

# SPORT

## Mushy at it again

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim made 26 off 32 balls in a crucial match against Abahani in the Dhaka Premier League at BKSP yesterday and thus he could not even contribute enough for Mohammedan to at least avoid the embarrassing 260-run defeat. Interestingly, the 29-year old wicketkeeper-batsman left the captaincy to concentrate more on his batting. Many eyebrows were raised when Naem Islam went for the toss in the morning against the Tamim Iqbal-led Abahani and later the Mohammedan officials confirmed that Mushfiqur wanted relief from the pressure of captaincy to concentrate on his batting. This is not the first time that Mushfiqur, who so far scored 480 runs in 13 matches at the average of 48.00 with one hundred and

four fifties in the ongoing league, gave up captaincy. In December last year Mushfiqur resigned as captain of the Sylhet Super Stars in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) ahead of the team's clash against Barisal Bulls while in 2013, he quit the Bangladesh captaincy after they lost the ODI series against Zimbabwe but was later convinced by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to continue in the role. So, this obviously begs the question of how it will be possible for one of the country's finest batsmen to lead the Tigers in Test cricket, arguably the most high-pressure environment in the international game. BCB split the national team's captaincy duties in late 2014, giving the ODI and T20I job to Mashrafe Bin Mortaza to relieve Mushfiqur from additional pressure. The decision understandably could not satisfy the little man.



Abahani's Liton Das (L) and Dinesh Karthik scored tons and shared a 162-run stand for the third wicket to lead Abahani to a record victory over rivals Mohammedan at the BKSP yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Abahani annihilate Mohammedan

BISHWAJIT ROY

Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Abahani's young batsman, stayed for a while at the crease as he was disappointed with the caught-behind decision. The left-hander pointed to his shoulder while returning to the dressing room and at that time Abahani were 64 for two in 13.2 overs. It however did not cause any trouble or yet another controversy at the BKSP yesterday; instead the sweet sounds of bat bashing the leather showcased the beauty of cricket in a picturesque, open ground. There was no shortage of entertainment as Liton Das displayed his shot-making prowess on way to regaining form with a hundred. Dinesh Karthik, the wicketkeeper-batsman who has so far played 23 Tests and 71 ODIs for India, took full toll advantage of a toothless Mohammedan bowling attack to hit a century. Exciting though the first half may have been, the rest of the match was still nowhere near the thrill that an Abahani-Mohammedan match usually generates. Exciting was not a word one could use for this match as Mohammedan succumbed meekly to a 260-run defeat -- the biggest margin of defeat in this List A competition -- in chase of a record total of 371 runs. Left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib took the two vital wickets of Mushfiqur Rahim and Naem Islam but it was his senior lookalike Shakib Al Hasan who was the wrecker-in-

chief, taking five wickets for 18 runs after hammering a hurricane 22-ball half-century. Mohammedan were all out for 111 runs in 24.3 overs, to the relief of Abahani who were in a hurry to complete the 20-over minimum that constitutes a match, as heavy clouds gathered around Savar. Abahani avenged their first-phase defeat in a one-sided game in Mirpur against their traditional rivals in a ruthless manner at a venue regarded as a favourite one for the Dhanmondi-based club. The encounter expectedly was devoid of the characterised clashes between the two archrivals in the

