at the Kensington Oval, Barbados.

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