

## Biman win a nail-baiter Semi line-ups complete

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinal line-ups for the Dhaka Premier Division Twenty20 Tournament has been completed as Mohammedan, Gazi Tank and Biman won their respective encounters yesterday. Abahani will now meet Gazi Tank while Biman, who had national speedster Shahadat Hossain's batting skills to thank for a thrilling win, will face Mohammedan in the semifinals on February 3 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. Originally scheduled to be held on February 1, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has shifted the date for the semis and has billed the final for February 4 at Mirpur.

The day's most entertaining match came at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur where Biman registered a last over, one-wicket victory over Cricket Coaching School (CCS).

It was an intense competition of bat and ball as CCS assembled 101 runs for the loss of seven wickets in their twenty overs, thanks to some tight bowling by Biman's Shahadat and Mahbubul Alam. However, right arm leg-spinner Nabil Samad came down heavy on the batting team as he spun a web picking up four wickets giving away just 11 runs. In response, Biman struggled and at one stage were 49 for the loss of six wickets. Only two batsmen of the first nine managed to reach double figures for Biman, but they were saved by the last minute heroics of Shahadat, who scored a rapid 22 of 16 balls to help his team home with just one ball to spare. Shahadat hit one boundary and one powerful straight six, which also brought him the man of the match award. CCS's Ripon bowled magnificently to pick up four wickets but it turned out to be in vain.

In other matches, Abahani maintained their unbeaten run in the tournament when they emerged victorious in their last group match against Victoria at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday. Abahani were all-out for 135 with all rounder Nadif Chowdhury top-scoring with 30 with the help of three boundaries. Victoria's Sharafullah was the pick of the bowlers, taking three wickets for 20 runs in his four overs. The Sky Blues then restricted Victoria to 124-7 through the fiery bowling of paceman Ziaur Rahman who scalped four wickets for just 17 runs. Opener Amit Mojumdar top scored with a blistering 54 of 40 deliveries smashing five boundaries and one six but was unable to add to Victoria's tally of two points.

At BKSP, Mohammedan had the last laugh over Partex as they beat their opponents by nine runs to seal their place in Tuesday's semi-final against Biman. Being put into bat first, the Motijheel giants reached 136-5. Suhrawardi Shuvo was the only notable scorer as he made a bustling 37 of 25 balls with just one boundary. Openers Mehrab Hossain Opee and Wasiur Rahman gave Partex a good start by putting up a 55 run partnership but Mohammedan bowlers Dollar Mahmud and Murad Khan picked up two wickets apiece to restrict the opponent to 127-5.

Mohammad Ashraful-led Gazi Tank went

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## Dido promises results

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Brazilian coach Edson Dido Silva signed a one-year contract with the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) in a simple ceremony at the BFF House yesterday.

The 46-year-old Dido, who arrived in the capital on January 24, said after the signing that he believes in winning matches.

"Well, I am from a Brazilian background with a mixture of Dutch football. I like to work with both, and for me football is not all about tactics and systems, I believe in winning and for that you have to play offensive football," said Dido.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, vice presidents Badal Roy, Shaukat Ali Khan Jahangir and technical director Shahidur Rahman Shantoo were present in the function. The BFF also renewed the contract with local coach Shafiqul Islam Manik for another year.

"It was our commitment to

appoint a foreign coach and now it is fulfilled. Now we want to see Bangladesh as a top team of this region," said the BFF boss adding that they will try their best to provide all the facilities to the new coach.

"The extension will depend on both parties satisfaction," he said when asked about whether there is any possibility to extend Dido's tenure.

On the other hand Dido said he was happy with the

signing and his first focus would be to prepare the team for the AFC Challenge Cup in April.

Happy to be officially appointed as the Bangladesh national coach, Dido said: "Well I am a not an unknown person to Bangladesh football as I was the coach of Vietnam when Bangladesh played against them in Dammam back in 2001, I have become

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SIZZLING SERENA: America's Serena Williams looks up to the heavens after defeating Dinara Safina of Russia in the Australian Open women's singles final in Melbourne yesterday. Serena needed only forty odd minutes to wrap up the match with a score of 6-0, 6-3.

PHOTO: AFP

## Serena slays Safina

Reclaims world No. 1 ranking

AFP, Melbourne



Serena Williams thrashed Russia's Dinara Safina 6-0, 6-3 to win her fourth Australian Open title Saturday, bringing up her 10th Grand Slam and reclaiming the world number one ranking on the way.

In one of the most lop-sided deciders ever, the American utterly dominated third seed Safina, allowing her opponent to win only eight points in the first set and claiming the championship in less than an hour.

"I'm so excited... I clearly love playing here and I get great support here. I don't get that every place I go," Williams said, after winning the first women's night final played in the Rod Laver Arena.

