



## Did U Know?

Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf is the leading run-scorer at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad. His tally reads 354 runs at 118.00 from five matches, with two hundreds and two fifties.



Preity Zinta

(Bollywood actor) "I'm going to tell all my producers to not release any movie between April 19 and May 30. It will be suicide." Who is convinced the Indian Premier League is going to be a big success. Zinta is the joint-owner of the Punjab Kings XI franchise.



**Neo Sports**  
India v South Africa  
Third Test, Day 1  
Live from 10:00am  
**TEN Sports & BTB**  
Bangladesh v Pakistan  
Second One-Day International  
Live from 4:00pm

## Lancer Cup kicks off

SPORTS REPORTER

The 25th Lancer Cup Golf Tournament, sponsored by Rangs Group, began at the picturesque Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

Bangladesh Navy Chief Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam teed off the prestigious meet as chief guest in the afternoon.

Chairman of Rangs Limited A Rouf Chowdhury and Toshihiko Hattori, Corporate General Manager of Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, were present on the opening day.

They will also attend tonight's closing ceremony and distribute prizes.

## Vital relegation tie today

SPORTS REPORTER

Sonargaon Cricketers and Young Pegasus will fight for survival in the Premier League as their relegation playoff match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur will determine the other relegated club along with Kalabagan Krita Chakra.

With all sides on six points going into the relegation playoffs that started on April 7, Kalabagan lost both their matches to Sonargaon and Young Pegasus. It means the winners of today's match will stay in next season's Premiership.

Sonargaon president Wasiq Rafiq yesterday said that he has accepted that next season he might have to see his side playing in the lower division.

"I am mentally prepared that we might lose tomorrow (Friday) and go down to the First Division," said Wasiq.

A loss would mean a drop in earnings from the cricket board as well as a loss of pride as a club like Sonargaon were a big-spending side in the last two seasons in the Premier League.

"We do not have that bad a side and five of our eight losses were very close. I could understand the big losses to Abahani, Mohammedan and BKSP but the other five were pure bad luck," added Wasiq.

Young Pegasus, Mohammadpur's only Premier League side, have the unenviable tag of being a breeding ground for upcoming cricketers and their demotion would mean a lot of opportunity for many young players looking to make their mark in the country's leading competition.

# Siddons optimistic

Cricket

AFP, Faisalabad

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons said Thursday he hoped his team would put up a better show in the second match against Pakistan here following an embarrassing defeat in the series opener.

The tourists were thrashed by 152 runs in the first of five matches in Lahore on Tuesday. The teams next meet Friday.

"It was a bit embarrassing to lose by that margin and we need to lift ourselves, but it is always tough against a team like Pakistan," said Siddons, blaming two power failure stoppages for derailing his team's run-chase.

Two power outages, stopping play for 48 minutes in all, saw Bangladesh's target revised from 323 to 282 in 39 overs, which proved beyond their reach after a poor start.

Bangladesh finally folded at 129 in 29.5 overs.

"At the start, we were chasing six plus an over but after lights went off twice we were left chasing nine an over, which proved tough,"

Siddons said.

Bangladesh surprisingly left out their front-line fast bowlers Shahadat Hossain and Syed Raseel - a move Siddons admitted backfired.

"We were one bowler short and that cost us dearly. The fifth bowler cost us nearly 106 runs in ten overs. But one slip does not make a series," said Siddons, who took over as coach last year.

Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik said Bangladesh was a quality opponent.



JAMIE SIDDONS

"They are a good side and we are not taking them lightly," said Malik of the Bangladesh team, who are here as a replacement to Australia, which postponed their Pakistan tour over security fears.

"At least we are playing some cricket, which is better than not having cricket at all. We did some experiments against Zimbabwe, and now we will do more against Bangladesh, and these will help us in the future."

