

# Star SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 6, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Suarez says sorry

Liverpool striker Luis Suarez on Thursday issued an apology after receiving an eight-match ban for racially abusing Patrice Evra, but stopped short of saying sorry to the Manchester United defender. Liverpool said Tuesday they had accepted Suarez's ban for calling Evra a "negro" but the player issued a statement the same day maintaining his innocence. But in another statement issued Thursday, Suarez said: "I never, ever used this word in a derogatory way and if it offends anyone then I want to



## Mockery of an A team

### Squad leaves for Ctg without a 12th man

#### Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) handling of the A team has turned into a complete farce as barely eleven players left Dhaka last night to play today's first warm-up-match against the visiting England Lions at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

Believe it or not, even two hours before their scheduled departure the authorities concerned were not clear about how many players would turn to the airport to catch the flight.

Finally eleven players flew to Chittagong as Gazi Tank, the Premier Division Club, refused to release their two players Mominul Haque and Asif Ahmed who were in the 13-member squad announced earlier for today's lone practice match and the first three one-dayers. Gazi instead allowed only Rony Talukder to join the team. And in

the end, Cricket Coaching School (CCS) lent a helping hand by giving two more players -- all-rounder Abul Bashar and left-arm spinner Avi -- who were scheduled to travel to Chittagong by bus at midnight. CCS's Tasamul Haque was already in the 11-man squad.

Left-arm spinner Elias Sunny was left out of the squad due to injury, but BCB failed to give a replacement for him although chief selector Akram Khan informed on Wednesday that Sohrawardi Shuvo, the left-arm spinner from Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, would replace Sunny.

It's now in no way a squad which was picked by the three-member selection panel. The selectors have been facing problems right from the beginning as some clubs were reluctant to release their players due to the ongoing Premier Cricket League and among them Abahani and Gazi Tank submitted written objections with the board.

It's become a complete joke the way

the board dealt with the matter with the clubs, but BCB director and chairman of cricket operations Enayet Hossain Siraj however blamed the clubs for what happened about the formation of the A team.

"We don't expect something like this from the clubs. You know national duty must be the priority and the club representatives also agreed in a meeting in July last year that they would fully cooperate with us, but unfortunately one club was reluctant to release two selected players. It was only on their request that the board allowed them to register eight foreign players and field three in a match. Besides we also reduced the number of pool players to two, but still this unfortunate situation arose," said Siraj.

"This is really unfortunate and we are really in an uncomfortable situation. We must address this issue seriously in the next board meeting," said BCB CEO Manzur Ahmed.

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Sheikh Jamal batsman Mushfiqur Rahim (R) plays the square cut during his innings of 105 not out against Brothers Union in their Premier Cricket League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## BFF frees Mithun, Emily

SPORTS REPORTER

National striking duo Zahid Hasan Emily and Mithun Chowdhury have been partially exempted from their punishments imposed by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) following the duo's disciplinary breach before the World Cup pre-qualifiers against Lebanon.

Emily and Mithun are now eligible to take part in the ongoing Grameenphone Federation Cup and can wear the jersey of Muktijoddha Sangsad in today's match against Team BJMC.

After playing unauthorised match in Manikganj on the eve of the Lebanon tour to play the crucial away World Cup pre-qualifying match, Emily and Mithun received a five-match domestic ban and fined Tk 2 lakh each. Both were asked to pay the fine by November last year, failing which they would face a further two-match suspension.

Neither Emily nor Mithun paid their fines as of December last year, rather they appealed again for exemption from the punishments as the National Team Management Committee headed by Badal Roy suggested that they seek pardon from the BFF president instead of the committee and clear their fines first.

Emily and Mithun cleared their fine on January 1 and then appealed to BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, thus missing their first Federation Cup match on January 2 and so serving a one-match ban.

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## Khilgaon HS advance

SPORTS REPORTER

Khilgaon High School advanced to the next round of the National School Football Islami Bank Tournament defeating Oxford Ideal School 6-2 in the Group E final of Dhaka Metropolitan zone at the Khilgaon High School ground yesterday.

Al Amin struck twice and Abedur, Rubel, Al Amin Jr and Rafi netted one goal each for the winners while Rubel struck a brace for Oxford Ideal.

## Narrow wins for Sk Jamal & Sk Russel

SPORTS REPORTER

Favourites Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Sheikh Russel KC began their Grameenphone Federation Cup campaign on a winning note defeating their respective rivals in Group C encounters at two separate venues yesterday.

A first-half strike from Nigerian Femi Orunnini helped Sheikh Jamal beat promotee Agrani Bank SC 1-0 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while Sheikh Russel KC defeated Victoria SC 2-0, thanks to first-half strikes from Vitus Mbaa and Siankam Emako at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Having secured the maximum three points from their first games, both professional football league sides are in an advantageous position to qualify for the last eight. Promotees Victoria SC and Agrani Bank, teams from the second-tier professional football league, appeared to be no threats for the giants, who have been playing with four foreign booters while the minnows are not allowed to field any foreign players.

The foreign recruits made the differences at both venues with all three goals over the two matches coming from them. Though they dominated the proceedings, both Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel squandered

a lot of chances through their shaky forward line-up and they had to be content with narrow victories in their openers.

At the BNS, having lost most of their star players to Abahani and Muktijoddha Sangsad this season, Bangladesh League champions Sheikh Jamal looked unimpressive on the field. Though they enjoyed the lion's share of ball procession there was something lacking among the players as no rhythm, speed or communication within the three departments could be noticed.

