



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club's Indian all-rounder Parvez Rasool topped the wicket-takers' chart in the group phase of the Dhaka Premier League with 20 wickets in 10 matches. Meanwhile, veteran Bangladeshi batter Naeem Islam was the top-scorer with 749 runs, donning the jersey of Legends of Rupganj.

PHOTO: STAR

Pleasant surprises and cruel twists of fate

SPORTS REPORTER

The ongoing Dhaka Premier League subverted expectations and rubbed predictions as star studded Mohammedan failed to make it to the Super League phase -- which begins from tomorrow -- while Rupganj Tigers clinched a spot among the top six immediately after earning promotion this season.

Although Mohammedan had hogged the limelight ahead of the DPL by signing national stars Shabik Al Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim, Taskin Ahmed, Soumya Sarkar and Mehedi Hasan Miraz, questions persisted about how they planned to use those resources.

The Black and Whites' team management must have been aware that most of their high-profile signings would be busy with the national team's tour of South Africa for the better part of the DPL. But a lack of clarity in planning was reflected by their outcome with only Mahmudullah and Soumya able to feature for Mohammedan, who exited in the first round of the tournament due to their inferior head-to-head record against two other teams on 10 points, Gazi Group and Rupganj Tigers.

Mohammedan recruits Mushfiqur and Miraz will now play for table-toppers Sheikh Jamal, whose

SUPER LEAGUE TABLE				
Teams	MP	W	L	Pts
Sheikh Jamal	10	9	1	18
Abahani	10	7	3	14
Legends of Rupganj	10	7	3	14
Prime Bank	10	6	4	12
Rupganj Tigers	10	5	5	10
Gazi Group	10	5	5	10

surge to the summit has been as inspiring as it was unforeseen.

The Dhanmondi-based club has had a terrific run so far in the league and are leaps and bounds ahead of others with 18 points from 10 matches. If they carry that form into the Super League, chances are Imrul Kayes' side will clinch the title with a few fixtures in hand.

Till the conclusion of its group stage, the league has been dominated by players outside the national team set-up. Veteran batsman Naeem Islam tops the run-getters list, scoring 749 runs at a staggering 83.22 average across 10 matches. The 35-year-old has

also smashed two hundreds and five fifties so far.

Just after Naeem is Anamul Haque, another player out of favour with the national team, who has scored 728 runs at an average of 72.80 across 10 matches.

Anamul and Naeem became the first batters to cross the 700-run mark in the first phase of the DPL. With at least five games remaining for both batters, either could go on to score the most runs by a batter in a single edition of DPL by toppling Saif Hassan's 814 in 16 matches in 2019.

Meanwhile, the leading wicket-taker is Sheikh Jamal's Indian off-spinner Parvez Rasool, who has scalped 20 wickets across 10 matches, including a fifer against Abahani. Among Bangladeshi bowlers, young left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan has impressed with 19 wickets so far.

Competitiveness is expected to increase as players from the national team have already joined their sides and will be treating the remaining fixtures as a major part of their preparations for the upcoming two-Test home series against Sri Lanka in May.

It was also announced that the five Super League fixtures to be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur would be televised, which should serve to increase the league's hype.

'Draw would have been a fair result'

REUTERS, London

Tottenham Hotspur blew a chance to strengthen their grip on fourth place in the Premier League as they suffered a last-gasp 1-0 home defeat by Brighton & Hove Albion on Saturday.

Antonio Conte's side produced a lacklustre display and looked set for a frustrating stalemate before Belgian Leandro Trossard made things even worse with a 90th-minute winner.

"A difficult game, we knew this," Conte said. "It was a tactical game. I think a draw would have been a fair result."

"We started very slowly and in this type of game you have to move the ball more quickly. Maybe the weather... I want to find an excuse, but it was not a good game for us."

After four successive victories the pre-match mood in north London was one of optimism but Tottenham's performance was in stark contrast to the bright spring sunshine.

Sluggish and unimaginative in possession, Tottenham's feared attacking duo of Harry Kane and Son Heung-min were virtual spectators in a first half in which the home side managed only one attempt at the Brighton goal.

Spurs showed a little more urgency after the break with Son having a couple of shots blocked, but Brighton always carried the greater goal threat and deservedly took the points when Trossard burst into the left side of the penalty area and beat Hugo Lloris with a low shot with the outside of his right foot.

Trossard is having a big impact in the top four race having been on target in Brighton's 2-1 win at Arsenal last week.

Tottenham stayed fourth place with 57 points but they are only three points ahead of local rivals Arsenal who have two games in hand and play later on Saturday at Southampton.

Brighton moved up to 10th with 40 points.



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring a hat-trick as Manchester United stay in the Champions League qualification race by beating Norwich City 3-2 in their English Premier League fixture at the Old Trafford yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Archery team off to Turkey

SPORTS REPORTER

An 11-member Bangladesh team flew for Turkey last night to take part in Archery World Cup Stage 1, to be held in Antalya from April 18 to 24. Nine archers are being accompanied by two coaches and a manager for the seven-day competition. A total of 197 male archers and 143 female archers from 47 countries are taking part in the competition.

The Bangladesh contingent will participate in three divisions: recurve men, compound men and recurve women.

Ruman Sana, Hakim Ahmed Rubel and Sagor Islam will feature in recurve men while Newaz Ahmed Rakib and Ashikuzzaman will take part in compound men events.

Diya Siddiqui, Nasrin Akter and Fahmida Sultana Nisha make up the recurve women team for Bangladesh.