Williams, the second seed, emphatically backed up her pre-tournament comments that she was the best women's tennis player in the world and will now officially reclaim the top ranking from Serbia's Jelena Jankovic.

She also became the highest ever prize money winner in women's sport during the tournament and took the women's doubles title with her sister Venus on Friday.

Williams said she was thrilled to join the likes of Steffi Graf and Martina Navratilova in the elite group of women with 10 or more Grand Slams.

"I idolised Steffi Graf," she said. "When I played her I was like 'Oh My God, it's Steffi Graf' and Martina Navratilova was someone who was my role model, so when I think of these greats I don't really think of my name, I think of them."

"I think people are starting to think of me (in those terms), which is uber-cool, I can't even get my mind around that."

Safina, whose brother Marat Safin won the men's title in 2005, had aimed to enter the history books as the part of the only brother-sister combination to hold Grand Slam titles.

Instead, she narrowly avoided entering the record books as being on the wrong end of the worst drubbing in a final in the tournament's history, saying Williams left her feeling like "a ball boy on the court today."

"She played exactly the way she had to play and she was much more aggressive and she was just taking time away from me," the 22-year-old said. "She didn't let me come into the match."

Only Graf in 1994 and Margaret Smith in 1962 have posted more comprehensive victories in the decider, both winning 6-0, 6-2.

Safina put the loss down to stage fright, saying Williams' experience proved a crucial factor, but vowed to dust herself off

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## Umpire Ponir no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Former umpire Wazed Ali Khan Ponir breathed his last on Friday evening. He was 59.

Ponir had an illustrious career as an umpire and officiated in matches under the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) from 1979 to 1998.

BCB president and directors of the board condoled the death of former national pool umpire and extended their deepest sympathies to the family of the deceased.



PHOTO: STAR

New Bangladesh football coach Brazilian Edson Dido Silva (2nd from L) makes a point during a press briefing at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Bhawan yesterday.

## India go 2-0 up

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's Thilina Kandamby smashed a solid 93 not out under pressure, but failed to stop India from posting a 15-run victory in the second one-day international here Saturday.

The tourists restricted Sri Lanka to 241 after scoring 256-9 in a day-night match, which was held up for five minutes during the hosts' innings after Indian fielder Ishant Sharma was struck by an object from the stands.

The 20-year-old paceman Sharma (4-57) was the bowling star for India, who now lead 2-0 in the five-match series.

Indian fast bowlers Zaheer Khan, Praveen Kumar and Sharma did the early damage, exploiting the conditions well under lights during their sharp opening spells to reduce the hosts to 36-3 in the eighth over.

Left-handed Kandamby sustained his team's hopes with a 100-run stand for the fourth wicket with skipper Mahela Jayawardene, who regained form with 52 -- his first half-century in 14 one-dayers.

But the asking rate kept climbing despite impressive knocks from Jayawardene and Kandamby, with Sri Lanka needing 91 to win with six wickets in hand in the last 10 overs.

India strengthened their position when man-of-the-match Sharma removed Chamara Kapugedera (31) and Farveez Maharoof (seven) in successive overs.

Kandamby, playing only his ninth one-day, hit nine fours in his 129-ball knock for his second half-century.

India earlier rode on Yuvraj Singh's 66 to post a competitive total after electing to bat.

The middle-order batsman's 38th half-century came after his side had lost three wickets for 83 runs. He steered the innings with an 85-run stand for the fourth wicket with Suresh Raina (29).

Yuvraj applied himself remarkably well on a slow pitch and reached his half-century in style, driving off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran through the covers for a four.

Yuvraj hit one six and seven fours in his 88-ball knock before falling to a dubious decision, adjudged leg-before by Sri Lankan umpire Gamini Silva off paceman Nuwan Kulasekara.

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## Arambagh blank Ctg MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Arambagh Krira Sangha blanked Chittagong Mohammedan 2-0 in the Citycell B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With this outcome, Arambagh avenged their first leg 1-0 away defeat against the same opponents.

Arambagh improved their tally to 14 points from 18 matches while Chittagong Mohammedan remained on 27 points from 17 outings.

The winners took a 1-0 lead in the first half through a 34th minute strike from Mohamed while Turjo doubled the margin in the 73rd minute.

Meanwhile, the fixture has been badly shifted, as the Abahani-Brothers match will now be held at the same venue tomorrow.



Jurgen Klinsmann

(Bayern Munich soccer coach) "He has been impressive, he has trained at the highest level and played the same way. We have had plenty of success with him and is the sort of player we need."

On Ze Roberto.



