



Sabbir Rahman heaves one over long-on during his unbeaten 43 which helped the Rajshahi Kings to a seven-wicket victory over the Khulna Titans, sealing a place in the final of the Bangladesh Premier League, at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

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# 'The Kings are a family'

SPORTS REPORTER

They have done it. After going through one of the worst starts in the competition, the Rajshahi Kings have eventually reached the final of the fourth season of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) following a dramatic turnaround.

And skipper Darren Sammy seemed very excited about that yesterday.

"We have achieved what we wanted at the start of the tournament, to go to the playoffs and then make it through to the final and the guys have played very well. It's not a one man show. People had said we don't have a star in our team but I always saw us as a team of stars.

"We have truly played like kings. At one point we were down and out but we believed among the group that we would turn things around and

we have done that. I am really excited and proud of the way we played," said Sammy after the match yesterday.

He was particularly happy about the way Sabbir Rahman, who scored a responsible 52-ball 43, played in the crucial fixture yesterday.

"I didn't want to change his batting or style of cricket. I just asked the guys to be responsible. It's not about anyone's ego, it's about the team. Yeah, they had some issues, I have dealt with that.

"I had a word with Sabbir. I told him, well played, that was very responsible, now let's do that again. The Kings is about a family. Once I came here and saw the guys, I knew that we were going to win. I have told the owners that we have come here with a mission and nothing is going to distract us," said Sammy.

"We have one more game and we will give it everything. It's just another cricket game, but it's

a big one. And so far, I think in finals of T20s, you know, I have not been so bad, so hopefully we can win that. We will have a good celebration tonight, it's been a good journey, but we need to continue," he added.

A disappointed Mahmudullah Riyad on the other hand blamed his team's batting for the defeat. While he was proud of the way his team played throughout the competition, he was not happy with the way his team batted.

"The Batting was frustrating. After all, how long will the bowlers keep defending low totals and keep winning games for us. But still, I am proud of my team. We played good cricket considering the kind of team we had. Had we batted better, things could have been different," said Mahmudullah.

On another note, Mahmudullah said that Bangladesh have a good chance of doing well against New Zealand in the upcoming series.

# 'You will see the real Rubel'

BISHWAJIT ROY



Sometimes fate brings about an opportunity out of the blue. Some can grab the chance with aplomb, while others fail to do so. Only time will tell which category

Rubel Hossain will fall into.

An opportunity came the fast bowler's way as he was picked in the 22-man squad for the preparation camp in Sydney and the tour of New Zealand as a replacement for injured paceman Mohammad Shahid.

"What can I say? I am just fortunate as I got the opportunity. It's very simple; an opportunity has come and I must capitalise on it," the 26-year old right-arm paceman said while talking about his fortune.

Rubel, who was dropped during the Afghanistan series in September due to a lack of bowling fitness, was supposed to be a first choice first bowler in the team, but unfortunately he had to wait for a stroke of luck, backed by impressive performances in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), to get the opportunity.

"It's a common syndrome as fast bowlers cannot bowl at their finest rhythm all the time. I could not do so for a while but thanks to Allah I got back my rhythm during the BPL. Now my challenge is to carry that to international cricket. If I get the chance in New Zealand, I hope you will see the real Rubel and what you always expect from him," said a confident Rubel.

"I was always confident about my return to the national side and I tried my best in the BPL to bowl at my best. If I am not wrong -- except three matches where I conceded 36, 39 and 41 runs -- I bowled well and with good pace. If Shafiul [Islam] revived his international career after such a long break then why would I give up hope," continued Rubel, who took 15 wickets in 12 matches in the BPL to seize the opportunity ahead of Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Al-Amin Hossain and Alauddin Babu.

Rubel also could not fathom why some people are saying that he now lacks pace.

"I cannot understand why people saying this. I can still bowl at my best pace and you saw that in the BPL. I have the confidence that I will be able to give the New Zealand batsmen some tough times if I get a chance to play.

"Now, I am working hard and can fully understand that there is no alternative to hard work. But from my seven years experience in international cricket I know I will need to prove myself in the middle."

Rubel also admitted that nothing could have been as depressing as missing the New Zealand tour.

