

SPORT



Sheikh Jamal pacer Muktar Ali bowled a brilliant eight-over spell to reduce Gazi Group Cricketers to 165 for 8 from 110 for 4 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday and led his side to an enthralling four-run victory.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Race thickens after Sk Jamal win

STAR SPORTS DESK

Mohammad Sharif's hat-trick went in vain as his side Gazi Group Cricketers slumped to a four-run defeat at the hands of Mahmudullah Riyad's Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today. The Dhaka Premier League game began on Wednesday but had to be pushed to the reserve day today due to rainfall on Wednesday. Gazi Group Cricketers began the day on 83 for three and needed 196 to win. However, they were bundled

out for 191 in 37.5 overs. Half-centuries from Anamul Haque and Forhad Hossain went in vain as their side fell four runs short. Sheikh Jamal's Muktar Ali was the key wicket-taker as he finished with



MAHMUDULLAH ... all-round show

four for 37. Arafat Sunny, with his remodeled action also did well and scalped two wickets.

The win has created an interesting scenario for the Dhaka Premier League with only two points separating the top eight teams at the end of the seventh round. With the Super League around the corner, things could get intense.

Mohammedan and Prime Doleshwar are at the top of the table with 10 points each. Victoria Sporting Club and the Legends of Rugganj have nine points each while Gazi Group Cricketers, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, Prime Bank Cricket Club and Brothers Union each have eight

points. Heavyweights Abahani are struggling in ninth spot with six points and will have to do well in their four remaining games in the league phase in order to finish in the top six.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SHEIKH JAMAL DHANMONDI CLUB: 168 for 9 in 38 overs (Abdullah 69, Riyad 30; Sharif 4-43, Saeed 2-27)

GAZI GROUP CRICKETERS: 191 all out in 37.5 overs (Anamul 53, Forhad 53, Faruque 22; Muktar 4-37, Wahidul 2-24, Arafat 2-25) (Target: 196)

Result: Sheikh Jamal won by four runs.

Homesick Fizz seeking a break

SPORTS REPORTER



Homesick Mustafizur Rahman is desperately looking forward to return to his village after his Indian Premier League (IPL) stint ends to spend time with his beloved family members. After the IPL, Bangladesh's young pace sensation is supposed to fly to England to play for county side Sussex. But according to sources within his family the 20-year-old bowler has been seeking a break from cricket for a while as he has been suffering from a minor leg injury and, most importantly, he wants to put an end to his longest period away from home alone.

Before leaving for India to play in the IPL, he vehemently said that Tetulia is next to heaven for him and nothing is more pleasing than spending time in the tranquil village with his beloved family members and friends. Now, staying away from home has created some stress on Mustafizur and it is apparently affecting his performance, which is why family members believe that another tour may create a problem in his career. They do not want to create any pressure on Mustafizur, who is very sensitive and emotional. It is not just the stress; they are also concerned about his physique as they believe that too heavy a workload may hinder his progress in international cricket.

Coach Chandika Hathurusingha said in a recent interview with this newspaper that he would prefer that Mustafizur play for Sussex. "We have to see how he pulls up after the IPL. I am aware of his Sussex contract and I am in good touch with the officials there. We keep

discussing. If he is fit enough and has no injuries, playing for Sussex will be very good because we have the Champions Trophy in England and getting exposed to those wickets will be good for him," he had said.

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) director and development committee chairman Khaled Mahmud also echoed the sentiment. "Yes, he has minor injury problems which I believe will be okay with a few days' rest. Mental fatigue and homesickness can be an issue but I definitely want Mustafizur to play in England because it will help him a lot in building up his future career," opined Mahmud, who also hinted about Mustafizur's reluctance to play for Sussex.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed also has no difference in opinion about the need to experience English conditions for a young pace bowler, but he placed equal importance on Mustafizur's fatigue and fitness.

"I must say that playing in typical English condition will add huge value to Mustafizur's career. Playing one season in England means you get four seasons' experiences. Anyway I don't know anything about Mustafizur's wishes but no way can we overlook the fatigue and fitness issue. Our board president (Nazmul Hassan Papon) already made it clear that the board will take care of this special talent in the best possible way," said Faruque.

