

## Enigmatic surface helps Enamul get first fifer

SPORTS REPORTER

Enamul Haque Jr registered his maiden five-wicket haul in List A cricket to seal a comfortable seven-wicket win over Mohammedan in a Dhaka Premier League encounter yesterday and keep Rupganj Tigers in contention for a Super League spot.

The surface at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday was the highlight of the encounter, assisting Enamul as he ended with figures of five for 41 as Mohammedan were bundled out for a paltry 143 in 38.1 overs after asked to bat.

Mahmudullah Riyad, who top-scored for Mohammedan with 48, expressed frustration after being caught behind off Enamul after the ball kept



very low.

While returning to the dugout, the experienced cricketer kicked the door to the dressing room while verbalising his anger over the variable nature of the pitch.

In reply, Rupganj chased down the target in 36.2 overs for the loss of three wickets. Asif Ahmed top-scored for them with 48 runs.

With three wins from eight games, it will be difficult for Mohammedan to qualify for the Super League stage. On the other hand, Rupganj will be eyeing a Super League berth with four wins from seven games and winning momentum on their side.

At the BKSP grounds, Legends of Rupganj (215-9) sealed a nine-run win over Shinepukur Cricket Club (206 all out) to stay third in the table while City Club clinched a three-wicket win over Brothers Union, chasing down a 271-run target courtesy skipper Jawad Royen's unbeaten 78. Brothers had earlier posted 270 for eight in 50 overs, powered by Dhiman Ghosh's 51.

## United's miserable season continues

REUTERS, Liverpool

Manchester United's miserable season continued on Saturday as Everton boosted their Premier League survival hopes with a 1-0 win over Ralf Rangnick's side at Goodison Park.

Out of all cup competitions, United were looking to earn a victory that would have moved them level on points with Tottenham Hotspur in fourth.

But their task was made all the more difficult when Anthony Gordon gave Everton a first-half lead.

For the Toffees, hovering above the relegation zone, the nerves showed after the break, but the visitors lacked the quality to get back into the match despite a wealth of attacking options on the pitch.

A late Cristiano Ronaldo effort was as close as United came to a leveller as they slipped to a loss that leaves the team with the most English top flight titles ever seventh in the standings, three points behind Spurs, who play Aston Villa later on Saturday.

| SCORES IN BRIEF (DAY-2)   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>   |  |
| 453 all out (Maharaj 84, Elgar 70, Bavuma 67; Taijul 6-135, Khaled 3-100)                         |  |
| <b>BANGLADESH</b>   |  |
| 139 for 5 (Tamim 47, Shanto 33, Yasir 8 not out, Mushfiqur 30 not out; Olivier 2-17, Mulder 3-15) |  |

Pacer Duanne Olivier gets through the defenses of Liton Das with a delivery that nipped back sharply from a good length as South Africa corner Bangladesh on the second day of their series-deciding Test at St George's Park in Gqeberha yesterday. Bangladesh were left reeling at 139 for five, still trailing by 314 runs, at Stumps.

PHOTO: AFP



## Tigers muddle up THEIR APPROACH

SPORTS REPORTER

Openers Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudul Hasan Joy came out to bat in the third session yesterday after Bangladesh had bowled South Africa out for 453 after the hosts had enjoyed some wayward bowling to progress for a little more than 46 overs on Day Two following their overnight score of 278 for five.

The first over showed tricks that the surface and condition at Port Elizabeth could play on cricketers. Duanne Olivier got it to shape in to the left-handed Tamim from the second delivery and off the third delivery, Tamim punched one down the ground for three to find his feet and show the trueness of the surface.

Olivier then bowled almost the perfect outswinger to Joy to get the outside edge

**Bangladesh left-arm spinner Taijul Islam took six for 135 – the tenth time he has taken five wickets or more in a Test innings.**

as Bangladesh lost their first wicket in the very first over. It was a precursor of things to come.

Bangladesh's first innings until the fifty-run mark, and perhaps a little beyond that, progressed in similar fashion to how South Africa's openers had started. Tamim played his shots while Nazmul Hossain tried to force the issue.



However, the boundary deliveries that were being offered by Bangladesh early in the innings to Dean Elgar and Sarel Erwee were not present from the hosts' bowlers.

Instead of taking advantage of the subcontinent-like wicket and focusing on getting through the day, Tamim emphasised on the surface's allowance of hitting through the line. It worked to a point as South Africa's focus wavered towards excitability as Tamim was taking his chances and the wait for that inevitable wicket delivery grew.

Living on the edge, Tamim and Shanto's 79-run partnership was eventually ended by Proteas' third seamer Wiaan Mulder.

