

SPORT



Skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (L) and Naeem Islam's record 225-run partnership propelled Legends of Rupganj to a thumping 68-run win over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in the Dhaka Premier League match at BKSP yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Mushy & Naeem's record stand powers Rupganj

Sports Reporter



A record partnership between centurions Mushfiqur Rahim and Naeem Islam

for the third wicket not only helped Legends of Rupganj recover from a poor start, but also set up a thumping 68-run win over Abdur Razzak's Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the BKSP in the second round of the Dhaka Premier League yesterday.

Batting first, Rupganj slumped to 13 for two after Shahadat Hossain's opening burst removed the Rupganj openers. That is when Naeem and Mushfiqur joined hands to put on a 225-run stand for the third-wicket, which is the highest ever stand for this wicket in List A cricket for Bangladesh.

Initially, both Naeem and Mushfiqur took it easy. They did not want to lose any more wickets and just played out the new ball.

Once they got settled, the boundaries started coming regularly. Mushfiqur ended up scoring 134 off 134 balls with 14 fours and a six, while Naeem hit 103 off 118 balls with seven fours and one six. While Mushfiqur reached his century off 115 balls, Naeem reached the landmark off 113.

By the time the duo were separated with Mushfiqur being caught off Razzak, Rupganj were at a

comfortable 238 in 41.1 overs. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Jalaj Saxena came in and hit a few quick-fire boundaries to help Rupganj amble across the 300-mark and post 305.

The momentum was with Rupganj and with scoreboard pressure weighing heavy, Sheikh Jamal crumbled after the exchange. While a number of their batsmen got starts, none of them managed to carry on. Mahbubul Karim, Fazle Rabbi and Ziaur Rahman all got out after getting to their 30s.

They were bowled out for 237 in 46.2 overs. Mosharraf Hossain, Asif Hasan, Naeem and Mohammad Sharif took two wickets each.

In the other game at the BKSP, Abahani continued their good run by thrashing Partex Sporting Club by seven wickets. Batting first, Partex managed to post 234 courtesy of Jubair Ahmed's unbeaten 50. However, it was a good batting track and this was going to be hard to defend.

While they did manage to reduce Abahani to 43 for two, a 150-run stand for the third wicket between Mahmudullah and Nazmul Hossain took Abahani home in just 38.3 overs.

While Nazmul remained unbeaten on 101, Mahmudullah hammered a 52-ball 77 with five fours and three sixes. Nazmul, who scored his highest List A score yesterday and his first century, hit four sixes and five fours.

Mahmudullah was caught in the 31st over and that is when the in-form Mosaddek Hossain arrived at the crease and supported Nazmul



Nazmul Hossain's maiden List A hundred took Abahani to a seven-wicket win over Partex Sporting Club at BKSP yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

SCORES IN BRIEF

LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ V SHEIKH JAMAL DC	56; Sunny 4-45, Anamul 2-45)
LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ: 305 for 5 (Mushfiqur 134, Naeem 103; Shahadat 2-52, Razzak 2-63)	PRIME DOLESHWAR: 247 for 6 in 48.3 overs (Imtiaz 99, Majid 45; Noor Alam 3-55, Nehaduzzaman 2-50)
SHEIKH JAMAL DC: 237 all out in 46.2 overs (Ziaur 42, Mahabubul 36; Naeem 2-21, Sharif 2-32, Mosharraf 2-56, Mashrafe 1-50)	Result: Prime Doleshwar won by four wickets.
Result: Rupganj won by 68 runs.	Player of the match: Imtiaz Hossain
Player of the match: Mushfiqur Rahim	PARTEX SPORTING CLUB V ABAHANI (BKSP)
BROTHERS UNION V PRIME DOLESHWAR	PARTEX SPORTING CLUB: 234 for 7 (Jubair 50, Sajjad 44; Shuvagata 2-45, Saifuddin 2-56)
BROTHERS UNION: 246 for 9 (Junaid 87, Mizanur	ABAHANI: 237 for 3 in 38.3 overs (Nazmul 101 not out, Mahmudullah 77)

with an unbeaten 23 to take Abahani home.

At the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, Prime Doleshwar won their second consecutive game when they overcame Brothers Union's 246 with four wickets and 1.3 overs to go.

