

Govt no to Pak series

SPORTS REPORTER

The government has decided not to go ahead with the postponed limited-overs home series against Pakistan.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarkar revealed the government decision after a meeting with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) high-ups at his residence last night.

"After the Pikhana events, our national security is not yet full-proof. In these circumstances, it is not possible to invite any foreign team," Ahad Ali Sarkar told reporters.

"That's why the tour of Pakistan team has been suspended for now," he added.

The BCB was forced to postpone the series following the carnage in Dhaka's BDR headquarters on February 25 as well as the terror attack on the Sri Lanka cricket team bus in Lahore on March 3.

The BCB then prepared a revised schedule to get the government's green signal but finally it has postponed the tour yesterday.

Nat'l volleyball League opens

SPORTS REPORTER

The Nakoshi KC blanked Hobokhali KC 3-0 in the opening match of the Rangs National Volleyball League at Narail yesterday.

Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, Chairman of tournament sponsor Rangs Group, declared the meet open.

Bangladesh Volleyball Federation officials and DC and Police Super of Narail were also present.

Abahani flying high

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

An understrength Abahani put on yet another clinical display to finish the first phase campaign of the Premier Cricket League with a high note when they handed a 38-run defeat to Biman at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

And Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's side proved they are strong enough by winning two big encounters in a row without five front-line bowlers.

Fresh from a five-wicket victory over their bitter rivals Mohammedan, the defending champions floored title contenders Biman in a high-scoring game to romp into the Super League with a four-point advantage.

The captain himself was the biggest advantage for the holders as country's number one pacesman Mashrafe, instructed not to bowl in full effort because of a back injury, not only contributed with a three-wicket haul with his off-spin but also inspired his team with some staggering diving saves.

The ordinary spin attack led by Mashrafe

was good enough for Abahani to defend a challenging total of 269-7 as Biman were all out for 231 in 46 overs despite a brilliant 78-run knock from young Zahurul Islam.

But before that, Tamim Iqbal and Indian recruit Rashmi Ranjan Parida set the tone by smashing half centuries in the Abahani innings after being sent into bat which gave their depleted attack some sort of relief.

Tamim and inform Rony Talukdar made a cautious start before the latter edged to Sajjad Kadir off national pacer Mahbul Alam on 25. Dashing left-hander Tamim, however, looked well set before losing his temper as the Chittagonian mistimed a hook against spinner Nabil Samad only to reach the safe hands of

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

POINTS TABLE					
	Played	Won	Lost	Tie	Points
Abahani	11	10	1	0	20
Biman	11	8	3	0	16
Surjo Torun	10	8	2	0	16
Mohammedan	11	6	4	1	13
Gazi Tank	11	6	5	0	12
Partex	10	6	4	0	12



PHOTO STAR

MAN-OF-THE-MATCH: Mohammedan's left-arm spinner Sajedul Islam (C) is the toast of his teammates after he took a wicket of his three victims during the Premier Cricket League match against Gazi Tank at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium in Narayanganj yesterday.

MSC puncture Gazi Tank Confirm Super Six berth in final hurdle

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

A highly anticipated contest involving Mohammedan and Gazi Tank turned into a complete mismatch when the Black and Whites thrashed the otherwise durable water tankers by 174 runs in a crucial Premier Cricket League match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The outcome of the match ensured Mohammedan's passage into the Super League along with their vanquished. The other teams already in the Super Six are holders Abahani, Surjo Torun, Bangladesh Biman and Partex.

In what was the lowest innings total so far in this year's league, Gazi Tank with their star-studded line up collapsed to a shocking 53 in

the face of some disciplined Mohammedan bowling.

The match was of special significance for Mohammedan who needed a win to stay alive.

Batting first, Mohammedan started off on Jayasuriya's strong shoulders who got off to a blitzkrieg start which he is so well known for. In the fifth over, Jayasuriya hit three boundaries and a towering six over mid-wicket off Mukter Ali to set the scarcely attended stadium ablaze. But it was short lived, as Tigers pacesman Rubel Hossain trapped him in front with a back of a length delivery which kept straight and hardly rose above the shin. At 39-1, Shamsur Rahman Shuvo stepped in and got off the field within ten minutes after he started feeling unwell.

In came Farhad Hossain, who lasted just seven balls before fending off a wide delivery to

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



PHOTO STAR

Abahani's Indian recruit Rashmi Ranjan Parida whacks one through the offside on way to hammering a fine 79 against Biman in a Premier Cricket League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Jayasuriya hails Sangakkara

SPORTS REPORTER

Sri Lanka marvel Sanath Jayasuriya has hailed new captain Kumar Sangakkara, considering him to be the fittest man for the job right now.

Jayasuriya believes that Sangakkara's experience as a vice-captain with the team for a long time makes him the ideal candidate for the Lankan hot spot.

"He's an intelligent guy and has been the vice-captain for so long. He has been performing well in his capacity as the deputy and he doesn't need much advice on it and I know that he is going to do a good job," said Jayasuriya after yesterday's Premier League match between Mohammedan

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Cricket? Not really

BISHWAJIT ROY

What happened during the Premier Cricket League match between table-toppers Abahani and Bangladesh Biman at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday was not a good sign for our cricket.

