



## Did U Know?

The first goalkeeper to see a red card was Gianluca Pagliuca of Italy. He was given the marching orders during a FIFA World Cup game against Norway in 1994.



**Mohammad Ashraful**  
(Bangladesh cricket captain)

"I think our performance was much better than our previous two series against New Zealand and South Africa. I believe we were competitive in the series if you considered our performance in the last two series. You know we have a long-term plan towards the World Cup of 2011."

Appearing happy at the Zia International Airport upon the Bangladesh team's arrival from Pakistan where his side lost all six matches.



## What to Watch

- BTV**  
Grameenphone Academy Cup Final  
Bangladesh v Pakistan  
Live from 9:30am
- TEN Sports**  
UEFA Champions League  
Barcelona v Man United  
Live from 12:00am (Thursday)
- SET Max**  
Indian Premier League  
Chennai Super Kings v Mumbai Indians  
Live from 7:30pm
- ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm

## Rakib stay on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Abdullah Al Rakib continued his winning run to take the solo lead in the 34th National Chess Championship at the federation hall room yesterday.

Defending champion Rakib won his third round board against FM Abu Sufian Shakil to secure three points.

GM Ziaur Rahman, IM Enamul Hossain Rajib and FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar followed the leader with 2.5 points each.

Zia drew with Rajib in the third round and Sagar beat Monir Hossain.

## Pioneer football from Friday

UNB, Dhaka

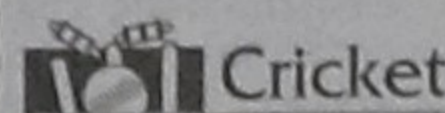
The Dhaka Metropolis Pioneer Football League will begin at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Friday.

President of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) SA Sultan, in his last public appearance as the BFF boss, will declare the Metropolis Under-16 soccer league open at 4pm through a colourful ceremony.

Seventy teams, split into five zones -- East, West, North, South and Central -- will initially compete in league basis matches.

Later, top 20 teams -- four each from five zones -- will earn the right to play in the super league. Finally, two teams will earn promotion in the Metropolis third division football league.

# Look up, Tigers



MOHAMMAD ISAM

An international team cannot just lose five one-day matches in a row at the blink of an eye. Essentially, it takes five days and fifty wickets and a thousand runs and a few missed catches before a group of individuals are trounced so badly. Basically, a lot has to go wrong before you can lose every match on a tour.

In Pakistan, everything went wrong for Bangladesh from predictably calamitous batting to the previously reliable bowling and fielding.

Batsmen played one poor shot after another and the only remedy that was on offer for this 'main headache' was to remove the head temporarily. There were not many bowling options and if there was an option available for poor fielding, it would have been applied too. Then again, it is hard to comprehend that the same individuals were so different during and before last year's World Cup. Even in the Twenty20

World Championship, cricket greats were touting Bangladesh as a dangerous side in the shorter forms of cricket. Almost the same set of individuals now look bankrupt and totally out of place in international cricket.

Batsmen now play like millionaires, let alone reading the delivery's line and length, they play shots regardless of circumstances. Fielding and bowling, our pride and saviours during hard times, have also taken a sharp downturn. Anyone who understands the nuances of the game would point to a team's fielding as the gauge that measures its mood.

All these point towards one thing: attitude. Yes, this is something that has taken a massive beating over the past 12 months or so. One would agree that too many lost games never help a team's cause but it could be the other way around too. A team lose when they play badly and, from a pragmatic point of view, have poor attitude towards their duty to the team and the game.

So when the winning attitude turns south, one perceives the

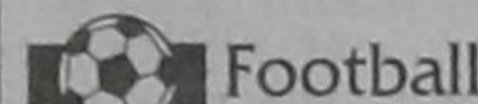
lack of leadership in the team's set-up. Clearly, that is the missing link and this is where Bangladesh has gone a few steps back after the 2007 World Cup.

It is now fair to say that Mohammad Ashraful's failings as captain has affected his batting. It is no rocket science that the pocket dynamo needs a clear mind to play his game. During this stint, Ashraful has produced a few good knocks and if he is, God forbids, dropped for a lack of leadership qualities, it will be a big blow for the future plans that are being mentioned at every given media opportunity.

It is no secret that the coaching staff has a massive role in our national set-up and it is bizarre to see them aim lower than the players.

Let's face it, no player in this side can claim to be a senior and if the team curve has to improve, someone has to put his hands up and take responsibility of the current situation and later, that individual can take all the credit for the good days, that surely lay ahead.

# Salahuddin's candidature questioned by councillor



SPORTS REPORTER

A councillor from Chittagong challenged the candidatures of Kazi Salahuddin, Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun and Golam Rabbani Helal for the April 28 elections of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

Councillor Shamsul Haque Chowdhury in a complaint against the three ace footballers on Monday night demanded that they had hidden information prescribed in section nine and ten in their respective nomination papers which was a gross violation.

