

## Preliminary nat'l camp concludes

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football squad concluded their four-day fitness training yesterday to gear up for the final preparation for next month's inaugural AFC Challenge Cup at home.

However, it was still uncertain whether coach Diego Cruciani's wish to spend two weeks in abroad and play at least three warm-up matches would be fulfilled or not.

The squad is expected to start residential camp at BKSP from tomorrow unless the federation confirms their trip to Thailand.

The National Team Management Committee (NTMC) was expected to sit with the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) high-ups yesterday but the meeting did not take place due to NTMC chairman Kazi Salahuddin's illness.

The BFF does not have the fund to provide training facilities abroad for preparation and BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal told yesterday that if the NTMC can arrange the trip, they will oblige.

Meanwhile, Dhaka City Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka and Helal have been made chairman and secretary of the AFC Challenge Cup local organising committee.



## Did U Know?

Muttiah Muralidaran of Sri Lanka took 5/79 in the first innings of the second Test against Bangladesh. It was the fiftieth time that he has taken five wickets or more in an innings in 101 Tests.

## What to WATCH

### STAR Sports

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka  
2nd Test, Day Three  
Live at 9:15 am

### DD National

India vs England  
Second Test, Day Two  
Live at 10:30 am

### ESPN

Sportscentre  
Live at 8:30 pm  
South Africa vs Australia  
4th ODI  
Live at 6:30 pm  
New Zealand vs West Indies  
1st Test, Day Three  
Live at 3:30 am (Saturday)



### Shane Warne

(Australian spin wizard)  
"It's cost me lots of stuff. At the end of the day, it's cost me probably a chance to captain Australia..."  
While admitting his off-field antics with a series of women.

DAY'S  
EVENT

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka  
2nd Test, Day Three  
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra  
**7th National Cricket League  
Four-Day Matches (Day One)**  
Chittagong vs Dhaka  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Stadium, Mirpur  
Rajshahi vs Sylhet  
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium  
Barisal vs Khulna  
Venue: Barisal Divisional Stadium



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh seamer Shahadat Hossain celebrates the dismissal of Sri Lanka batsman Kumar Sangakkara (R) on the second day of the second Test at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra on Wednesday.

## Rajshahi keep one-day crown



SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi clinched their second consecutive National Cricket League one-day crown with two rounds remaining when they handed a five-wicket defeat on Sylhet in the eighth round yesterday.

With an all-win record, Rajshahi have taken an unassailable lead in the six-team table with 16 points. Chittagong caught up with Dhaka at second place after a 29-run victory against the hosts at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium. Bottom-table Barisal moved up the table with an impressive six-wicket home win over Khulna, who had national caps Manzarul Islam, Tushar Imran and Abdur Razzak back for the match.

### RAJSHAHI-SYLHET

After Shafaq Al Jabir and Mushfiq Rahman's opening salvo reduced Sylhet to 42-5 by the tenth over, the visitors managed only 103 before being shot out at the Rajshahi

Divisional Stadium. Sohrawardi Shuvo mopped the tail taking three wickets for just nine runs.

Rajshahi also lost wickets at regular intervals but man-of-the-match Jahurul Islam carried on his bat in a responsible 58 off 98 balls to canter them to 106-5 inside 30 overs.

### DHAKA-CHITTAGONG

Dhaka lost eight wickets for 77 runs after solid top-order batting to crash to their fourth successive defeat in the championship as they were all out for 216 in reply to Chittagong's 245. Skipper Al Shahriar (60 off 68 balls) and Mahmudullah Riyad (40 off 46 balls) added 88 runs for the third wicket to take the total to 139-2 but part-time left-arm spinner Faisal Hossain ripped through the middle order taking 4-25.

Earlier, Chittagong finished with a challenging total as Ilias Sunny (46 off 36 balls) and Gazi Alamgir (26 off 36 balls) put on invaluable 60 runs for the last wicket partnership after Nazimu-ddin's 37 and man-of-the-match Faisal's 32.

### BARISAL-KHULNA

Four-half centuries spearheaded Barisal's six-wicket defeat of Khulna at the Barisal Stadium with Marshall Ayub providing the entertainment. Nasiruddin Faruque topscored 63 not out but young Marshall's explosive 37-ball 50 steered the home to the target while chasing Khulna's 246-6 built around in-form opener Nazmus Sadat's 98. Having hit ten boundaries in 118 balls, Sadat was run out in the 43rd over to miss a deserved century. Marshal, who hit five fours and one six, was adjudged man-of-the-match.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SYLHET:** 103 all out in 36.4 overs (Imtiaz 28, Rezaul 27, Sadekur 17, Shafaq 3-19, Mushfiq 2-25, Reza 1-16, Kamrul 1-30, Shuvo 3-9).

**RAJSHAHI:** 106-5 in 29.4 overs (Jahurul 58 n.o., Farhad 13, Shuvo 10 n.o., Hasibul 1-35, Nazmul 1-22,

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## Tsunami survivor runs havoc

SPORTS REPORTER from Bogra

Although playing only his third Test, Sri Lankan opener Upul Tharanga showed enough maturity in his brilliant batsmanship here yesterday to swing the match away after a spirited Bangladesh bowling on the second day of the second and final Test.

The 21-year-old left-hander will definitely love to play against Bangladesh again in future as his maiden one-day hundred also came against the Tigers in Colombo last September. He batted more than seven hours to score an unbeaten 160 off 297 balls that contained 19 fours and two sixes against Mohammad Rafique and Enamul Haque over long-on.

"It was my day. I got a good start and managed to carry it. I played my normal game that's why I was successful," said Tharanga, who made his Test debut against India at Ahmedabad in December last year.

