

Star SPORT

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First child first

South Africa batsman Hashim Amla will miss the rest of the one-day international series against Sri Lanka to be with his wife who is expecting their first child, Cricket South Africa said Saturday.

Amla hit a half-century in the five-wicket win which gave the Proteas a 2-0 lead in the five-game series at Buffalo Park after making a century in the opener.

"Hashim will be missed. Hopefully we clinch the series without him as soon as possible," said captain AB de Villiers said.

—AP



Premier league from Feb 1

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League, the top-tier professional football league, will get underway from February 1 while Bangladesh Championship League, the second-tier league, will start from February 7, decided a meeting of Bangladesh Professional Football League Committee yesterday.

The meeting also decided to hold the 2nd Independence Cup Football tournament between March 10 and 12 with 16 teams taking part in the knock-out tournament.

Eleven teams from Bangladesh Premier League and five teams from Bangladesh Championship League will take part in the tournament, said BFF's acting general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

"Top five teams of Bangladesh Championship League's points table will be given permission to play along with 11 sides of Bangladesh Premier League," said Shohag.

Both the leagues will remain suspended during the Independence Cup, he added.

Jamal avoid upset

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club almost suffered an upset at the hands of Surjo Tarun but another big-spending promoted club Brothers Union couldn't save themselves against Prime Doleshwar in the fifth round clashes of the Dhaka Premier League yesterday.

In the day's other match, Old DOHS trounced Bangladesh Biman by 125 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

SURJO-SKJAMAL

Having decided to bat first, Surjo Tarun rode on 62s by opener Jupiter Ghosh and middle-order Tayabur Parvez and though both struck four boundaries and three sixes,

SCORES IN BRIEF

SURJO TARUN: 244-7 in 50 overs (Jupiter 62, Parvez 62; Ariful 3-47).
SHEIKH JAMAL DHANMONDI CLUB: 248-8 in 49.1 overs (Mehrab 64, Deepak 48; Imran 3-44, Kibria 2-31).
Result: Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club won by two wickets.
BROTHERS: 273-8 in 50 overs (Nazir 59, Tanvir 47; Tajul 2-44).
PRIME DOLESHWAR: 274-7 in 49.2 overs (Mizanur 76, Manvinder 76; Ashraf 2-32).
Result: Prime Doleshwar won by three wickets.
OLD DOHS: 257 all out in 50 overs (Ziaur 64, Shuvogoto 54; Kashif 3-22).
BIMAN: 132 all out in 44.1 overs (Faisal 68, Rezaul 19; Ashraf 3-28).
Result: Old DOHS won by 125 runs.

Parvez's effort was a much more rapid knock (coming off 56 balls). The knocks helped Surjo Tarun make 244-7 in 50 overs.

Pacer Golam Kibria took two wickets at the top but Deepak Joon and Mehrab Hossain Jr batted sensibly with the latter scoring 64 off 84 balls.

A late burst from skipper Sohrawardi Shuvo, who made a 26-ball 42, took his side home with five balls to spare.

Imran Ullah took three wickets for the losing side.

BROTHERS-DOLESHWAR

It was Imran Nazir's 59 and 47 from Sohail Tanvir that took Brothers Union to a fine 273-8 in 50 overs.

But the large score was not enough for Prime Doleshwar, who rode on a pair of 76s from Mizanur Rahman and Manvinder Singh, who took just 71 balls in his knock.

The game was won with four balls to spare with the Indian recruit Manvinder taking Doleshwar to victory.

DOHS-BIMAN

Spin did the trick for Old DOHS as they struck down Biman for 132 runs in 44.1 overs. Skipper Mohammad Ashraf took 3-28 while Saeed Anwar picked up two wickets for the winning side.

Earlier, Old DOHS had Ziaur Rahman and Shuvogoto Hom Chowdhury's half-centuries to make 257 all out in 50 overs.



FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN: Australia fast bowler Peter Siddle (C) celebrates with his teammates after taking India's last second innings wicket on the third day of the third Test at the WACA in Perth yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India perish in Perth

Australia seal series with innings victory

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Australia routed India by an innings and 37 runs inside three days on Sunday to seal a crushing 3-0 series victory against the hapless tourists.

Rahul Dravid and Mahendra Singh Dhoni were out before lunch at the WACA Ground in Perth and Australia cleaned up the tail for 171 soon after the break to complete their third emphatic win.

India, the world one-day champions, have now lost seven straight away Tests after their 4-0 loss to England last year and this latest heavy defeat is likely to lead to calls back home for a shake-up, especially of the top-order.

It was the second Test in a row the tourists had been beaten without Australia needing to bat twice, having been smashed by an innings and 68 runs in the second Test in Sydney.

Despite a gritty batting performance by their most inexperienced batsman, Virat Kohli, the last man to fall for 75, it was another shoddy batting display by the Indians, whose abject displays have caused much consternation at home.

India resumed at 88-4, needing another 120 runs to make Australia bat again, and Kohli and veteran Dravid briefly revived their hopes with a dogged 84-run stand for the fifth wicket.

However, the loss of Dravid (47) and Dhoni in quick succession before lunch had Australia closing in on victory. The death knell came quickly after the resumption, with yet another insipid performance by the Indian tail.

Swing bowler Ben Hilfenhaus's incredible resurgence continued when he claimed three wickets in four balls after lunch, before Peter Siddle had Kohli caught behind to seal the win.

Hilfenhaus (4-54) claimed eight wickets for the match to have 23 wickets in the series at 16 apiece.