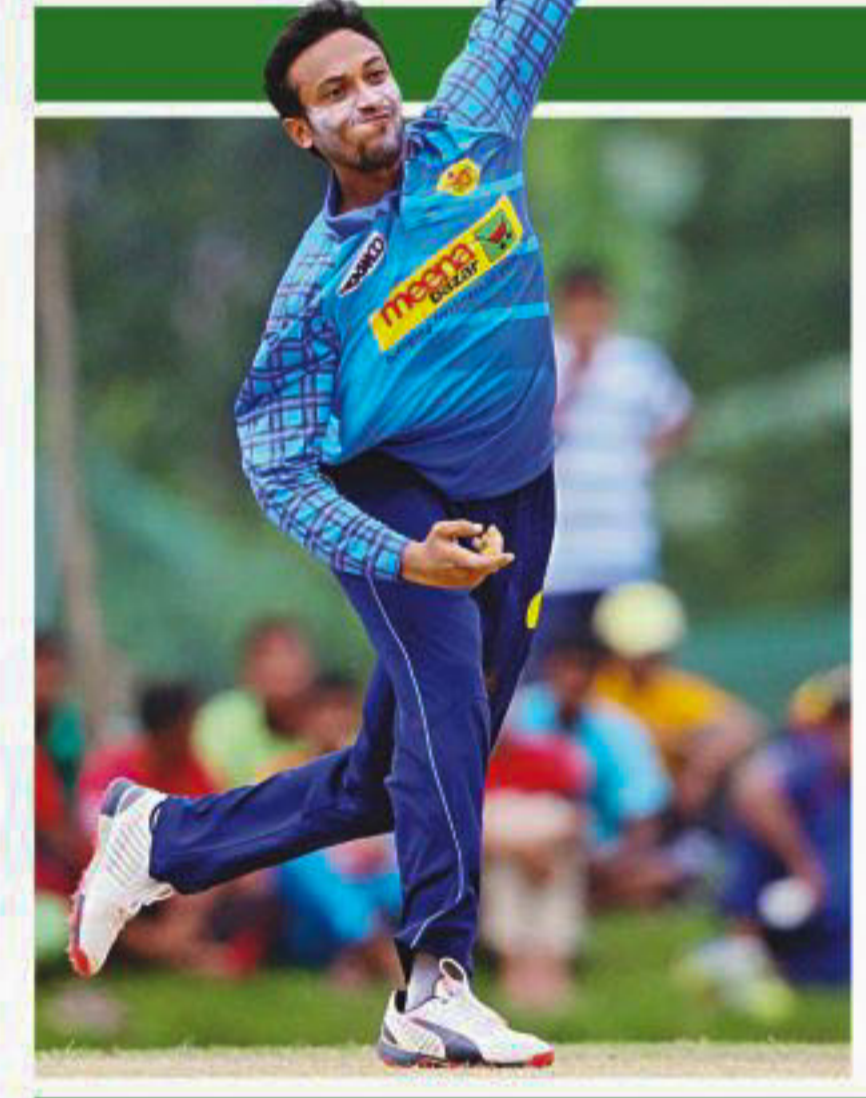
'90s, but it was not too much to expect a quality battle from two strong sides. However, in the absence of regular performers like Naem Islam Junior and Subashis Roy, Mohammedan's bowling attack looked distinctly ordinary on a flat pitch. A flurry of short deliveries and half-volleys made it easy but that does not take away from the brilliance of Liton, Karthik and Shakib after captain Tamim Iqbal and Liton put on a 49-run opening stand in 10.2 overs. Karthik tore the Mohammedan bowling apart during his 97-ball 109 that contained 11 fours and four sixes, Shakib hit a 24-ball 57 with two fours and five sixes before

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**ABAHANI:** 371 for 5 (Liton 139, Karthik 109, Shakib 57; Ariful 2-55, Naem 1-45)

**MOHAMMEDAN:** 111 all out in 24.3 overs (Naem 32, Mushfiqur 26; Shakib 5-18, Mosaddek 2-12)

**Result:** Abahani won by 260 runs.



**STATISTICS**

Abahani's 260-run win over Mohammedan is the largest in terms of runs in List A cricket in Bangladesh.

Abahani's score of 371 is the highest total posted in Bangladesh. The previous best was 370 scored by India and an England XI side.

Shakib Al Hasan's 5 for 18 is his best bowling figures in List A cricket and his first five-wicket haul in the country's List A domestic cricket.