"It was really painful for me when I thought that I would not be there while the team played in New Zealand; a dream condition for any pace bowler. And if you look at my record you will find that my performances against New Zealand were not bad. So as a pace bowler I cannot imagine that my team will play in New Zealand and I will not be there."



## RUBEL AGAINST KIWIS

ALL ODIS					
Mat	Wkts	BBi	Bowl Av	5	
9	17	6/26	22.35	1	
ALL TESTS					
Mat	Wkts	BBi	Bowl Av	5	
3	6	5/166	64.83	1	
ODIS IN NEW ZEALAND					
Mat	Wkts	BBi	Bowl Av	5	
3	4	2/68	40.75	0	
TESTS IN NEW ZEALAND					
Mat	Wkts	BBi	Bowl Av	5	
1	5	5/166	42.00	1	

## SCOREBOARD

TITANS V KINGS					
KHULNA TITANS					
Mazid run out	11/10	R/B	4s/6s	2/0	
Hasanuzzaman run out	1/5			0/0	
Pooran c Farhad b Afif	22/10			2/2	
Shuvagata c Nazmul b Farhad	4/6			0/0	
Mahmudullah c Nazmul b Patel	22/28			2/0	
Howell c Sammy b Patel	12/13			1/0	
Arifur not out	32/29			2/1	
Cooper c Nurul b Patel	4/3			1/0	
Naem lbw b Williams	0/3			0/0	
Mosharraf c Franklin b Sammy	4/10			0/0	
Junaid not out	1/4			0/0	
Extras: (lb-9, w-2, nb-1)	12				
Total: (For 9 wickets in 20 overs)	125				
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-12, 3-17, 4-54, 5-74, 6-82, 7-87, 8-92, 9-102.					
RAJSHAHI KINGS					
Mominul c Mazid b Cooper	2/4			0/0	
Nurul c Hasanuzzaman b Mosharraf	14/11			2/0	
Afif lbw b Mahmudullah	26/27			3/0	
Sabbir not out	43/52			2/1	
Franklin not out	30/24			2/1	
Extras: (lb-2, lb-2, w-8, nb-2)	14				
Total: (For 3 wickets in 19.2 overs)	129				
Did not bat: Patel, Mehedi, Sammy, Farhad, Nazmul, Williams.					
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-34, 3-67.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Williams	4	0	18	1	
Nazmul	4	0	20	0	
Farhad	4	0	28	1	
Mehedi	1	0	14	0	
Afif	1	0	9	1	
Patel	4	0	19	3	
Sammy	2	0	8	1	
Result: Rajshahi Kings won by 7 wickets.					
Player-of-the-match: Samit Patel.					

## Police held by Kawran Bazar

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police FC played out a goalless draw against Karwan Bazar SC in their Marcel Bangladesh Championship League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With their third draw in eight matches, Bangladesh Police climbed up to third position of the eight-team table with 12 points while Karwan Bazar stayed at fifth position with nine points.

# Red cards in cricket!

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi



Cricket, like football and hockey, may see introduction of red cards as punishment for violent acts on the field.

This was one of the recommendations made by the guardian of the game's laws, Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), at its two-day meeting which ended in Mumbai yesterday.

The MCC's World Cricket Committee, headed by former England captain Mike Brearley, also recommended limiting the size of a bat's edges and depth in a bid to bring about a balance between bat and ball.

"There was a survey done of the umpires and 40 percent said they are considering giving up the game or giving up umpiring because of verbal abuse," Brearley said.

"Anecdotal evidence from people who are familiar with leagues in parts of England say that the behaviour has got worse.

"The umpires have to be respected and given the best possible chance and I think cricket is the only game in which there isn't this possibility of an in-match punishment or deterrent," he added.

According to the suggestion, umpires will be given the power to eject a player from a game for serious disciplinary breaches such threatening an umpire, physically assaulting another player, umpire, official or spectator or for any other act of violence on the field of play.

The committee also deliberated on ball-tampering laws, but felt that they should remain unchanged, and was split vertically on the possibility of reducing Test cricket from a five-day affair to a four-day one.

Other recommendations included calling on the International Cricket Council (ICC) to continue to work towards introducing a World Test Championship and presenting the case for cricket at the Olympic Games while also changing the law on the ball striking a fielder's helmet.

