



Abahani batsman Jahurul Islam hit a century yesterday, the opening day of the Dhaka Premier League, scoring a 147-ball 121 laced with 13 boundaries and a six to lead his side to a 60-run win over BKSP at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# DPL starts with a bang

SPORTS REPORTER

The opening day of the 50-over Dhaka Premier League (DPL) yesterday saw three enthralling encounters at three different venues. Opener Jahurul Islam became the first centurion of this edition and his unbeaten 121 off 147 balls helped defending champions Abahani Limited to a total of 216 for nine. They defended comfortably, winning the game by 60 runs against BKSP at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The other two games also offered plenty of exciting cricketing action for the fans. At the BKSP- 3, Legends of Rupganj edged Brothers Union by three wickets with just a ball to spare. Shahreer Nafees hit 59 to help Rupganj successfully chase the 220 for eight posted by Brothers. Meanwhile, at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, Uttara Sporting Club registered a nine-run win over Sheikh Jamal in a game that saw three fifties.

After being sent in to bat, Abahani suffered a batting collapse and were left reeling at 53 for four in 15.2 overs. However, a 112-run fifth-wicket stand between Jahurul and all-rounder

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**ABAHANI v BKSP**  
**ABAHANI LIMITED:** 216 for nine in 50 overs (Jahurul 121 not out, Saifuddin 55; Naser 3-39, Murad 2-54)  
**BANGLADESH KRIRA SHIKKHA PROTISTHAN:** 156 all out in 40.5 overs (Kaiyum 38 not out, Ratul 37; Nazmul 3-30)  
**Result:** Abahani won by 60 runs.  
**BROTHERS UNION v RUPGANJ**  
**BROTHERS UNION:** 220 for eight in 50 overs (Yasir 65, Sharifullah 35, Fazle 34; Muktar 2-38, Nabil 2-41)  
**LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ:** 221 for seven in 49.5 overs (Nafees 59, Azmir 38, Asif 38; Jani 3-64, Sharif 2-35)  
**Result:** Rupganj won by three wickets.  
**UTTARA SPORTING v SHEIKH JAMAL**  
**UTTARA SPORTING:** 249 for four in 50 overs (Tanjid 64, Sojib 61 not out; Tanbir 2-22)  
**SHEIKH JAMAL DHANMONDI CLUB:** 240 for nine in 50 overs (Nurul 65, Nasir 48; Rashid 3-44, Payel 3-65)  
**Result:** Uttara won by nine runs.

Mohammad Saifuddin steadied the ship before the latter was removed off a Naushad Iqbal delivery in the 42nd over after having scored a patient 55 off 80 balls. Jahurul remained unbeaten till the end but a lack of support from

the other end saw Abahani post a modest total.

Coming in to chase, BKSP could only manage 156 runs in 40.5 overs with a team-high unbeaten 38 coming from skipper Abdul Kaiyum. Abahani's Nazmul Islam was the pick of the bowlers, returning economical figures of three wickets for 30 runs from 10 overs.

In the other game, Brothers Union rode on Yasir Ali's brilliant 69-ball 65 and a 35-run knock from Sharifullah at the death to post a middling total. In chase, Rupganj had a promising start in the form of a 67-run opening partnership between Azmir Ahmed and Mohammad Naim in 11.2 overs before losing three wickets off the next five balls to slip into a precarious position. However, Nafees's brilliant fifty and a further 38 runs from Asif Ahmed helped Rupganj edge Brothers off the penultimate ball of the game.

Uttara openers -- Tanjid Hasan and Anisul Islam -- strung together a 113-run partnership after being sent in to bat first in Fatullah, before Tanjid fell for 64. However, an unbeaten 61 from Shojib Hossain helped Uttara post a challenging total. Despite skipper Nurul Hasan's run-a-ball 65 following the exchange, Sheikh Jamal fell short as they could only manage 240 for nine.

# Rain provides food for thought

SPORTS REPORTER from Wellington



After the first day of the second Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand was washed out without the toss taking place, there is high chance of rain for the second day of the Test at the Basin Reserve today.