## Negi conjures Fatullah heist

SPORTS REPORTER

The Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium witnessed probably the second-most exciting game of this season's Dhaka Premier League yesterday as Victoria Sporting Club threw away a game which they seemingly had in the bag at noon. Chasing 259, Ruppangj were reduced to 83 for six in 22.3 overs and it seemed like it was time to pack up and get back home early for iftar, but Mosharraf Hossain and Pawan Negi had other ideas. Negi came in to bat at six and Mosharraf at eight and together the pair produced a scintillating 148-run seventh-wicket stand in just 22.1 overs to change the complexion of the game. Negi plundered 124 off 89 balls with four sixes and 13 fours, while Mosharraf held one end up with a responsible 62-ball 41. In the end, Negi took Abahani home with a six off Chaturanga de Silva, sealing the game with seven balls to spare. More than a boundary, the six was a statement. The best batsman of the game had dispatched the best bowler, who had taken five wickets, to win the match. As a result, Victoria relinquished the top spot to Ruppangj. Victoria begun well as half-centuries from Mominul Haque and young all-rounder Al-Amin took them to 258. Tajjul Islam took three wickets for Ruppangj, while Abu Hider and Negi took two each. After the exchange, Mohammad Mithun smashed four boundaries in the opening over of the chase to show that he meant business. However, Ruppangj collapsed soon after, losing six wickets for 65 runs before Negi and Mosharraf resuscitated their innings. The Indian batsman was particularly harsh on Dollar Mahmud, whom he smacked for four boundaries in the 36th over to bring up his half-century. He reached his century off 77 balls with a boundary off Kamrul Islam Rabbi in the 44th over and there was no stopping him from there on. At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, a disciplined bowling performance from Prime Bank Cricket Club, who finally seem to be hitting a groove, saw them beat Prime Doleshwar by six wickets in a game that was marred by rain. Rubel Hossain picked up two wickets in his eight overs and gave away just 19 runs. In fact, every bowler in the side boasted a good economy rate with the highest, at four, coming from Shuvagata Hom. At 100 for six in 33 overs, rain interrupted play and once the game resumed, Prime Bank needed an easy 118 from 33 overs to win the game. Unmukt Chand scored an unbeaten 43 and ensured that there would be no upsets in the chase.



NEGI ... 124 not out

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**VICTORIA SPORTING CLUB:** 258 all out in 50 overs (Mominul 82, Al-Amin 63; Tajjul 3-47, Hider 2-32, Negi 2-54)

**LEGENDS OF RUPPANGJ:** 264 for 8 in 48.5 overs (Negi 124 not out, Mosharraf 41; De Silva 5-46)

**PRIME DOLESHWAR:** 100 for 6 in 33 overs (Nasir 30 not out, Sachin 17; Rubel 2-19, Monir 1-15)

**PRIME BANK:** 122 for 4 in 25 overs (Chand 43 not out, Sabbir 28; Sanjamul 2-25)

**Result:** Prime Bank won by six wickets. (D/L method)

## Siddikur tees off in Queen's Cup today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman is looking to take his good form from last month's Mauritius Open into the Queen's Cup which begins today in Thailand. The 31-year-old golfer finished second in the tri-sanctioned event despite holding a three-shot lead up to 15th hole on the final day of the Mauritius Open. However, he is trying to forget that setback and consolidate on his good form at the Santaburi Samui Country Club. Siddikur has fond memories of this golf course. "I always like to come back to Samui. I had my first top-10 here and then I went on to win in Brunei. I have good memories about this place and I'm looking forward to the week ahead," the two-time Asian Tour winner told the Asiantour.com. "I like this kind of golf course, it's tight and narrow. It's also windy out there and it suits my game. I believe that's the reason why I always play well here." The 300,000-dollar event will also feature the likes of two-time champion Prayad Marksaeng, Thai veteran Thaworn Wiratchant, rising Korean star Jeunghun Wang, Australian veteran Scott Hend and India's SSP Chawrasia. After completing this event, Siddikur is likely to take part in the ISPS Handa Global Cup in Japan next week before flying to Chinese Taipei for the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship.