Fans sitting in close proximity abused and hurled objects like water bottles at players of the rival team, some over-enthusiastic players were seen trying to chase those unruly fans with bat in hand like a sword, umpires in the middle denied a batsman a runner after a genuine complaint that he had a cramp. And worst was an aggrieved player, sitting on the bench, ran on to the playing area to protest the decision forgetting the code of conduct.

Thankfully despite those bad incidents the match finished peacefully. But questions have been raised against the security arrangements at the premier venue of the country and the disciplinary aspect.

Supporters got free access to areas they were not supposed to be allowed during and after the game.

Abahani fans, standing very close to the Biman dressing room, were seen hurling abusive language and throwing water bottles towards the players. They were particularly

hostile against Abahani's last year captain Tushar Imran creating chaos for a while.

Tushar, in retaliation, ran towards the fans aggressively, which was totally unacceptable. Former national and Biman opener Javed Omar's contribution in the match was 13. It was still acceptable. But what he did on his return to the dressing room was shocking. He ran towards the fans along with Tushar wielding a bat that he should have used more judiciously while he was in the middle.

On top of that the veteran Javed entered the ground to charge umpire Nadir Shah after the man in uniform did not allow Zahurul Islam a runner. Nadir did not speak after the match but it was understandable that Zahurul was not a good actor like Minhazul Abedin Nannu or aware of how to convince an umpire to immediately get a runner in the case of a cramp. He was however allowed to have a runner two overs after his first complaint.

After the match that Abahani won by 38 runs, match referee Zahid Razzaque Masum summoned both Javed and Tushar and only

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3



Did U Know?

Pedro Galica, at the age of 52, cycled from his home in Argentina to Mexico for the FIFA 1986 World Cup, only to find on arrival that he couldn't afford to get in. While he was trying to haggle for a ticket, thieves stole his bike.



TALK TURKEY



John Terry
(Chelsea captain)
"I don't see myself leaving Chelsea, ever. I love this club a lot. I have been here since I was 14 and I don't want to leave."

What to WATCH

Neo Cricket
New Zealand v India
First Test, Day One
Live from 4:00am
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



Premier Div Cricket League
Surjo Torun v Partex
Venue: BKSP
BKSP v Young Pegasus
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

India start favourites Hamilton Test begins today

Cricket

AFP, Hamilton

India regroup after outplaying New Zealand in the one-day series with an even more ominous line-up for the first Test starting here Wednesday.

With Sachin Tendulkar appearing to be over a stomach strain that restricted his limited-over appearances, and the injection of fellow legends Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman, this is an Indian side stacked with run-makers.

Having won the one-dayers 3-1, with

Virender Sehwag slaughtering the New Zealand attack, India start as firm favourites to win their first Test series in New Zealand in 40 years.

"We're up against it," was New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori's frank assessment on the eve of the first of three Tests.

Although the green tinge on the Seddon Park wicket will give the bowlers hope on the opening session the pitch should favour the batsmen for the remainder of the five days.

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni prefers to bat first but said he would wait until the toss here as the weather conditions could influence his final decision.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



PHOTO AFP

I WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO CATCH: India superstar Sachin Tendulkar enjoys a moment with Josh, the son of coach Gary Kirsten, during a practice session at the Sedan Park Stadium in Hamilton yesterday.



PHOTO STAR

A CDDM official (4th from L) tries to restrain a furious Biman batsman Javed Omar from having a go at Abahani fans (not in picture) on the stands during the sides' Premier Cricket League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

JFA to offer youth coach to BFF

SPORTS REPORTER

Japan Football Association (JFA) will provide a youth coach for Bangladesh this year, informed Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin yesterday.

The BFF chief confirmed this after his meeting with former Japanese international footballer Tsuyoshi Kitazawa, who arrived in Dhaka yesterday for a five-day trip to observe JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) activities in Bangladesh.

Kitazawa, an ambassador of JFA, is an official supporter of JICA and won 58 caps for the Japan national football during 1991-99. He also has a winner's medal in the 1992 Asian Cup Football.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Semifinalists urged to behave

SPORTS REPORTER

The organisers urged the four semifinalists of Citycell Super Cup's Cup stage to keep cool during the last four battles.

Abahani will take on Brothers Union in the first leg of the first semifinal tomorrow while Dhaka Mohammedan meet Chittagong Mohammedan in the second semifinal on Friday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The winners of the eight-team event will pocket Tk one crore, the biggest ever prize money in history of the country's domestic football. The runners-up will get Tk 20 lakh.

There had been some controversies, mainly due to poor refereeing in the group stage, which concluded on Monday. Brothers and Mohammedan both have complained about refereeing but the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) would not be able to bring foreign referees for the first leg semis, confirmed tournament committee chairman Harunur Rashid yesterday.

The BFF has already appealed to the AFC for foreign referees but due to international commitment, most of the top referees in Asia are now busy.

It is likely that foreign imports will conduct the second leg

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Stanfords in tax trouble

AFP, Chicago

Disgraced cricket mogul and financier Allen Stanford and his wife owe at least 227 million dollars in back taxes, US tax officials said in court filings Monday.

The Texas billionaire's assets, along with those of his various financial groups, are frozen pending the outcome of a civil lawsuit in which securities officials accuse him of perpetuating a 9.2 billion dollar fraud.

The Internal Revenue Service asked the federal judge overseeing the case to add it to the lengthy line of Stanford's creditors and warned the bill could be even higher because Stanford has not yet filed his 2007 tax returns.

The IRS said in a motion filed on Friday that Stanford

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3