



Mohammedan's new Nigerian recruit John Goodwin (2nd from L) scores the opening goal of their Citycell Super Cup match against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

## PAKISTAN'S TOUR BCB knows govt decision today

SPORTS REPORTER

With the wait over, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) makes a final decision about the postponed limited-overs home series against Pakistan today.

"Tomorrow [Tuesday] it is the cut off time for us and we are expecting a decision from the government on this issue, be it a yes or no," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus yesterday.

The board placed a revised schedule for the series after the government instruction to postpone the tour on March 6, a day before Pakistan were scheduled to arrive in Dhaka to play two Twenty20 games and five ODIs, due to security reasons.

According to the revised schedule, the board wants to stage it from March 26 to April 10. But to stage the series within that timeframe the board needs an immediate go-ahead signal because of time constraint; otherwise it would not be possible for Nimbus, which holds the TV rights, to bring in the equipment for live coverage.

"We will have to confirm Nimbus as well as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) by tomorrow [Tuesday]. And beyond that deadline it is not possible to hold the series because of other international commitments," said Jalal.

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful and his deputy Mashrafe Bin Mortaza are scheduled to take part in the multi-million-dollar

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## Light penalty on Kalabagan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) disciplinary committee on Sunday suspended a Kalabagan cricketer and fined the club's manager for creating anarchy during their First Division League match against Indira Road on Friday.

The disciplinary committee fined Kalabagan manager Punnya with Tk 10,000 while slapped a one-match ban on Ashiquzzaman.

It was learnt that the disciplinary committee also cautioned match referee Morshed Alam for not taking the case into trial immediately after the match that Kalabagan won by two runs.

The match came under scrutiny with charges being labelled against the winning team officials for intimidating the on-field umpires in an effort to win favourable decisions at the Dhaka University ground.

As Brothers kept missing chance after chance, Mohammedan sat back to hold on to a draw that was enough for them to win the group.

After the match, Mohammedan coach Maruf admitted his team's poor show.

"Brothers Union looked like a very charged unit and dominated the game. Overall, we

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## Torun march on Hot battle for Super League places

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Surjo Torun maintained their fairy-tale run in the Premier Cricket League with a four-wicket victory over Young Pegasus at the BKSP in Savar yesterday.

Saqlain Sajib, with a five-wicket haul, fashioned the easy win for the lightweights-turned-title contenders. The left-arm spinner from Rajshahi took 5-37 as Pegasus were dismissed for 153 runs that Surjo Torun chased down in 46.2 overs for the loss of six wickets.

While Torun's eighth win in ten games strongly placed them in the second position with Bangladesh Biman on 16 points each, two points shy of leaders Abahani, elsewhere victories of Partex and Old DOHS heat up the race for the three remaining Super League slots.

Partex brightened their chances for a place in the six-team Super League with a comfortable seven-wicket victory over winless City Club at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. The victory improved their tally to 12 points to share third spot with Gazi Tank.

DOHS returned to winning track with a 33-run success against Victoria at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. DOHS raised their collection to ten points from as many matches.

With two teams tied at 12 points, Mohammedan in an embarrassing position on 11 points and DOHS breathing down their neck, it would be an interesting four-way battle for the remaining Super League slots when the last

round of the first phase starts today.

Mohammedan will have to beat Gazi Tank at Fatullah today to avoid an ignominious exit from the title race. Defending champions Abahani on the other hand will lock horns with Birman at Mirpur in a battle for the top spot.

### SURJO TORUN- PEGASUS

Pegasus made a disastrous start after deciding to bat as they lost both openers for 17 runs. The resistance then came from Rahat Sadek (31), Iftekhar Nayem (32) and Abul Bashar (28) but their effort was

not good enough to put up a fighting total on the board.

Sajib caused the main damage while Sabir Khan took two wickets for 25 runs in 7 overs.

In reply, Surjo Torun rode on Zunaid Siddiqui's half-century to reach 157 runs for six wickets.

The Tigers opener smashed five fours and two sixes during his 94-ball 57 while Hannan Sarker made second team highest 25 off 37 balls with two fours.