"You see, when a foreign club or team ropes him they will try to get the best out of him but for us we need to handle him carefully," he added.

In the final analysis, what path he takes will depend wholly on Mustafizur.



Mohammedan win again

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC recorded their second victory in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a 3-1 win over Sonali Bank at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Pakistani Umer Bhutto put the Black and Whites ahead in the 12th minute after converting a penalty corner before his compatriot Mohammad Imran doubled the margin from a penalty stroke. Imran also struck his side's third goal in the 53rd minute to ensure victory, before Prosenjit struck a consolation goal in the 56th minute for Sonali Bank.

In the day's other match, Shadharan Bima thrashed Railway SC 8-0 with Moshin Billa and Shamim Mia scoring braces while Wahid Rashid, Mohammad Rasel, Farhad Ahmed and Afsar Uddin scored one goal each.

TRI-NATION ODI SERIES

Gayle, Sammy & Bravo left out

AFP, St. John's

Chris Gayle, Darren Sammy and Dwayne Bravo were all left out of the West Indies squad for the first four tri-nation one-day international series while T20 match-winner Carlos Brathwaite has been included.

Off-spinner Sunil Narine and all-rounder Kieron Pollard, who have not played international cricket since November 2015, were included in the 14-man squad for the series against Australia and South Africa starting from June 3.

Brathwaite and Marlon Samuels, who played key roles in West Indies' World T20 triumph earlier this year, have also been included but the squad does not include all-rounder Andre Russell, Sammy, Bravo and Gayle, all involved in Indian Premier League cricket.

Countrywide swimmer search begins

SPORTS REPORTER



Hundreds of enthusiastic swimmers yesterday turned up at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur to show off their potential on the opening day of a six-month talent hunt programme titled 'Bangladesh in search of the best swimmer'.

The programme, jointly organised by the Bangladesh Swimming Federation and the Bangladesh Navy, created quite a buzz and there was no shortage of enthusiasm among the participating swimmers, many of whom turned up on their own from different parts of Dhaka.

Mohammad Ridoy, a salesman from Bangla Motor, might be the best example of the participating swimmers' eagerness as he took a day off from the owner of his shop to turn up at the swimming complex with the necessary costumes, including swimming goggles that he bought with the small salary he earns. Although the 16-year-old failed to impress the selection committee, his enthusiasm during the trial session was something to behold.

Like Ridoy, many swimmers from Nababganj, Keraniganj, Savar, Moghbazar, Mirpur, BKSP and other parts of Dhaka gathered to demonstrate their potential in the age group selection (11-20 years) of four categories for boys and girls. 32 swimmers, including nine from BKSP, have been selected by the selection committee.

Al Amin, a student of Kabi Nazrul Islam College who registered online, was ecstatic after being selected in the boys' 15-17 Group. "I expected to do better than what I have done [sixth position]. I believe I can achieve better timing if I am given good training," said Al Amin, a student of class XII.

The talent hunt programme perhaps



Minister of public administration Syed Ashrafur Islam shakes hands with swimming hopefuls during the "Bangladesh in search of the best swimmer" competition launched at the Nazrul Islam National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

captured a lot of attention following the success of Mahfuza Khatun Shila, a Bangladesh Navy swimmer who won double-gold in the South Asian Games in India in February.

Bangladesh's South Korean swimming coach and selector for this programme Park Tae Gun was excited to see the passion of the participants.

"If Korea can produce Olympic gold winners in swimming from 5 crore people, then why can't Bangladesh produce such swimmers from 17 crore people. Korea provided a five-year-long training to some 100 swimmers and one of them won gold

in the 2008 Olympic Games. There may be a hidden diamond in some part of Bangladesh and if we can provide them proper training, they can bring gold medals from international meets," said Gun, who has also selected 16 potential swimmers on the sidelines of the first batch of 32.

The talent hunt programme will be conducted in all the 64 districts and a final selection of 60 swimmers will be provided long-term training.

