

# Rajshahi ahead

SPORTS REPORTER



Rajshahi have to see through the fourth and final day of their last second phase game against Sylhet to reach the final of the National Cricket League. Their 210-run lead with six wickets still in hand gives the eastern divisional headquarters a sniff, but after yesterday's play Rajshahi have already overtaken Sylhet in the points table.

Sylhet were bowled out for 277 in the first innings at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, enabling Rajshahi to gain eight bonus points, taking them to 101.98 while their opponents have to win the game today to make it to the final as they got only 5.02 bonus points.

Away at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium where the players and match officials arrived at 5.30am, a good 3 and half hours before the start of play, Khulna were in full control after bowling out Dhaka Metropolis for 288 runs and then hurtling to 166-2 at stumps, a lead of 496 runs.

Khulna's national opener Imrul Kayes struck his first century of the 2011-12 season.

**RAJSHAHI-SYLHET**

The onus will be on Sylhet to take the remaining six Rajshahi wickets to give themselves an outside chance of clinching a place in the NCL final. But they are already 210 runs in deficit and must make their moves as quickly as possible. Otherwise it will be a

Rajshahi-Khulna final.

During the third day's play, Sylhet added 125 runs but lost seven first innings wickets to concede a lead of 110 runs. Nadif Chowdhury was dismissed by Forhad Reza for 61 runs off 165 balls with the help of six boundaries and a six. Towards the end, Enamul Haque Jr thumped 30 off 44 balls.

Sanjamul Islam took four wickets while medium-pacer Forhad took three.

Rajshahi however lost four quick wickets, Abul Hasan taking two, but Sabbir Rahman and Hamidul Islam held on for 21 overs before stumps were drawn.

**KHULNA-DHAKA METRO**

Khulna have already booked a place in the final after amassing 600-plus runs in the first innings, on top of starting the game on 102.84 points. On the third day, they first bowled out Dhaka Metro for only 288 runs and without enforcing the follow-on, chose for some batting practice.

The body language of the Dhaka Metro players gave away what was at stake for them, going through the motions as Imrul Kayes cashed in with a century. The left-hander was unbeaten on 101 off 144 balls with the help of thirteen boundaries and a six.

Imrul added 155 runs with Soumya Sarkar in the opening stand before the latter fell for 57 off 82 balls hitting five boundaries and a six.

Earlier, Tasamul Haque struck his second first-class century of the season (and career). He was caught by Taposh Ghosh off Abdur

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Rajshahi skipper Forhad Reza (R) congratulates left-arm spinner Sanjamul Haque on taking his fourth wicket during their National Cricket League second phase game against Sylhet at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## BCB ponders giving payroll to others

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is considering bringing more players on its payroll besides the national players. The issue will be discussed in the next cricket operations committee meeting before placing it in the board meeting for approval.

"We are planning to bring in more than 40 players on the payroll alongside the contracted national team players. As per the plans, 15 will be picked from the A team while near about thirty players will be chosen from the academy, under-19 and other sides," informed BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Enayet Hossain Siraj.

Right at the moment only fifteen players are on BCB contract.

"We are trying to give some financial support to the players and we believe this kind of financial assistant will inspire the players, especially who are not solvent to take the burden of buying the expensive gears," he added.

Siraj also believes that time has come to review the match fees and other facilities of the players at different level.

"We must focus on this

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## Hefty fine on Sunny

SPORTS REPORTER

Elias Sunny of Dhaka Metropolis was punished by the match referee for showing dissent towards the umpires during the third day's play of the National Cricket League match against Khulna at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

The national all-rounder was fined 50 per cent of his match fees after he questioned the umpire's decision after being given out caught-behind off Tushar Imran in the first innings. He was out for a duck off 29 balls.

Since this was Sunny's first offence, he was spared of a match ban.

## AHF Cup Bangladesh face Oman in final



SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bangladesh moved to the final of the 4th AHF Cup Hockey Tournament as they came from behind to beat Sri Lanka 5-3 in the semifinal in Bangkok, Thailand yesterday.

In the day's other semifinal, Oman defeated Chinese Taipei 2-1 to set up today's final against Bangladesh, are the defending champions, winning it in their maiden appearance in the 3rd AHF (Asian Hockey Federation) Cup in the 2008.

Bangladesh conceded a goal in the ninth minute of yesterday's match against Sri Lanka who had beaten Bangladesh once before in the 2006 SA Games. However, Bangladesh wasted little time to bounce back as defender Kamruzzaman Rana levelled the margin in the 11th minute before Mamunur Rahman Chayan converted a penalty corner in the 26th minute to give Bangladesh a 2-1 lead.

The islanders kept pressing for an equaliser and found the back of the net in the 34th minute to go to the break at 2-2.

Bangladesh took the lead again four minutes into the

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## SA matches may not be



CRICINFO, Johannesburg

The South African Cricketers' Association (SACA) has said it is "unlikely" they will agree to Bangladesh's proposal to play three ODIs and five Twenty20s in May. SACA will meet with Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Tuesday to discuss the Bangladesh Cricket Board's offer but association chief executive Tony Irish told ESPNcricinfo it is doubtful they will rubber-stamp the fixtures.

Should they withhold permission, the tour cannot take place, as Irish explained. "Because this will fall outside the Future Tours Programme (FTP), it needs the permission of SACA to take place," Irish said. "And what I can say at the moment is that it is unlikely we will go through with it."