Kohli, who also top-scored in India's

calamitous first innings with 44 as the tourists were dismissed for 161, before Australia made 369 on the back of David Warner's explosive 180, had been fighting his way towards his maiden Test century in his seventh Test, but received no support aside from Dravid.

Dravid's once-famed "wall" defence was again breached by Ryan Harris, who knocked the 39-year-old's leg stump out of the ground.

The delivery didn't do anything significant off the pitch, but found the gap between bat and pad, ending the veteran's vigilant innings after 177 minutes and 114 balls.

It was the fifth time in six innings in the series that Dravid had been bowled, and his average for the series of 28 is well down on his career average against Australia of 52.62.

Dravid has now been bowled more times in Test cricket than any other batsman -- 54 times.

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Old DOHS's Mohammad Ashraf is joyous after taking one of his three wickets in their Dhaka Premier League match against Biman at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Muktis, BJMC favourites

Quarterfinals start today

SPORTS REPORTER

Star-studded Muktijoddha Sangsad and newcomers Team BJMC will be looking forward to ensuring their semifinal berths of Grameenphone Federation Cup when they take on Farashganj SC and Rahmatganj MFS respectively in the quarterfinals at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

On paper and performance of three group-stage matches, Muktijoddha Sangsad and Team BJMC are considered as favourites for the quarterfinals. Their opponents, having admitted that they would start as underdogs, however vowed not to give any room to their opponents.

Despite starting the tournament as favourites and winning the first match against Cox's City by 10-0 margin, Muktijoddha's performance has been inconsistent as they went down 2-3 against newcomers BJMC in the next match before surviving a scare against Mohammedan to hand them a 3-1 defeat.

The All Reds will be badly missing the services of country's best defender Ariful Islam in the quarterfinal who is expected to be replaced by Brazilian stopper Rafael De Andrade. The other Brazilian, attacking midfielder Willington De Lima, may also make his debut today.

"I have not yet been able to field my best playing eleven, and I won't be able tomorrow (Tuesday) either due to injury and suspension problems. But we are still strong

enough to pull off a victory against Farashganj," said Muktijoddha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik yesterday.

Manik however is aware of the strength of the opponents Farashganj SC, who last season surprised all by winning the Independence Cup. Farashganj's performance in this tournament has also been steady.

"Farashganj are an unbeaten side and are yet to concede any goal. We must keep this fact in mind and try to stop them with a specific plan," said Manik, whose side themselves have scored 15 goals and conceded three in the previous three matches.

Farashganj, the Old Dhaka Outfit, are also upbeat about making it to the last four by upsetting Muktijoddha Sangsad as they have nothing to lose.

"I think Muktijoddha have the best side this season and they are far ahead of us but we will go for a victory," said Farashganj coach Kamal Babu.

"But one thing is that all teams are equally strong after the inclusion of four foreign players as all players are sacrificing their quality local players to make room for the foreigners. But teams like Farashganj have no such problem and that equation makes all teams equal," said Kamal, whose backline has been depleted due to unavailability of right-back Shahidul and Cameroonian stopper Metenou Albau for injuries and will have to negotiate Muktijoddha's in-form strikers Mithun Chowdhury, Sunday Chizoba and Zahid Hasan Emily.

Appearing after a 29-year hiatus from

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Moni brings glory for the country

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed that Enamul Haque Moni will stand in the one-off Test between New Zealand and Zimbabwe at McLean Park in Napier from January 26.

Moni will become the first Bangladeshi to be the on-field umpire in the game's highest version. Australian Rod Tucker will be his partner in the middle while Englishman Nigel Llong will be the TV umpire and Australia's David Boon the match referee. This group will also conduct the three-match one-day series.

"I am definitely very pleased. Ever since I began umpiring in 2003, I have always wanted to stand in a Test match," he said in an instant reaction yesterday.

Fellow international umpire Nadir Shah congratulated Moni on his rise as an umpire. "I am very happy that he has become a Test umpire. He is as good as anybody in the world. I am sure he will do well," he said.

Sharfuddinul Ibne Shahid Saikat, the third Bangladeshi on the international panel, was also pleased and pointed out that it would help umpires in the country.

"Definitely I'm very happy. As Moni bhai goes up a step, so do all of us. One must also remember that he has gone there due to his on-field performance," said the former cricketer.

Moni has stood in 36 ODIs and three Twenty20 Internationals. He was also the first from the country to stand as a neutral umpire in a one-day international when



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Law to coach Sylhet?

SPORTS REPORTER

Tigers coach Stuart Law could be appointed as the head coach of the Sylhet franchise in the inaugural edition of the Bangladesh Premier League that begins next month.

"We will make a formal announcement later, but we have chosen Stuart Law to be the coach for our team," said Uday Hakim, a senior official at Walton, the owner of the franchise.

BCB has approved of this decision as there are no international duties for the Tigers while the BPL takes place and the board had always left the window open for the coaching staff to participate in the BPL.

"We are absolutely fine with Sylhet's decision to appoint Stuart Law as their team's coach," said BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus.

Former National team players Naimur Rahman and Rafiqul Alam have also been assigned as team consultants for Sylhet.

Dhaka have targeted former Tigers' bowling coach Ian Pont as their head coach while former Tigers head coach Jamie Siddons has

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A functional odd couple

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Australia opener David Warner admits he and partner Ed Cowan are an "odd couple" at the top of the batting order but says the combination of aggression and caution is working well.

The pair put Australia on the path to victory in the Perth Test and a 3-0 series lead against India with a 214-run opening stand, Warner going on to make 180 and claiming the man-of-the-match award.

The partnership, to which Cowan contributed 74, was the

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