STAR Cricket

Australia v New Zealand

First ODI (D/N)

Live from 10:30am

STAR Sports

Australian Open

Live from 11:00am

ESPN

English Premier League

Newcastle v Sunderland

Live from 7:25pm

Liverpool v Chelsea

Live from 9:55pm

Primera Liga

Sporting v Sevilla

Live from 2:00am (Monday)

## Jamal surprises pros

SPORTS REPORTER

Nineteen-year old Jamal Hossain Mollah has emerged as Bangladesh's new golfing sensation after winning the City Bank - Dhaka Bank Bangladesh Open 2009 by five strokes at the Kurmitola Golf Club on Saturday.

Jamal, who is still an amateur, produced a fighting even-par 72 on the final day to finish with a 13 under par 275 and thereby wrap up the title ahead of his more illustrious professionals.

Indian professionals Harendra Gupta, Shamim Khan and Sanjay Kumar finished joint second with a score of 8 under par 280, with Gupta prevailing in a three-way playoff to finish as the best professional.

An elated Jamal was greeted with thunder-

ous applause from the galleries at Kurmitola after he sunk his final putt on the 18th hole.

He said, "It is an amazing feeling to win one of the biggest tournaments ever to have been staged in my country. This whole week has been like a dream for me."

After starting the day brightly the youngster had lost some of the momentum to the more experienced Shamim, but his exuberance and tenacity paid off in the end, as the challenge from the Indian tapered off.

An astonishing birdie on the seventh signalled his intentions of seeing out his top spot status but despite some hiccoughs along the way, particularly on the 11th and 12th holes, he managed to claim a landmark victory.

"I was little nervous at the start today when Shamim [Khan] made a birdie on the first. Nevertheless, I was quite relaxed by the time we

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangladesh's golfing pride Jamal Hossain Mollah receives the winners' trophy from Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman (R) during a presentation ceremony of the City Bank-Dhaka Bank Bangladesh Open at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

## Khelaghar, Kalabagan in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Khelaghar and Kalabagan romped into the final of the First Division Twenty20 Cricket League with comfortable wins in the semifinals at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The final will be take place at the same venue tomorrow. Khelaghar registered an eight-wicket victory over Indira Road in the first semifinal.

Indira Road were all out for 72 runs in 19 overs after deciding to bat first with Mohammad Aminul (16) and Manik Barua (15) reaching double figures.

Saker Ahmed, Morshed Shawon and Masum Khan claimed two wickets each conceding 7, 14 and 15 runs respectively.

Khelaghar reached the target with 75 runs for the loss of two wickets in just 16 overs.

Aslam Ali top scored with an unbeaten 38 off 48 balls that featured six fours while Riazul Islam remained 26 not out off 32 deliveries, including three fours.

In the second semifinal,

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## A tribute to Ponir

SHAKIL KASEM

The usual conversations I have with Tanjeeb Ahsan Saad are almost always on the wrong side of 11pm. It was therefore quite a surprise, and certainly not a pleasant one at that, to have received a text message from Saad early in the morning yesterday. Ponir, who for years together had walked out to take his place behind the stumps at 10 each morning, to say "Play" was to have his janaza, at 10 in the morning. The timing was eerie.

The mind rolled remorselessly down memory lane, to visions of legendary umpires of yesteryears, the Badsha Shirazis, the Reza-e-Karims, the Ghias Bhaies, the Bazlu Bhaies, and finding his way about them the portly, cherubic ever smiling, ever pleasantly charming Ponir. At a time when umpires fees were a pittance, Ponir and his colleagues would brave the sun and rain, not to speak of errand and at times unreasonable supporters of teams, to shepherd the game of cricket in Bangladesh. To paraphrase a cliché, too many of us to count, were indebted to these very few stalwarts and unsung heroes of our cricket.

As a captain, I have had to deal with Ponir more times than I can remember. What I do remember is that his cheery smile never left his face, even after a hard day in the field. He was fair, he was firm and above all he was friendly to every cricketer who came his way. It is a pity and certainly a shame that we never had the time to give

ary, spare a thought if you will for the Ponirs of the world, who sacrificed potential careers in other fields, and their families, just so they could belong to that special fraternity that made up and grew to what is now Bangladesh cricket.

Ponir's death has affected me, more than I can explain to myself. He brings back memories of that easy, laid back old world of cricket that we knew and came to embrace and love. He was one of us, a cricket personality whose passing will surely be painful and poignant. But as usual life will go on in the same frenetic pace that is now Bangladesh cricket. In spite of his easy-going manner, Ponir would have approved.

But despair not my dear departed friend. Sleep well until we wake you up for one final game in that great stadium in the sky. For sure, in another time and at another place, we are all destined to meet again.

(Shakil Kasem is a former cricketer who also served Bangladesh Cricket Board as its development committee chairman).



WAZED ALI KHAN PONIR

Ponir and his colleagues the respect and honour and above all the dues this game should owe to them. In these days of TV umpires and astronomical figures in dollars being paid to umpires on the field and beyond the bound-