



Tajjilul Islam's (R) six-wicket haul powered Mohammedan Sporting Club to a 51-run victory against Legends of Rugganj in a Dhaka Premier League match at BKSP yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

A lesson in scapegoating

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) came down heavily on two players and their clubs for 'tarnishing the image of Bangladesh cricket'.

Tasnim Hasan and Sujon Mahmud have been banned for 10 years each while their clubs, Lalmatia Club and Fear Fighters Sporting Club, have been scratched from playing in any division of the Dhaka league for their role in the Dhaka Second Division League matches.

Sujon had conceded 92 runs off four balls while playing for Lalmatia against Axiom Cricketers. It seems an atrocious performance but exposed the underlying ills in domestic cricket. But it was also a statistical anomaly that had attracted the attention of the cricketing world and forced the BCB to form a special committee to look into the matter. The special committee found that Fear Fighters' Tasnim had also voluntarily conceded 69 runs in 1.1 overs against Indira Road Krira Chakra the day before the Lalmatia-Axiom game in protest of alleged biased umpiring.

What Sujon did out of frustration at 'biased umpiring' has apparently been proven by BCB's special committee as a 'crime' against the image of the country's cricket. The captains, managers and coaches of both teams have also been handed five-year suspensions. However, umpires Shamsur Rahman and Azizul Bari, who were officiating in both matches, have been banned for six months for their inability to handle the matches properly; that ruling must have brought a sigh of relief to the match officials as they will not miss any cricket next season.

You may have a lot of questions in your mind regarding the justification of the punishments but BCB have apparently solved the recurring bane of alleged biased umpiring through this one harsh judgement on the players and the clubs.

But even if you accept the vague terms of 'tarnishing image' and that BCB just follows their own rules, one question must be asked -- whether the game's governing body in the country was sincere enough to go to the root of the problem or were they only looking for some scapegoats.

BCB's umpires committee have the sole authority to allocate match officials but the clubs have long been raising their voices at the committee's deaf ears about taking action against certain umpires and asking that they not be awarded any matches. The committee was even reluctant to entertain requests about the issue from the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM).

Kazi Yusha Mishu and Sailab Hossain Tutul have been occupying the posts of chairman and member-secretary of the BCB's umpires committee respectively for such a long time that many could not recall when they started, and it seems that their aptitude for the posts is directly proportional to their loyalty towards the powerful.

Even as biased umpiring has gradually and silently been decaying Bangladesh cricket and there was a need to revamp the committee to solve this perennial problem, BCB has so far showed little urgency to solve it.

We wish that this punishment could solve the evil practice of deciding the fate of a match beyond the boundaries of the playing field where every stakeholder, starting from club officials to umpires, engage in backroom dealings. It is a practice that has been going on for years, especially at the lower levels of domestic cricket and with the full knowledge of the board. But unfortunately, the nature of the punishment hints that the board's wrath was focused on those who, even if wrongfully, tried to portray the true picture of the ills of domestic cricket while failing to address the root of all evils.

Rugganj lose the plot

Abahani win another low-scorer; Doleshwar outclass Prime Bank

SPORTS REPORTER



When you witness a game in which a team defends a total as small as 135, you usually expect the captains and players of the teams to talk about how difficult the wicket or the conditions were.

However, Legends of Rugganj skipper Mosharrar Hossain, whose side was bundled out for 84 while chasing Mohammedan's 135, gave a shocker of a reply when asked about the defeat.

"This was a wicket on which batsmen ideally would have scored 300," a frustrated Mosharrar blurted while speaking to The Daily Star after the match yesterday.

"I don't know what to say about my batsmen. What can you say when your batsmen try to pull half-volleys? I feel that cricketers who play outside [non-professional cricketers] would have

played much better on this wicket. It was a completely flat wicket with absolutely nothing on it. They [Mohammedan] put in a bad batting performance. But we

the wickets. Believe me when I say that there was no turn at all. There was a bit of movement in the morning when they batted. But when we came to the

ran through Rugganj's batting order with figures of six for 24. Rugganj lasted for just 32.4 overs.

The day's other game at the BKSP, between Kalabagan Krira Chakra and Abahani, was also a low-scoring one. However, there were no shockers here as Abahani raced to their target of 157 in 30.2 overs and six wickets in hand. Young Saif Hasan scored 61, while Mohammad Mithun posted an unbeaten 30 to lead the chase.

Earlier, Shuvagata Hom had taken four wickets to help bundle Kalabagan out for 156 in 45.5 overs.

The Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah witnessed the battle of the two Primes with Prime Doleshwar coming out on top by seven wickets. Batting first, Prime Bank Cricket Club were bowled out for 180 in 49.5 overs with Zakir Hasan scoring 52. Shahriar Nafees's unbeaten 78 and Marshall Ayub's 62 led Doleshwar home in 45.2 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF		
MOHAMMEDAN V LEGENDS OF RUGGANJ	Player of the match: Tajjilul Islam	seven wickets.
MOHAMMEDAN: 135 all out in 39.4 overs (Rakibul 24, Shamsur 23; Asif 4-19, Sharif 2-15)	PRIME BANK CC V PRIME DOLESHWAR	Player of the match: Delwar Hossain
RUGGANJ: 84 all out in 32.4 overs (Mosharrar 22; Tajjilul 6-24, Sajedul 2-3)	PRIME BANK: 180 all out in 49.5 overs (Zakir 52, Asif 33; Delwar 3-17, Forhad 3-30)	KALABAGAN KC V ABAHANI
Result: Mohammedan won by 51 runs.	PRIME DOLESHWAR: 181 for 3 in 45.2 overs (Nafees 78 not out, Marshall 62; Al-Amin 2-26)	KALABAGAN: 156 all out in 45.5 overs (Tushar 36, Hamilton 31; Shuvagata 4-19, Saifuddin 2-26)
	Result: Prime Doleshwar won by	ABAHANI: 161 for 4 in 30.2 overs (Saif 61, Mithun 30 not out; Abul 2-20)

were worse," added the skipper, who top-scored for his side with a 60-ball 22.

Mosharrar's teammate, veteran pacer Mohammad Sharif, echoed his sentiment. "Their spinners got most of

crease it was much better to bat on and we still failed," said Sharif.

Asif Hasan's four for 19 helped restrict Mohammedan to 135 in 39.4 overs. After the exchange, Tajjilul Islam

Mosaddek in Grade C, but Mehedi in Grade D

SPORTS REPORTER



Nasir Hossain, Al-Amin Hossain and Arafat Sunny have been excluded from the Bangladesh Cricket Board's national contract this year. Instead, the BCB have included Mosaddek Hossain, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Mehedi Hasan Miraj and Taskin Ahmed.

Kamrul and Mehedi have been placed in Grade D and will be earning Tk 100,000 every month, while Mosaddek and Taskin have been put in Grade C and they will be earning Tk 150,000. While the youngsters were bound to be included based on their performances, the surprising factor was the elevation of Mosaddek to Grade C. It was a move that raised a few questions considering that Mehedi has been kept in Grade D.

There were no other surprises in the national contract with Mushfiqur

Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Tamim Iqbal receiving the top contracts with Tk 400,000 per

NATIONAL CONTRACTS

Name	Grade	Salary in Tk (Per month)
1. Mushfiqur Rahim	A+	400,000
2. Shakib Al Hasan	A+	400,000
3. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	A+	400,000
4. Tamim Iqbal Khan	A+	400,000
5. Mahmudullah Riyad	A	300,000
6. Imrul Kayes	B	200,000
7. Mominul Haque	B	200,000
8. Sabbir Rahman	B	200,000
9. Soumya Sarkar	B	200,000
10. Rubel Hossain	C	150,000
11. Taskin Ahmed	C	150,000
12. Mustafizur Rahman	C	150,000
13. Mosaddek Hossain	C	150,000
14. Tajjilul Islam	D	100,000
15. Kamrul Islam Rabbi	D	100,000
16. Mehedi Hasan Miraj	D	100,000

Note: Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will earn Tk 20,000 more while Tamim Iqbal will earn Tk 10,000 more as incentives for captains and

month. Mahmudullah Riyad is the only player in the Grade A category and he will be earning Tk 300,000 per month.

The four top order batsmen -- Imrul Kayes, Mominul Haque, Sabbir Rahman and Soumya Sarkar -- will earn Tk 200,000 per month, while Rubel Hossain, Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman have been placed in Grade C and will earn Tk 150,000 per month.

Slow left-arm spinner Tajjilul Islam has been given a Grade D contract and he will be earning Tk 100,000. While Tajjilul is more senior than the others in Grade D, he is yet to cement his place in the Test squad.

Last year, 15 cricketers were given the national contract. This year, the board decided to increase one slot and include a number of youngsters because of their valuable contribution to the team.

The captains and the vice-captain will earn an extra Tk 20,000 and Tk 10,000 respectively.

Mushy's 134 in warm-up

STAR SPORT DESK

Stand-in skipper Mushfiqur Rahim scored an unbeaten century for Bangladesh in the rain-abandoned 50-over warm-up game against Duke of Norfolk XI on Monday.

Mushfiqur, wearing the captain's armband in absence of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, won the toss and opted to bat first in chilly and overcast conditions in Sussex, where the team is having a 10-day conditioning camp.

The former ODI skipper then led from the front, scoring unbeaten 134 off just 98 balls as the visitors amassed 345 for seven in their stipulated 50 overs. Mushfiqur, according to information provided by the Bangladesh Cricket Board, hit 14 fours and a six in his hurricane knock. Soumya Sarkar scored 73 while Imrul kayes added 44. Mehedi Hasan Miraj (31) and Nasir Hossain (26) added valuable contributions too.