## Russel thru'; Ctg Abahani out

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel Kirra Chakra moved into the quarterfinals of the Walton Federation Cup at the expense of big-budget Chittagong Abahani after an emphatic 3-0 win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC in their final group match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Jean Jules Ikanga, Shahedul Alam and Paul Emile scored the goals as the former treble-winners, who came into the match needing a draw to advance, emerged Group B champions with four points. Muktiyoddha Sangsad went through as group runners-up with three points while Independence Cup champions Chittagong Abahani had to be eliminated from the group stages. The pre-match focus was on whether Muktiyoddha could produce another upset after having stunned Chittagong Abahani in their previous match, but the club's coach Abdul Kayum Sentu decided to rest three key players as their quarterfinal berth had already been confirmed. Sheikh Russel, on the other hand, started the game with much enthusiasm and their midfield comprising Jamal Bhuiyan, Shahedul Alam Shahed and Paul Emile dominated the show while wingers Alamgir Kabir Rana and Monaem Khan Raju wreaked havoc down the flanks. The opening goal came in the 29th minute when Raju whipped in a cross for defender-turned-striker Ikanga, who tapped in from inside the six-yard box. The lead was doubled

**MUKTIJODDHA** - 0

**SHEIKH RUSSEL** - 3

**BROTHERS UNION** - 2

**SHEIKH JAMAL** - 1

three minutes later when Shahedul's strike from 30 yards out beat Muktiyoddha's second-choice goalkeeper Mohammad Nayeem. Sheikh Russel further extended the lead one minute before the end of the half after a darting run from right-back Nasirul Islam ended in a chip for Ikanga, who cut the ball back to his compatriot Paul Emile for a low drive into the net. Muktiyoddha played better in the second half even though there hardly any remarkable attack except for a move in the 53rd minute from Ahmed Kolo Musa, who saw his shot to near post comfortably gathered by Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton before Ikanga's chip missed the target by few inches. Meanwhile Brothers Union emerged Group C champions after a come-from-behind 2-1 win against Sheikh Jamal DC, who qualified as group runners-up. Haitian striker Augustine Walson struck a brace in space of two minutes after defender-turned-midfielder Yeasin Khan had put Sheikh Jamal ahead in the 71st minute with a strike from 30 yards out. Both sides came into the match having confirmed their last eight berths with Sheikh Jamal ahead of Brothers on goal difference. It seemed both sides were keen to avoid Group A runners-up Abahani in the last eight battle, especially with the way Brothers squandered opportunities before Yeasin broke the deadlock with a long-range effort. Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Maksudur Rahman Mustak made a terrible howler by letting a free-kick from Walson slip through his legs before the Haitian ensured Brothers' victory with a strike on the rebound.



Mariner Youngs Club forward Ashrafur Islam takes a shot towards target during their Premier Division Hockey League match against Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Mariners pip big neighbours

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC slipped up in the title race of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League after suffering a 1-3 defeat to Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. The first defeat in 10 matches pulled Mohammedan down to fourth position with 23 points, five behind leaders Usha KC and three adrift of second-placed Abahani while Mariners moved up to

third position with 25 points. The matches involving title contenders have recently been a ground for constant scuffles and arguments over umpiring decisions and, to avoid such a situation, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday introduced video reviews for the first time during this league. But that decision failed to completely eradicate the scuffles as Mohammedan players protested umpires' decisions a number of times instead of seeking video reviews. The Black and Whites, however, took lead through Tasver Abbasi's penalty corner conversion in the eighth minute.

Mariners, who were denied by the woodwork before Mohammedan's lead, were once again denied by the woodwork before Waqas Sharif changed the direction of a fierce-hit from Ashrafur Islam to level the margin. Even though the umpire initially ruled out the goal, the help of video review eventually allowed the goal to stand. The Mariners then took the lead through a 49th-minute strike from Waqas, who hit the board after availing a forward-pass from Moinul Islam Koushik before Arshad Hossain wrapped up the victory by guiding home a rebound on 59 minutes.