The two sections actually referred to information on whether the candidate was earlier found guilty in any criminal offence, and whether the candidate was earlier convicted under the criminal

offence.

While Salahuddin, who is contesting for the presidency, and his two former national and Abahani teammates declared them innocent in the nomination form, Haque with a strong recollection of history, argued it. It might sound weird but the fact is that Haque demanded in his appeal that the three former players were landed in jail while recalling the sad day of September 21 in 1982 when four Abahani players (including the aforesaid three players) were arrested from the Bangabandhu National Stadium in charge of beating up an assistant referee during the match against Mohammedan. The next day, the then military ruler found the four players guilty in a one-day trial under the Martial Law. They were however freed from prison after 17 days following the President's mercy.

Salahuddin, the finest footballer the country has ever produced and

a man, whose dignity has never been questioned, had to live with that painful event for over two decades. But it was beyond his wildest dreams that someone would bring back that nightmare.

"I don't believe any Bangladeshi can raise this matter after 26 years as the whole nation knows what happened at that time. I don't want to believe it and it is impossible to believe that someone in the sports arena raised the question," said a shell-shocked Salahuddin.

Shamsul Haque, who certainly has nose for news, was however unavailable to give his version of the story despite repeated attempts from The Daily Star Sport to reach his cell phone.

Meanwhile, chief election commissioner Mezbah Uddin informed the reporters that the hearing would take place at the BFF Bhaban today in presence of both the complainant and the defendants.



Bangladesh women cricketers celebrate after their win against Under-16 boys team at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday. The women's team played the game as part of their build-up for the Asia Cup, beginning in Sri Lanka from April 27.

# SRK wants order



INTERNET, undated

The more Shah Rukh Khan desires order, the more there's disorder.

Indeed, the chaos which greeted the megastar at different times during his day-and-a-half trip to the city, left him quite drained.

Disorder was on view during the Kolkata Knight Riders' first home match, at the Eden on Sunday. It was pretty evident on Monday evening too, as Shah Rukh was leaving The Sonar.

First, Shah Rukh had to dodge past hysterical fans (most of them women, young and old). He did oblige some photograph-seekers, though.

Then, Shah Rukh had to admonish a securityman, who appeared to

roughly push a group of photographers and hangers-on. "No, not like that... Don't do that," he told the dazed plainclothesman.

Finally, Shah Rukh had to chide a couple of photographers who wanted to trample him and his son, Aryan. The latter, in fact, briefly lost his balance.

"There's a way of doing things, please... Don't shout and don't push," Shah Rukh said, as bodyguard Yasir reminded him that he was well behind time in leaving for the airport and catching the flight back to Mumbai.

Earlier, Shah Rukh laughed when a suggestion was made that he needed a break after a truly hectic week, a feature of which was hours of dancing at the Chinnaswamy and at the Eden in dehydrating conditions.

"In a few days, I'll be off to Paris for the unveiling of my wax statue at the Gevin Museum there... Before that, there are other com-

mitments to keep," Shah Rukh told The Telegraph.

He added: "But I'll be following what's being done at the Eden... I've set out to improve things when the next match is played there (versus Mumbai, on April 29)... As I've said, I want the whole experience to be nicer."

It's no secret, of course, that Shah Rukh swears by quality. Brand SRK simply cannot be associated with anything that's mediocre or worse.

Kudos to Shah Rukh for being sensitive towards the needs of those who pay good money for a seat, but that also reflects so poorly on those running the Cricket Association of Bengal.

Shah Rukh, understandably, chose to steer clear of the more contentious issues. For example, whether curator Kalyan Mitra should be sacked and whether he'd himself taken the initiative for an

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GM Reefat Bin Sattar (L) makes a move against Debaraj Chatterjee on the third day of the National Chess Championship at the National Sports Council yesterday.

## Academy Cup final today

SPORTS REPORTER

The GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) take on visiting Pakistan Academy in the final of the triangular Grameenphone Academy Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

State-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) will telecast the match live from 9:30am.

The visitors will start as favourites in the final as they won both the league matches quite convincingly against the home side. Pakistan lost their only game against South Africa Academy team.

On the other hand on way to the final, NCA defeated South Africa Academy team in two games.

After the final the two teams will be involved in a two four-day matches.

## Women win warm-up tie

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team managed a 13-run victory against the U-16 Private Academy selection team in a practice match at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

The women's team, which leaves for Sri Lanka on April 26, played the match as part of their preparation for the first-ever Women's Asia Cup that begins in the first week of May in the island nation.

Women's team scored 165 runs for six wickets in their share of 50 overs.

Panna Ghosh contributed 46 runs off 110 balls with the help of six fours while Rumana Ahmed made 46 off 71 deliveries that contained four boundaries and two sixes.

Masud Rana claimed two wickets for 14 runs while Nobel, Eshaque, Masud, Raihan and Shaheen took one wicket each.

In reply, the academy were bundled out for 152 in 47.3 overs.