## TEAMS

**BANGLADESH** (from): Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (vice-captain), Tamim Iqbal, Zunaed Siddiqui, Aftab Ahmed, Nazimuddin, Shahriar Nafees, Shakib Al Hasan, Dhiman Ghosh, Abdur Razzak, Mahmudullah Riyad, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Raseel, Forhad Reza and Rokibul Hasan.

**PAKISTAN** (from): Shoaib Malik (captain), Salman Butt, Nasir Jamshed, Younis Khan, Misbahul Haq, Mohammad Yousuf, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Umar Gul, Sohail Tanveer, Rao Iftikhar, Sohail Khan, Wahab Riaz, Fawad Alam, Bazid Khan, Sarfraz Ahmed.

## Olympic torch relay route altered

PTI, San Francisco

Fearing violent anti-China protests from Tibetans and human rights activists and possible skirmishes between anti- and pro-Beijing demonstrators, authorities here changed and truncated the route of the Olympic torch at the last moment.

They also cancelled the closing ceremony planned at the end of relay which will now be held at an undisclosed venue for security reasons.

This left both demonstrators and American-Chinese who had come to cheer the torch disappointed but avoided any violent situations seen in Paris and London.

The torch was lit at McCovey Cove behind the schedule and first runner flanked by Chinese and American police headed away from the crowd into a warehouse on the waterfront.

The flame remained inside for more than half an hour and then it was taken in a van under heavy security to a location more than two kilometers away where a runner emerged with the torch.

The torch was then taken through alternative route and when it reached near its end where the closing ceremony was to be held, it was announced that the ceremony would also be held at an alternative site which was not disclosed because of security considerations.

A city spokesman defended the decision, saying that the authorities had decided to change the route taking into consideration the situation as it existed but refused to go into political repercussions. The police has done a wonderful job, he said.

## National judo from today

UNB, Dhaka

The City Bank 28th National Judo Championships will commence today at the NSC Gymnasium.

A total of 288 participants from 33 teams across the country will take part in 10 weight categories in the two-day meet.

This is the first time that those winning gold, silver and bronze will receive cash prizes of Tk 1000, Tk 500 and Tk 300 respectively.

Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Youth and Sports Mahbub Jamil will be the chief guest on the closing day on Saturday and distribute the prizes among the winners.

# Hendricks does it again

SPORTS REPORTER

**Grameenphone Academy Cup** A late flurry of wickets brightened GP-BCB

Cricket Academy's chances to take first-innings lead in the second and final four-day Test against South Africa Academy in spite of visiting batsman Reeza Hendricks's century yesterday.

Hendricks remained unbeaten on 101 in his back-to-back hundred of the series as the tourists reached 243 for seven at stumps on second day at the Beer Shreshtha Shaheed Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna.

Reeza, whose 155 went down the drains in the first Test as the South Africans crashed to an innings-defeat, remained not out on 101 to keep his side alive.

The visitors, who made a solid start with Sammy-Joe Avontuur (44) and Shadley van Schalkwyk (36), adding 67 runs for the opening stand after booking the local boys for 324, were cruising at 119-1 but lost two wickets in the space of one run.

# Match-fixing hearing Apr 13

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) member secretary MA Kabir admitted that a hearing on the Premier League match between Surjo Torun and Sonargaon, alleged to be a fixed affair, has been summoned for April 13.

But the enquiry is apparently based on hearsay with no concrete evidence from any quarter.

"There is rumour in the air. I have heard it from someone and so have the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and its technical committee," acknowledged Kabir.

The two umpires and the match referee have been asked to give their account on the match although on the match day, they did not report anything out of the ordinary," said Kabir, who also

added that none of the concerned clubs have been asked to be present at the hearing.

Match referee Hemayet Ahmed Siddiqui and on-field umpires Afzalur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman have been asked to report to the technical committee on the concerned match, although the match officials did not report anything 'untoward' after the match, held on April 3.

The technical and discipline committee will receive a report on the match after the hearing.

With the 24-run victory, Sonargaon moved to six points but that did not take them out of the relegation zone and Surjo Torun's loss made sure they did not finish fourth ahead of BKSP.

