



The Khulna Division team pose for a photograph after winning this year's National Cricket League with an emphatic nine-wicket victory in a sixth-round match against Dhaka Division at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

# Khulna get record seventh

*Rajshahi Division relegated to Tier 2*

SPORTS REPORTER

 Khulna Division became champions of the National Cricket League (NCL) for a record seventh time when they defeated Dhaka Division by nine wickets on the fourth day of the sixth and final round at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

The hosts finished unbeaten in the league, winning three of six games while drawn the rest, and accumulated 39.81 points to finish on top of Tier 1.

Khulna skipper Nurul Hasan, who was awarded the player-of-the-match for his unbeaten 227-ball 150 in their first innings, said he was happier with his contribution to the team's win than with his unbeaten ton.

"I always say that I prefer and think that it is important to win a match after scoring 20 runs rather than losing a game after scoring a century. For instance, we had a good partnership in the middle [of the first innings] because of which we were able to take a big [100-run] lead and because of that we won the match. So, it feels really good. More than scoring a

POINTS TABLE						
TIER 1						
Team	M	W	L	D	PT	
Khulna Division	6	3	0	3	39.81	
Dhaka Division	6	1	1	4	24.39	
Rangpur Division	6	1	2	3	21.46	
Rajshahi Division	6	1	3	2	18.65	
TIER 2						
Sylhet Division	6	3	2	1	36.04	
Dhaka Metropolis	6	1	1	4	25.79	
Barisal Division	6	1	1	4	21.35	
Chattogram Division	6	1	2	3	20.92	

FACTS		
Match	Result	Draw
24	12	12

SCORES IN BRIEF	
<b>BARISHAL V DHAKA METRO</b>	<b>BARISHAL:</b> First innings 414 and second innings 269 all out (Fazle 75, Salman 59, Moin 80; Arafat 5-85, Taskin 3-41)
<b>DHAKA METRO:</b> First innings 466 and 19 for 1.	<b>Result:</b> Match drawn.
<b>RANGPUR V RAJSHAHI</b>	<b>RANGPUR:</b> First innings 274 and second innings 228 for 6 decl (Jahid 33, Tanbir 72 not out, Ariful 48; Delwar 4-73, Muktar 2-44)
<b>RAJSHAHI:</b> First innings 254 and second innings 93 all out (Junaed 34, Sujon 27; Alauddin 3-42, Sajedul 2-21, Ariful 3-20)	<b>Result:</b> Rangpur Div won by 155 runs.
<b>DHAKA V KHULNA</b>	<b>DHAKA:</b> First innings 279 and second innings 216 all out (Raqibul 99, Shuvagata 42, Md Arafat 53; Ziaur 5-44, Nahidul 2-74)
<b>KHULNA:</b> First innings 379 and second innings 117 for 1 (Anamul 79 not out, Nazmul 1-49)	<b>Result:</b> Khulna Div won by 9 wickets.

hundred, I feel good that my runs had an impact and that we won and became champions," said the wicketkeeper-batsman.

Dhaka, who trailed by 100 runs in their second innings, were bundled out for 216 after resuming the day on 102 for five. Raqibul Hasan was the top scorer for Dhaka with a 227-ball 99-run knock.

Following the exchange, Khulna romped to victory in just 25.4 overs in chase of 117 for the loss of a solitary wicket. Opener Anamul Haque remained unbeaten for a 76-ball 79.

Nurul said that the task for his team was not easy as they missed the likes of experienced left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak in the final round and had to deal with a few injuries in the middle of the game.

However, he mentioned that the competitiveness in the tournament had increased. He also said that the Bangladesh Cricket Board's initiative of increasing the minimum fitness requirements at

ROLL OF HONOUR	
Year	Winner
2008-01	Biman Bangladesh
2001-02	Dhaka Division
2002-03	Khulna Division
2003-04	Dhaka Division
2004-05	Dhaka Division
2005-06	Rajshahi Division
2006-07	Dhaka Division
2007-08	Khulna Division
2008-09	Rajshahi Division
2009-10	Rajshahi Division
2010-11	Rajshahi Division
2011-12	Rajshahi Division
2012-13	Khulna Division
2013-14	Dhaka Division
2014-15	Rangpur Division
2015-16	Khulna Division
2016-17	Khulna Division
2017-18	Khulna Division
2018-19	Rajshahi Division
2019-20	Khulna Division

the start of this year's tournament had made the players more aware.

