

Star SPORT

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Terry shirt idea rejected

Chelsea have turned down a proposal for their players to wear shirts in support of captain John Terry who has been charged with racially abusing QPR defender Anton Ferdinand. Some of the Blues squad and staff had raised the prospect of donning T-shirts showing their backing for the skipper. Chelsea, who fully back Terry in his fight to clear his name, did not want to risk emulating something that could be viewed as provocative or construed as a potential contempt of court ahead of Terry's hearing at West London magistrates court on February 1.



Players of Bangladesh Police and Chittagong Abahani are in hot pursuit of the ball during the Grameenphone Federation Cup qualifying match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Eng U-19s come here next month

SPORTS REPORTER

The England under-19 team will tour Bangladesh next month. The tour features seven one-dayers, in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet and will begin on January 20.

England named their squad already, but the hosts haven't named theirs yet.

It would be an interesting time for the selectors as the Premier League will be in full flow during the tour and most of the cricketers are tied up with the Dhaka clubs.

SQUAD

Adam Ball (captain), Muhammad Abid, Shozair Ali, Daniel Bell Drummond, Ben Foakes, Gavin Griffiths, Brett Hutton, Aneesh Kapil, Sam Kelsall, Jack Leaning, Craig Overton, Jamie Overton, Rammy Singh, Kishen Velani, Sam Wood.

Police KO Ctg Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Police produced a big upset in the Grameenphone Federation Cup qualifiers when they booked their place in the final stage by knocking out former Bangladesh League side Chittagong Abahani 3-0 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Chittagong Abahani, who were relegated from the professional league last year, were under the cosh from the very beginning and went a goal down in the eleventh minute when Amirul found the back of the net beating Abahani goalie Nahid Uddin with a placing shot from inside the box.

Abahani came close to an equaliser when Hasan Mahmud let one fly from outside the box, but unfortunately for the port city side, the shot missed the target by a whisker. And they were to rue the missed chance as Amirul made it 2-0 for Police in the 25th minute. Abahani's Masud Rana wasted another opportunity to score as the first half ended 2-0. After the breather, Police maintained their superior ball possession and Kabirul Islam drove the final nail into Abahani coffin in the

64th minute when he danced past a defender before placing the ball past the hapless keeper.

In the second match of the day, BKSP beat Bangladesh Army 4-2 in the tiebreaker after the regulation time ended 1-1. Despite the win, BKSP will have to beat Wari in the play-off match on December 27 to ensure their final round berth.

BKSP took the lead in the 15th minute when Ratul beat the Army keeper after availing a minus from Sajib. Army stepped up the pressure to find the equaliser and created numerous scoring opportunities but failed to get the equaliser in the first half. The goal came in the 78th minute from a penalty when Army stopper Ridwan handled the ball inside the danger zone. Ridwan was shown the red card while Army's substitute midfielder Didarul Haque stepped up to dispatch the spot-kick into the net to draw level.

Ten-man BKSP held their fort for the rest of the regulation time and eked out the win in the tiebreakers as four out of their five converted their kicks while three of the Army men faltered from the spot.

First-class not BCB's first priority?



MOHAMMAD ISAM

Friday's cancellation of the National Cricket League matches is just the tip of the iceberg in Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) continuous disregard for the first-class game.

During the first part of the 2011-12 season, the BCB scheduled the NCL into two parts (split by the Eid-ul-Fitr break in mid-November), both of which had domestic international series as well as second-string and other tours interlaced. So when matches against West Indies and Pakistan were held at the same time as the first-class competition, none of the Tigers were available to play the much-needed four-day cricket.

Such arrangements have meant that those who have played all five Test

matches this year -- Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees and Mushfiqur Rahim -- have totalled four first-class matches between them. Rubel Hossain, Shahadat Hossain and Nasir Hossain have played four Tests each with the Bagerhat paceman playing a considerably less first-class cricket than the other two.

In fact, Tamim and Rubel haven't played first-class cricket in Bangladesh for a long time. The left-handed opener's last NCL game was in November 2007 while Rubel hasn't played one since December 2008.

Nazimuddin and Mohammad Ashraful are among the Test players to have played more than ten first-class games in 2011, though in the latter's case it clearly hasn't worked. But the Chittagong batsman's persistence in the longer version has paid off after he won a Test cap against Pakistan and

impressed. Elias Sunny and Robiul Islam have also played eight and nine first-class matches respectively with one of them, the left-arm spinner, clearly living up to his reputation.

Most of these players have had to fend for themselves and try to sneak in (or out) of first-class games, but if there was a proper schedule under strict guidance in place, none of this would have happened. Nobody can guarantee a leap in a player's international performance but regular first-class cricket keeps the players honest and good habits in place.

In this regard, the BCB has failed the players and the nation as a whole. By giving higher priority to the more rewarding Dhaka Premier League and the potentially more lucrative Bangladesh Premier League Twenty20 competition, they have provided the

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Title within Zia's sight

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman senses his 12th national title after he held Grand Master Niaz Murshed to a draw against in their 12th round match of the Walton 37th National Chess Championship at the BOA Media Hall yesterday.

Zia, who has 10.5 points to his name leads Niaz by a point and faces a comparatively easier opponent in Golam Mostafa in the last round today. A draw against Mostafa today will ensure Zia's 12th national title. At the other hand, Niaz will have to beat Mohammad Javed and hope that Zia loses his bout to have any chance of winning the title.

In joint third position are Minhazuddin Ahmed and Abu Sufian with nine points each. Minhaz defeated Mahfuzur Rahman while Sufian beat Mahtabuddin Ahmed to claim full points. In the other matches of the day, Sohel Chowdhury beat Shafik Ahmed, Debraj Chatterjee beat Mostafa and Mehedi Hasan defeated Monir Hossain.

Premier cricket delayed

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricket Committee for Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) yesterday announced that the Premier Division Cricket League will start from December 29, a day later than previously announced.

The league was due to start on December 28, as announced on Friday.

National kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER

The zonal round matches of the services zone of the Meizan National Kabaddi begins today at the Kabaddi Stadium.

Kabaddi Federation's vice president KM Akhtar Hamid will formally inaugurate the two-day meet as the chief guest in the afternoon.

Six services teams -- Army, Police, Navy, Air Force, Prison and Fire Service and Civil Defence are taking part in the competition.



Grand Master Niaz Murshed (R) makes a move as Grand Master Ziaur Rahman watches carefully during their twelfth round match in 37th Walton National Chess Championship at the BOA Media Hall yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH

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