

## T20 meet in May!

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to stage a T20 tournament involving the Dhaka Premier League clubs as part of the national team's preparation for the Twenty20 World Cup in England in June.

Although the date for the tournament is yet to be finalised, it is expected that the event would take place sometime in May after the CCDDM Cup, which will follow the ongoing Premier Division Cricket League.

The Premier League is scheduled to be completed on April 5 and the three-day CCDDM Cup involving the six top Premier League clubs will run till end of May.

"We have a plan to arrange a Twenty20 tournament prior

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## City sink into Div I

SPORTS REPORTER

Mirpur minnows City Club has dropped down onto the Dhaka First Division League when they lost to Victoria by four wickets in the relegation phase of the Premier Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

After winning the toss, Victoria surprisingly opted to field first but did full justice to their decision bowling out City for 116 with half the overs left in the innings. Opening bowler Waskurni Polish and leg spinner Akil Arshad took three wickets apiece to rattle City's innings. Arman Haider

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## John Dyson

(West Indies cricket coach)  
"It's my responsibility, I accept it. I have apologised to the team, it's all I can do. It was a bad mistake. It's extremely disappointing."

While admitting his mathematical error which handed England a one-run win in the opening one-day international on Friday.



### BTv

Super Cup Football (Cup Group, Return Semifinal)  
Abahani v Brothers  
Live from 5:00pm

### TEN Sports

South Africa v Australia  
Third Test, Day Five  
Live from 2:30pm

### ESPN

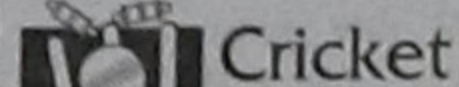
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live from 8:55pm



### Premier Division Cricket (Super League)

Abahani v Gazi Tank  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur  
Surjo Torun v Mohammedan  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Biman v Partex  
Venue: BKSP  
Super Cup Football (Cup Group, Return Semifinal)  
Abahani v Brothers  
Time: 5:00pm  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

# Abahani, Gazi in testy battle



SPORTS REPORTER

The focus will be on the battle between defending champions Abahani and Gazi Tank when the Premier Division Cricket Super League gets underway today at three different venues.

The Mashrafe Bin Mortaza-led Abahani will not only try to take a giant step forward towards retaining the title but will also seek to take revenge on Gazi Tank who have inflicted two consecutive defeats on their more exalted counterparts. Led by national captain

Mohammad Ashraful, Gazi beat Abahani in the on-going league's Twenty20 semifinal and also in the first phase. All this history will make for extra spice when the two lock horns at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur in the pick of the day's matches.

In the day's other games, Mohammedan without Sri Lanka great Sanath Jayasuriya will desperately try to take revenge of their first phase five-wicket defeat to keep in contention when they meet with second-placed Surjo Torun at Fatullah while Biman face off with Partex at BKSP.

Abahani is yet to recover from the injury-plague which saw them lose five frontline

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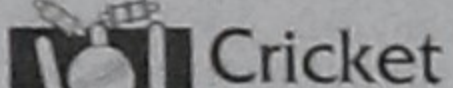


PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia vice-captain Michael Clarke (C) looks shattered after dragging a Dale Steyn (L) delivery on to his stumps on the fourth day of the third Test against South Africa at Newlands in Cape Town yesterday.

# Johnson delays defeat

## Aussies still take series 2-1



AFP, Cape Town

Mitchell Johnson hit an 86-ball century for Australia before South Africa completed an innings and 20-run win on the fourth day of the third Test at Newlands Sunday.

Johnson and Andrew McDonald (68) shared an Australian record seventh wicket stand of 163 to delay South Africa's consolation

victory. Australia won the series 2-1.

Left-arm spinner Paul Harris took six for 127 and fast bowler Dale Steyn three for 96.

South Africa were on course for a crushing victory when Australia lost their sixth wicket at 218, still 224 short of avoiding an innings defeat.

But McDonald and Johnson, voted man of the series, went for their shots and thrashed a tiring bowling attack.

They put on 163 in 122

minutes off 161 balls to break the Australian seventh wicket record against South Africa of 160 by Richie Benaud and Graham McKenzie in 1963/64.

The stand was ended when McDonald was caught at silly mid-off off Harris.

Johnson was on 95 while Peter Siddle was out first ball, also caught at silly mid-off.

Johnson, who was stranded on 96 not out in the first Test in Johannesburg, faced Steyn, who placed eight fielders on

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# Security fears force IPL to go abroad

AFP, Mumbai

Cricket's lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) will be held abroad this year, organisers said Sunday, blaming the government for being unable to provide security for the showpiece tournament.

An IPL source said South Africa and England were being considered as the new venue for the six-week tournament, whose high-paying contracts have attracted some of the most celebrated players in the game.

Safety has been a major worry after the attacks in the Indian city of Mumbai in November and an attack targeting the Sri

Lankan cricket side in Pakistan this month that left eight people dead and eight people from the team wounded.

But the Indian government said it could not lay on additional security because of deployments for national elections being held at almost exactly the same time as the April 10-May 24 tournament.

"Due to the attitude of the government that it cannot provide security for the tournament, we are forced to take a decision to move the IPL out of India," the country's cricket chief Shashank Manohar told reporters.

"A final decision on the venue will be announced in two to three days."

The tournament, which pits star-studded

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PHOTO: AP

England captain Charlotte Edwards holds aloft the glittering piece of glory after defeating New Zealand in the ICC Women's World Cup final in Sydney yesterday. England won by four wickets.

