

# SPORT



The players who featured in the team for the second tri-series match against New Zealand only had a gym session yesterday, but the fringe players took to the nets ahead of the third match against Ireland in Malahide today.

## Need to improve in all departments: Mash

Sports Reporter



They had some nery moments in the abandoned first match against Ireland and their batting and bowling failed to shine in the second match against New Zealand. That's why the Tigers will need to come up with their best when they meet hosts Ireland in the third match of the tri-series at Malahide in Dublin today.

Above all, the Tigers will be hoping that rain does not play foul like it did in the first game against the same opposition. Bangladesh have been struggling to cope with the cold, but it will be unbearable if rain denies them again.

Everyone knows how important Shakib Al Hasan's performance is to win a match, but the ace all-rounder is yet to make his mark, while Sabbir Rahman, who holds a very important batting position, has not been able to continue the form he showed in the warm-up.

So the team think-tank will be hoping that the two key performers will recover from their poor showings to give the Tigers their first win in the tri-series after their first game against Ireland was washed out and they suffered a four-wicket defeat to New Zealand in the second.

The players who took part in the second match only engaged in a gym session yesterday, while the non-playing members had net and fielding

sessions. The Tigers may field an unchanged side and they will be looking to senior players taking responsibility to turn the tables.

Captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza also emphasised on the need for improvement in all departments.

"I think 275-280 could have been a lot better [against New Zealand] but still I think bowling wise we also have to improve. We have to take wickets early up front. They attacked us, but I think Mustafizur [Rahman] bowled well. He got the wicket after coming in, but again I think it's about both bowling and batting. The mistakes which we made, we can't make those every day," Mashrafe said after the second match.

"I think we are not too far. If you look at our batting, three guys got runs but the problem was they got out. That is something we lack and I think we can learn from it and make sure we don't continue to repeat it. And obviously, as I said, bowling up front is very important in these conditions," he continued, adding that he was also dissatisfied with his bowling against New Zealand.

Mashrafe also hoped that Sabbir would get his rhythm back soon.

"He [Sabbir] has been playing well at number three. Obviously there are challenges on such a wicket, especially for a batsman from the subcontinent. I hope he can identify where he went wrong. He was in good touch but he hasn't been able to score for two matches but we believe he will return to run soon," he said.

## Tigers benefit in new Test rankings

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Bangladesh gained three points, but their position remains the same, as the International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled the Test rankings following its annual update yesterday.

The Tigers are now six points behind West Indies, who gained five points.

India continue to lead the table with 123 points, while South Africa, who gained eight points, are second with 117 points.

The battle in the middle is also heating up as nine points separate third-ranked Australia from seventh-placed Sri Lanka. England and Pakistan lost two and four points respectively.

The update discards results from 2013-14, while results from 2015-16 series are weighted at 50 per cent.

TEST RANKINGS	POINTS
India	123 (+1)
South Africa	117 (+8)
Australia	100 (-8)
England	99 (-2)
New Zealand	97 (+1)
Pakistan	93 (-4)
Sri Lanka	91 (+1)
West Indies	75 (+5)
Bangladesh	69 (+3)
Zimbabwe	0 (-5)

# Not much effort to keep cricket in Asiad

Saheb Subhan



One piece of news that has slipped under the radar over the past month is the Olympic Council of Asia's decision to drop cricket from the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta.

Cricket was played in the Asian Games for the first time in 2010 in Guangzhou, where Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan to win gold -- the country's only top-place finish in the Games. In Incheon 2014, the Bangladesh men's team won bronze in the event while the women picked up their second consecutive silver. Bangladesh have won a total of 12 medals in 10 editions, and cricket has contributed four of those from just two Asian Games.

The OCA said on April 20 that cricket, along with some other disciplines, was removed in order to reduce the burden on the Indonesian organisers.

So it is a little surprising that there has been no hue and cry over the expulsion of cricket from the Games, as it is a source of glory for an otherwise medal-starved nation. But quite apart from the Bangladeshi perspective, cricket being dropped from the Asian Games -- the showpiece multisport event of the region most passionate about the game -- should be concerning to the game and its developmental ambitions.

