

# SPORT



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (3rd from L) puts pen to paper for Mohammedan Sporting Club while Soumya Sarkar (R) signs for Prime Bank Cricket Club yesterday ahead of the Dhaka Premier League.



PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

## 'DPL helps players handle pressure'

BISHWAJIT ROY



Mosaddek Hossain was beaten by a beauty when he faced the first delivery in a Test match from pacer Suranga Lakmal. The young right-hander also faced similar discomfort through the remaining five deliveries of that over. However, he regained his confidence in the very second over, when ace left-arm spinner Rangana Herath came to bowl on the other end at the P Sara Oval, by opening the bat face slightly to find the gap between cover and point. A total of 75-runs was the final contribution from his bat that helped his side manage a valuable first innings lead and ultimately win the historic 100th Test in Sri Lanka.

It is not as if Mosaddek's arrival in the international cricket scene since early last year has made a huge splash among the world's cricket fraternity but rather his assured batting approach and temperament has hogged the spotlight within a very short period of time.

This comes as no surprise for those who followed him in the domestic circuit though, especially after the way he showed his maturity and handled the Sri Lankan spin attack during the second Test.

"The excitement surrounding Dhaka Premier Cricket League might not remain like what it had been a few years back but still you always feel the pressure when you play the Dhaka League. If our first-class cricket is a platform for the players to make big-scoring a habit then Dhaka League is a platform from where you can learn how you need to handle the pressure. And Saikat (Mosaddek) has valuable domestic experiences under his belt," was the explanation from selector Habibul Bashar.

Therefore, when this season's league rolls out onto the field from tomorrow, its importance will be immense for cricketers regardless of whether or not it has lost its appeal to the country's cricket fans.

This is since it is a competition from where a player can perform and receive the highest accolade from senior teammates, the way Mosaddek had from Tamim Iqbal last season. Mosaddek barely did anything wrong during the last season, prompting Tamim to say: "He has a brain of a 45-year-old. He is a mature boy. If he keeps playing the way he is, it won't be long before he enters the national team."

"Domestic cricket is a platform for me where I can take preparation and learn many things. So far I learnt many things from this competition which is helping me in international cricket. I am looking forward to flourishing in international cricket at the highest level and I believe domestic cricket is an area where I can shine to fulfill my dream," said Mosaddek yesterday.

"It's not so easy to perform well in the Dhaka League because you have to take pressure. The clubs are paying you and you have to pay them back. I always try to learn something about how I can handle the pressure and I have my own way," he continued.

Mosaddek also believes that in modern day cricket, one must learn the craft of shifting gears from one format to the other. "You have to take quick decisions in T20 cricket while you have got some time to settle down in the middle in the one-day game and Test cricket is all about patience and as a player I always think how I can change my gear."

"Mental toughness is very important to survive and I am well aware with the fact that a player cannot always enjoy the best time in his career," he added.

In the end, he considered luck as a factor as well but luck will only favour those who capitalise on opportunities whether it is in the domestic circuit or the international level.



MOSADDEK HOSSAIN

## Tamim signs up for Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER



He played for the champions Abahani last time but has decided to switch hands towards their arch-rivals this season in the Dhaka Premier League.

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal caused a bit of a stir ahead of the start of the country's premier 50-over competition, when he signed up for Mohammedan Sporting Club yesterday.

He however, avoided any controversy and downplayed the switch while speaking to reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. "Look, I always say one thing. My uncle used to play for Abahani and my father was a Mohammedan player. So I am happy, no matter which club I play for. I might play for Abahani next year. I might also end up playing for Mohammedan for the next five years. It all depends on the situation," said Tamim.

"It's all good with Abahani. I have a good understanding with them," he added.

Mohammedan finished fifth in the six-team Super League stage last season. Tamim, who like the rest of the national players will get to play a maximum of four matches before they leave for England to prepare for the Champions Trophy, hopes he can change Mohammedan's luck by giving his best at the start of the league.

