

## Staying or going?

Werder Bremen seem intent on off-loading star midfielder Mesut Oezil before the end of the summer transfer window. "If we get an offer, then we will look at it," Bremen general manager Klaus Allofs said Tuesday at the Bundesliga's training camp in Bad Waltersdorf, Austria. Allofs made clear that Bremen aren't in a financial position to extend Oezil's contract. "We weren't able to bridge the gap between our figures," Allofs said of the failed negotiations over a contract extension.

- INTERNET



## Relegation fears irk minnows



SPORTS REPORTER

All the giants of the professional football league have already brought their respective squads in good shape, having ensured the services of country's top booters, leaving the lightweights worried about their ability to form squads that will be able to avoid relegation.

It is evident that giants like Bangladesh League champions Abahani, runners-up Mohammedan, newcomers Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, rejuvenated Muktiyoddha Sangsad and new powerhouse Sheikh Russel KC with their local collection are going to be the major challengers in the upcoming season.

For the rest of the seven minnows, a couple of sides have yet to start the process of forming their squads ahead of the September 1-20 players' transfer. As it stands, most of the sides will be glad only to avert relegation rather than fight the giants neck to neck.

The lightweights have been trying to retain the services of their veterans while keeping their eyes on the new players from the ongoing senior division football league and it is clear that there will be not much difference amongst the lightweights Brothers, Farashganj, Rahmatganj, Arambagh, Chittagong Mohammedan, Chittagong Abahani and Feni Soccer Club.

However, the key point irking all the minnows is that they are all worried about their fate if they are relegated from the B. League. As things stand currently, there are no specific guidelines on how teams can return to the B.

League once they are relegated. There is no existence of a second-tier league system where teams relegated in the B. League can participate, and this has created a huge headache for the sides that fear the ignominy.

As per the bylaws, two teams will be relegated from the Bangladesh League. Three teams have already been demoted from the prestigious competitions in the three editions of the league, and since the Bangladesh Football Federation has yet to roll out the second and third tier professional football leagues there are fears that the relegated teams will remain in the wilderness for too long.

"The BFF has gotten enough time to evaluate the professional league that actually harmed our football and failed to improve our football standard as well as produce players and I think they should think about it," said Brothers Union football manager Amer Khan.

"We welcomed newcomers Sheikh Jamal, but do not support the way they were permitted and it happened because the BFF has yet to roll the second tier league," Amer said. "If we can't make a good team this time, we may pull ourselves out of the league and will come back to the top fray after a system is built up."

The former national player, however, said that they have six to seven 'binding players' from last season and was trying to rope in younger players.

"Rahmatganj MFS is a 75-year-old club and think about where we will play if we face relegation because there is no existence of the premier division league," said general secretary Tipu Sultan adding that they would begin the process of forming the squad within a week as

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PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara steers the ball into a gap as short-leg Murali Vijay looks on during the first day of the third Test match against India at the P Sara Oval International Cricket Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

## SL stack up the runs



AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara top-scored with 75 as the hosts prospered against an untidy Indian attack on the opening day of the third and final Test on Tuesday.

Former skipper Mahela Jayawardene made 56 and Thilan Samaraweera remained unbeaten on 65 as Sri Lanka, leading 1-0 in the series, piled up 293-4 by stumps at the P. Sara Oval in Colombo.

All-rounder Angelo Mathews was the other batsman at the crease on 26, having put on 52 runs so far for the fifth wicket with Samaraweera.

Sangakkara, who won his third successive toss and decided to take first strike on the even-paced wicket, missed out on a third century in the series.

The left-hander, who made 103 in the first Test and 219 and 42 not out in the second, looked set for another big knock when he hit five boundaries and two sixes with fluent elegance.

But a lapse in concentration midway through the afternoon session caused his downfall when he lofted left-arm spinner Pragyan Ojha to long-on, where Virender Sehwag held the skier.

India, seeking a series-leveling win after losing the first Test, were let down by the bowlers, who sent down 14

no-balls and two wides during the day.

Leg-spinner Amit Mishra, making his first appearance in the series in place of the injured Harbhajan Singh, was the worst culprit with six no-balls in his 0-99 from 25 overs.

Ojha, the most successful bowler of the day with 2-78, sent down four no-balls. Seamer Ishant Sharma bowled three and Sehwag one, while Abhimanyu Mithun conceded two wides.

Sangakkara was given a reprieve on 23 when third slip Suresh Raina lunged to his right and dropped the ball that was carrying comfortably to Venkatsai Laxman at second slip. Mithun was the unlucky bowler.

Jayawardene, who put on 84 for the fourth wicket with Samaraweera, was unlucky to be given out leg-before by Australian umpire Rod Tucker in the final session.

Television replays indicated the ball from Ojha would have passed over the stumps.

Sri Lanka's assistant coach, Stuart Law, said he expected a keen tussle between bat and ball over the next four days.

"This wicket has something for everyone," the former Australian international said. "If you bat well, you score runs and we have already seen balls flying pass the edge off both seamers and spinners."

"It's going to be a test for the skills of the batsmen. I am very happy with the way things went for us and hopefully this will set us up for a big first innings total."

"The closer we get to 500, it sets up for a good victory."

Sri Lanka, batting almost the entire day in overcast conditions, lost both openers in the morning session to go to lunch on 102-2.

Tharanga Paranavitana, who also hit centuries in each of the previous two Tests, fell for eight when he edged Sharma to wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Tillakaratne Dilshan (41) added 87 for the second wicket with Sangakkara, before he was run out off what turned out to be the last ball of the morning session.

