

# SPORT

## We believe we can win: Mash

Sports Reporter



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will return to action today after serving a one-match ban and the Bangladesh ODI skipper will certainly be hoping that his top-order batsmen show a resilient approach when they take on New Zealand in their second match of the tri-series at the Clontarf Cricket Club Ground in Dublin today.

The Tigers skipper will also seek some solace as he had a bitter experience during the last visit to New Zealand in December-January as the Tigers not only lost all the matches but the captain also suffered an injury that kept him out of action for three months.

Bangladesh's first match against hosts Ireland was abandoned due to rain but there was cause of concern for the Tigers during the 31 overs that were played as they had suffered a batting hiccup due to poor application from the top order batsmen on a green-top, before Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad salvaged the situation.

Mashrafe however highlighted the recovery acts of Tamim and Mahmudullah while talking about the second match after yesterday's practice session.

"After the early wickets, the way Tamim and Riyad [Mahmudullah] batted, they showed their experience. This is the reality, two or three wickets can fall early but it is important to come back from that. We are expecting that the wicket will be similar; on such wickets if you get set then 270-300 is possible. We have not yet seen how similar this wicket is to the earlier one," said Mashrafe, who missed the first match as a one-match ban was imposed on him for a slow over-rate in the last ODI in Sri Lanka.

New Zealand will be missing some of their key players, but the Bangladesh captain was not taking anything for granted.

"The first target whenever we take the field is that we want to win the match. New Zealand

are of course a very good team. In the rankings they are well placed. Even though they do not have some of their top players but if you see, many of the players from the last series we played against them are here," said Mashrafe, adding that they tried their best to be as prepared as possible despite the facilities not being up to the mark.

"I believe and my team believes that we can win against New Zealand. Those who are good are good in any condition. Of course the conditions matter, but we believe in our ability and the bowlers and top-order batsmen that we have, if they keep faith in their skills, then something good can happen hopefully," he added.

Bangladesh practised yesterday in sunshine but Mashrafe was not sure what will happen today.

"The days we have spent practising here, the weather has been unpredictable -- sometimes it is windy, sometimes it is sunny and suddenly it starts raining. So we have to adjust and play in these conditions. Hopefully it won't be like this in England, but we have three matches left to play here, so we have to mentally adjust to that," said Mashrafe.

Bangladesh played the first international at the venue in 1999 in the World Cup match against West Indies, which they lost by seven wickets.

The Bangladesh captain hoped that rain will not play foul again as they were looking to play matches ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy in England.

"It is important to play matches for Champions Trophy preparations. We had hoped that we would get conditions similar to England, but that has not happened. In the first match it was a very grassy wicket; maybe that won't be the case [in today's game]. Maybe even if there is grass on the wicket, it will become flat after the early movement. But still, I think the wickets are different from those in England."

There may be one change from the last team as Rubel Hossain or Taskin Ahmed may make way for Mashrafe's return.



The Bangladesh team gather into a huddle for a pep talk from skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (C) before their practice session at the Clontarf Cricket Club Ground in Dublin yesterday. The Tigers will take on New Zealand in their second match of the tri-series today.

PHOTO: BCB

## Carroll happy with security trend

Sports Reporter



Cricket Australia's head of security Sean Carroll expressed his satisfaction over the security measures that were in place during England's tour of Bangladesh in October last year.

"We are looking forward to working with Bangladesh authorities and the BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) to make sure that there will be a very successful tour going ahead in August this year," Carroll, who arrived in the capital on Monday night, told reporters after a meeting with the top officials at the Police Headquarters.

"I won't go into the details of conversations I

had with the high commission, but certainly we've been very satisfied with the security plans that the Bangladesh authorities put for the England cricket team last year and also recently for the IPU meeting [136th IPU Assembly held in Dhaka] that was held," he continued.

Carroll had visited Bangladesh last year in October during England's tour and monitored the security arrangements which were wholeheartedly acclaimed by the England and Wales Cricket Board's security adviser Reg Dickason.