Skipper Salma Khatun, Sukhtara, Rumana and Tithi Rani Sarker took two wickets apiece.

Shaheen was the top scorer with unbeaten 36 off 70 balls that included four fours while Raihan added 31 and Arif chipped in with 29.

## BRAC BANK CLUB CUP

## One giant set to exit

SPORTS REPORTER

The two semifinals of the Brac Bank Hockey tournament will be held at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium today.

One of the popular giants will surely make an early exit as the traditional rivals Abahani and Mohammedan meet in the second semifinal of the season's curtain-raiser tournament at 4pm.

On the other hand, another hockey powerhouse Usha Krira Chakra take on Sonali Bank in the first semifinal at 2:30pm.

Mohammedan has a very young side this season as most of the players are from BKSP and made a forlorn start in the tournament when they shared points with Sadharan Bima but managed a hard-fought victory on way to the last four.

Star-studded Abahani however moved into the semifinals with comfortable victories except their dramatic draw against Usha, who for their part got relatively easy opponents to claim their berth.

# Ws sparkle for Royals



CRICINFO, undated

Australian domination in the Indian Premier League (IPL) continued as the two Shanes -- Watson and Warne -- starred with bat and ball respectively to power Rajasthan Royals to their maiden victory in the tournament, fittingly in front of their home crowd at the Sai Man Singh Stadium on Monday.

Warne's 3 for 19 restricted Kings XI Punjab to what appeared to be a par score of 166 but the target was overhauled fairly comfortably, thanks to a fiery 49-ball 76 by Watson, supported by an unbeaten 36 by the young Ravindra Jadeja.

Rajasthan were pegged back early in their chase, losing their openers with the score on 19. Sreesanth induced a thin edge off his first delivery to send back Mohammad Kaif, while Yusuf Pathan returned a leading edge while trying to whip Brett Lee across the line. Kamran Akmal, fresh off a Twenty20 international for Pakistan against Bangladesh on Sunday, fended off a verbal assault from Sreesanth before falling to a well-judged catch by Piyush Chawla running backwards at deepish mid-on.

The fall of the third wicket put Watson on the defensive briefly. Sensing the need to build a partnership, he held one end up and waited

patiently for the bad deliveries. Irfan Pathan got a couple to beat the bat but Punjab weren't prepared for the onslaught that was to come. One particular heave from Watson was so powerful it split the bat in half and yet just carried on over the long-on boundary. Wielding a new bat, Watson took on James Hopes, lofting one over his head on one knee, before nearly decapitating Irfan with a straight drive.

That shot dented not only Irfan's psyche but also that of the Punjab side as Watson and Darren Lehmann added 51 off 39 balls. The partnership got the home crowd more animated as Watson approached his fifty by launching one over the roof at cow corner. However, just before the stroke of 100, Lehmann was squared up by an Irfan delivery which jagged back in sharply.

The dismissal brought Jadeja, one of India's Under-19 stars, to the middle and his reputation as a big hitter was justified with some cracking strokes through the off side. As if armed with a license to destroy, he flat-batted Sreesanth past the covers before lashing the same bowler past deep backward point. Lee too wasn't spared and the ball scorched to the boundary almost as quickly as the ball left his hand. The pair brought up their 50 stand off a mere 29 balls before Watson aptly sealed the deal with a whip past midwicket.

Punjab had the luck with the toss but their power-packed top order, boosted by Mahela Jayawardene's inclusion, couldn't quite push on, with the exception

of Yuvraj Singh. The flat deck left very little margin for error and the Punjab batsmen picked up boundaries aplenty by merely driving through the line, adjusting easily to the length of the ball. Karan Goel and Kumar Sangakkara showed scant respect to Siddharth Trivedi and Munaf Patel, fetching boundaries regularly. Unfortunately, both perished against the run of play. Munaf had the last laugh, sending Goel's off stump out of the ground with a yorker while Warne ended Sangakkara's eight-ball cameo with a sharp return catch. Hopes, fresh after his 71 in the opening game, became Warne's second victim after attempting a slog. Hopes was subdued by the fall of wickets at the other end and his attempt at hitting out only cost him his wicket.

Yuvraj, the Punjab captain, signalled his arrival with a blazing straight drive off his first ball. Rajasthan however had only themselves to blame for not halting his charge. Lehmann spilled a skier at mid-off when Yuvraj was on 15 and there was further shock when Mohammad Kaif, one of the safest catchers, made a complete mess of a straightforward chance at point with Yuvraj at 29.

Yuvraj greeted Trivedi's return with a merciless bluff past extra cover before taking on the spinners. Dinesh Salunke and Yusuf were clattered on the roof over deep midwicket, his third six bringing up his half-century. However, it was 'that' man Warne again who stemmed the rot, cleverly cutting

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Action from yesterday's Metropolis Premier Division Volleyball league match between Power Development Board and Fire Service at the Volleyball Court adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium.