

## Jose rubbishes Inter return

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho has refuted reports linking him to a return as manager of Inter Milan next season. Media in Italy raised the possibility based on Mourinho's decision to register his two children at the schools they attended while he was coaching the club he led to the Serie A, Italian Cup and Champions League titles last season. Tackled on the rumours Mourinho told a press conference: "What they're saying each day in Italy that I will once again be coach of Inter next season is false, completely false."

- AFP



(L) Farashganj coach Kamal Babu imparts his winning mantra to his charges while (R) Russian striker Eduard Sakhnevich (No. 09) leads a happy Sheikh Russel bunch during their practice yesterday for today's Independence Cup final.

PHOTOS: STAR



## Kapali, Mizanur rule Day 2

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi opens Mizanur Rahman and Avishek Mitra, a relatively new pair, gave Dhaka no chance on the second day of their National Cricket League game at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

In only his sixth first-class game, Mizanur hammered his maiden first-class hundred as Rajshahi ran off to 206 for no loss in their first innings in reply to Dhaka's 294 all out.

Away at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi, Alok Kapali struck 86 but couldn't prevent Sylhet giving up a 5-run first innings deficit, but he came back to pick up a late Barisal wicket.

### DHAKA-RAJSHAH

Dhaka added 77 runs to their first day total of 217-6 with wicketkeeper Arman Hossain scoring 65 off 135 balls with the help of eleven boundaries.

Paceman Delwar Hossain took four wickets while Mohammad Shahjada, Saqlain Sajib and Naeem Islam picked up two each.

But it was Rajshahi's reply with the bat that left everyone



MIZANUR 139 n.o.

stunned as the Mizanur-Avishek pairing tore into the Dhaka attack.

Mizanur reached his century off 128 balls before ending the day on 139 runs off 164 balls with the help of 22 boundaries. His opening partner Avishek gave him fine support, adding 56 off 149 balls.

Though the more experienced Dhaka bowlers Talha Jubair and skipper Mosharrar Hossain Rubel bowled tightly, the rest of the inexperienced bowlers gave away too many.

Left-arm spinner Tayebur Rahman gave away 18 runs in his only over.

### SYLHET-BARISAL

A non-consequential match has been brought to life through some fine performances. After Shahriar Nafees hit that hundred on the first day, Alok Kapali followed up his five-wicket haul with a cool 86. He struck eleven boundaries and a six in his 143-ball knock, an innings that almost took Barisal past Sylhet's first innings total of 257, but Kapali was last man out.

The Sylhet skipper had added 94 for the fourth wicket with Rajin Saleh, who made 50 off 98 balls but a late order collapse put them in deficit.

Sylhet were 26 for one with Kapali again, with his

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## New cricket selectors by April 26?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) could decide on the new national selection panel later this week in their next meeting.

According to sources, BCB chief AHM Mostafa Kamal is seeking opinions from the directors on the choice of former national captain and member of the last selection committee Akram Khan as the chief selector alongside two other former captains Habibur Bashar and Naimur Rahman.

In terms of seniority it is Akram who leads the way among this group and it has been the norm to make the senior most former player the chief.

As far as the board's hunt

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## INDEPENDENCE CUP FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT FINAL

# Battle of unknown

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj Sporting Club and Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra will be battling it out for their maiden trophy in the unlikelyst of finals of all time when they meet to decide the Independence Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The final can be dubbed as the most unexpected one, since never before have two underdogs made it to the final of any top-tier tournament in the country's football. In fact, it will be the first silverware for either of the sides who win at the big bowl.

Farashganj, the old Dhaka club, saw off the likes of favourites Abahani and Sheikh Jamal while Sheikh Russel dispatched Mohammedan Sporting on their way to the final.

Farashganj's progress has been so much fairy-tale-like that even their coach Kamal Babu concedes they already have achieved a lot and have nothing to lose in the final.

"We will play tension-free football because we have nothing to lose," said the old Dhaka club's coach. "They are a much better side than us. Yet we have nothing but win on our mind."

The Farashganj coach will be missing the services of Congolese striker Siyo Zunapio and midfielder Shyamal Ahmed, both of whom saw red card in their dour win against Sheikh Jamal in the semifinal.

Babu is expected to play veteran Idris Kasirye alongside young Sohel Rana who has been the revelation scoring four goals including crucial ones in the quarterfinal and semifinal.

Babu's opposite number Mahmudul Haque Liton though has no such worries with injury or suspension and is likely to stick to the same side that overcame Mohammedan in semifinal.

"The fact that this could be our maiden silverware gives us all the more confidence to play good football and win."

Liton will be hoping the golden touch of Russian striker Eduard Sakhnevich lingers for one more match. The Russian has scored three goals so far in the tournament, and like Rana, has scored crucial goals in both quarterfinal and semifinal. But despite his side's good form, Liton was not entertaining any thoughts of an easy outing.

"Farashganj may be weak on paper, but

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## Academy tail wags well

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The GP-BCB National Cricket Academy kept up the advantage through tail-end resistance on the second day of the second and final four-day game against South Africa Cricket Academy at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Their first innings ended on 479 runs in 148.2 overs, a laboured performance given their superb work on the opening day when they made 332-6. The visitors made a solid reply but lost skipper Joshua Richards to end the day on 66 for one, 413 runs adrift.

Anamul Haque Bijoy began the day on a flashy note, hammering 42 runs off just 27 balls with five fours and two sixes before falling just 30 minutes into the second day. After Hardus Viljoen bowled him, he walked back to the dressing room after having made 169 off 287 balls with the help of 26 boundaries and the two sixes.

It was a complete contrast from the first day's efforts from young Bijoy, who stayed at the crease patiently all day to make 127 runs.

After his departure, tail-enders Shaker Ahmed and Shubhashish Roy added 98 runs for the final wicket to put some respectability back to the total.

The left-handed Shaker struck nine boundaries in his 64 off 178 balls while Shubhashish helped him out with 28 off 136 balls, much to the chagrin of the visiting side as the pair batted out 52 staggering overs.

For the South Africans, pacemen Machant de Lange and Hardus Viljoen took three wickets each while left-arm spinner Siya Simetu took two.

Paceman Alauddin Babu removed Richards in the tenth over but Dominic Hendricks and Lenart van Wyk shepherded the innings till play ended at quarter to four in the afternoon due to bad light.

### BRIEF SCORES

GP-BCB ACADEMY: First innings 479 all out in 148.2 overs (Bijoy 169, Rony 74, Shuvogoto 70, Shaker 64; de Lange 3-120, Viljoen 3-128, Simetu 2-60).

SA CRICKET ACADEMY: First innings 66-1 in 22 overs (Hendricks 30 not out; Alauddin 1-24).



Siddikur, on fifth position at the end of third round, will be looking to end the Indonesian Masters on a high today.

PHOTO: INTERNET

## Siddikur in with a good chance

Golf

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman clawed back to fifth position giving himself an excellent chance to finish the Indonesian Masters on a high at the end of Round Three at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club yesterday.

Siddikur scored a 3-under-par 69 in the round which gave him an overall score of 9-under-par 207, just two shots behind Chuayprakong and Park Hyun-bin of Korea. Runaway leader and world number two Lee Westwood of England has a 5-stroke lead.

Siddikur had to complete the last two holes of his second round on Saturday morning and finished the round at par, putting him way behind on the leaderboard. But then he made a superb comeback firing a 3-under-par Round Three to regain some ground on the leaders. In fact, Siddikur was 4-

under par until the 15th hole, but then a bogey cost him one shot putting him a little behind.

Siddikur started the 75,000-dollar Asian Tour event with a brilliant 6-under-par on Thursday and led Westwood and the more illustrious Asian golfers.

The Bangladeshi sensation, who is currently in second position in the Asian Order of Merit, will be looking for an excellent finish heading into the 2.8-million-dollar Ballantine's Championship in Korea next week.

### LEADING SCORES ON SATURDAY

200 - Lee Westwood (ENG) 68-66-66  
205 - Thiti Phun Chuayprakong (THA) 68-68-69 & Park Hyun-bin (KOR) 67-68-70  
206 - Prayad Marksaeng (THA) 67-70-69  
207 - Siddikur (BAN) 66-72-69, Prom Meesawat (THA) 70-68-69, Thongchai Jaidee (THA) 67-70-70 & Antonio Lascuna (PHI) 67-70-70

## A team's 3rd one-dayer rained out

SPORTS REPORTER

The third one-day game between Bangladesh A and South Africa A was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to persistent rain at the De Beers Diamond Oval in Kimberley yesterday.

The fourth one-dayer will be played in Potchefstroom on April 27.

The series is finely balanced at 1-1 after the hosts fought back with a 56-run win at Boland Park in Paarl on Thursday night. Skipper

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## Walton nat'l volleyball

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Air Force and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) chalked up victories in the first round of the men's competition of the Walton National Volleyball Championship yesterday.

Police beat Satkhira 25-18, 25-19, 25-23; Air Force defeated Khulna 25-16, 25-13, 25-16 while BGB outplayed Rangpur 25-18, 25-19, 25-16.

In the women's group, Rajshahi thrashed Dhaka University 25-4, 25-08, 25-09 while BJMC outplayed Gazipur 25-12, 25-16 and 25-06.