"The tournament was much more competitive than before. I think it will improve further in the future. And regarding the beep test, it actually created awareness among the players so everyone

TOP FIVE BATSMEN							
Player	Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100	50
Taibur (Dhaka Div)	6	523	110	58.11	55.40	2	2
Anamul (Khulna Div)	5	506	151*	72.28	64.37	2	2
Raqibul (Dhaka Div)	6	498	99	55.33	49.01	0	6
Nasir (Rangpur Div)	6	460	161*	51.11	52.27	1	3
Naeem (Rangpur Div)	6	405	135	40.50	37.39	1	1

TOP FIVE BOWLERS							
Player	Mat	Runs	Wkts	Econ	SR	5	10
Razzak (Khulna Div)	5	610	31	2.69	43.7	2	1
Ifran (Chattogram Div)	4	272	19	3.70	23.1	2	0
Nazmul (Dhaka Div)	6	763	18	2.52	100.8	1	0
Taskin (Dhaka Metro)	4	300	17	2.97	35.5	0	0
Salaudun (Dhaka Div)	5	422	17	3.07	48.4	0	0

became more concerned about fitness. It was very competitive and everyone showed their eagerness to play well and win."

He also mentioned that the availability of true wickets across the country also helped increasing the competitiveness of the tournament.

"If it is a true wicket then it helps both bowlers and batsmen. We played three matches in Khulna and they were all on true wickets. That was also the case in Mirpur. The batsmen had to work hard and the bowlers had to maintain good length. Overall, it was better than the previous seasons," concluded Nurul.

Meanwhile, in Rajshahi, a 155-run thumping at the hands of Rangpur Division saw Rajshahi Division relegated to Tier 2 after finishing at the bottom of the Tier-1 table with 18.65 points. In chase of a 249-run target, Rajshahi were bundled out for a meagre 93 runs.

In Barishal, the match between Dhaka Metropolis and Barishal Division ended in a draw, which meant that the former finished in second spot in Tier 2 while the latter remained in third place. Sylhet had already confirmed their promotion to Tier 1.

## Towhid hits third ton on the trot

*U-19s stay perfect against visiting Lankans*

SPORTS REPORTER



Towhid Hridoy's incredible run of form continued against the visiting Sri Lanka Under-19 team as he hit another hundred in the fifth and final youth ODI at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

It was the right-hander's third consecutive century, a record for any Bangladeshi U-19 batsman, and helped the hosts sign off their last international match before the next year's Under-19 World Cup with a 50-run victory.

The home side won the five-match series 4-0 after the first game was washed out.

Towhid punished the opposition bowlers and the batsman from Bogura smote three four and five sixes during his 102-ball 111. That effort was backed up by Prantik Nawrose Nabil's 77-ball 65 as the hosts amassed 283 for seven in 50 overs.

In reply, Sri Lanka were bowled out for 233 runs in 44.4 overs. Ravindu Rasantha scored a team-high 84 off 92 balls, a knock that included nine fours and two sixes. Shahin Alom and Hasan Morad claimed two wickets each.

"I am enjoying my batting most at this moment. As a team we are in very good shape and have been playing good cricket for the past few months. We are

now looking forward to the World Cup," Towhid, who scored an unbeaten 82 in the first game before 123 in the second and 115 in the fourth match, told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

"I don't want to focus on the things which are far off and that's why I am now only focusing on the upcoming World Cup," he added when asked about his aspirations.

"He [Towhid] is our future cricketer. His cricketing sense is amazing; especially against spin bowling he is an outstanding batsman," said former captain and BCB Development Committee Chairman Khaled Mahmud.

The Under-19s are scheduled to travel to South Africa on January 4 to play two practice matches against local sides before the World Cup, which will be held in the rainbow nation, begins on January 17.

"I think our recent 4-1 series victory in New Zealand and good performances in England will help us play good cricket in South African conditions," hoped Towhid.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 283 for seven (Nabil 65, Towhid 111, Parvez 38; Rohan 2-57)

SRI LANKA: 233 all out in 44.4 overs (Samaaz 40, Ravindu 84; Shahin 2-46, Hasan 2-47)

Result: Bangladesh U-19s won by 50 runs. Player-of-the-match: Towhid Hridoy.



The Bangladesh U-19 team's Towhid Hridoy (R) continued his incredible run of form with the bat, scoring a century during the fifth and final youth ODI against their Sri Lankan counterparts to seal a 50-run win in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

## Machine fells Mash

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has been away from almost all cricketing activities since the World Cup last summer, but with the country's biggest T20 league -- the Bangladesh Premier League -- set to commence in just a matter of days, the 36-year-old has started to practise in preparation.

