

# Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY MARCH 11, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Mourinho world's best-paid coach

A study by website futebolfinance.com has revealed Real Madrid's Jose Mourinho to be comfortably the world's highest-paid coach, according to the Sportinformations agency. The Portuguese boss, who has won the Champions League with both FC Porto and Inter Milan, is reported to earn 10 million euros (\$13.1m) per year. According to the study, he is followed by Barcelona nemesis Pep Guardiola and veteran Dutchman Guus Hiddink - now in charge of ambitious Russian club Anzhi Makhachkala - with both pocketing 7.5 million euros (\$9.8 million).

- AFP

## Minister assures cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker yesterday assured aggrieved cricketers that he would do all in his power to uphold their rights and protect the interest of the game.

The sports supreme made the assurance while talking with an eight-member delegation comprising of former cricketers at his National Sports Council office yesterday.

The cricketers met the sports minister to press their demand against the controversial constitution amendment of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in which the rights of the cricketers to become BCB councilors has been revoked.

"We apprised the minister regarding the current crisis surrounding the BCB's recent constitutional amendment issue. He (Ahad Ali Sarker) listened to everything and asked questions about a few issues. We tried to clear our position. We not only discussed over the cricketers' councillorship issue but also few other things like making CEO as a toothless COO and abolishing the post of CFO," informed BCB director and former national captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain.

Roquibul Hasan, Faruque Ahmed, Akram Khan, Athar Ali Khan, Khaled Mahmud, Khaled Mashud and CWAB secretary Debabrata Paul

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# Tigers' chance to prove

## Misbah counts Shakib as 'main man' in Asia Cup opener today

SPORTS REPORTER



Regardless of all the controversies and the high-profile arrivals, the focus has returned to the field and a largely dry win column, as Bangladesh have the Asia Cup opener today against an opponent they haven't conquered in almost thirteen years.

The hosts take on Pakistan, whom they have defeated just once in 29 ODIs, at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur that experienced a short burst of rain yesterday. Though there is a lot of doubt whether it will have any effect on the playing conditions, it still might, as a bit of grass was left on the wicket. There is also some suggestion

that three pace bowlers could well make the final eleven.

On a wicket that has traditionally offered hardly any pace and low bounce, a lot will ride on how Mushfiqur Rahim rotates the left-arm spinners and the off-spinning all-rounders, essentially how he manages the ten vital overs of his main man.

Sometimes, Shakib Al Hasan is more important to the Bangladesh team than his status as an all-rounder in world cricket. His steady left-arm spin will attack and contain, whatever is necessary, while also coming in handy during Powerplays and the slog. With the bat, he leads the engine-room (the middle-order) with his ever-growing precision of picking singles and the fervent manner of hitting boundaries.

Pakistan will not remember Shakib

fondly, the all-rounder having had a magical time the last time the two sides met. It was a Test match and the 24-year-old realised a target that he has long held in high stead: a century and five-wicket haul in a Test. Shakib hammered 144 in the first innings when Bangladesh were down in the dumps, before picking up six wickets.

Shakib will be the focus of attention in the dressing room when he goes out to bat today, though he has said that he hasn't planned anything different for this game.

"My game-plan will be same. If I contribute for the team, that'll be great. I'll try my best and that's the only way I play every game," he said yesterday during the pre-match press conference.

"We want to play our best cricket, though we are not able to do it all the time. It is pos-

sible at home. This tournament is a good place for us to know where we stand in world cricket at the moment," he added.

The tremendously poor record against Pakistan also came up as a question, to which the Magura lad pointed out the recent close shaves.

"We haven't won against Pakistan in a long time that's true, but in the last series we had a good chance in the third ODI.

"We did well in the second

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(Top R) Former Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is in his full flow during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. The paceman is set to make a return to the national side today when Bangladesh take on Pakistan in the opening match of the Asia Cup. All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan tests his footballing skills (L) while the Pakistan players share a light moment during the two teams' practice sessions.



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

## All options open in first Test

AFP, Dunedin

New Zealand battled to 137 for two at the close of play on the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa on Saturday after being set an imposing 401-run target to win.

The home side lost both openers cheaply before Brendon McCullum and Ross Taylor came together and reduced the required total to 264 with eight wickets in hand by stumps.

When bad light stopped play four overs early, McCullum was not out 58 with Taylor unbeaten on 48.

If New Zealand do pull off an unlikely victory they will have to post their highest successful fourth-innings run chase, or alternatively they could salvage a draw with the arrival of forecast rain.

The Black Caps' current record fourth-innings winning total is 324-5 against Pakistan in Christchurch in 1994.

South Africa declared their second innings at 435-5 midway through the fourth day with Jacques Rudolph unbeaten on 105 -- the third centurion of the innings after Graeme Smith (115) and Jacques Kallis (113).