"You can build the best team, but that does not

FIXTURES		
Date	Match	Venue
April 12	Abahani v Khelaghar	KSOAS
	Prime Doleshwar v Partex	BKSP 3
	Legends of Rupganj v Brothers	BKSP 4
April 13	Victoria Sporting v Sheikh Jamal	KSOAS
	Mohammedan v Gazi Group	BKSP 3
	Prime Bank v Kalabagan KC	BKSP 4
April 17	Abahani v Partex	BKSP 3
	Prime Doleshwar v Brothers Union	KSOAS
	Legends of Rupganj v Sheikh Jamal	BKSP 4
April 18	Victoria Sporting v Gazi Group	KSOAS
	Mohammedan v Kalabagan	BKSP 4
	Prime Bank v Khelaghar	BKSP 3
April 20	Abahani v Brothers	KSOAS
	Prime Doleshwar v Sheikh Jamal	BKSP 4
	Rupganj v Gazi Group	BKSP 3
April 21	Victoria v Kalabagan	BKSP 3
	Mohammedan v Prime Bank	KSOAS

who are occupied because of the Indian Premier League, can further improve the standard of the league. While he admits that it would have been better had the national players played the entire competition, he is also of the opinion that the country's top domestic competition shouldn't depend merely on the 15 national cricketers.

"Ideally it would have been great if the national players could have played all the matches in league, but that's not possible because we have to go to England. However, the fact that the league will continue despite that is a good sign. Bangladesh cricket after all, is bigger than just 15 national cricketers," said Tamim.

Apart from Tamim, young spinners Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Taijul Islam also signed up for Mohammedan yesterday. While Taijul hopes to make a comeback into the national ODI team through the premier league, Mehedi described the move as a dream come true.

"In the first two seasons I played for Kalabagan Cricket Academy. While we did well in the first, we didn't have a good team in the second. I didn't really get a chance to sniff the championship trophy in the last two seasons. I hope to play for that this season. I have always dreamed of playing for big teams like Mohammedan, Gazi Tank and Abahani," he said.

On another note, the other national player, Soumya Sarkar was signed up by Prime Bank Cricket Club yesterday.

mean that you will win the championship. You need luck on your side. If we give our best and still end up losing, then I am sure everyone will accept our effort, no matter what the result," said Tamim.

Furthermore, he also added that the presence of the national players in the competition, except for Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahman



## Fizz leaves today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman will leave for Hyderabad today to take part in the tenth edition of the Indian Premier League. The left-arm, who was awarded the Emerging Player of the competition last season, may find it a bit difficult to make it into the playing eleven this season, as the current combination for Hyderabad, including Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan is doing pretty well.

The only way for Mustafizur to immediately get into the team it seems would be to replace a foreign batsman. If that happens, then Hyderabad will have to replace one of their local bowlers, all of who are doing quite well at the moment, with a local batsman. There's no doubt that Hyderabad's top player will get a chance to play in the competition. It however, won't be a surprise if it takes some time for him to make the eleven.

## National school football in June?

SPORTS REPORTER



Having got the assurance of fund under the FIFA Forward Programme, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is now pondering whether to hold the National School Football Championship in June after the completion of the first-term exams at school level.

The championship was supposed to get underway from February 1 as per BFF's much-hyped-four-year calendar, but the game's governing body is struggling to roll it out on the field due to financial constraints. It seems, however, that the hurdles have been overcome after the FIFA development committee last week sanctioned 112,500 dollars [approximately Tk 90 lakh] for the school championship.

The championship was held once previously, that too partially, in 2013.

"The BFF president gave me the go-ahead to arrange the school championship and we, the school tournament committee, will soon sit for a meeting to fix everything. However, I have a plan to start the championship in June after the first-term exams of schools," said Bijon Barua, chairman of the school tournament committee.

"With the budget of FIFA fund, we can hold the school tournament with the participation of one school from each of the 64 districts," Bijon said. "We will include more schools from the upazila level, if Islami Bank accepts our proposal. We are eagerly waiting for a positive response from them."

The bank had provided Tk5 crore to hold the 2012 national school championship and promised to provide Tk3 crore for the 2013 championship.

## Better results from table tennis team

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh finished 25th among 28 nations in the men's section of the Asian Table Tennis Championship after notching up two victories yesterday in China.

Bangladesh men's team, comprised of Manosh Chowdhury, Mahabub Billah and Masud Rana Porag, bested Maldives 3-2 and Oman 3-0, said a Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) press release.

Bangladesh women's team, comprised of Rahima Akter, Momena Alam Rumi and Sadia Rahman Mou, lost 0-3 to their Sri

## Youth cricket league gets underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The second edition of the Youth Under 19 Cricket League 2016-17 (YCL) kicked off in Cox's Bazar yesterday. Four zonal teams, East, South, North and Central Zone are participating in this four-day tournament being held at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium (SKICS).