Bangladesh, also playing without Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal and Mustafizur Rahman, then found no reward as the Norfolk openers proved solid in their chase. The hosts were 95 for no loss after 19 overs when rain intervened, and there was no more play possible.

'SL can win Trophy'

AFP, Colombo

Famed South African pacer Allan Donald began his appointment Tuesday as Sri Lanka's interim bowling coach, declaring the squad has the potential to claim victory in next month's Champions Trophy.

Donald was hired by the Sri Lanka cricket board as a fast bowling consultant ahead of the tournament in England.



Pakistan skipper Misbahul Haq (L) and opener Azhar Ali run between the wickets on the third day of the second Test against West Indies at the Kensington Oval on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pak inch towards lead

AFP, Bridgetown



Azhar Ali crawled to within six runs of a hundred as Pakistan reached 226 for three at lunch on the third day of the second Test at Kensington Oval in Barbados on Tuesday.

Misbahul Haq was also at his most obdurate as a tedious morning's play saw the tourists progress by 54 runs off 26 overs from their overnight position without losing a wicket.

Ali added 11 runs to his total and will resume in the afternoon session on 94 alongside his captain who reached the interval unbeaten on 40 as Pakistan laboured hard in reply to the West Indies first innings total of 312.

Both batsmen found run-scoring extremely difficult on a pitch showing greater signs of wear and offering increasingly variable bounce. Ali's occupation of the crease has so far spanned 429 minutes in which he faced 257 deliveries, stroking eight boundaries.

Misbah was also typically watchful, facing 121 balls in 160 minutes in the middle and striking five fours.

West Indies captain Jason Holder summoned the second new ball after the 81st

over, and while Shannon Gabriel appeared to have sorted out the no-ball problem which plagued his efforts on the second day, neither he nor the other faster bowlers were able to separate the fourth-wicket pair.

They had come together late on the second day after Pakistan lost three wickets for six runs following an opening stand of 155 between Ali and Ahmed Shehzad, whose contribution of 70 was notable for him being twice reprieved when dismissed of no-balls apart from also being dropped at the start of his innings.

Ali and Misbah had put on 65 for the fourth wicket at the interval, their exaggerated caution reflecting an effort to ensure that Pakistan earn a potentially decisive first innings lead.

The tourists are seeking a first-ever Test win at the venue which would also clinch an historic first Test series win in the Caribbean ahead of the final Test in Dominica in a week's time.

SCORES IN BRIEF
WEST INDIES: First innings 312 (Powell 38, Chase 131, Dowrich c Younis 29, Holder 58; Amir 3-65, Abbas 4-56, Yasir 2-83)

PAKISTAN: First innings 226 for 3 (Azhar 94 not out, Shehzad 70, Misbah 40 not out; Bishoo 2-57)

Shakib to join Tigers a day late

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan will return to Dhaka from the IPL to attend the wedding ceremony of his younger sister Jannatul Ferdous on May 4.

Following the ceremony he will leave for Sussex on May 5 to join his national teammates who are in the midst of a training camp there.

Shakib's national teammate, also part of the IPL, Mustafizur Rahman is scheduled to return today and will fly for Sussex tomorrow.

Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is another player who is expected to depart for Sussex tomorrow after returning home to visit his ailing wife on April 30.

Chance to climb up the ladder

STAR SPORT DESK



The Bangladesh ODI team may have lost a point in the International Cricket Council's annual update of the ODI rankings

released on Monday, but the Tigers can gain a lot of ground in the upcoming tri-series starting on May 12 in Ireland against the hosts and New Zealand. The rankings have assumed special importance now because the top eight teams at the cut-off time of September 2017 will gain automatic qualification to the 2019 World Cup.

Bangladesh are currently in seventh place on 91 points, three clear of

Pakistan in eighth position. The ninth-placed team is West Indies on 79 points, so the fear of sinking below that is a remote one. On the other hand, Sri Lanka in sixth position is only two points clear of Bangladesh, and according to the ICC rankings predictor the Tigers will leapfrog Sri Lanka with 97 points if they win all four matches of the league-based tri-series. Even if they win three, they will sit on 94 points, one clear of Sri Lanka.

With New Zealand fielding an under-strength side, the above scenarios are certainly possible, and Bangladesh would also want the rankings cushion ahead of their campaign in the Champions Trophy group of death.

ODI RANKINGS

Rank	Team	Points
1.	South Africa	123 (+4)
2.	Australia	118 (-)
3.	India	117 (+5)
4.	New Zealand	115 (+2)
5.	England	109 (+1)
6.	Sri Lanka	93 (-5)
7.	Bangladesh	91 (-1)
8.	Pakistan	88 (-2)
9.	West Indies	79 (-4)
10.	Afghanistan	52 (-)
11.	Zimbabwe	46 (-2)