



THE PARTY BEGINS: Old DOHS players celebrate their title triumph in the Aktel Premier Cricket League after beating Bangladesh Biman at BKSP on Wednesday.

## Another thorny DOHS crown

SPORTS REPORTER

Old DOHS as expected retained the coveted Premier Cricket League title with a five-run victory over Bangladesh Biman in their penultimate Super-Six match at BKSP yesterday.

But the manner in which the victory was achieved spoiled the title-triumph of Akram Khan's men for a second successive year after Biman alleged that they were robbed of a certain win by the umpires, who let loose a comedy of errors during the Biman chase.

Riding on a fluent 109 by national opener Javed Omar Belim, Biman were well placed to overtake DOHS' 230 as they entered the final 10 overs needing only 30 runs for victory and with five wickets standing.

But three questionable leg-before decisions by umpires Jahangir Alam and Mahfuzur Rahman saw Biman bowled out for 225 in 46.2 overs.

Discarded national all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman looked menacing on 24 when he became the first victim of what Biman officials later claimed 'the first of a series of biased rulings from umpires'. Wicket-keeper-batsman Sajjad Kadir (4) was the next victim of a surprisingly quick demise of Biman.

The sparse audience at the BKSP smelled something dirty no sooner Biman started their chase, and it was nakedly exposed when umpire Jahangir ruled Shahriar Hossain out caught at short cover though it was clearly seen from the distance that Kenyan Steve Tikolo had palmed it off the bounce.

When the match entered its final act officials of Biman were

seen busy shouting at their batsmen in the middle: "Don't let the ball hit your pad."

After the match furious Biman players and officials were seen involved in a mock celebration for DOHS' title triumph. The winners however were not in a festive mood despite yet another successful year that saw them thrash Mohammedan Sporting Club by 121 runs in the previous match at the same venue.

DOHS captain Akram Khan however ruled out any nepotism by the men in uniform saying that it was not uncommon to see one or two wrong decisions in a match.

"It is not unusual to see one or two bad decisions in a match. I don't see anything wrong in it. Actually it is almost a habit for many to smell a rat when someone achieved anything in the country," said the former national skipper.

But Akram's statement belies the

reality with whispering of favouritism on a particular team growing louder after Wednesday's match.

It can be mentioned that last year teams also complained against umpires of favouring DOHS. The situation was at its worst in the last league match against Brothers Union when an umpire called a no-ball after the last DOHS batsman was clean bowled.

"If it is the standard of umpiring nobody would show their interest to make a good team. Everybody should understand that we are a Test playing nation and this kind of attitude will take us nowhere," said Biman cricket team manager Ziaur Rashid Rupom after the match.

An interesting episode took place during the match. A number of BKSP students were watching the proceedings during the Biman chase when a former national cricketer ran

PHOTO: STAR



### Did U Know?

A soccer ball is made up of 32 leather panels, held together by 642 stitches.



### Faisal Iqbal

(Pakistan batsman)  
"I have learnt a lot from my uncle. He has always been there to help me out and polish my skills. But I have only wanted to do one thing and that is to make a name for myself." Who is determined to step out of the shadow of his uncle Javed Miandad after striking his maiden Test century on Tuesday.



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## Sonargaon runners-up

SPORTS REPORTER

Sonargaon Cricketers finished runners-up in the Aktel Premier Cricket League on their debut when they inflicted a 43-run defeat on Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

The newcomers, who made a poor start but bounced back after the players were handed punishments for playing reckless cricket in the middle of the league, recorded their eighth consecutive win to stretch their collection to 22 points with one round remaining.

Al Shahriar, one of the senior cricketers fined and stripped off captaincy during the club's reformation process, hammered his seventh half-century to inspire Sonargaon amass 282 for six in 50 overs after being put into bat.

Shahriar's 59 off 68 balls, which featured nine boundaries, not only steadied the side after early dismissals but also set a launching pad for significant knocks by

Indian international Sridharan Sriram (53 off 55 balls), Anisur Rahman Sanchay (48 from 64 balls) and man-of-the-match Mohammad Salim, who smashed 70 not out in just 63 deliveries.

After the opening pair was separated with five runs on board, Mohammedan raced past the 100-mark before 14 overs with quickfire knocks from Sandeep Sharma (21 off 15 balls) and Aftab Ahmed (25 off 26 balls).

The local giants looked well set for a victory having crossed 200 mark with more than 15 overs remaining. However, the dismissal of skipper Habibul Bashar on the total of 206 saw Mohammedan lose their last half in the space of 36 runs.

