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# Star SPORT

DAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 3, 2007, E-MAIL: sports@thecitizenstar.net

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## NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE 2007-08 Khulna vow better show

SPORTS REPORTER

One might be surprised to see a team finish a tournament without a win when they have a number of national players including Habibul Bashar and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

The result of Khulna however showed the real picture of the National Cricket League, the first-class competition of the country. The star-studded Khulna side managed five draws in the four-day meet and lost all their five limited-over encounters to finish last in the six-team competition.

The players' leisurely attitude towards the competition made it almost a 'picnic' affair but Khulna and former Bangladesh captain Bashar believes that it is a different story this time due to two major changes when the National League kicks-off across the country from October 19.

"After a very enthusiastic start, this competition gradually lost its charm because of little money and unavailability of the star players, who were always away in national duties. But now the good news is that the authority has offered a handsome match fee and hopefully,

national players will also be able to play a maximum number of matches," explained Bashar reflecting on the board's offer of Tk 15,000 and Tk 10,000 for the four-day and one-day matches respectively.

"I must admit that leading cricketers hardly had any motivation to play the league and I was no exception. But I am sure that it is a different story now and you will see a new Khulna this season. The NCL will be more competitive than the previous occasions," confessed the former national skipper, who didn't play any match in the last season, adding that the pitches are important to make it a success.

The 34-year-old right-hander also said that he is looking forward to the league seriously to get his form back, before the upcoming tour of New Zealand in December-January.

"NCL is very important for me. I haven't played a single match after coming back from Sri Lanka tour. I think the competition is also important for Mashrafe to rediscover his rhythm in the longer version," said Bashar adding that they will desperately miss the late Manjul Islam Rana, who tragically died in a road accident.

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FRIENDS FOREVER: Australian all-rounder Andrew Symonds (R) and Sreesanth have a go at each other after the Indian fast bowler took Symonds's return catch in the second one-day international at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi on Tuesday.

PHOTO AFP

## Pak stumble to spin

**Cricket**

AFP, Karachi

ping Akmal leg-before and then forcing an edge off Hafiz, which was smartly snapped up by Kallis in the slips.

Younis Khan had made only six before he was bowled by paceman Andre Nel off a delivery that kept low, while Kallis proved his all-round abilities by bowling Faisal Iqbal (seven) to leave Pakistan tottering at 97-4.

At the close on the second day, Pakistan were 127-5 in reply to South Africa's first innings total of 450, still needing a further 124 to avoid the follow-on.

Captain Shoaib Malik was unbeaten on nine and Abdul Rehman one not out after a reckless display of batting by the home batsmen.

Pakistan lost four wickets for 26 runs after they were given a solid start by Kamran Akmal (42) and Mohammad Hafeez (34), who shared a 71-run partnership for the first wicket.

Earlier, the South African innings was built around a brilliant knock by Kallis, who led his team to their highest total in Pakistan, surpassing the previous best of 403 they scored at Rawalpindi in 1997.

Kallis hit 19 boundaries during his five-hour innings and shared a valuable 170-run third wicket stand with Hashim Amla (71). He also shared a fourth wicket stand of 73 with Ashwell Prince.

South Africa, resuming at 294-3,

added another 50 runs before Danish Kaneria struck twice to raise hopes of a fightback from the home team.

The leg-spinner, who was unlucky not to get Kallis on the first day when wicketkeeper, Akmal dropped a catch when the South African maestro was on 36, finally got the prized scalp, his 199th in Tests.

Kallis was undone by the bounce and was caught behind while forcing a cut. He turned his hundred as one of his three best.

"It's right up there, maybe one of the three best I have made," said Kallis. "We were probably 50 runs short but the way the guys bowled is remarkable and put us in a strong position."

"There is still hard work ahead of us as the pitch is still good for batting."

Kaneria landed his 200th Test wicket when Prince failed to keep a drive on the ground and the leg-spinner took a straightforward catch in his follow-through.

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## Nat'l football from Nov 2

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Football Championship will kick off on November 2 with the qualifying rounds of nine zones across the country.

The zones are Padma, Surma, Kaptakhyia, Karnaphuli, Teesta, Jamuna, Meghna, Brahmaputra, Services and Education.

The Bangladesh Football Federation has requested applications from interested venues to host the qualifiers before October 10.

The BFF has yet to decide about the venue of the finals where all group winners will join the hosts and the defending champions.

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## Australia go one up

**Cricket**

AFP, Kochi

Sreesanth and Symonds and then Indian batsman Harbhajan Singh with a few Australian players after his dismissal.

Sreesanth later received a nasty blow on his helmet as he reacted late to a firm drive from his captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who topscored with a fighting 58 before being the last man out.

Australia's batting might was on view as the World Cup winners posted a challenging 306-6, with man-of-the-match Haddin (87 not out), Symonds (87) and Matthew Hayden (75) all putting the Indian attack to the sword.

The total was 287-4

at 87-4 in the opening 15 overs,

with paceman Stuart Clark grabbing two wickets, and Mitchell Johnson and James Hopes one apiece.

Robin Uthappa tried to match the Australians' stroke-play as he hit a 30-ball 41 with two sixes and four boundaries but his flourish did not last long. He was trapped leg-before by Clark.

The match also saw rival players trade words in the middle -- first Indian seamer Shanthakumaran

Singh (10) and Gautam Gambhir (seven) cheaply.

Australia were earlier struggling at 8-2 after being put in to bat, but Symonds, Haddin and Hayden ended India's early celebrations to help their side set a stiff target.

Hayden was instrumental in getting his side back on track after skipper Adam Gilchrist (0) and Brad Hodge (3) had fallen in the opening four overs. He added 58 for the third wicket with Michael Clarke and 94 for the next with Symonds.

Symonds and Haddin then built on Hayden's superb effort with a 108-run stand for the fifth wicket. The last 10 overs yielded 91 runs, thanks to big hitting from the pair.

Haddin faced just 69 balls and hit three sixes and eight fours in his career-best knock for his second successive half-century, while Symonds struck two sixes and nine fours in his 83-ball innings.

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## 75 years of Bodyline

**Cricket**

AFP, Paris

product of Winchester and Oxford, devised a strategy of dangerously short-pitched bowling using his two fast bowlers, Harold Larwood and Bill Voce, to combat Don Bradman, Australia's sporting hero of the Depression-ravaged times.

The 'Don' had been rewriting cricket's record books since his Test debut in 1928 and when the Australians won the five-Test series 2-1 in England in 1930, Bradman amassed 974 runs at a batting average of 139.14, an aggregate record that stands to this day.

Jardine's theory of directing his bowlers to bowl at leg stump and make the ball rear into the batsman's body became known as 'Bodyline.'

Over the ensuing six months Jardine's despised tactics not only threatened the future of Test cricket but even undermined the bonds of the British Empire.

The combatants and the eyewitnesses have all but gone, although Bill Brown, now in his 90th year, played for New South Wales against the MCC but did not play in a Bodyline Test.

Jardine, a cold, calculating

win the Ashes but he would lose a dominion in the process.

It was a tumultuous time for cricket.

Passions became so inflamed that during the third Test at the Adelaide Oval in January 1933, seething spectators threatened to jump the fence as anti-English feelings soared.

Bill Woodfull, Australia's gentle-manly captain, was twice struck by bumpers and wicketkeeper Bert Oldfield edged a ferocious delivery from Larwood on to his temple, collapsed beside the pitch and was carried from the field unconscious.

It produced one of the immortal quotes in Test cricket when Woodfull told the English management: "There are two teams out there, and only one of them is playing cricket."

Behind the scenes there were

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

## 'Relegation league on'

SPORTS REPORTER

Three Premier League clubs reluctant to play the relegation play-offs served a legal notice to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Monday to complicate things about holding the much-talked about Premier League relegation league.

"We have received the legal notice from the three clubs. The board will give its reply but the relegation league is on," said board member Shafiqur Rahman Munna, who is looking after the issue in absence of CDDM chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, yesterday.

Brothers Union, City Club and Indira Road served the legal notice after the Premier League clubs' meeting with the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CDDM) ended fruitless on Monday.

The league is scheduled to start tomorrow but it will only happen if the respective clubs make a U-turn.

## 200 up for Kaneria

AFP, Karachi

Leg-spinner Danish Kaneria took his 200th Test wicket on Tuesday, becoming only the sixth Pakistani bowler to achieve the feat.

The 26-year-old Kaneria, playing his 47th Test, only needed two wickets to reach the landmark at the start of the first Test against South Africa at the National Stadium here.

He dismissed Jacques Kallis for a

masterly 155 and then held a return catch off his own bowling to take the wicket of Ashwell Prince for 36.

Kaneria is the 53rd bowler in the world to take 200 or more Test wickets in a list headed by legendary Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne with 708.

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**Cricket**

AFP, London

Darrell Hair, the Australian umpire who was giving evidence on the second day of his legal action against the International Cricket Council (ICC), the governing body of the game, claimed he was not permitted to stand in top-level matches because "it was motivated along racial lines."

Hair, who is suing the ICC for racial discrimination in the Central London Employment Tribunal, said: "If I had been from West Indies or Pakistan or India, I might have been treated differently, like Billy Doctrove."

He was referring to his fellow umpire, a black West Indian, who was standing with him in the final Test at the Oval last year when Pakistan were accused of ball-tampering, and who has continued

to officiate in Tests and one day international matches.

"At the time we told Inzamamul Haq, the Pakistani captain, that we believed the marks we found on the ball were deliberately put there," the burly umpire explained to the hearing.

"After the match I was continually pilloried in the media by Shahryar Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, and Inzamam, which was clearly in breach of ICC conduct -- and yet it did nothing to prevent this."

Hair, who is suing the ICC for racial discrimination in the Central London Employment Tribunal, said: "If I had been from West Indies or Pakistan or India, I might have been treated differently, like Billy Doctrove."

Hair also emphasised that the match was awarded to England and not forfeited, as was supposed at the time.

"There is nothing in the Laws of Cricket to permit a governing body

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AFP, London

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