"You cannot judge the potential on the basis of first, second and third in the competition because there is something more to watch and I have picked up fully

raw talent considering their potential in the future," opined the Korean coach who played a big role in Shila's success.

However, the organisers from different pockets of Dhaka said that it was a very good initiative but expressed their opposition to the inclusion of BKSP students who are already trained swimmers.

BKSP coach Mosharrar Hossain also echoed the sentiment and advocated for a school-based talent hunt programme.

"Definitely, it is a big and good initiative but it could have been more systematic and scientific and involved school students," Mosharrar observed.



England captain Alastair Cook was out for just 16 in the first Test at Headingley yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka keep Cook waiting

AGENCIES, Leeds



England captain Alastair Cook was dismissed for 16 on the first morning of the opening Test against Sri Lanka at Headingley on Thursday, leaving him 20 runs short of becoming the first Englishman and the youngest batsman to 10,000 in Test cricket.

England, who had slumped to 83 for five, were 171 for five at tea, when rain forced an early close to the day's play.

Alex Hales and Jonathan Bairstow frustrated Sri Lanka after debutant all-rounder Dasun Shanaka sparked a top-order collapse on the first day. Opening batsman Hales, under pressure for his place after a modest return in England's

series win in South Africa, was on a Test-best 71 not out with Bairstow, on his Yorkshire home ground, unbeaten on 54.

The pair's so far unbroken sixth-wicket stand of 88 helped England recover after Shanaka's treble strike went a long way to justifying Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews's decision to field first.

Mathews won the toss in overcast conditions reminiscent of those at Headingley two years ago when his side won the second Test to seal their first series win in England.

Three deliveries later and still in the 21st over, Shanaka had the under-fire Nick Compton out for nought with first slip Lahiru Thirimanne holding a low catch. Joe Root, England's recently crowned player of the year in all formats, also fell for a duck to Shanaka as he edged to gully.

Shanaka had taken three wickets for one run in eight balls, again proving the value of accurate medium pace in conditions offering some assistance, if not extravagant movement, for swing and seam bowling.

England were 57 for three at lunch.

Hales was then 38 not out, with James Vince in the uncomfortable position of still being on nought after 19 minutes at the crease on his Test debut.

After getting off the mark Vince struck two fours but exited for nine when he edged a good-length delivery, this time from Shaminda Eranga, to gully.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 171 for 5 (Cook 16, Hales 71 not out, Vince 9, Stokes 12, Bairstow 54 not out; Eranga 1-34, Pradeep 1-26, Shanaka 3-30)

Brothers appraised of new laws

SPORTS REPORTER

The referees committee of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday appraised the players and officials of Brothers Union about the new laws of the game in a bid to ensure they conduct themselves properly on the field during the matches of upcoming Federation Cup and Bangladesh Premier League.

The program lasted about three hours.

The referees committee, which had already conducted the same program at Mohammedan SC, Sheikh Jamal DC, Arambagh KS and Rahmatganj MFS, will gradually appraise the players and officials of other clubs of the Bangladesh Premier League about the new laws.

Gujarat take 2nd spot

STAR SPORT DESK

Gujarat Lions outplayed Kolkata Knight Riders to win their Indian Premier League match by six wickets at Green Park in Kanpur yesterday. The win places Gujarat in second position in the points table and in sight of the four-team playoff, while Kolkata also remain in contention in fourth place.

Bangladesh and Kolkata all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan had a match to forget as he was one of Dwayne Smith's four victims after scoring just three and did not get a bowl during Kolkata's defence of a paltry 124-run target.

Choosing to field Gujarat made inroads largely through West Indian batsman Smith, whose medium pace earned him career-best T20 figures of four for eight from four overs. In reply Gujarat skipper Suresh Raina's unbeaten 53 took the side home with 6.3 overs to spare.

SCORES IN BRIEF
KOLKATA: 124 for 8 (Pathan 36, Uthappa 25; Smith 4-8, Jakati 1-22, Bravo 1-29)
GUJARAT: 125 for 4 in 13.3 overs (Raina 53 not out, Finch 26; Narine 1-30)
Result: Gujarat won by 6 wickets