This is the second time that this tournament is being held, with the first being back in 2016 in Chittagong. It's an initiative that helps cricketers compete with each other before they enter the big leagues. The top under-19 players take part in this competition.

The competition began with East Zone taking on South and North Zone facing Central yesterday. South Zone will now play North on April 16, while East Zone will play Central from the same day onwards. And finally, South Zone take on Central and North Zone face East from April 22.

Lankan counterparts. They will take on Qatar for the 23rd-24th position deciding match today.

"The boys really showed brilliant performance against Maldives and Oman. We could have produced better results against Malaysia and Indonesia had we come here a few days earlier," said BTTF general secretary Hassan Munir, who went there to attend the annual general meeting of Asian Table Tennis Union, over phone last night.

Munir informed that the players will now participate in singles, doubles and mixed events.

## Babar, Hasan star in series-levelling win

AFP, Providence



Babar Azam stroked yet another hundred against the West Indies and Hasan Ali claimed five wickets as Pakistan won the second one-day international by 74 runs at the National Stadium in Guyana on Sunday.

Put in by West Indies captain Jason Holder, Pakistan totalled 282 for five and then dismissed the hosts for 208 off 44.5 overs despite a battling knock from Holder, who was last out to Ali for a top score of 68.

Reinstated in his favourite number three spot in the batting order, Azam held a faltering innings together and then accelerated towards an unbeaten 125, his fifth century in ODIs and fourth in five innings against the Caribbean side.

His classy knock occupied 132 deliveries and was embellished with three sixes and seven fours.

"I just wanted to bat through to the end of the innings and I was able to achieve that to help us put up a good total," he said.

"It doesn't matter where I bat, I just want to make a contribution for the team."

Azam received critical support from Imad Wasim, the all-rounder finishing unbeaten on 43 in an unbroken sixth-wicket stand of 99 which released the shackles of previously disciplined West Indian bowling on a pitch lacking the pace and bounce from the first match -- which the home team won by four wickets -- two days earlier.

On a good batting pitch the home side also lost their discipline in the reply, crashing to 75 for six with a series of poor shots while the Pakistan bowlers showed much greater intent than in the first game.

"Our batting at the top again let us down because I felt, on this pitch, we definitely had a chance to get to 283," Holder noted at the end of the match.

"Maybe it would have been different with some more runs at the top but now we have to focus on winning on Tuesday (in the third and final match)."

### SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 282 for 5 in 50 overs (Azam 125 not out, Hafeez 32, Ahmed 26, Wasim 43 not out; Gabriel 2-50)

WEST INDIES: 208 all out in 44.5 overs (Holder 68, Nurse 44; Hasan 5-38)

Result: Pakistan won by 74 runs and 3-match series level 1-1.

Player-of-the-match: Babar Azam.

Babar Azam's unbeaten 125 powered Pakistan to a 74-run victory against West Indies in the second ODI in Guyana on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP



## Punjab ride on Amla, Maxwell

AGENCIES, Indore

Kings XI Punjab continued their winning run in the Indian Premier League, defeating Royal Challengers Bangalore by 8 wickets at the Holkar Cricket Stadium yesterday.

AB de Villiers smashed a 46-ball 89-run unconquered innings laced with as many as nine sixes and three fours to single-handedly take RCB to 148-4 after they were reduced to 22-3 in 5 overs.

De Villiers shared 46 runs off 49 balls with Mandeep Singh (28) for the 4th wicket to steady the innings. He then added 80 off 41 balls with Stuart Binny (18) as RCB amassed 68 in the last four overs.

Chasing the target, Manan Vohra (34) and Amla (58) shared 62 runs off 35 balls for the opening wicket to lay the foundation for the run chase.

Amla and skipper Glenn Maxwell (43) then forged 72 runs for the third wicket to take Kings XI home in 14.3 overs.

For Punjab, Varun Aaron (2/21) picked up two wickets, while Sandeep Sharma (1/26) and Axar Patel (1/12) got one wicket each.

Tymal Mills (1/22) and Yuzvendra Chahal (1/29) took one wicket each for Bangalore.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGALORE: 148 for 4 in 20 overs (De Villiers 89 not out, Mandeep 28, Binny 18 not out; Aaron 2-21)

PUNJAB: 150 for 2 in 14.3 overs (Amla 58 not out, Maxwell 43 not out, Vohra 34; Mills 1-22)

Result: Punjab won by 8 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: AR Patel