All these recommendations will be sent to the main MCC Committee and, if approved,

they will be implemented in the new code of the Laws of Cricket which will be introduced on October 1, 2017.

On the suggestion to reduce the bat size, Ponting said that 60 per cent of the world's professional players supported the decision to limit them to 40 mm on edges and 67 mm for depths, including 7 mm for curvature.

"We want to limit the edges to 38-42 mm. Some of the players have edges in excess of 50mm. We are happy with what we have come up which will restore the balance between the bat and the ball. We have seen top-edges and leading edges going for sixes. Even with the limit in bat size big hitters can still clear the ropes," said Ponting.

It was announced that the ball tampering law, which recently made headlines when South Africa captain Faf du Plessis was caught on camera using a mint in his mouth to help polish the ball during the series in Australia, will remain the same.

"Don't be caught," was the advice given by both Brearley and Ramiz Raja.

The change in the law regarding the ball striking a fielder's helmet says that catches and stumpings will be permitted after the ball has struck a fielder's helmet.

At present catches and stumpings may be taken off a wicket keeper's pads, the use of which is optional, and so it seems unfair that they should not be permitted after hitting a helmet, the wearing of which has become compulsory in the game, the committee said.

The change will include a ball becoming lodged or trapped in the grille of the fielder's helmet and will be treated in the same way as the ball getting trapped between the wicket keeper's pads or in a fielder's sweater or pocket, the committee stated.

The committee also discussed four-day Tests and day/night Tests and was split on the former suggestion.

About the need to try and include cricket in the Olympic Games, the committee said that Indian Cricket Board chief Anurag Thakur, who was asked about it separately, told them that he would keep an open mind.

# Kamrul replaces Shafiul Injured bowler to miss NZ ODIs, T20Is

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh pacer Shafiul Islam has been ruled out of the ODIs and the T20Is in New Zealand after being diagnosed with a hamstring injury yesterday.

Kamrul Islam Rabbi was announced as his replacement in the 22-member preliminary squad for the New Zealand series that will be travelling to Australia later this week.

Shafiul hurt himself while fielding during the first qualifier of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) between the Khulna Titans and the Dhaka Dynamites on Tuesday.

He underwent a scan yesterday and that revealed a grade two hamstring injury on his left leg.

"It may take Shafiul up to four or five weeks to recover and we have therefore announced a replacement," Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief selector Minhajul Abedin told reporters at Mirpur yesterday.

"If Shafiul can recover before the New Zealand Tests then we will try to play him. We want him in the squad because among all the pacers he is right there at the top in terms of performance. The faster he gets fit, the better it will be," added Minhajul.

"He played 13 continuous matches in the BPL and I think that's a big deal for him. I don't think he has managed to do that in the last seven or eight years. From that aspect I think he should have received some special attention," said Minhajul.

When asked if Al-Amin Hossain was not considered as a possible replacement on disciplinary grounds, Minhajul said: "There have been a number of negative things said about him. We didn't consider him."

Minhajul also said that they would announce a 15-man squad for the ODIs before the first practice game in New Zealand, before revealing the T20I squad after the second ODI and then the Test squad after the second T20I. After the T20Is, five will return and 17 will stay behind, according to the chief selector.



## Rahane out of series

Ind-Eng 4th Test starts today

REUTERS, Mumbai

India middle-order batsman Ajinkya Rahane has been ruled out of the last two Tests against England with a fractured finger while fast bowler Mohammed Shami is also doubtful for the fourth match at the Wankhede Stadium, beginning on Thursday.

The 28-year-old Rahane, who has had a modest series so far, was hit by a ball during Wednesday's practice and sustained an avulsion fracture on his right index finger.

Batsman Manish Pandey has replaced Rahane in the squad, with paceman Shardul Thakur named as a back-up for Shami, who has a sore knee and will be assessed before the start of the penultimate match of the five-Test series.

Keaton Jennings will make his England debut as captain Alastair Cook's latest opening partner.



BRAC Bank has become the kit partner of the men's cricket team, women's cricket team and under-19 team. The teams will sport its logo for all home and away series -- barring ICC tournaments -- until 2018, starting with the upcoming New Zealand series.

PHOTO: COLLECTED