

## Drogba a Dhoni fan

India cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has a fan in star Chelsea footballer Didier Drogba, who says of all the cricketers, he likes the Indian skipper the most. Star international footballers Drogba, Frank Lampard and Fernando Torres will feature in a soon-to-be-aired Pepsi 'Change The Game' advertisement along with Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Virat Kohli and Harbhajan Singh. In that advertisement, Drogba says, "I like Dhoni. Few games I have been watching of his, he is brilliant. He has been fantastic."



# A Real Clasico

Ronaldo buries Barca at home

REUTERS, Barcelona



Real Madrid have one hand on a first La Liga trophy in four years after Cristiano Ronaldo scored a brilliant winner in a 2-1 victory at Barcelona on Saturday that stretched their lead over their bitter rivals to seven points with four games left.

It was Real's first win in eight La Liga 'Clasicos' and could have an impact on confidence for next week's Champions League semi-final second legs when Real host Bayern Munich and Barca entertain Chelsea.

On a rain-swept night at the Nou Camp, when Real also set a new record of 109 goals scored in a league season, Sami Khedira was sharpest to react when Barca goalkeeper Victor Valdes dropped the ball at a corner.

The Germany midfielder bundled it over the line for a 17th-minute lead.

Barca had started nervously and lacked their usual fluidity and once Real were ahead they defended solidly and rarely looked like conceding as Barca stroked the ball around on the slick surface without real penetration.

The noise volume inside the giant arena rose after substitute Alexis Sanchez finally scrambled the ball in for the equaliser with 20 minutes left but the home fans were silenced three minutes later.

Mesut Ozil's superb pass released Ronaldo on the right and he took the ball wide before smashing it home.

The goal, extending his La Liga record tally for the season to 42, was the best response to critics who accuse the Portuguese of flopping in big games and he is now one goal ahead of Barca forward Lionel Messi at the top of the scoring chart.

Barca had won six Clasicos and drawn one since coach Pep Guardiola took over in 2008. It was a first victory in the contest for Guardiola's Real counterpart Jose Mourinho in four attempts.

As well as virtually wrapping up the title, Real's win ended Barca's 11-match winning streak in the league and inflicted a first defeat on the Catalans in 35 league matches at the Nou Camp and in 55 home games in all competitions.

It was a triumph for Portuguese Mourinho, the combative former Barca assistant coach whom Real took from Inter Milan two years ago to try to end Barca's three-year grip on the Spanish title.

Mourinho may yet have another crack at his old club in the Champions League final although they trail Bayern 2-1 and Barca are 1-0 down to Chelsea after this week's first legs in Munich and London.

Saturday's match followed a similar pattern to Wednesday's game at Stamford Bridge, with Barca dominating possession but struggling to find a way through a resolute defence.

The Spanish and European champions suffered back-to-back defeats for the first time in nearly three years and now need to regroup for Tuesday's clash with Chelsea.



I AM THE BOSS: Real Madrid's Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring the winner from a quick counter attack against fierce rival Barcelona during the "El Clasico" at Nou Camp in Barcelona last night. Real won 2-1.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## BCB requests Proteas for matches

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday informed they have requested South Africa to play three ODIs and five Twenty20 internationals next month.

"At this moment there aren't any international matches for the national team, so in view of the impending T20 World Cup in Sri Lanka, we have approached South Africa to play against us," he said. "We can go over there or they can come here, possibly in May."

Kamal however informed that the BCB would bear the costs even if the Tigers go to South Africa and if the matches are hosted here. Zimbabwe have also been contacted to play a tri-nation tournament.

"We have spoken to Zimbabwe and they can play in the tri-nation event either here or in South Africa."

If Bangladesh host the matches, it will be held in the first week of May and if those are held in South Africa that will be in mid-May.

He however refused to comment on the fate of the Pakistan tour citing the court order. It was learned that the BCB had not received the full order from the High Court.

## Siddikur slips

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman slipped to joint 38th position midway through the third round of the CIMB Niaga Indonesian Masters before rain intervened to cut short the day's play. Siddikur, who started with last four holes left to the second round, made two bogeys to finish Round 2 on one-over-par 73 for a par 144 aggregate.

