

Star SPORT

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Cassano back in training

Italy forward Antonio Cassano returned to training with AC Milan on Thursday for the first time since heart surgery. The 29-year-old has not played since falling ill following a match at Roma on October 30. Five days later, he underwent surgery to repair a minor heart defect. Cassano trained with eight other first team members who didn't play in Wednesday's Champions League quarterfinal against Barcelona. He is due to undergo tests on Monday which if he passes will allow him to have his playing licence restored so he can



Shakib looking for a break

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan is intent on getting a bit of rest from competitive cricket after the upcoming IPL, as he has not taken any substantial time off the game for more than two years. That could mean skipping a stint on the English county circuit this season, following his second season with Kolkata Knight Riders - the IPL ends on May 27, and Shakib is yet to firm up his county plans.

"The county cricket [stint] hasn't been confirmed yet. I still don't know if I would play [county cricket], even if I am fit," Shakib told cricket website Cricinfo. "I haven't stopped [playing] for the last three years, so I am thinking that only if I get a 15 to 20 days rest after the IPL, I will go and play in England. If they [whichever county team he might sign with this season] tell me to go and join them straight after the IPL, I won't go, that's what I have planned."

Shakib has had only three major breaks from cricket
SEE PAGE 17 COL 1



Brothers Union's young striker Shah Alamgir Anik (C) is slide-tackled by Farasghanj defender Mamun Miah during their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Muktijoddha, BU drop points

SPORTS REPORTER



Both fixtures of the Bangladesh Premier League ended in draws at different venues yesterday.

Newcomers Team BJMC held Muktijoddha Sangsad KC to a goalless draw at the Tangail Stadium while Brothers Union and Farashganj SC played out a goalless draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. The second draw in seven matches left Muktijoddha Sangsad in joint lead along with Abahani on 17 points though Abahani have a match in hand. BJMC are just behind them with 10 points from seven matches.

Brothers moved to the fifth position with nine points from seven outings and Farashganj were in seventh position with seven points from as many matches.

"We could have left the field with full three points had strikers Emily, Sunday, Nasir availed the opportunities that came their way," said Muktijoddha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik after the match.

"Getting one point is a good result as we lost to them twice in the Federation Cup," said Manik. "The unplayable ground condition and sultry atmosphere were also the reasons behind the draw."

"Apart from scoring the goal, we did everything right but luck was not on our side

as Ismail Bangura squandered at least four opportunities," said BJMC coach Jakaria Babu adding that the hot weather affected the players' performance.

At the BNS, it was an equal battle between two mid-table sides as Brothers and Farashganj put up a good show. However, the Brothers officials' verbal abuse against the referee was against the spirit of the game, but surprisingly the referee Mizanur Rahman did not take any measures against officials.

Farashganj dominated the first half and created two scoring chances, one of them was a spot-kick in the 26th minute which Congolese striker Siyo Zunapio blasted against the crosspiece to deprive Farashganj from getting full three points.

Brothers Union, who came into the match on the back of two inspirational victories over Sheikh Russel and Muktijoddha Sangsad, enjoyed lion's share of procession after the break and yielded a number of scoring chances but Farashganj goalkeeper Sultan Ahmed Shakil foiled those attempts. He first thwarted Kinsley Cigozie's shot and later saved Shah Alamgir Anik's attempt before Abdul Malek narrowly missed the target.

With four minutes left, Farashganj almost picked up their second victory when Teajieu Metenow Alban headed a Devis Mario free-kick just inches over the crosspiece.

League in another quandary



SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League will remain suspended until the authorities reach a decision in a meeting, today, on the latest controversy to hit the domestic game.

The appearance of Mohammad Yousuf for Victoria Sporting Club has been the source of trouble after Abahani contested the Pakistani batsman's "clearance" obtained from Mohammedan Sporting Club, for whom he played last season.