"It may not matter that much to the Test teams, but it is very important to non-Test playing countries," said Syed Ashrafur Huq, Bangladesh's first domestic longer-version double-centurion in the early 1980s and in 2007, as the Asian

Cricket Council's (ACC's) CEO, the driving force behind getting cricket featured in Guangzhou. "When they [non-Test playing countries] play cricket in the Games, their federations get grants from their respective Olympic councils, which are used to develop the teams that will participate in the event."

While spreading the game to new frontiers has always been the party line of the International Cricket Council (ICC), cricket's global governing body has actually started to put its money where its mouth is recently, with ICC chief executive Dave Richardson saying in late March that the time is right for cricket to return to the Olympics in 2024 for the first time since making its Olympic debut in the 1900 Games.

A big part of the reason that cricket had not been part of the Asian Games before 2010 was that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) was at odds with the Indian Olympic Association and therefore the bid to have the sport featured in the Games did not have the backing of the financial heavy-weight of the cricketing world. That all changed in April 2007, when Sharad Pawar was BCCI president.

"The main objection used to come from India as they did not want to play in the Asian Games or the Olympics," said Ashrafur, who left the ACC in 2015 after a major shakeup left the body with only two officials. "Pawar, unlike his predecessors, was sympathetic to our cause and he said that whether India play or not, we should try and take it into the Games because it will help the other countries."

### WHAT CAN BE DONE

It is helpful to look at how the OCA was convinced in 2007 to understand how the tide can be changed again. It was driven by the ACC, and they had a sympathetic ear in Haider Farman, the Asian Games director then and, fortunately for the chances of getting cricket back in, now.

The removal of BCCI's objection was a crucial aspect. Also, a key argument in convincing the OCA was that cricket would rake in the big bucks from international television audiences.

"The cricket event was the most watched televised event in 2010 and 2014, not in China or in South Korea, but around the world. Such is the passion for the game in the subcontinent that even if an Under-23 India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka team is sent, their countrymen will watch it," Ashrafur added.

It falls upon the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) to make the effort to change the current status quo. "I do not think the BCB [Bangladesh Cricket Board] can do much in this situation; it is up to the BOA to take some action. The BCB can maybe put pressure on the BOA, but it is up to the BOA to act and [Syed] Shahed Reza, the secretary-general of BOA, has a working relationship with key OCA members."

"I have not talked directly to them," said Reza when contacted. "I sent an email the next day [after it was announced that cricket would not be part of the Asian Games] to the OCA requesting them to keep cricket, but we have not heard back."

Asked whether the television viewership angle could be used again to influence the

decision, Reza said: "I don't think that [influencing the decision] is correct."

"Look, it is not a matter of gold or silver," Reza said when the importance of cricket in the Asian Games to Bangladesh was pointed out. "Every country wants gold. It is not up to us to issue directives; we can only request. It depends on the

together and the OCA made the decision; we don't know why."

Reza added that it is too early to tell whether it is possible to get cricket back into the fold, but a cursory Google search revealed two cricket grounds -- the GMIS Cricket Ground and the Karawaci Cricket Ground -- with stands in Jakarta, where



Bangladesh won their first ever Asian Games gold medal in 2010 in Guangzhou after defeating Afghanistan by five wickets in the final.

capacity of the organisers, whether they have the venues, etc. Their [OCA's] financial matters are also involved. Maybe there are no suitable grounds in Indonesia; the OCA and the hosts sat

the Games will be held in October 2018.

It however seems that the intrepid action that resulted in cricket being included the first time around is now missing.

## A chastening first defeat

SPORTS Reporter



Gazi Group Cricketers finally saw the other side of the coin coming into the 10th round of the Dhaka Premier League at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday. And nothing could have been worse than the way Gazi Group tasted their first defeat at the hands of Kalabagan Krira Chakra, who brought down the highflying side with a 127-run victory.

Rejuvenated after a seven-wicket victory over Shekih Jamal Dhanmondi Club, Kalabagan put up a fighting 222 in 50 overs and then shot Gazi Group out for 95 runs to secure their second consecutive win and third overall this season.

Opener Tasamul Haque was the Kalabagan hero, making a 132-ball 102 that contained six boundaries. His efforts were followed by some good bowling, especially from off-spinner Sanjit Saha and leg-spinner Saad Nasim, who took three wickets each, but the coaches of both teams admitted that Gazi's batsmen failed to play according to the demand of the pitch.