This imprudent act of setting up a hearing on word of mouth would not do any favour to the credibility of people who must cater to the needs of the game and not the clubs.

## Indo-Pak series under scrutiny?

REUTERS, Karachi

Interviews with three Pakistan players conducted by the International Cricket Council's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) related to Pakistan's tour of India at the end of 2007.

A source close to players Younis Khan, Danish Kaneria and Umar Gul told Reuters on Thursday that the questions related to an Indian man and his connection with the Pakistan team.

"The ACSU officer, Alan Peacock, inquired about the nature of the relationship some Pakistani players had with the gentleman," the source said.

"Some gifts he gave them on the recent tour and his background, and how they had come to know him."

The ICC confirmed on Wednesday that the ACSU had interviewed the players at the weekend in Lahore, and clarified in a statement the interviews were not related to any alleged breach of the ICC Code of Conduct.

"He also showed them photographs of the gentleman with some people listed as bookmakers by the ACSU. But the players made it clear to them he had never made any offers to them, nor discussed any match details with them," the source said.

The ACSU officer had also talked to banned fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar over comments made last week in a television interview, the source added.

Shoaib claimed to have been offered money on several occasions to underperform but had rejected all of them for the love of his country.

The source said Shoaib had told the ACSU that the approaches occurred in 1998, a couple of years before the ICC formed its anti-corruption unit.

"Shoaib also told him that he might have got some dates and facts wrong because he was very angry and upset when he made the claims on television shortly after being banned by the Pakistan Cricket Board."

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# India get Ishant back

## Third Test against South Africa from today

Cricket

AFP, Kanpur

India's hopes of squaring the Test series with South Africa received a boost on Thursday after key pacer Ishant Sharma was cleared to return for the third and final match.

"He (Sharma) is fit, but we have yet to decide on the team combination for the match," India skipper Anil Kumble told reporters on Thursday.

South Africa lead 1-0 in the series following their huge victory by an innings and 90 runs in the second match in Ahmedabad. The opening Test ended in a draw in Chennai.

India's pace attack lacked sharpness in the absence of the 19-year-old Sharma, who was forced to skip the first two Tests with finger and toe injuries.

Sharma rose to prominence on the contentious recent tour of Australia where he troubled batsmen with his pace and variations. He has so far grabbed 12 wickets in five Tests.

But the hosts were still sweating over the fitness of ace leg-spinner Kumble, yet to recover completely from a groin strain.

When asked whether he felt comfortable bowling in the nets, Kumble said: "Not really, but I am hoping to get better. I will have to wait before deciding anything. That will be the first call in the morning."

The Indian skipper said he was confident his team would bounce back after the disappointing performance in Ahmedabad, where the hosts were bundled out for 76 in the first innings.

"It was just one of those days when we lost 10 wickets in 20 overs. It does not happen every day. It was the one bad session we had in the last six years and we have put that behind us," said Kumble.

"We are very positive. It is not the first time that we have lost one Test in a series. We have done that

in Australia and whenever we are pushed to the wall we have performed well."

India lost the first two Tests in Australia before coming back strongly to win the third in Perth. They eventually lost the four-match series 2-1.

India have not lost a Test series at home in three years and Kumble said his side was confident of maintaining the record.

"We are very proud of our home record and we would like to keep

that intact. It is important for us to concentrate on this Test and get the right result to level the series," he said.

"We have a few plans and to ensure that we execute them. We are very confident we will be able to do that."

The pitch here is expected to favour spin, but Kumble said India needed to put in a strong all-round performance in a bid to level the series.

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DRIBBLER: India vice-captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni tries a few tricks with the ball during a training session on the eve of the third and final Test match against South Africa at the Green Park in Kanpur yesterday.

MGH

# LOOK BEYOND

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For information on Autism, contact the ACWFB offices:  
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Chittagong - Mirzapur, Muradpur, Tel: 031-443380143