Tharanga resumed the day on 12 and saw wickets falling like ninespins but the young lad showed his mettle to deny the home team taking advantage in the series decider.

"Mahela (Jayawardene) told me not to look at the scoreboard and rather concentrate on my own game. And I think that's the way.

"The Bangladeshi bowlers, especially the seamers bowled very well and I always tried to play according to merit of the ball," he added.

He also explained his success with Lasith Malinga for the ninth wicket stand which gave them an edge at the end of the day.

"I have known Malinga since school and we have played a lot together. I knew he can bat so I just told him to take it easy," said Tharanga, whose home in Ambalangoda was washed away by tsunami in December 2004 but his family survived the disaster.

"Thanks God that we only lost our home, not lives. I am lucky enough that my parents and sister are alive," said Tharanga.

## Kenya due on March 14

SPORTS REPORTER

Kenya will arrive in Dhaka on March 14 to play four one-day internationals against Bangladesh. The ICC associate members were due to arrive today according to the previous schedule and play three one-dayers.

However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board confirmed yesterday that the visiting side will play ODIs on March 17, 20, 23 and 25 respectively. The first and second matches are due to be played at Bogra and Khulna while Fatullah Stadium has been chosen as the venue for the last two games, provided the venue at Fatullah gets ICC's approval in time.

## Another landmark for Tendulkar

PTI, Mohali

Sachin Tendulkar reached another milestone on Thursday when he equalled Kapil Dev's record for most Test appearances by an Indian.

Tendulkar, 32, stood alongside Kapil Dev with 131 India caps when he stepped on to the field in the second Test against England.

Only three others have played 100 or more Tests for India.

Sunil Gavaskar (125), Dilip Vengsarkar (116) and Anil Kumble (105) belong to the elite group.

Another worthy name would be added to that prestigious list when captain Rahul Dravid, now with 99 caps, takes the field in the third Test against England at Mumbai from March 18 to 22.

## A lesson for home batsmen

BISHWAJIT ROY from Bogra



Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar wants to take lessons from Upul Tharanga before going into the second essay of the second and final Test against Sri Lanka.

The home side were yet to dismiss their opponents as the islanders rode on a masterly unbeaten 160-run by the 21-year old Tharanga to finish the day on 302-8 but Bashar said that they have already started thinking about their second innings.

"No doubt, our first target would be to pick up the remaining wickets quickly but we are already thinking about the second innings. I think the second day was not too bad for us if you consider our first innings total. But all know that we have a very poor record in second innings," said Bashar.

Bangladesh put pressure on Sri Lanka in the first Test in Chittagong when bowlers did a tremendous job to allow Sri Lanka only a 19-run lead but the Tigers' second-innings nightmare revisited once again.

"We have already started to talk about the issue. This time we are going to play session by session rather than putting runs on board or thinking about setting a target. I have faith in my boys that they will put their best to finish the series on a high note," added a confident Bashar who vowed not to repeat the same mistakes.

"The way the young Sri Lankan carried his innings was absolutely brilliant and I think he snatched the match from us. But we can take the lesson from him about how to carry an innings as long as possible after getting settled in the middle," said Bashar, who was not ready to accept the blame for setting a defensive fielding



**B**ANGLADESH once again started the day well with the pace bowlers taking control. Shahadat Hossain was magnificent, taking two early wickets. It was really an advantage to get rid off two dangerous batsmen like Thilan Samaraweera and Kumar

strategy.

"I don't understand why the question was raised. We were defending a very small total, so you have to check the run-rate as well as pick up wickets to keep in contention. Even Sri Lanka took the same strategy although they have a bowler like Muralidaran," explained Bashar.

Many, however, believed that the Bangladesh captain failed to take the initiative when Sri Lanka

were struggling at 43-4 because of his conventional fielding strategy that allowed Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene and Tharanga to relieve the pressure.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed also echoed the same sentiment but said that it could have been better if Bashar had attacked before the lunch break.

"He could have tried to attack four or five overs before lunch but I

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PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lankan opener Upul Tharanga raises bat to celebrate his century on the second day of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium on Thursday.



## AKRAM INSWINGER

Sangakkara on the same score. The one that got the better of Sangakkara was a real beauty although I think the Sri Lankan was a bit unlucky, as the ball kept low. It was a good opportunity for Bangladesh to take lead in the first innings after grabbing four wickets for 43 runs but they simply failed to cash in on it.

After lunch, Mohammad Rafique did not turn the ball and bowled very flat. Actually, he never looked like getting a wicket. Here I feel that Bangladesh were lacking an all-rounder. You need a fifth bowler in the Test side who would bowl 15 overs and at the same time, would contain as well.

Although Mohammad Ashraful took the wicket of captain Mahela Jayawardene who fell one run short of a deserved half-century, but he is good for hardly two to three overs at this level. You can't expect someone to bowl juicy full-tosses after sending back top four opposition batsmen.

The honours of the day goes to Upul Tharanga who began mod-

estly, took his time to settle before opening up with nice strokes. I think it is a very important century in his career because he had only one first-class hundred before this Test match. He is young and has the potential to play a long time for Sri Lanka if he can keep his head down. He virtually received no support from the teammates but for Jayawardene.

And Bangladesh should have attacked as soon as they saw the back of the rival captain. But the fast bowlers looked tired and the senior spinner of the side was not responding.

It is highly unlikely that from this stage, Bangladesh would go on to pull off a draw. With Tharanga still at the crease, the home side must get two wickets early in the morning but that would mean facing Muttiah Muralitharan who would be as hungry as ever on a turning track. Yes, Sri Lanka are clearly on the driving seat but Bangladesh also fought well to take six wickets on the day. They have more hard work to avoid a defeat.