As the forecast indicated, there was heavy rain since early morning in Wellington yesterday which did not subside for a long while. After a few rounds of inspection, the umpires finally called off the day's play at 3.10pm local time. The second day's play will begin half an hour early, at 10.30am.

Players from both sides opted to stay behind at the hotel but a few members of the

green pitch in mind, Bangladesh could well play with four seamers. That means Mustafizur Rahman could return to the side and lead the fast bowling department alongside Ebadot Hossain, Abu Jayed and Khaled Ahmed.

Following a disappointing performance from the pacers in the first Test in Hamilton, where the trio conceded 369 runs from 87 overs for just one wicket, the team management will surely be looking for a better show in Wellington.

The same goes for the batting department. It will be important for the Tigers to do well with the willow in the first innings, which has remained the biggest area of concern in the longest format of the game over the years.

During their last tour of New Zealand in 2017, it was a pretty similar scenario in



PHOTO: COLLECTED

team management were present at the field, including Bangladesh head coach Steve Rhodes, who inspected the ground a few times.

However, the delay may help the Tigers, who are dealing with a few injury concerns -- mainly Tamim Iqbal's, who has been suffering from groin pain.

As overcast conditions and rain are still forecast, the Bangladesh team management -- who were likely to include left-arm spinner Taijul Islam in place of Mehedi Hasan Miraz -- may well change their game plan.

With the seam-friendly conditions and

Wellington as rain delayed the game before Bangladesh went on to post 595 runs in the first innings. Shakib Al Hasan scored 217 and Mushfiquir Rahim struck 159. However, despite posting a huge first innings total, Bangladesh went on to lose the game.

New Zealand, on the other hand, are expected to play with the same team that registered a comprehensive innings-and-52-run win over the visitors and once again the likes of Neil Wagner, Trent Boult, and Tim Southee are expected to test the Tigers' batsmen with the short ball.

# Smith and Warner not picked for Pak ODIs

AFP, Sydney



Steve Smith and David Warner were Friday left out of Australia's squad for their one-day series against Pakistan despite being eligible for the final two games after their ball-tampering bans expire.

Injured fast bowler Mitchell Starc was also omitted after failing to recover sufficiently from a pectoral muscle injury picked up during the second Test against Sri Lanka in Canberra a month ago.

Smith and Warner's year-long suspensions for their part in attempting to alter the ball during a Test against South Africa expire on March 28, making them available for the fourth one-dayer in Dubai.

There had been much talk of them being rushed back into the side ahead of the World Cup in England in late May, but selectors opted to stick with the same 15-man squad that is currently in India.

Selector Trevor Hohns said after consultation with head coach Justin Langer it had been decided they would be better served

easing their way back at the Indian Premier League, which starts on March 23.

"While their bans will be finished on March 28, Steve and David have been working through rehabilitation from elbow surgery and it has been agreed the best pathway for them to return to play is in the Indian Premier League," he said.

"David will play with Sunrisers Hyderabad and Steve with Rajasthan Royals.

"Cricket Australia will continue to liaise with both Steve, David and their IPL clubs to monitor progress as we build towards the ICC World Cup and the Ashes," he added.

Smith went under the knife in January after being forced to drop out of the Bangladesh Premier League with a ligament problem. He had been in a brace for weeks, but picked up a bat again and had a session at the Sydney Cricket Ground last week.

Warner also returned home from Bangladesh with an injured elbow, though less serious than Smith. He too had surgery and could play this weekend for his club side.

Their bans only related to state and international cricket. During the Test in Cape



PHOTO: FILE

Town, Cameron Bancroft tried to alter the ball with sandpaper. He was exiled for nine months, returning in December with Perth Scorchers and has recently been in red-hot form with the bat in Sheffield Shield.

With Starc also missing for the Pakistan series, Australia have an unchanged squad from the one currently losing their series against India 2-0.

How closely the current squad resembles the one for the World Cup will only be known by April 23, which is the deadline set by the International Cricket Council.