Where Bangladesh had seven specialist batters in a pitch good for batting, Mulder's presence showed its merits as South Africa

were able to use more from the conditions after Simon Harmer was taken out of the attack in much the similar way as Mehedi Hasan Miraz was early in the South Africa innings. The comparison of aggression ends there as South Africa were able to play to the merit of deliveries later on during their innings.

Tamim's hurried knock of 47 from 57 came to an end, trapped in front of the stumps by Mulder, before the medium pacer also got the better off Shanto (33 off 74) and Bangladesh skipper Mominul Haque for 6.

Hitting the seam was the basis of South Africa's bowling strategy and all of the third session, the pacers went about that objective, even as they were interrupted by Tamim's strokeplay. More importantly, Bangladesh' approach with the bat shied away quite a bit from their approach in Mount Maunganui during their epic first win of any kind on New Zealand soil. Then, Bangladesh had made the New Zealand pacers bowl to them. Here, their approach lacked conviction.

The wicket showed that it was still good for batting as close of play neared but Bangladesh will have to apply themselves a lot more to get even a draw from this match.

Earlier, Taijul Islam reached the 150 Test wickets landmark, finishing with six for 135. Bangladesh were however unable to attack with the ball for a considerable amount of time on the second day with South Africa always going after at least one spinner to make the pacers toil further. The unconvincing display also begs the question why Bangladesh's Test approach changes from series to series.

## What to WATCH

T SPORTS  
South Africa vs Bangladesh  
2nd Test, Day 3  
Live from 02:00 pm  
La Liga  
Levante vs Barcelona  
Live from 01:00 am

(Monday)  
STAR SPORTS 1  
IPL  
Kolkata vs Delhi  
Live from 04:00 pm  
Rajasthan vs Lucknow  
Live from 08:00 pm

STAR SPORTS HD 2  
EPL  
Brentford vs West Ham  
Live from 07:00 pm  
Manchester City vs Liverpool  
Live from 09:30 pm

## Kings on top, but title race far from over

SPORTS REPORTER

When Swadhinata Krira Sangha beat two-time defending champions Bashundhara Kings on the opening day of the Bangladesh Premier League this season, few would have expected the newcomers to be at the bottom of the table at the end of first phase.

But exactly there they are with only six points from 11 matches. That surprise win remains as their only victory so far, alongside three draws and as many as seven defeats, the last of which came yesterday in a 2-1 reverse against fellow strugglers Sheikh Russel KC.

That Swadhinata are struggling is no surprise given the unpredictable nature of the league. Former champions Sheikh Russel, now up to eighth spot with 10 points after this victory, are still not out of danger. Also in danger are Muktiyoddha (7), Uttar Baridhara (8) and Rahmatganj (9).

Like the battle for survival, the battle for the title, too, is intense, with at least four contenders very much in the hunt.

Bashundhara Kings are sitting pretty at the top with 26 points, but Abahani (22), Sheikh Jamal (21) and Chittagong Abahani (21) still have the opportunity to derail them from their aim of winning a hattrick title.

Sheikh Jamal, under Spanish coach Juan



Manuel Martinez, have been impressive and are the only team to have not lost a single game in the league so far. Kings, on the other hand, had an eight-match winning streak following the surprise opening day defeat against Swadhinata.

Like Kings, Abahani, too, have lost just a single game, but a couple of more draws sees them trailing the leaders by four points.

One of the reasons Chittagong Abahani are doing so well is the form of Peter Thankgod, the Nigerian striker who scored 13 goals with two hattricks and currently leads the goalscoring chart.

The port city side, though, have been pretty generous at the other end, conceding 20 goals against 21 they have scored.

The best goal-difference record, though, belongs to Kings, who have Robson Robinho to thank for for scoring 10 goals, many of which have come in critical stages of matches.

Interestingly, the top 15 names in the goalscoring chart are all foreigners, with the exception of Eleta Kingsley (5), who, of course, is a naturalised Bangladeshi.

The league will go into a supposedly two-week break, with mid-term transfer window running from today up to April 21.

Bashundhara Kings are likely to make two crucial acquisitions in this window, considering their Asian ambitions. Abahani, too, have Asian ambitions and they have already roped in Nedo Turkovic from Swadhinata KS for the AFC Cup matches, but apart from these reinforcements, there isn't likely to be a lot of activities in this window.



Everton's Anthony Gordon celebrates after scoring the only goal against Manchester United as [Inset] Cristiano Ronaldo looks dejected following their 1-0 defeat at the Goodison Park yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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