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## Russel play Farashganj in Plate final

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj set a final clash against Sheikh Russel in the Plate stage of the Citycell Super Cup after beating Rahmatganj 5-3 in the penalty shootout in yesterday's battle of the riversiders.

The regulation 90 and extra 30 minutes of the second Plate semifinal ended in a goalless draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Sheikh Russel also eliminated Chittagong Abahani by the same margin in tiebreakers after their semifinal on Saturday ended 1-1 after 120 minutes.

The Plate final is scheduled for March 25.

Farashganj, who were the better side of the two old-Dhaka neighbours, kept their cool in the shootout despite missing a number of easy chances earlier.

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## ACADEMY IN SYLHET BFF assured of govt support

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has finally decided to start its football academy in Sylhet but will need government support to fulfill its dream.

The football governing body in the country has also got the assurance that it will get the assistance it wants, told BFF president Kazi Salahuddin.

The site for the proposed academy will be BKSP's Sylhet wing, where the BFF wants a part of the sports academy to

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PHOTO: STAR

Farashganj striker Enamul (L) is under pressure from Rahmatganj defender Mostafa Kaba as he takes a crack at the ball during their Citycell Super Cup Plate semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Farashganj won the match 5-3 in the tiebreaker.

## SECOND-LEG FIRST SEMIFINAL

# Brothers' uphill task

SPORTS REPORTER



Brothers Union will give a last shot at the Citycell Super Cup title today when they take on favourites Abahani in the second-leg of the first semifinal, which kicks off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 5pm.

However, Wasim Iqbal's side will have to beat an inform Abahani by a two-goal margin to ensure a place in the March 27 final, where the winners will take away Tk one crore as prize money.

Amallesh Sen's B. League champions come to the second leg with a one-goal advantage after beating Brothers 3-2 in the first outing. It was Abahani's 13th consecutive victory of the season that was inspired by Zahid Hassan Emily's late brace that helped them recover from 2-1 down.

The Sky Blues, however, will miss their

inspirational Ghanaian star Awudu Ibrahim who had scored a spectacular opening goal last time out. The indefatigable striker is suspended for the game after being booked three times in four games.

Key centre-back Sujan is also nursing a minor injury but has yet to be ruled out, informed Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

"We have enough back-up players, so we are not going to be bothered by the absences. Our approach will remain attacking although we are leading," said Rupu, whose side need just a draw to confirm a place in the final.

If Brothers win by a one-goal margin, the semifinal will go into 30 minutes' extra time and penalty shootout if the teams are not separated after two hours of play.

"We are not thinking about the past. This is now the real semifinal for us. The previous match was like a quarterfinal. The players know that and we are going to go for win tomorrow," former national midfielder Rupu added.

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PHOTO: AP

Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes (2nd from L) stops Fulham striker Bobby Zamora's (L) header with both hands to concede a penalty and earn himself a sending-off in their Premiership encounter at Craven Cottage on Saturday.

# Day of shocks

## Man United, Chelsea both lose

AFP, London



Sir Alex Ferguson has been forced to admit the Premier League title race is back on after watching his side slump to a 2-0 defeat at Fulham in a match where Paul Scholes and Wayne Rooney were sent off.

Chelsea, beaten 1-0 at Tottenham, were unable to capitalise on the champions' slip-up, but Liverpool, who beat United 4-1 last Saturday, can cut their rivals' lead at the top to one point by beating Aston Villa at Anfield on Sunday.

Arsenal too could have a major influence on how the season ends. The on-form Gunners, who beat Newcastle 3-1 on Saturday, have still to play all three teams above them.

A Danny Murphy penalty and Zoltan Gera's late strike sealed the points for Fulham, condemning United to back-to-back league defeats for the first time in almost four years, as well as their first reverse at Craven Cottage since 1964.

United could have few complaints

after a lacklustre display in which Scholes was ordered off after only 17 minutes for the goal line handball that allowed Murphy to open the scoring.

Rooney, who only came on as a second-half substitute, was given his marching orders after collecting a second yellow card moments after Gera's 87th-minute strike.

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson admitted his side had been off the pace from the start.

"In the first half we never got started. They were lively and got stuck in and we respect that - they lost 4-0 to us a couple of weeks ago (in the FA Cup). But it's disappointing we didn't meet the challenge."

"If you lose games in March and April it can cost you. Fortunately we have a slender lead but not a lot and I'm hoping we return to our best after the international break."

United's slip-up ensured that Chelsea's first defeat under temporary manager Guus Hiddink was particularly frustrating. Luka Modric made the difference, finishing off Aaron Lennon's clever cutback five minutes after half-time.

"We lost a huge opportunity, knowing

that United were losing, it was a great chance to really change things," Hiddink admitted.

Arsenal increased the pressure on Villa ahead of their trip to Liverpool by beating Newcastle 3-1 at St James' Park, a win that leaves their hosts in the relegation zone.

Obafemi Martins, who had seen a first-half penalty saved by Manuel Almunia, cancelled out Nicklas Bendtner's opener for the Gunners inside a minute just before the hour mark.

But Abou Diaby and Samir Nasri quickly killed the contest to leave Arsenal three points clear of Villa in fourth place, the final qualifying slot for next season's Champions League.

"Many people underestimate the mental strength of this team and we have shown that recently," the Frenchman said.

"We go from strength to strength and if we keep our spirit we will be better and better. Results are going for us and we want to go as high as we can."

Everton now look to be out of the race for fourth after a 2-1 defeat by struggling Portsmouth at Fratton Park.

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