### PARTEX-CITY

City Club continued their poor

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Old DOHS captain Mehrab Hossain in full swing on way to scoring an unbeaten knock of 77 against Victoria in the Premier Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## CT in South Africa

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday officially named South Africa as the new hosts of the biennial Champions Trophy this year.

South Africa was recommended last week by cricket's governing body in the wake of incidents in Pakistan which have effectively put hosting cricket matches in that country off the agenda.

The elite eight-nation event was moved out of Pakistan after South Africa refused to tour Pakistan, while Australia, England and New Zealand also voiced concerns over touring the troubled country.

In addition, the March 3 attack in Lahore on the Sri Lankan team bus has further set back any chance of Pakistan hosting an event in the near future.

A statement by the ICC said: "With the need to minimise risk and create certainty around the event, the meeting agreed to recommend that CSA (Cricket South Africa) be sought as the alternative host, with Wanderers and Centurion as the venues, provided agreement on the financial arrangements can be reached."

"Originally planned for Pakistan, the venue for the event had to be shifted due to security concerns."

ICC President David Morgan said: "I think the Board has made a sensible decision that will give the event every chance of success. We now

have clarity on the subject and we can make firm plans for what is going to be a great spectacle of ODI cricket."

Also vying for the event had been venues in Australia, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.

Sri Lanka was ruled out as a possible host after concerns were expressed over weather conditions in Colombo during the dates set aside for the tournament.

The ICC said: "This is especially relevant given that the length of this year's ICC Champions Trophy has been reduced to a short, sharp 12 days as on that basis there would be no room for reserves."

Morgan added: "I would like to thank Sri Lanka Cricket for its commitment to offer an alternative to Pakistan. And also, I want to acknowledge its willingness to step aside in this matter. I'd also like to thank CSA for putting its hand up and offering to host this event."

An "impressive" submission from the United Arab Emirates narrowly missed out, according to ICC Chief Executive Haroon Lorgat who said: "Although not successful on this occasion, I have no doubt Abu Dhabi and Dubai will be the scene for top-level international cricket in the future and I certainly would not rule out the possibility of an ICC event being hosted there at some stage."

The ICC added: "With Wanderers and Centurion, Cricket South Africa can provide two world-class venues in what is effectively one location and as we know from the ICC World Twenty20 2007, weather conditions in

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## IPL still in limbo

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Cricket's lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) hung in the balance Monday as talks with the government on security matters failed to resolve match dates.

"There has been no decision," secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India N Srinivasan told reporters after a 90-minute meeting of senior IPL administrators with federal home ministry officials here.

"The home ministry conveyed its concerns and we also explained our views and the concerns of the various stakeholders. I don't want to say anything more."

Less than a month remains before the scheduled April 10 opening of the second season of the multi-million-dollar Twenty20 league that features some of the world's leading cricketers.

The government last week rejected a revised IPL schedule on the grounds that it could not provide adequate security to the tournament because it overlapped with general elections.

The tournament is due to be held April 10 to May 24, while the parliamentary elections take place across the country in five phases from April 16 to May 13 with counting of votes on May 16.

The government wanted the 59-match

schedule to be adjusted in such a way that states hosting games do not have to pull out security forces on election duty to guard the tournament.

"We told them it will not be possible to provide central paramilitary forces for the IPL because of the elections," home ministry spokesman Onkarmal Kedia told local media on Monday.

"We want them to draw up a schedule after consulting state governments on the dates when they can provide security. The ministry will take a decision after receiving a new schedule."

In light of the attacks in Mumbai in November and on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan earlier this month, fears have been expressed that the IPL may also be a target for militants.

Another rejection of the schedule by the government is almost certain to lead to the tournament's cancellation this year since there is no other window for the six-week event in an overcrowded international cricket calendar.

The tournament cannot go beyond May 24 because players need time to prepare for the World Twenty20 Championships starting in England on June 5.

Although the IPL has hired a private South African security firm to liaise with local authorities, police and paramilitary forces will still be required to protect the cricketers, officials and fans.



KEEPING AWAY FROM CRICKET! Master India batsman Sachin Tendulkar enjoys a game of football while training at the Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. The first Test between New Zealand and India begins tomorrow.