

## Giants look to stretch winning run

SPORTS REPORTER

The third-round of the Kai-Altech Premier Division Cricket League begins today in the city at different venues.

Defending champions Old DOHS take on Indira Road Krira Chakra at BKSP while title aspirants Abahani meet newcomers Young Pegasus at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium in a bid to maintain their all-win run.

The other match between Partex Sporting Club and Kalabagan Krira Chakra will take place at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

The remaining third round matches -- Sonargaon v City Club (Fatullah), Victoria v Brothers Union (BKSP) and Mohammedan v Biman (Mirpur) -- will be held tomorrow.

**Sourav ready to play anywhere**

PTI, Kolkata

Having staged a memorable comeback into the Indian team, former captain Sourav Ganguly says he is ready to renew his famous opening partnership with Sachin Tendulkar

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PHOTO: STAR  
Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik (2nd L) speaks to his charges during an early morning training session at Ramna Park in the city on Monday.



## Did U Know?

Shane Bond of New Zealand took 4 for 61 including a hat-trick in the one-day international against Australia at Bellevue Oval on January 14. It was the eighth time that he has taken four wickets or more in a match, and third against Australia.



**John Terry**  
(Chelsea captain)  
"Jose Mourinho is the best in the business, there's no doubt about that, and I'm sure he will be for the next 20 years. That's what we want at Chelsea the best and only the best. So there is no way we want the best boss around to be walking away." While urging the team's coach to stay.



**What to WATCH**  
ESPN  
Commonwealth Bank Series  
New Zealand v England  
Third ODI  
Live at 5:00 am  
Sportscenter India  
Live at 9:30 pm  
FA Cup  
Man City v Sheffield Wednesday  
Live at 1:30 am (Wednesday)  
**STAR Sports**  
Australian Open  
Men's/Women's First Rd  
Live at 6:00 am

## Ponting given rest



AFP, Melbourne

In a bid to manage his workload ahead of the World Cup, Australian captain Ricky Ponting will be rested when the host nation takes on England in Brisbane on Friday in their triangular series one-day international.

With two wins from as many matches, after comfortable victories over both England and New Zealand, the Australians are at unbackable odds to reach the finals of the series.

With that in mind, the Australian selection panel announced here Monday that Ponting would miss Friday's game, with wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist to take over the captaincy and Mike Hussey's incredible rise continuing with his promotion to vice-captain.

Ponting's omission also opened the door for an unexpected recall for forgotten Victorian batsman Brad Hodge.

Hodge, who hasn't played for Australia for almost a year, is likely to slot into the middle order in Ponting's absence, in a timely opportunity ahead of the upcoming World Cup.

Australian chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch said Ponting had been playing continuously since late September and would benefit from a rest.

"We feel that Ricky Ponting needs and deserves a break," he

said. "He has played every match for Australia in all forms of the game since the DLF Finals in Malaysia in September, and we think this is the right time for him to allow his body to rest ahead of the World Cup."

"We've taken this approach to managing workload in previous years with success."

Hodge, who made a double century against South Africa last summer but lost his spot soon after, has played just five one-day internationals and has the modest average of 15.80.

His last limited-overs appearance for Australia was against Sri Lanka last January, and he



RICKY PONTING

seemed to have fallen out of favour with the selectors.

However, Hilditch said he fully deserved his recall.

"Brad Hodge is a logical replacement for Ricky in this squad

of 14," Hilditch said.

"He has been in exceptional form for Victoria this summer."

Hodge was grateful for the chance to revive his international career.

"Sometimes in cricket and especially representing Australia it might be the one chance that you get ... it's such a great side," he said.

"This is a window of opportunity for me."

"I've just got one game and one little opportunity and hopefully I can perform well and make an impression like I always try to do, and then maybe you never know about selection further down the track."

Having made an impressive international debut against New Zealand in Hobart on Sunday, pace bowler Ben Hilfenhaus has been retained in the 14-man squad for the Brisbane game.

Victorian paceman Glenn McGrath is expected to play after missing the Hobart game with groin soreness, while Brett Lee is close to returning after the bout of bronchitis that caused him to miss the first two triangular series matches.

In good news for New Zealand, young batsman Ross Taylor has been declared fit to face England in Tuesday's tri-series match, despite suffering cramp during his sparkling 84 against Australia in Hobart.

The Kiwis are hoping to capitalise on the fragile mindset of their beleaguered opponents and extend England's two-month losing streak on Australian soil.

Meanwhile the PCB has lodged a formal complaint with match referee Chris Broad.