But there are likely to be at least three changes, with Starc, Smith and Warner all set to be picked.

# Khawaja ton aces Kohli's



Usman Khawaja (L) and Virat Kohli both hit sumptuous centuries in the third ODI between Australia and India at Ranchi yesterday, but it was the Aussies who prevailed to pull back a game in the five-match series. PHOTO: AFP

AFP, Dehradun



Gritty half-centuries from skipper Asghar Afghani, Mohammad Nabi and Rashid Khan set up Afghanistan's convincing 109-run win over Ireland in the fourth one-day international yesterday.

Afghan, who made 54, and Nabi, who top-scored with 64, lifted Afghanistan from a precarious 81 for six to 223 all out in 49.1 overs in the north Indian city of Dehradun.

Paceman Aftab Alam led the bowling charge with four wickets to dismiss Ireland for 114 in 35.3 overs as Afghanistan took a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

Khan, who made 52 while batting, and fellow spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman claimed two wickets each to flatten Ireland's chase.

"The top-order batsmen didn't play

well but Rashid (batting at number nine) did the job for us," Afghan said of his man of the match leg-spinner.

"We can give a chance to other players in the next match."

Afghanistan faltered after being put into bat, losing more than half their side in the 18th over against a lethal bowling attack led by off-spinner Andy McBrine.

McBrine and paceman Boyd Rankin took two wickets each while James Cameron-Dow, who rattled the middle-order including Nabi's prized scalp, returned figures of 3-32 in his 10 overs.

Afghan, who hit four fours and three sixes in his 70-ball stay, put on a crucial seventh-wicket partnership of 50 with Nabi to trigger his team's revival.

He was run out but Nabi kept up the fight during his 86-run stand with Khan, who hit six fours and a six before being the last man out.

"They've got a deep batting line-up, but I'm not overly concerned with the bowling," Ireland skipper William Porterfield said.

"I am disappointed with the batting. We managed to lose wickets throughout. We didn't do the basics right. There's not a lot to do in a day, just need to get into the nets and do our best."

Ireland won the third ODI on Tuesday after Afghanistan triumphed in the opener and the second match was washed out.

The final match is on Sunday in Dehradun.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**AUSTRALIA:** 313 for 5 in 50 overs (Khawaja 104, Finch 93, Maxwell 47; Yadav 3-64, Shami 1-52)

**INDIA:** 281 all out in 48.2 overs (Kohli 123, Shankar 32; Cummins 3-37, Richardson 3-37, Zampa 3-70)

**Result:** Australia won by 32 runs.

**Player-of-the-match:** Usman Khawaja.

# Rashid leads with Sajib in the mix

SPORTS REPORTER

India's Rashid Khan maintained his two-shot lead at the end of the third round of the City Bank American Express Chittagong Open as Bangladesh's Sajib Ali kept himself in the hunt six shots adrift yesterday.

The 28-year-old Rashid (65-66-70) kept hopes of his 11th title alive with his second flawless round of the tournament as his total score read 15-under-par (201) at the 40-lakh-rupee event.

Indian rookie Kshitij Naveed Kaul also returned a 70 at the Bhatia Golf & Country Club on Friday to be on the leader's tail at 13-under-par (203) while Udayan Mane produced the day's best score of 65 to climb to third place at 12-under-par (204).

Sajib was the only Bangladeshi golfer, among the 16 who have made the cut, inside the top 10. The 30-year-old settled for a one-under yesterday to be tied at 10th at nine-under-par (207).

Rashid, who won the last of his 10 titles in December 2018, said: "My short-game wasn't that good today. However, I stuck to my task and still managed a decent two-under. Importantly, I've dropped just one bogey in the tournament so far and kept the errors out and that adds to my confidence going into the final round."

Defending champion N Thangaraja of Sri Lanka was tied at 12th at eight-under-208 while Bangladesh's Dulal Hossain and Mohammad Nazim were tied at 17th and 19th with aggregate scores of seven-under-par (209) and six-under-par (210) respectively.