It is the second such delay in two months after the first phase of the competition was suddenly stopped by the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis on February 1 after 24 chaotic hours previously in which Surjo Tarun gave Kalabagan Krira Chakra an inad-

vertent walkover resulting in their demotion from the top league; BCB director GS Hasan Tamim quit his post as CCDM chairman on the same night. All twelve clubs vehemently protested the stoppage and the league resumed on February 5.

It was expected that after the Bangladesh Premier League T20s and Asia Cup, the Super League phase will see a swift finish, but once again the CCDM not only bowed to pressure, its powerlessness as an independent body has also showed up.

On March 28, Abahani protested Yousuf's participation on the morning of their Super League match against Victoria at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. When CCDM, the league minders, couldn't provide the relevant paperwork by early afternoon, the Dhanmondi giants directed their playing

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6

Superb Siddikur



INTERNET

Siddikur Rahman birdied the last hole for a five-under-par 67 to pull clear from the chasing pack after the halfway stage of the Panasonic Open India on Friday.

Siddikur fired six birdies against one bogey for a six-under-par 138 total at the 300,000-dollar event sanctioned by the Asian Tour and PGTT.

Thailand's Prom Meesawat was a further shot back with India's Gaganjeet Bhullar, Shankar Das, Ashok Kumar and Manav Jaini at the venerable Delhi Golf Club.

Siddikur, who won his maiden Asian Tour title in 2010, credited his hot putter for the solid round where he made 24 putts highlighted by a monster 30-foot birdie putt on the third hole.

"My putting was so good. My caddy was telling me that I needed to hole the birdie putt on the last hole (12 feet) to lead the tournament and I was very confident because I had a good line," said Siddikur.

Siddikur said his game has been on the upswing since taking a one-week lesson at a golf academy at the renowned TPC Sawgrass in the United States.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1



PHOTO: ASIANTOUR

Siddikur Rahman intently follows the path of his swing during the Panasonic Open at the Delhi Golf Club yesterday. The 27-year old golfer jumped to the top with a five-under-par 67 in Round 2.

LOCAL snippets

SPORTS REPORTER

Uttar Baridhara Club and Beanibazar SC played out a 1-1 draw in the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

After the barren first half, Nazrul put Beanibazar ahead in the 63rd minute but they held on to the lead for only nine minutes as Sumon pulled back the goal to force Beanibazar to share points in the first match in Cox's Bazar.

Both teams are in joint second position with nine points each from seven matches, two points less than leaders Wari Club.

Jibon of Uttar Baridhara Club and Sajim of Beanibazar were given the marching orders during the game.

Div-II Football

Friends Social Welfare Club and Bashabo Tarun Sangha played out a goalless draw in the Destiny Group 2nd Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Women's School Football

Viquarunnisa Noon School and College recorded a 2-0 win over Kamalapur Sher-e-Bangla Railway High School in Plan Metropolis Women's School Football tournament at the Motijheel Govt Boys High School ground yesterday.

Marium and Mouri struck one goal each for the winners.

In the day's other match, Shaheed Nabi High School drew 0-0 against Motijheel T&T High School at the same venue.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

NATIONAL ARCHERY Milon fails to win a medal

SPORTS REPORTER

Star archer Emadul Haq Milon was eliminated from the bronze-deciding Recurve Bow event of the Uttara Bank 5th National Archery Championships when he lost to BKSP's Ram Krishna Saha at the Army Stadium yesterday.

"Ram was tied with Milon in their stipulated sets and later the game rolled into tiebreaking but that too could not decide a winner. However, Ram was declared winner on the consideration that he shot the nearest arrow to the centre," said tournament's technical director Kamrul Islam Kiron over the phone.

Holder Milon had earlier lost to promising archer Sheikh Sajib of BKSP in the semifinal as they were tied at 5-5 before Sajib won 2-0 in the tiebreaker.

Sajib will now face Roman Saha Sujan of Dhaka Mariners Club in the final of the event.

In women's recurve bow event, Nazmin Khatun of Bangladesh Ansar & VDP won the bronze medal while Shamim Azad of Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

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