Doleshwar were guided by their

opener, Imtiaz Hossain who scored a 143-ball 99.

Batting first, Brothers rode on Junaid Siddique's 87. Doleshwar's Arifat Sunny, who had taken a five-wicket haul in his previous game, took four scalps yesterday and was the key wicket-taker.

After the exchange, Imtiaz's 99 along with Abdul Majid's 45 and

'It is Tigers' duty to be a cut above'

SPorts Reporter



When Legends of Rupganj signed both Bangladesh's Test and ODI skippers for the Dhaka Premier League, everyone expected the latter to take charge of the team this season.

However, to the surprise of many, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza decided to hand over the captaincy to Mushfiqur Rahim. Mashrafe, who has been going through quite a bit with his T20I retirement and the controversy surrounding that in the last few weeks, wanted to relax a bit and as a result asked Mushfiqur to take charge.

Speaking to reporters in Savar yesterday, Mushfiqur said that Mashrafe's decision to hand him the captaincy made the wicketkeeper-batsman put in double the effort on the field.

"This is the first time that I am playing with him [Mashrafe] in club cricket in my life and this is a big honour for me. He had requested me to captain the team because he wanted to relax a bit.

"When a person of his stature gives you that responsibility you have to be more focused than usual. I gave my 200 per cent on the field in the last two games," said Mushfiqur who scored match-winning knocks in both of Rupganj's games so far.

It's not just Mushfiqur. Bangladesh's

national players have done relatively well in the Dhaka Premier League so far. From the veterans such as Mushfiqur to youngsters Mosaddek Hossain and Nazmul Hossain Shanto, who have just found their feet in the team, everyone is trying to prove a point in the competition.

Mushfiqur reckons that the good performance here will provide the national team with a big boost ahead of Bangladesh's triseries in Ireland and the Champions Trophy in England.

"This is a big boost because everyone wants national players to do well in this league and this is our duty. If there is no difference between players who play for the national team and the other players, then we shouldn't be getting priority to play in the national team. We need to hold on to that standard," said Mushfiqur.

The national players will only get to play two more matches before they leave for national duty. Mushfiqur hopes that he can seal Rupganj a place in the Super League before him and Mashrafe leave.

"If you notice every team in the Premier League will be a little weak - apart from Gazi Group and Prime Bank, they have good back-up. That's when the main game will take place. Hopefully we can give them a good start so that they can qualify to the top six," said Mushfiqur, who scored 134 yesterday against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

Srini barred from going to ICC meet

PII, New Delhi

Former BCCI president N Srinivasan cannot represent the Board at the ICC meeting next week as he has been held guilty of conflict of interest, the Supreme Court said on Monday.

The apex court allowed BCCI's Acting Secretary Amitabh Chaudhary to represent the cricket board at the ICC meeting on April 24 and directed BCCI CEO Rahul Johri to accompany him.

A bench headed by Justice Dipak Misra said since Srinivasan has been held guilty by the apex court for conflict of interest, he cannot be allowed to represent the BCCI in the ICC meeting.

"It is directed that Amitabh Chaudhary shall represent the BCCI in the ICC meeting and Rahul Johri shall accompany him and he (Johri) will also attend the meetings of the CEOs," the bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y

Salaries to rise, but not as desired

Warm-ups against Ind and Pak before CT

SPorts Reporter



The salary of the national cricketers will increase when the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) offers them a new national contract but it may not fulfil the desire of the players.

"The cricket operations committee has discussed the new salary package of the national cricketers, but the board will take the final decision. There is no doubt that it will increase from the last package," BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan told the reporters yesterday at Mirpur.

When asked whether they have any plan to double the figure, Akram said: "They (cricketers) are getting enough bonuses; they got it after the 2015 World Cup and the recently concluded Sri Lanka series. We are giving more bonuses than any other board in the world.

"The number of players we bring to the national payroll is much bigger than the other boards in the world. A player has many sources of income here if he performs well. They have DPL (Dhaka Premier League), BPL (Bangladesh Premier League). Apart from national cricketers we have 80 to 90 players who are also under BCB's payroll. We need to keep the balance but one thing is certain; we are keeping the interest of the

cricketers in mind," he continued.