"The batsmen made the mistake as they tried to force their shots and it was not a wicket where you could go for kill. I think it's a good wakeup call for us as our players now understand that they need some extra effort and should be careful if we want to become cham-

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**KALABAGAN:** 222-9 in 50 overs (Tasamul 102, Jashimuddin 28, Tushar 32; Parvez 4-44)  
**GAZI GROUP:** 95 all out in 32.5 overs (Anamul 16, Nadif 45; Sanjit 3-7, Abul 2-24, Tushar 2-19, Saad 3-12)  
**Result:** Kalabagan Krira Chakra won by 127 runs.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Tasamul Haque

Championship is not all that easy. And cricket is like that," said Gazi Group coach Mohammad Salahuddin.



On the back of Tasamul Haque's (R) sublime century, Kalabagan Krira Chakra handed Gazi Group Cricketers their first defeat in this edition of the Dhaka Premier League.

Kalabagan coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury also echoed the sentiment, saying Gazi Group's batsmen were in a hurry initially, which initiated the collapse. "They tried to force the issue, which was not possible on this kind of wicket. Anyway, Tasamul batted well considering the conditions and because of that we could post a good total," he said.

Nadif Chowdhury was the only notable contributor for Gazi Group with 45.



PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

## Sk Jamal win thriller

Brothers Union upset Mohammedan

Sports Reporter



Iftekhar Sajjad captured four wickets after Junaed Siddique hit a hundred as Brothers Union upset Mohammedan Sporting Club by 129 runs in the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League at BKSP yesterday, while Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club pulled off an exciting two-wicket victory against Prime Bank Cricket Club to keep their Super League hopes alive at the other BKSP venue.

Left-handed Junaed scored 110 off 123 balls with the help of eight fours and shared a 100-run partnership with Alok Kapali for the third wicket as Brothers made 276 for eight in 49 overs. Kapali hit 51 off 48 balls with seven fours.

Mohammedan lost Shamsur Rahman early in their chase, but Saikat Ali took charge and made 70 off 66 balls, a knock that featured four boundaries and five sixes. However, it was not good enough to save face as Sajjad claimed four wickets for 19 runs.

It was Brothers' fourth win while Mohammedan suffered their fourth defeat, which makes their chances of qualifying for the Super League difficult.

In an exciting chase of 271 runs, Mahmudul Haque smashed a boundary off the penultimate ball of the innings to propel Sheikh Jamal to a two-wicket victory with one ball to spare, but

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**MOHAMMEDAN V BROTHERS**  
**BROTHERS:** 276-8 in 49 overs (Junaed 110, Rubel 36, Kapali 51; Sajedul 2-62, Tajjul 2-41, Enamul 2-52)  
**MOHAMMEDAN:** 147 all out in 35.4 overs (Saikat 70, Avishek 29; Nihaduzzaman 2-31, Kamrul 2-31, Sajjad 4-19)  
**Result:** Brothers Union won by 129 runs.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Junaed Siddique.  
**PRIME BANK V SHEIKH JAMAL**  
**PRIME BANK:** 270 for 9 (Maruf 61, Zakir 34, Easwaran 54, Al-Amin 42, Asif 31; Shahadat 2-43)  
**SHEIKH JAMAL:** 271 for 8 in 49.5 overs (Fazle 36, Chopra 48, Gazi 54, Ziaur 34, Elias Sunny 44, Mahmudul 27 not out; Ariful 4-75)  
**Result:** Sheikh Jamal won by two wickets.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Elias Sunny.

credit must go to Elias Sunny who, along with Mahmudul, added 64 runs for the eighth wicket to chase down the challenging total.

Sheikh Jamal required ten runs from the last six balls and Sunny smashed a boundary off the first ball from Ariful Haque. But the bowler took his revenge off the very next ball by dismissing him. Mahmudul then picked up one run and, after Shahadat Hossain managed one off the fourth ball, he regained strike. Off the penultimate ball, Ariful smote a boundary, taking his side to the target.

For his 44 off 47 balls with three fours and a six, Sunny received the man of the match award.

It was Prime Bank's third defeat and the win saw Sheikh Jamal keep their Super League hopes alive with a sixth win.