Cricket Australia (CA) chief executive James Sutherland also insisted that it was 'all systems go' for Australia's tour to Bangladesh, saying that only a few of the security details were left to be ironed out, so Carroll's report will be important.

"As I said, we are certainly working with the BCB and the Bangladesh authorities to make sure there is a rigorous security plan for the Australian cricket team when they visit later this year," said Carroll.

The series, which is expected to feature a Test in Dhaka and Chittagong each, is expected to get underway from late August.

Australia have not played a Test in Bangladesh since 2006 and their last tour to the nation was in 2011 for a three-match ODI series. Australia were originally scheduled to travel to Bangladesh in October 2015 but postponed it at the last minute due to security concerns and also withdrew their Under-19 side from last year's World Cup in Dhaka.



Pabna clinched their maiden title as they defeated Narayanganj by five wickets in the National Cricket Championship final at the Aminuddin Stadium in Pabna yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

## Nat'l Cricket C'ship Pabna clinch maiden title

Our Correspondent, Pabna



Rain has been a deterrent throughout the 37th National Cricket Championship and it reared its head once again in yesterday's final as Pabna defeated Narayanganj by five wickets in the curtailed 20-overs-a-side affair at Pabna Aminuddin Stadium yesterday.

There was a nervy moment when set batsman Imran Hossain walked back to the pavilion in the 19th over with Pabna 10 runs away from their 122-run target, and more importantly a maiden title.

A single off the first ball of the 20th over enhanced the pressure, but any anxiety was allayed when Mohaiminul Khan Chowdhury blasted the second ball of the over for a huge six, bringing the equation down to three runs off four balls.

Mohaiminul scored those three runs off the next two balls to secure Pabna's first national cricket championship crown.

"Through the national cricket tournament, local players travel to different areas across the country and get the opportunity to play against the best the country has to offer. It makes players more confident and they want to prove themselves by putting up their best performance," Pabna captain Tawhid Tariq Khan said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Jahangir Alam, coach of the Narayanganj district team said this is a fine tournament and the players performed their best despite the rain.

"Due to the heavy showers on Monday night, the field became slower, so our batsmen could not score our targeted runs," Jahangir said.

## Razib, Rakib lose in China

Sports Reporter

Both Bangladeshi Grandmasters, Enamul Hossain Razib and Abdullah Al Rakib, lost their respective boards in the fifth round of the Asian Continental Chess Championships in Chengdu, China yesterday.

GM Razib lost against GM Karthikeyan Murali of India to earn 2.5 points, while GM Rakib lost against IM Atabayev Saparmyrat of Turkmenistan to earn two points from five matches.

In the women's section, WIM Shamima Akter Liza earned 1.5 points after losing against Du Yaxin of China while WFM Nazrana Khan Eva lost against Omurbekova Diana of Kyrgyzstan to earn the same number of points.

Razib had drawn his fourth-round board against GM Lu Shanglei of China earlier on Monday, while Rakib lost against GM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi of India in the same round.

## Baliapukur crowned champs

Sports Reporter



Rajshahi's Baliapukur Vidya Niketan became the best among 540 schools when they beat Kashinath Alauddin High School of Moulvibazar by 34 runs in a rain-interrupted final of the Prime Bank Young Tigers National School Cricket Competition at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

It was a joyous moment for the boys from Baliapukur Vidya Niketan who worked hard since January this year to make their dream come true and the most satisfying fact for winning skipper Mohaimenul Haque was that they brought their little known but beloved school to the spotlight.

"Everybody in the country will now know that there is a school in Rajshahi named Baliapukur Vidya Niketan," said an excited Mohaimenul. The captain gave full credit to the team effort for the success. "Everybody contributed and it's a team effort which helped us to make our dream come true. We had a target and we fulfilled it," he added.