### SCOREBOARD

**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 238 (Amla 62, Smith 53, Rudolph 52; Martin 4-56)  
**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings 137 (McCullum 48, Vettori 46; Philander 4-72)

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Second innings 435 for 5 declared (Smith 115, Kallis 113, Rudolph 105 not out; Bracewell 3-70)

**NEW ZEALAND:** Second innings 137 for 2 (McCullum 58 not out, Taylor 48; Philander 1-29)

# Tamim's date with destiny

MOHAMMAD ISAM



When Tamim Iqbal walks out to bat at the centre of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today, he will be a marked man by a lot of people, many of whom are not going to be Pakistanis. The screeching sound of many a sharpening knife will buzz in his ears but it will be his prerogative what he wants to hear; or even drown out the noise, depending on the state of his mind.

Tamim will have to lay his entire focus on Pakistan's all-round bowling attack rather than what has happened over the last week or so, extending to the last three months when a lot has gone wrong for the Chittagonian. He

would like to improve on his recent record against this opposition against whom he has just two fifties. On his day however, the left-hander can be a class act and has quite a few good knocks in his ODI collection. Two out of three of his centuries have come at this ground where he has also hammered four half-centuries and one third of his total runs in 40 innings.

Practically, there are some other positives that Tamim can take from his fortunes in international cricket. An average follow-up season after two good years has happened to a lot of top sportsmen and women, and Tamim is no different. So this is supposed to be the time for recovery, if the ebb and flow of international sports are anything to go by.

The interesting aspect in this situa-

tion for keen observers will be to see whether the man in question can harness his talent and acquired skills into good use during this tournament, perceived by some as the crossroads in his career, the first of many.

At the turn of the year, Tamim's ugly act against Mohammad Ashraful earned him a lot of flak from everyone, including another teammate who felt cheated by his behaviour. There was more trouble for the 22-year-old when he had an alleged fall-out with the Chittagong Kings owners and management with two incidents with former Australian batsman Dean Jones making headlines.

And then came the mother of all controversies, although the whole issue wasn't his doing. BCB supreme

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# Akram returns as the boss

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Akram Khan withdrew his resignation letter yesterday to continue as the chief selector.

The former captain, who submitted his resignation letter three days back in protest of interference from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal regarding selection of the Asia Cup squad, explained the reasons behind the withdrawal during a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"I have withdrawn the resignation letter. The day before yesterday the honourable Prime Minister asked me to meet her. We discussed every aspect of cricket and she's assured

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# Watson takes over Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER

Shane Watson has dislodged Shakib Al Hasan from the number one position in the ICC player rankings for ODI all-rounders.

The Australian leads the former Bangladesh captain by three rating points as Watson now has 423.

Shakib, who has a chance to regain the spot with a good showing in the Asia Cup that begins today, though holds his No 1 spot in the Test rankings.

# Azarenka scrapes thru'

AFP, Indian Wells

World number one Victoria Azarenka survived an opening-match scare to beat Mona Barthel 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (8/6) in a three-hour marathon at the Indian Wells tournament Friday.

The 22-year-old Azarenka appeared headed for disaster, trailing 4-1 in the third set but the unseeded German Barthel could not close the deal.

The win means Azarenka, who claimed her first Grand Slam title in Melbourne, will face Svetlana Kuznetsova in the third round, who advanced after Swiss Timea Bacinszky pulled out of their match with a wrist injury.

Former Indian Wells winner Jelena Jankovic became the first seed to crash out Friday, losing in straight sets 6-4, 6-3 to world No. 99 Jamie Hampton.

The 12th seeded Jankovic blamed her second round

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India's little master Sachin Tendulkar wears a cheerful smile as he walks in to the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel with his teammates yesterday. The batting genius will once again be the centre of attention during the Asia Cup as the world eagerly awaits his 100th international century.

PHOTO: STAR

# When it was everything

BISHWAJIT ROY



Once it was a dream for the cricketers in the country to play the Asia Cup but obviously those days are well and truly gone. In those days, the country's cricketers hardly got the opportunity of getting international exposure and this tournament was the only platform for them to show what they've got.

International cricket is now an everyday affair for the current generation of cricketers because they go through a hectic schedule in different formats of the game all through the year since Bangladesh's elevation to the highest level in 2000.

So a Shakib Al Hasan or a Mushfiqur Rahim will definitely never feel the excitement with the region's biggest cricket extravaganza as was the feeling of the generation of Athar Ali Khan when the eleventh version of the competition will kick off at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

"I made my international debut in the Asia Cup in 1988. In those days Asia Cup was a big thing for us and we had been eagerly waiting for the biennial tournament because it had created the opportunity to get international exposure," said the former opener turned commentator Athar.

"Just imagine, I got the opportunity to play 19 one-day international in my ten years of international career, so in this generation it would be impossible to imagine how exciting it was to play in the Asia Cup. The sentiment will be the same if you ask any other cricketers in my generation," he added.

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### PAST WINNERS

Season	Winner
1983-84	India
1985/86	Sri Lanka
1988/89	India
1990/91	India
1994/95	India
1997	Sri Lanka
2000	Pakistan
2004	Sri Lanka
2008	Sri Lanka
2010	India

### RECORDS

<b>Most runs:</b> Sanath Jayasuriya (1220 runs in 25 matches)
<b>Top score:</b> Younis Khan (144 vs Hong Kong in 2004)
<b>Most wickets:</b> Muttiah Muralidaran (30 wickets in 24 matches)
<b>Best bowling:</b> Ajantha Mendis (6-13 vs India in 2008)