Siddikur's third round started badly as well as he bogeyed on the second hole

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# Anamul misses double ton

No play today; Day 3 tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER



Anamul Haque missed a maiden double hundred but

Khulna continued to dominate Dhaka Metro yesterday on a rain-interrupted second day of the National Cricket League second phase game at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Khulna declared their first innings on 618 for eight; stumps were drawn with Dhaka Metro on 118-2, a whopping 500 runs behind.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Rajshahi took three first innings wickets of Sylhet after declaring their first innings on 387-8 after the game started thirty minutes late.

The third day's play will continue on Monday due to today's daylong countrywide strike.

### KHULNA-DHAKA METRO

After play started at 12:16pm due to overnight and early morning rain, Khulna hammered 230 runs in a

marauding 30.5 overs but from an individual viewpoint, it was a disappointing morning for Anamul as he fell on 193 runs.

Having started the day on 178, there was a lot of buzz around this young talent's impending milestone but a Tariq Aziz delivery in the third over of the day trapped him leg-before, ending his 264-ball stay. In all, Anamul hit 27 boundaries and two sixes, but there were more celebrations at the other end as Taposh Ghosh struck a century and Ziaur Rahman breezed to 63 off 58 balls.

Taposh batted for more than four hours for his 183-ball 111 that had fourteen boundaries while Ziaur pounded nine boundaries and a six.

In reply, Dhaka Metro lost two wickets for 118 runs with Tasamul Haque unbeaten on 54 after Marshall Ayub made 31 opening the innings with Mohammad Ashraful (3).

### RAJSHAHI-SYLHET

Enamul Haque Jr turned the tide on this encounter's second day when

he frustrated the Rajshahi middle-order. The left-arm spinner took six wickets when they declared.

He took the wickets of Hamidul Islam, Forhad Reza, Jubair Ahmed and Sanjamul Islam, though Sabbir Rahman batted quite positively at the other end.

It ensured that any qualms about the nature of the wicket were misplaced as the newly laid wicket played quite well. Sabbir struck nine boundaries in his 116-ball 78 before Forhad declared the Rajshahi innings after they batted for 27 overs on the day, scoring 96 runs and losing four wickets.

Sylhet lost Imtiaz Hossain early when the right-handed opener was struck in front off Mukhtar Ali, though Imtiaz was not too happy with the decision.

Their Indian recruit Rahul Dewan started off well, but the tall right-hander from Haryana perished when left-arm spinner Sanjamul trapped him leg-before.

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# Many aspirants for BD coach's job



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is yet to officially start the hunt for Stuart Law's successor but refreshingly many have shown interest in becoming the Bangladesh head coach.

Former Australia batsman Dean Jones was the first to express his interest, before 49-year old former England all-rounder Dermot Reeve also threw his hat in the ring for the position which will be vacated when Law steps down at the end of June. Former Australia batsman Law resigned from the post due to family commitments as well as to take up a position as high performance coach of Australia's Centre of Excellence.

"Yes, I would be very interested in the job," Reeve told ESPNcricinfo.

Reeve has coached Somerset, Central Districts in New Zealand and has also been bowling coach of the New Zealand T20 side and Pune Warriors in the IPL. He is currently working as a television commentator

BCB cricket operations committee chairman Enayet Hossain Siraj however said that they have only just begun the process and the candidates will be asked to send their applications with a forwarding letter to the acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury by May 15.

"Many have been showing their interest which is a positive sign and I think this has come about firstly through the BPL where the foreign coaches understood that the working environment in Bangladesh is favourable. Secondly, of course, is the Asia Cup performance of the team where the world has seen that success is possible for the Tigers when previously it was quite difficult to come by," said Siraj.

"We have only just started to look for a coach so by the deadline we have provided, we will draw up a shortlist and then process our requirements," he added.

It was also learnt that those from previous coaching setups, including Jamie Siddons, could also apply for the job but the BCB sources said that they are looking for a new face.



PHOTO: STAR

A disappointed Anamul Haque (L) of Khulna walks back after being dismissed for 193 against Dhaka Metro during the 2nd day of their National League match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

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