"We are however not only focusing on the national players, but we also keep an eye on players who are doing well in domestic cricket," said Akram.

It was learnt that the national cricketers demanded a massive increase, as high as three times the current number, citing the examples of other boards. The last contract expired in December last year and the board is yet to finalise the new contract four months into the year.

Akram also informed reporters that Bangladesh will play warm-up matches against Pakistan (May 27) and India (May 30) as part of the build-up to the ICC Champions Trophy to be held in England and besides that the Tigers will also play practice matches against Duke of Norfolk's XI and Sussex XI during their 10-day training camp in Sussex.

Akram said that a few back-up players will accompany the team which will fly for England on April 26 as the tour will be a long one; before the Champions Trophy, where Bangladesh have been drafted in Group A along with England, Australia and New Zealand, the Tigers will play a tri-series in Ireland where New Zealand will be the third team.

"We are however yet to finalise how many additional players will accompany the team," said Akram.



Rabbi to play in Russia

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday selected Golam Rabbi to represent the country in Gazprom's Football for Friendship event to be held in Russia in June-July.

The game's governing body had earlier short-listed three under-12 players - Daanial Karim Ansari, Rabbi and Shampad Hasan - from 200 budding footballers through a trial.

Though Daanial had the edge over Rabbi and Shampad due to his fluency in English, the latter two had comparatively better skill and technique. Rabbi was eventually picked to represent Bangladesh for the event where 64 boys and girls, split into eight groups, will play. It has been learnt that Rabbi will be taught basic communicative English over the next two months.

KKR win a thriller

AGencies, New Delhi



A 110-run fourth wicket stand between Yusuf Pathan (59) and Manish Pandey (69*) gave the Kolkata Knight Riders a much deserved 4-wicket win over the Delhi Daredevils at the Ferozeshah Kotla on Monday, condemning Zaheer Khan's team to their first home loss of the season.

Manish Pandey was the star of the show as he kept his cool in a tense final over to take Kolkata over the line, staying unbeaten on 69.

Chasing a competitive target of 169 to win the match, the Knight Riders were off to the worst possible start as they lost their first three wickets for just 21 runs.

Earlier, the Delhi Daredevils decided to bat first and meandered to a total of 168 for 7.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 168 for 6 in 20 overs (Samson 39, Billings 21, Nair 21, Iyer 26, Pant 38; Coulter-Nile 3-22)
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 169 for 6 in 19.5 overs (Pandey 69 not out, Pathan 59; Zaheer 2-28, Cummins 2-39)
Result: Kolkata Knight Riders won by 4 wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Nathan Coulter-Nile.



The Dhaka Premier League match between Prime Doleshwar and Brothers Union yesterday included what has now become a familiar scene at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah. Spectators are exchanging cash as they bet on different aspects of the game. The scenario here could well be a small example of a much wider sports gambling scene, as it has been reported that illegal betting takes place on cricket matches of all levels around the country, but there has not yet been any action taken by the concerned authorities against the unlawful act. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Fakirerpool told to play in BCL

Sports Reporter



Fakirerpool Young Men's Club have been demoted to the Bangladesh Championship League (BCL), the second-tier of the professional football league, according to a decision

from an emergency meeting of the executive committee of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

The decision was taken in view of an application from the club, which had won the BCL title last year to get automatic promotion to Bangladesh Premier League, to skip the season due to financial and organisational issues.

"Fakirerpool Young Men's Club will have to participate in this season's Bangladesh Championship League and their 11 binding players have been treated as free players," read a BFF statement after the professional

football league committee referred the issue to the highest body.

"We will sit for a meeting after getting a written decision from the BFF and inform whether we will play in the Bangladesh Championship League or not," said the club's general secretary Sabbir Hossain.

Sabbir was a bit surprised at the decision of not permitting them to skip the season completely as clubs like Farashganj had returned to the top flight after playing in no league last season.

Sabbir however is mulling to form a squad for the BCL as the transfer window has been extended to May 15 from April 30 even though he is not sure whether they would be able to form the squad.

Explaining the reasons behind pulling out of the BPL, Sabbir said that they have failed to form a good enough squad for the top-tier league due to not being able to manage funds within a few months of