CSA media spokesman Gordon Templeton said: "They are two separate matters. We are aware of the PCB's complaint but the CSA hearing is in terms of our own code of conduct and policies."

Templeton said he was "not privy" to the precise nature of the Pakistani complaint.

"Brad Hodge is a logical replacement for Ricky in this squad

also included references to ".... baboons" and suggestion that the spectators should ".... off back to Pakistan".

CSA chief executive Gerald Majola said in a statement: "CSA has investigated the matter and we have heard the remarks made by Herschelle Gibbs in response to verbal abuse directed by a number of Pakistan supporters at Paul Harris while he was fielding on the boundary."

Herschelle says these remarks were for the ears only of his teammates in his proximity, and were directed in general terms at that section of the crowd that had verbally abused Paul Harris. He has apologised if he has caused offence to anyone."

Majola said the action was taken in terms of CSA regulations which stemmed from the International Cricket Council's anti-racism policy.

It was reported from Pakistan that Saleem Altaf, the PCB director of cricket, had confirmed that a complaint had been made. Altaf said both the Pakistan and South African boards had copies of tapes of the remarks.

The ICC code prohibits using "...any language or gestures that offends, humiliates, intimidates, threatens, disparages or vilifies another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin".

If found guilty of a Level 3 offence, Gibbs faces a ban of between two and four test matches or between four and eight one-day internationals.

South African coach Mickey Arthur added he was not happy about the stump microphones.

## Ex-refs to inspect B. League venues

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has appointed three former referees to inspect the venues to be used during the B. League -- the inaugural Professional Football League.

Monirul Islam, member-secretary of BFF's referees' committee, Sheikh Badaruddin and Rafiqul Islam will inspect the grounds facilities and submit their reports to the federation by January 19.

The venues are: Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka, MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong, Khulna Stadium, Sylhet Stadium and Rangamati Stadium.

## Ali Asif's appointment raises questions

SPORTS REPORTER

If the job of a cricket team's operations manager has got something to do with the press apart from his other duties, then the recent appointment of Ali Asif Khan for the demanding post might not have augured all well for Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The board, in a surprise move on Saturday, named Asif as the national cricket team's operations manager for the Tigers' brief Zimbabwe tour later this month, replacing former national captain Khaled Mahmud.

But an undisclosed probe report about police brutality on the working journalists during the Bangladesh-Australia Test match in Chittagong held Asif along with four other board officials in some way responsible for the ugly episode on April 16 last year at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

The police attack on reporters and photojournalists on that fateful day sparked widespread criticism both at home and abroad and amid uproar the home ministry had formed a one-member judiciary inquiry committee of Comilla District's Sessions Judge Shawkat Hossain.

The judge submitted his report to the home secretary on May 21 after talking with over fifty persons.

It was learnt that there was specific charges against the responsible police officials in the report. The report highlighted a lack of coordination between the cricket board and the security officials. It also specifically questioned the role of the five-member committee for the match.

It may be mentioned that the board sent Jamil A Satar, the then vice-chairman of Gates and Security Committee, and Asif, who acted as vice-chairman of Cricket Operations Committee, from Dhaka to coordinate the match along with local board representatives.

Although Jamil lost his credential in the board after that incident and was not included in any of the new committees, Asif somehow prospered with the blessings of BCB general secretary Mahabubul Anam.

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## Mohammedan want to ride the wave



SPORTS REPORTER

most popular clubs of the country into the professional era with a bunch of unknown players.

"We lost Nazrul, Alifaz, Munna, Biplob and lastly Arman Aziz, who shaped our championship last season," told the celebrated coach who took over Mohammedan towards the end of the previous season and guided them to win the National League title.

"The other clubs had secured services of these players in 2005 even before the National League was over. We had disciplinary problems with Hassan and Manju and the club decided to let them go to avoid criticism. Now we have no stars but I am hopeful that the upcoming footballers we have will give the club longer service."

"Unlike Abahani and Muktioddha -- the strongest teams on paper -- and even Brothers Union, who have seemingly repaired the damage after the previous two's heavy marketing at the transfer scene, Mohammedan have been left with mediocrity."

"Yes, we are being rated among the mid-table clubs like Sheikh Russell, Arambagh and Farashganj. It's true that we could not hold on to our players or bring any big names. But that certainly does not mean we would finish fifth or sixth," said Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik, who faces the challenge of taking one of the

championship. We have a big fan base which will be a plus point.

The former national fullback, who led Muktioddha to a number of titles, feels that he is having a different type of experience with the black and whites. Manik is used to handling a number of young players.

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