However, his efforts to get back to cricket were halted after he suffered a groin injury while practising his batting at the Academy ground in Mirpur on Sunday.

While batting in the nets against a bowling machine, Mashrafe was struck and fell to the ground in agony. He did not continue practice that day and was later attended to by physiotherapist Julian Calefatto.

However, Mashrafe is yet to see any doctor regarding the issue. He added that it was not only his groin, but that he was also feeling pain in his waist since Monday morning.

Fortunately, BCB chief physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury said that the injury was not very alarming and that Mashrafe would recover after a few days of rest.

## Nizam clears his position

STAR SPORT DESK

The Daily Star on Tuesday published a story with the headline 'Rot at the roof' on Page 14 which, quoting Miraz Hossain Munna, it mentioned that Obeid R Nizam was the owner of Kamrangir Char Sporting Club. Nizam however cleared his position in this regard through a rejoinder yesterday.

"The story may have included my name inadvertently and has been misinterpreted," the statement said.

Quoting a portion of the report, the statement added: "It may be mentioned here that, I have absolutely no connection with Kamrangir Char Sporting Club any longer. I had been the President of the club until May 2016 after which, I had resigned and the committee was dissolved henceforth. The information that has been published has certainly mislead [sic] the readers. I am however, the CEO of the Dhaka Dynamites."

The portion of the report under question read: "It was not possible to get any comments from officials of Kamrangir Char Sporting Club as Saiful Islam -- who had taken care of the team in the past -- informed that he left the club while secretary Miraz Hossain Munna said that he was not present at the match as he was busy with the BPL Players' draft. He also informed that Kamrangir Char's owner is Obeid Nizam, who was the CEO of Dhaka Dynamites."

# 'Pink ball places onus on pacers'

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Indore



Bangladesh's demanding tour of India reached its last stop yesterday when the Tigers landed in Kolkata at around 3:00pm to take part in the second and final Test against India at the Eden Gardens from November 22. The toughest challenge awaits them in the West Bengal capital as they will play their first day-night Test against the top-ranked Test side, who will also be playing their first Test with the pink ball.

The Bangladesh team's 10:30am flight from Indore, where Bangladesh lost the first Test inside three days, was delayed by two and a half hours. Before departure, pacer Al-Amin Hossain talked to reporters at the team hotel and said that the pink ball challenge would be more difficult for the bowlers than the batsmen. Because of the increased swing and movement that the ball is said to offer, the bowlers in the Bangladesh lineup will have a greater responsibility to control the swing.

How an old pink ball will behave is still uncertain. The seam movement coupled with the movement off the pitch will also mean that bowlers need that extra bit of control.

"It will be more challenging with the old ball than the new one. During evening, when the floodlights come on, there is an increase in the



Much will depend on how pacers Abu Jayed (L), Mustafizur Rahman (M) and Al-Amin Hossain adapt to the pink ball during the second Test against India which begins on Friday.

PHOTO: BCB

movement of the ball. From what I understood in practice sessions, it will be a challenge for the batsmen, but I feel that the main challenge here will be for the bowlers. The team that bowls the best will be ahead in this game," Al-Amin said.

Al-Amin reiterated that even with the opportunity to train for two days in Indore before leaving for Kolkata, the defeat in the first Test set them back ahead of the second game.

"We are all excited about the pink-ball Test

since it is a historic one. India are new to it and so are we. So, both sides will be enter uncharted terrains. I feel this will be a challenging one. We have been training for the past few days and we will also train in Kolkata for two days. So overall, with the poor result from the first Test, things are going to be very difficult. We are thinking of how we can play as a team and resist them in the Kolkata Test," said Al-Amin.

Abu Jayed bowled well during the first Test, bagging four wickets -- all of top-order batsmen. Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Chetshwar Pujara fell prey to his swinging deliveries. While Bangladesh will once again look to the seamers, the focus will also be on the pacers since the pink ball is likely to get more movement.

"The ball is made for everyone. We have to hit the right areas. There are differences too. It is a much harder ball than the red one and it is easier to shine. I think it will be good, everything considered. The ball is very good and if the conditions remain okay then there will be big responsibility on the pacers. We have to bowl well, or else they will not be troubled since all their batsmen are world-class. They have two to three batsmen who are among the top 10 in the world. The pink ball will be a challenge for the bowlers. If we can play well then it will be an intriguing Test."