

# Star SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY DECEMBER 29, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Doni admits to betting

Italy's new soccer match-fixing scandal gained momentum on Tuesday when legal testimony showed former Atalanta captain and Italy midfielder Cristiano Doni admitting his role in illicit betting. Reports also said another accused player, ex-Piacenza defender Carlo Gervasoni, had told prosecutors that many more Italian matches than previously suspected involved illegal betting and match-fixing including games in Serie A. Promoted top-flight side Atalanta had six points deducted and Doni was banned for three and a half years in August after a football federation probe into betting in Serie B last term, but Doni had never



## Tricky ties for giants

Premier League begins today



SPORTS REPORTER

If the giants are not careful, the newcomers could begin the Dhaka Premier League today with a loud bang.

Defending champions Abahani and their traditional rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club have reputations to save and momentum to build when they face off with Brothers Union and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club respectively.

Heavy spending has meant that both the promoted sides have closed the gap with the big guns. Abahani have a tricky outing at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur against a Brothers side that is brimming with experience.

Nazimuddin, Nafees Iqbal, Tushar Imran, Aftab Ahmed, and Dhiman Ghosh add a lot of batting depth. The left-arm spin trio of Abdur Razzak, Taposh Ghosh and Shaker

Ahmed can trouble the best of batting line-ups in the competition. Their fielding is a worry, with the youngsters expected to pull them through in the department.

Abahani though has picked smartly, keeping their captain Mahmudullah Riyad and adding some form players. The Tigers vice-captain will have Marshall Ayub, Anamul Haque, Fazle Rabbi and Farhad Hossain for support with balance added by all-rounders Elias Sunny and Forhad Reza.

Their arch-rivals haven't set the transfers alight, depending on stability more than bling. Imrul Kayes and Imtiaz Ahmed could make a lethal combination at the top with skipper Naeem Islam and Rajin Saleh leading the middle-order. Syed Rasel will be their lead seam option alongside the Rajshahi duo Mohammad Shahjada and Delwar Hossain. Also, the leg-spinner Noor Hossain could play a major role but that will entirely depend on how the captain deals with him.

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Bangladesh gymnast Quazi Syque Caesar swings on the high bar in the Sultana Kamal 4th Central South Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Chopper ride to save icons' time

SPORTS REPORTER

How do three people reach the Hotel Radisson in Banani from BKSP and Fatullah respectively in 30 minutes on a Thursday evening?

Simple; get a helicopter to give you a lift.

Shahriar Nafees, Mushfiqur Rahim and Alok Kapali will have to pack their bags quickly after their Premier League matches today as they have to be present at the logo launch of the Bangladesh Premier League.

Being icon players of the Twenty20 competition, they have to be present at the Hotel Radisson at 6:00pm for the program even though their matches end at around 5.30.

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## Navy clinch V-Day b'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Navy emerged champions in the Citycell Victory Day Basketball Championship beating Bangladesh Army by 80-67 points in the final at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Navy led the first half of the keenly contested match by 41-35 points. Mithun of Bangladesh Army scored 25 points while Rashed scored 25 points. Mithun of Bangladesh Army scored 15 points while Amanat caged 13 points for the losing side.

Meanwhile, Citycell 25th National Basketball Championship will start at the same venue on December 31.

## Mash's wait almost over



SPORTS REPORTER

If you want to know how painful it is for a cricketer to be a mere spectator for almost an entire year, you can ask pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. It has never been a smooth journey for the 'Narail Express' because of persistent injuries since his international debut in November 2001 against Zimbabwe. The agony was exacerbated this year as his dream of playing in the World Cup at home was shattered following yet another knee injury suffered during a domestic game in December last year. He made a short comeback to international cricket to play two ODIs against Australia at home in April before undergoing surgery on his knee in May.

The "Braveheart" cricketer however was not willing to look back, instead eagerly



looking forward to the Premier Division Cricket League, which will kick off today at three different venues, to make a comeback into competitive cricket after a lengthy period of rehabilitation.

"I am looking forward to make a new start in my career. Hopefully I will be available for selection for my club (Bangladesh Biman) from the third week of next month. I'm now bowling with a full run-up at practice, but not with full effort. But I am confident about regaining my match fitness from the third week of the next month, but everything will be depend on our national team physio," said Mashrafe while talking to the Daily Star Sport yesterday.

"I don't want to look back at what I missed in the past; rather, my main target is to see how I can manage myself and prolong my international career. I hope I will be available for selection for the next Asia Cup in March,

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## Shamsul props up Khelaghar

SPORTS REPORTER

A four-wicket haul from Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity's Shamsul Alam sunk Uttara Sporting Club by 41 runs in their First Division Super League match at the BKSP-3 ground in Savar yesterday.

Batting first, Khelaghar made 198-9 in 50 overs with Nantu making 53. Uttara were bowled out for 157 runs in 49.5 overs with Shamsul picking up four wickets for 19 runs. Hasan Reza took two wickets.

In the day's other match, Partex beat Eskaton Sabuj Sangha by seven wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

## CENTRAL SOUTH ASIAN GYMNASTICS C'SHIPS

## Team hopes vanish

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's hope of clinching a bronze medal in the men's team championship event of the Sultana Kamal 4th Central South Asian Gymnastics Championships evaporated following a miserable opening day at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Uzbekistan won the gold medal with a score of 248.90 while the silver medal went to the Indian side, who made 246.90 points. Sri Lanka and Pakistan won bronze medals with scores of 214.65 and 208.55 points.

Bangladesh's hopes centred around the participation of US-born Bangladeshi gymnast Quazi Syque Caesar. He made 78.70 points to finish fifth among 30 gymnasts after taking part in the events of Floor, High Bar, Parallel Bar, Steel Ring, Pommel Hors and Vault but he received very little support from his colleagues, among whom

Mushfiqur Rahman and Tanvir Ahmed finished thirteenth and fourteenth with scores of 54.65 and 52.40 respectively.

However, all three Bangladeshi participants have qualified for the Competition II (individual events) along with 12 more participants.

"We could not do well in a couple of events like Vault and Pommel Hors but what my teammates did was excellent at their level. But I did try my level best," said Syque, who joined the Bangladesh squad on December 17.

Bangladesh Gymnastic Federation is also dreaming of a gold medal at international level for the first time, only because of the presence of Syque who also represents the Michigan state as well as the Michigan University.

"I am not saying that I am going to win a gold medal in the tournament but I am hopeful to win a gold medal in the Parallel Bar which is my favourite event," Syque said. "I am also a good performer in the Floor but I

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