Irish said the main reason for SACA's hesitancy is the packed schedule facing the national team. Most South Africa players are currently involved in the IPL or in county cricket, with the nota-

ble exceptions being Graeme Smith, who is recovering from ankle injury and Lonwabo Tsotsobe and Mark Boucher, who did not secure IPL deals.

Bangladesh's proposal to play the matches in May will leave South Africa without some of their players who are occupied in either India or England and could result in avoidable fatigue in a busy year. South Africa will play Zimbabwe in five practice Twenty20 matches in June, will then travel to England for over two months from July from where they will head to the World Twenty20 in Sri Lanka. They also visit Australia in October-November and host New Zealand in December.

Jacques Faul, CSA acting chief executive, said timing would be the biggest consideration when the relevant stakeholders meet to make a decision. "We always want to play cricket and foster cricket but we've got to be careful with how much preparation and how much rest we give our team," Faul said. "It is quite important how we pace the team."

Irish's comments indicated that it was

in the best interest of the players not to include an extra tour, as it may result in overload. "With the way the international season is scheduled, it is quite difficult to fit other matches in, unless they are on special request from the team," Irish said. The five matches in Zimbabwe are an example of this, with the fixtures taking place after national coach Gary Kirsten asked for more T20s before the World Twenty20.

Zimbabwe have made special arrangements to accommodate South Africa's request for the practice matches. They moved the dates for maintenance work on the pitches in Harare and Bulawayo from June to July, which also resulted in them having to postpone their scheduled tour against Bangladesh to later in the year.

This has left Bangladesh with no international cricket before the World Twenty20 and motivated them to seek fixtures from South Africa. Bangladesh have also mooted the idea of a tri-series between themselves, South Africa and Zimbabwe although that also appears unlikely to happen.

## Australia make solid start



CRICINFO, Roseau

Ravi Rampaul had an immediate impact on his return to Test cricket by striking with his second delivery but Australia steadied to reach lunch at 69 for 1 on the first day of the third and final Test in Dominica yesterday.

It was a solid start after Michael Clarke won the toss and chose to bat in the final Test of the West Indies series, and while the tourists have already secured the Frank Worrell Trophy they are keen to end the tour on a high.

At lunch, David Warner was on 28 and Shane Watson had 30, after Rampaul's early removal of Ed Cowan for 1. Rampaul, included for his first match of the series after Fidel Edwards was ruled out due to injury, curved his second ball in beautifully and surprised Cowan, who offered no shot and was lbw. The only aspect of the dis-

missal that did not represent a misjudgement by Cowan was his decision not to ask for a review.

Rampaul was impressive with the new ball, swinging it and troubling the batsmen, and he didn't concede a run until his 17th delivery. He should have had a second wicket when Warner, on 5, edged to third slip but the

### LATEST

Australia moved on to 119 for 3. Ponting was batting on 11 while captain Clarke was 5 not out.

captain Darren Sammy spilled a simple chance and to add to the frustration for West Indies, Sammy introduced himself in the next over and was duly driven for four by Warner.

Neither batsman set out to score quickly but they both put away deliveries when they could, pulling and driving when the bowlers strayed in length.

The inclusion of Rampaul

for Edwards was the only change for West Indies, while Australia made two changes. As expected, Ryan Harris returned to replace the injured James Pattinson, while the left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Starc was preferred to the spinner Michael Beer on a surface that didn't appear as spin-friendly as the one the teams faced in Trinidad.

### SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: First innings  
Cowan lbw b Rampaul 1  
Warner not out 28  
Watson not out 30  
Extras: (b-4, lb-5, w-1) 10  
Total: (For 1 wkt in 28 overs) 69  
To bat: Ponting, Clarke, Hussey, Wade, Hilfenhaus, Lyon, Harris, Starc  
Fall of wicket: 1-1  
Bowler O M R W  
Roach 9 4 16 0  
Rampaul 9 4 22 1  
Sammy 6 3 10 0  
Shillingford 4 0 12 0  
WEST INDIES: Barath, Brathwaite, Powell, Bravo, Chanderpaul, Deonarine, Baugh, Sammy, Shillingford, Roach, Rampaul.

## Ctg planning T20 tourney

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong District Sports Association is planning to organise a Twenty20 tournament called Bangabandhu Cup T20 next month in the port city.

The association arranged a discussion meeting, presided over by vice-president Ali Abbas, in connection with the event at its office yesterday.

"Being inspired by the last two mega events, the World Cup Cricket in 2011 and Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) that were also held in Chittagong, we want to arrange an international standard cricket tournament here next month," said general secretary AJM Nasiruddin who was the chief guest at the meeting.

"Though we didn't make any fixture but we hope to start the tournament by mid-May. As per our initial plan, eight teams will play and all matches will be held at the MA Aziz Stadium," he said.

## BFF POLLS Candidates' frantic hours

SPORTS REPORTER

As the April 30 polls of Bangladesh Football Federation draws nearer, candidates are passing busy time trying to convince their voters. The final list of candidacy was revealed yesterday with 52 candidates contesting for 21 posts.

It seemed that incumbent president Kazi Salahuddin was going to be unchallenged for his bid but former vice-president Abdur Rahim has taken the challenge to Salahuddin with a promise of reviving district football again while the other two candidates have withdrawn at the eleventh hour.

A total of 42 candidates are contesting for 21 posts in the election where the combined consensus panel led by Kazi Salahuddin and Badal Roy seemingly hold the upper hand, although some rival candidates who failed to find their place in

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