This year's competition saw participation of 540 schools and 10,800 players from across the country. Sixty-four district champions featured in the divisional round from which seven

divisional champions and champions of Dhaka Metro Zone qualified for the National Round held in Bogra and Rajshahi. In all, 965 matches took place at 70 venues nationwide.

The final match was reduced to a 24-over-a-side affair due to rain. Sent in to bat first, Baliapukur scored 129 runs in 24 overs thanks to Somrat Ali, who hit 53 off 50 balls that contained four fours and three sixes.

In reply, Kashinath Alauddin High School lost wickets at regular intervals before they were bundled out for 95 runs.

Sakibul Islam initiated the early damage by taking two wickets and then Mohammad Foysal took charge to finish the job with a four-wicket haul. Foysal, who also scored an unbeaten 21, captured four for 16 to be named the player of the match.



Rajshahi's Baliapukur Vidya Niketan clinched the Prime Bank Young Tigers National School cricket title after defeating Kashinath Alauddin High School of Moulvibazar by 34 runs at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Shila fifth, Romana sixth

### Alida pulls out of 100m sprint

Sports Reporter



Bangladesh's two female swimmers, Mahfuza Khatun Shila and Romana Akter, finished fifth and sixth respectively in the women's 100m breaststroke event of the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku, Azerbaijan yesterday.

With only nine participants to start with, the two Bangladeshi swimmers finished third in their respective semifinals to move into the eight-contestant final round.

Shila, the double gold medallist in last year's South Asian Games, finished her dash in 1 minute 18.15 seconds while Romana finished hers in 1 minute 19.48 seconds. Shila's timing in Baku was 1.74 seconds worse than her career best of 1 minute 16.41 seconds.

The gold medal in the event was won by Turkey's Victoria Zeynep, who

clocked 1 minute 8.72 seconds.

Meanwhile, Alida Shikder, the USA-born Bangladeshi athlete, withdrew from the 100m sprint event yesterday, citing jetlag as the reason for withdrawal, after having arrived in Baku from USA on Saturday. The 19-year-old athlete withdrew just hours before the heats of the event.

Officials of the Bangladesh Athletics Federation informed that Alida withdrew in order to keep herself from injury and exhaustion ahead of the long jump event on Thursday.

"When we learnt about the withdrawal decision, we talked with her coach immediately," athletics federation general secretary Abdur Rokib Montu said yesterday. "The coach said Alida got very little time to recover and decided not to take part in the 100m sprint. Long jump is her main event and she didn't want to risk herself

ahead of the event."

In the men's 100m sprint, Bangladesh's Abdur Rouf was eliminated from heats after securing the 28th position among 31 contestants with a timing of 11.28 seconds, 0.36 seconds more than his best timing set during the trial for these games.

Shooter Shakil Ahmed also failed in the 10m air pistol event as he was eliminated from the qualification round after finishing 12th among 31 participants, with a score of 570 points. Another Bangladeshi shooter Anwar Hossain finished 17th with a score of 563 points.

Meanwhile, shooters Abdullah Hel Baki and Syeda Atkia Hassan Disha gold medallists in the 10m air rifle mixed event, returned home yesterday morning along with the 10m air rifle individual event's silver medallist, Rabbi Hasan Munna.

## Bowlers will find it tough in CT: Bond

Agencies, Wellington

After a hectic campaign in the Indian Premier League (IPL), bowlers may find the going tough heading into the Champions Trophy, former New Zealand pacer Shane Bond believes.

"Because of the condensed schedules in the IPL, and the heat and the travel, the bowlers haven't been bowling a lot in the nets," Bond wrote in a column for the ICC.

"Bowlers will be expected to bowl their quota of 10 overs, [which] will pose a unique challenge in terms of the bowlers not having had enough of a workload.

Bond added that players would need to make a few rapid changes in terms of both adjustment and attitude when they switch from the 20-over format.

"Players have been training and are in good shape physically, so this adjustment shouldn't be particularly demanding, but the issue of bowling workloads is another matter altogether."