Last season's runners-up Sheikh Jamal were lucky to find the back of the Agrani Bank net even once as their foreign and local strikers seemed to join in a rally of squandering chances.

Unmarked Femi headed an Atiqur Rahman Meshu cross from the left home in the 25th minute and later they created at least four more scoring chances but Brazilian Everton, Nigerian Assogba Allen, Meshu failed to convert any of them.

"Certainly I am not happy with the performance as the boys should create more chances in the game but they could not do it. They could not even avail the opportunities they created," said Sheikh Jamal coach Shafiq Bari Titu adding that the team suffered much when Nigerian Kester Akon left the field sustaining an injury to his head

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## Mushfiq, Faisal hit tons

#### Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim slammed an unbeaten hundred as Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club registered their second win in the Premier Division Cricket League with a comfortable seven-wicket victory over Brothers Union at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Many saw the Bangladesh captain's effort as a perfect answer to his club high-ups as whispers were doing the rounds that the little man didn't assume captaincy duties in this game in protest of the harsh response from the officials to his captaincy in the last match which they lost to Abahani.

Mushfiqur however denied the allegation, saying that after the last match they took the decision to hand over the duties to Sohrawardi Shuvo in a mutual understanding.

Away at BKSP, Pakistani Faisal Iqbal reached the three-figure mark as Biman recorded their first victory in three matches when they handed a seven-wicket defeat to Cricket Coaching School (CCS) in a high-scoring battle.

Faisal Hossain returned with a five-wicket haul after Mohammad

Ashrafal's unbeaten 88 as Old DOHS posted a 40-run victory over Kalabagan Krira Chakra at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. It was DOHS's second win in three games.

#### SHEIKH JAMAL-BROTHERS

Pakistani left-arm pacer Sohail Tanvir inflicted the early damage by taking two quick wickets but Mushfiqur joined Indian Deepak Joon to snatch the early initiative from Brothers. The pair contributed 132 runs for the third wicket as Sheikh Jamal scored 211 for three wickets in 44.2 overs in reply to Brothers' 207 for nine.

Deepak hit 72 but Mushfiqur finished the game in style with a long-off boundary against Aqeel Ahmed. The right-hander, who was dropped by Nazimuddin before reaching fifty, smote ten boundaries during his 124-ball 105.

Earlier Nazimuddin and Nafis Iqbal gave Brothers a confident start but they lost wickets at regular intervals once the 44-run partnership was broken following the dismissal of Nafis (12). Nazimuddin made 49 runs.

Arafat Sunny was the most successful bowler taking three wickets.

#### BIMAN-CCS

The Biman top order put in a strong batting display to snatch an emphatic win chasing 273 runs. Faisal Iqbal was

the most impressive scoring an unbeaten 104 off 111 balls that contained eight fours and two sixes but Kashif Siddiqui (44), Avishek Mitra (30) and Junaed Siddiqui (67) were also notable contributors. Avishek and Junaed however fell victim to run-outs.

Earlier Rokibul Hasan led from the front with a 91-ball 86 that featured two fours and three sixes as CCS set a challenging total of 273. Number seven batsman Suleman Khan put the opponent bowlers to the sword when he smashed three fours and five sixes to make 64 off 46 deliveries.

Rezaul Karim took three wickets for 40 runs.

#### DOHS-KALABAGAN

Mohammad Ashrafal got back among runs with an unbeaten 88 off 111 balls that saw nine boundaries while Nasir Jamshed added 54 as Old DOHS scored 248 runs in their share of 50 overs.

Faisal Hossain was the other notable score with 41 and later he starred with his occasional left-arm spin to dismiss Kalabagan for 208 runs.

A 109-run second wicket partnership between Nasiruddin Faruque (40) and Rifat Ullah (95) was not good enough for Kalabagan to avoid defeat as their innings lost momentum once Faruque was dismissed.

Left-arm spinner Enamul claimed

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Sheikh Jamal defender Atikur Rahman (R) tries to dodge an Agrani Bank defender during their Grameenphone Federation Cup match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## BPL to brand Bangladesh

#### Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League's (BPL) main focus is to brand Bangladesh as an attractive cricketing nation, officials said at a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The tournament will consist of six divisional teams which will participate on a franchise basis. The divisional teams will be franchised through an open auction which will take place at the Westin Dhaka on January 10. The minimum bidding amount of a franchise will be 1 million US dollars.

Each team will consist of 18 players out of with a maximum of nine foreign players, up to five of whom can play in a match. There will be six star players from Bangladesh representing each team as an Icon player.

During the auction, there will be three categories for foreign players with bidding for category A starting from 1,00,000 US dollars, for category B 50,000 US dollars and for category C 25,000 US dollars. The categorisation of Bangladeshi players and the final Bangladeshi player auction list will be decided on January 7 in the BPL Governing Council meeting.

The players' auction is set to be held at either the Radisson Water Garden or the Pan Pacific Shonargaon on January 19 from 11am onwards and the program will be telecast live worldwide through the Broadcasting Partner of the BPL, Channel-9. Overseas broadcasting partners have yet to be announced.

Recently, Tillakaratne Dilshan and Farveez Mahroof (Sri Lanka), Sohail Tanvir (Pakistan), and retired Proteas pacer

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