National captain Bashar hit 58 off 81 balls before being caught by substitute Rafiqul Islam Khan off the bowling of his Sonargaon counterpart Mohammad Ashraf.

Ashraf's legbreaks got him three wickets for 31 from 4.5 overs and the national cricketer was elated after his side's second-place finish.

"I am happy because of the double success. We did it as a new team in the Premiership and I am

also captaining a side for the first time," told Ashraf who cracked five boundaries in a 21-ball 25 in the Sonargaon innings.

"We played great cricket toward the end and we could have been in the title race had we started picking up a bit early.

"Everything we did was dramatic. It began from the transfer when we made a strong team but got off to a poor start. Then we bounced back. It was really exciting and extra ordinary," added Ashraf who won all eight matches after replacing Al Shahriar as captain.

In the day's other match, a 43-run last wicket partnership between Rubaiyat Haque (30) and Labur Rahman (13) helped bottomers Brothers Union snatch a thrilling one-wicket victory over Victoria Sporting Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Having dismissed Victoria for 195 with left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny bagging 5-41 from 10 overs, Brothers reached 197-9 in 44.1 overs with one-down Gazi Salahuddin topscoring with 49 with five fours and one six.

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## PCB to probe Chappell's comments on Akhtar

Cricket

REUTERS, Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has asked match referee Ranjan Madugale to look into alleged comments made by India coach Greg Chappell that stated he was concerned with paceman Shoaib Akhtar's bowling action.

"We have written to the match referee asking him to find out if Chappell has made the comments attributed to him," PCB director Abbas Zaidi told Reuters on Wednesday.

"We are taking this issue very seriously." Earlier, PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan confirmed the board was seeking clarification

regarding Chappell's views on the matter.

"We have seen these reports and we are trying to find out whether he has said these things," Shaharyar said.

"If he has implied anything about Shoaib's action it is a violation of the ICC (International Cricket Council) code of conduct." A former Australian captain, Chappell was reported by an Indian television channel as saying that there was "something seriously different" about Shoaib's action.

The comments came after Indian batsmen Sachin Tendulkar and Anil Kumble were both hit on the helmet by rising Shoaib deliveries in the third and final Test between the sides taking place in Karachi this week.

The Times Now channel claimed

Chappell had told them he had seen a lot of people hit by Shoaib and that India could do without their players being hit like that.

"Even if something has been implied in any statement we will pursue it with the match referee," Shaharyar said.

"In 2004, our chief selector Wasim Bari made some comments about the umpires officiating in an international game involving Pakistan and he was reprimanded by the ICC for violation of code of conduct which applies to all players, team and board officials."

The 30-year-old Shoaib has been reported three times for a suspect bowling action but was cleared to play first class cricket in 2001, after which he has not been reported again.

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## Rahim's boys face USA today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19 cricketers will play their first practice match against USA today in Colombo.

The Mushfiqur Rahim-led side left Dhaka on Monday to take part in the ICC Under-19 World Cup.

The young Tigers are also scheduled to play another build-up match against Zimbabwe on February 3 before playing their first match in the World Cup on February 5.

## BFF releases '06 calendar

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday released its calendar for the year 2006, but funnily there was no slot for the Dhaka Premier Football League.

The BFF, in its yesterday's executive committee meeting, formed a five-member committee with BFF vice-president Kazi Salahuddin as chairman to find out a way to keep the coveted Dhaka League running along with the Professional League, scheduled to be launched in September.

"The committee will submit a report about ways to hold the two leagues by February 15. Same teams will take part in the Professional League and the Federation Cup which will be played simultaneously from September this year to May 2007," told BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal after the meeting.

"The Federation Cup will be a tournament like the FA Cup," he said adding that the BFF was also looking forward to continue the National Football League if clubs agreed.

According to the calendar, the first ever National School Football Championship will be held from February-April followed by Girls' School Championship in March-April. The Sher-e-Bangla National Football Championship will make a return after a long gap, in July-August while the BFF will introduce the national Women's Championship at the same time.

The JFA Cup U-16 tournament and the National Youth Championship will be played from October-December.

According to the proposal of AFC, the BFF will have to introduce a City League to support the players of the School League and the tournaments would be launched in Chandpur, not in Narayanganj as it had been earlier decided.

The BFF is looking forward to hosting the AFC Challenge Cup (March 25-April 9) in Dhaka and Chittagong after Nepal's withdrawal as hosts of half of the tournament.

"If we get the MA Aziz Stadium, we will stage two group matches in Chittagong," Helal informed. The AFC event manager for this tournament is due in Dhaka tomorrow to discuss the issues.

## Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Prantik Kriha Chakra defeated Surjo Tarun Club by 73 runs in the First Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

Prantik made 225 for nine with captain Aslam Ali scoring highest 58.

In reply, Surjo Tarun were bowled out for 152 in 39.4 overs. Chayon scored 55 runs.

## Media people harassed at the BKSP

SPORTS REPORTER

Media persons were harassed at the BKSP gate during yesterday's Premier Cricket League match at the Savar sports institute.

Reporters and photojournalists were held back for almost an hour at the gate in the morning following a 'no admission for public' circular issued by the DG of BKSP.

Guards at the gate told the visitors that no one could get inside without permission of the DG. No BKSP official was available to give permission or explain why the media people on assignment to cover the league's title deciding match were barred from entering.

However, media men got inside with the help of a cricket board official finally.

It was not the first occasion that journalists were bothered by BKSP's step-motherly attitude. During the previous round of the league, the guards tried to stop reporters at the entrance after receiving a verbal notice from the officials.

## Pakistan take series with record win

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Abdul Razzaq and Mohammad Asif destroyed India's batting might as Pakistan won the third and final cricket Test by a massive 341 runs to clinch the series 1-0.

Razzaq claimed 4-88 and Asif took 3-48 as India, set an improbable victory target of 607, were shot out for 265 in their second innings just before stumps on the fourth day.

Yuvraj Singh played a lone hand for the tourists with 122, but could not prevent a heavy defeat in the decisive Test after the first two games in Lahore and Faisalabad ended in high-scoring draws.

It was Pakistan's best ever Test win in terms of runs, surpassing the 301-run victory over Sri Lanka in Colombo in 1994.

India fell just one run short of their worst defeat -- by 342 runs against world champions Australia in Nagpur in 2004.

Pakistan's remarkable win came despite the absence of their inspirational captain Inzamamul Haq due to a back injury and after they were three down for no run in the first over of the match on Sunday following Irfan Pathan's hat-trick.

Pakistan, reduced to 39-6, went on to make 245 after a gutsy century from Kamran Akmal and then bowled out the Indians for 239 in their first innings to gain a seven-run lead.

The victory avenged the 2-1 defeat at India's hands in the previous home series in 2004 and made Pakistan firm favourites to win the five-match one-day series starting on Monday.

Asif, a tall 23-year-old from the northern town of Sheikhpura,

destroyed the top order in quick time before Razzaq polished off the middle in front of some 12,000 screaming home fans.

Asif, playing only his third Test match, dismissed Virender Sehwag, Venkatesh Laxman and Sachin Tendulkar in a hostile seven-over opening spell.

India were reduced to 74-4 before the left-handed pair of Sourav Ganguly and Yuvraj stumped the rot by adding 103 for the fifth wicket.

Yuvraj smashed 19 boundaries and a six before he was last out, caught behind off Razzaq.

Former captain Ganguly, struggling to retain his place in the Indian team, had made 37 when he was trapped leg-before by Razzaq off the first delivery after tea.

Razzaq then had Mahendra Dhoni (18) and Irfan Pathan (four)

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## Captain Younis being humble

Rahul blames batting

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's acting captain Younis Khan on Wednesday cautioned against blaming India despite thumping them by 341 runs in the final Test here to clinch the series 1-0.

"A lot went in our favour in this game which could have gone either way," said Younis, who deputised for the injured Inzamamul Haq in the crucial Test at the National Stadium.

"It was probably a good toss to lose," said Younis, recalling his Indian counterpart Rahul Dravid's decision to field first after winning the toss.

"Anything could have happened after 39-6; we could have been bowled out for 100 and that would have changed the game.

"But Akmal and the others rose to the occasion. Maybe the early wickets we got in India's second innings helped us win the Test.

"We may have got them in four hours in the end, but it was not as easy as it seemed. We had the better luck."

India's Dravid said his team was outclassed by a team that played better cricket over the four days.

"We had a few strategies in place to contain them, but obviously it did not work. Simply put, we were outclassed.

"We could not have hoped for a better start when Irfan (Pathan) took that hat-trick," Dravid said.

"But then Kamran (Akmal) batted very well. Worse, we did not bat well at all and that in the end cost us the game."

Dravid stressed his team did not have trouble facing the seaming ball.

"Any batting line-up would have struggled to put bat to ball on the first two days when the wicket was seaming around," said Dravid.

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THE BACKBONE IS BROKEN: Indian maestro Sachin Tendulkar's off stump is sent for a walk by Pakistan paceman Mohammad Asif on the fourth day of the third and final Test in Karachi on Wednesday.

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