Meanwhile, Indian star Sachin Tendulkar's 169th Test made him the most-capped player in history, surpassing former Australian captain Steve Waugh's tally of 168

appearances.

India went into the decisive Test without the injured Gautam Gambhir and Harbhajan, while Raina, who hit a century on his debut in the last match, was preferred over Yuvraj Singh for the number six spot.

Fit-again fast bowler Lasith Malinga returned for Sri Lanka along with left-arm seamer Chanaka Welegedara. They replaced Dilhara Fernando and Dammika Prasad, who shared the new ball in the

second Test.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SRI LANKA:** First innings 293 for 4 (Dilshan 41, Sangakkara 75, Jayawardene 56, Samaraweera 65 not out, Mathews 26 not out; Ojha 2-78) **INDIA:** Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Virender Sehwag, Murali Vijay, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Venkatsai Laxman, Suresh Raina, Pragyan Ojha, Amit Mishra, Abhimanyu Mithun, Ishant Sharma.



## Another record falls for Sachin



AGENCIES, Colombo

Milestone man Sachin Tendulkar on Tuesday became the most-capped Test cricketer in the world after taking field for his 169th match, the third and final of the ongoing series against Sri Lanka, at the P Sara Oval in Colombo.

The 37-year-old champion batsman, who holds almost every batting record, overtook retired former Australian captain Steve Waugh with whom he was tied at 168 matches after the second Test at SSC.

Tendulkar, who has been around for two decades now, has also played 442 one-day internationals, just a couple of matches less than Sri Lankan Sanath Jayasuriya's record of 444.

Tendulkar has scored 13,742 runs in 168 Tests at an average of 56.08, notching up 48 hundreds and 55 half-centuries in the process.

He has 17,598 runs, including 46 centuries, in his 442 one-dayers. The Mumbaier also holds the distinction of being the first batsman to score a double hundred in ODIs.

But despite these astonishing feats, Tendulkar remains hungry for more runs and after getting his fifth Test double hundred in the second Test against Sri Lanka, the diminutive batsman urged critics to stop talking about his age.

## BCF lodges GD against traffickers

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Chess Federation lodged a general diary on Sunday to the Paltan Police Station seeking legal action against alleged human trafficking to Malaysia in the name of chess.

The federation found a fake organisation named Dhaka Chess Federation (DCF), who sought four invitations to take part in a chess tournament in Malaysia and the organisers informed the national chess federation.

"DCF has sent names of four chess players, who are not with chess for the last 10 years and they did it for human trafficking," said BCF joint secretary Masudur Rahman Mallik.

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## Flintoff ruled out for season

AFP, London

England star Andrew Flintoff has been ruled out of competition for the rest of the season by his county Lancashire as he struggles to recover following knee surgery.

The 32-year-old all rounder was due to make his comeback this week from a year on the sidelines after two knee operations.

However, he was pulled out of both a limited-overs game Monday and a three-day match, starting Tuesday, for the second time against Yorkshire in Crosby, Liverpool.

## England keep same team

CRICINFO

Having emphatically completed a 354-run victory against Pakistan in the first Test, England have stuck with the men who delivered the job and named an unchanged squad for the second match, which begins on Friday at Edgbaston.

Tim Bresnan, included as a late replacement in the squad for the opening game after Ajmal Shahzad picked up an ankle injury, retains his place with Shahzad being sent back to Yorkshire for their crucial Championship clash against Nottinghamshire to prove his fitness.

The competition for the position of England's back-up

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## Focus on bowlers BCB call up 21 cricketers



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has called up twenty-one cricketers for a conditioning camp that will start from today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The selected players have been asked to report to the national team's assistant coach Khaled Mahmud at 2:30pm at Mirpur.

Most of the national cricketers are now enjoying holidays after an arduous season and they will be back to business when a preparation camp with a preliminary squad will kick off for the 2011 World Cup.

"Basically the board arranged the camp for the players who were out of the national team and as well as players like Mohammad Ashraful who didn't play enough match in the last few tours," said former national captain Mahmud.

"We will mainly focus on the fitness but work on the skill as

well, especially with the bowlers. Our bowling has been struggling in the last couple of series and I believe this was because of the inexperience.

"We have to work hard for a long period of time to improve the bowling. All the bowlers are talented but they haven't had enough international experience to cope up with the pressure," he said adding that the preparation camp for the national cricketers is likely to start from August 20.

BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Enayet Hossain Siraj informed yesterday that they will take a decision on the probabilities after the return of coach Jamie Siddons, who is enjoying a vacation in Australia.

One of the national selectors however said that they gave the probable names more than a month back.

"We may start the camp for the World Cup with twenty-five selected cricketers. The decision will be taken after return of the national coach," said Siraj.

The selected cricketers for the conditioning camp are

Mohammad Ashraful, Rokibul Hasan, Mehrab Hossain, Naeem Islam, Alok Kapali, Shahriar Nafees, Shahadat Hossain, Enamul Haque, Mahbubul Alam, Dollar Mahmud, Nazimuddin, Sohrawordi Shuvo, Talha Jubair, Rabiul Islam, Sahagir Hossain, Farhad Hossain, Saqlain Sajib, Shamsur Rahman, Elias Sunny, Marshall Ayub and Kamrul Islam.

## Champions draw with Wari

SPORTS REPORTER

Champions Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club played out a 2-2 draw against Wari Club in the lone super league match of the Bashundhara Metropolis Senior Division Football at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Galib and Wahed struck

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**SPORTS POLL**  
**TODAY'S QUESTION**  
**Do the Tigers need a bowling coach?**  
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