

# Star SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 7, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Food poisoning caused defeat

Ukraine coach Oleg Blokhin dismissed fears about his team's poor form ahead of the European championship following the co-hosts second consecutive friendly defeat at the hands of Turkey on Tuesday. "We experienced serious personnel problems in the match with Turkey as our 10 players were suffering from food poisoning and we had to shuffle the line-up just before the kick off," Blokhin said after the match in Ingolstadt, Germany, which his team lost 2-0. "We still do not know what caused it as those who suffered the poisoning ate



## Shakib seeks to skip Zim tour

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan has requested the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to give him rest during the Zimbabwe tour where Bangladesh will play an unofficial T20 tournament from June 18.

BCB cricket operations committee chairman Enayet Hossain Siraj admitted that the world's No 1 all-rounder gave them a letter few days ago in which he expressed his desire to be left out of the Zimbabwe-bound Tigers squad.

But Siraj said yesterday that they are yet to take any decisions about Shakib while chief selector Akram Khan said that they weren't informed about the matter officially.

BCB announced a 15-member squad which naturally included Shakib last Thursday and the team is supposed to leave

Dhaka on June 12.

"We received a letter from Shakib few days ago in which he requested to drop him from the Zimbabwe trip as he needs a break after a gruelling season," said Siraj. "He also rang me yesterday (Tuesday) to explain the reasons. He said that he has some minor injuries which may aggravate if he doesn't take rest."

"I asked our national team physio [Vibhav Singh] and trainer [Grant Luden] to give me a report on his current condition and we will take a decision about his letter within the next two days," he added.

Shakib had an MRI on his left knee while also complaining about a side strain which he seemingly picked up while playing for the Kolkata Knight Riders last month.

Siraj was in favour of giving Shakib rest to make sure that he will be available for official matches in Ireland and the Netherlands in July.

"Without any doubt, the question will be

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Citta, a 33-year-old female elephant, makes her first Euro 2012 prophecy choosing a melon above a sign indicating a Poland win at the Krakow zoo yesterday.

## Citta the Paul

AFP, Krakow

Paul the amazing clairvoyant octopus may be dead but now he has a worthy heir, a Polish-based Indian elephant named Citta.

Weymouth-born but German-based Paul went down a storm during the last European Championships and the 2010 World Cup in South Africa with his remarkable ability to predict the winners of various matches, mostly involving Germany.

His overall record from the two competitions was 12 correct predictions from 14 attempts, including a 100 percent record in South Africa.

And although he has passed onto pastures new, Krakow based elephant Citta has taken over the baton and

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## Deadlines rolling in for BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

There seems to be no end to the issue of the Bangladesh Premier League players' payment as yet another deadline looms large on the six franchises.

After the Federation of International Cricketers Association (FICA) sent a letter threatening legal action if payments were not completed by May 31, the Bangladesh Cricket Board had asked for a seven-day extension which ended today. Still, there is no sign of closure when it comes to the players receiving full remuneration.

Another must-do for the franchises is the payment of tax which most haven't completed, and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has given them a June 25 deadline yesterday.

The BPL governing council chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain said that they will meet the franchises on June 9 and take stock of the situation. "We have all the figures in front of us and on June 9 we will have a meeting with the franchises to find out about the unpaid fees," he said.

"It is not something we encourage, but it is a financial

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Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova hits a high forehand return to Estonia's Kaia Kanepi during her French Open quarterfinal victory at the Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Maria, Petra book semifinal date

AFP, Paris

Maria Sharapova on Wednesday reached her third French Open semifinal where she will take on Petra Kvitova, the powerful Czech who crushed her in last year's Wimbledon final.

Russian second seed Sharapova, who was also a semi-finalist in 2007 and 2011, eased past Estonia's Kaia Kanepi 6-2, 6-3 while fourth-seeded

Kvitova ended Kazakh qualifier Yaroslava Shvedova's dream run with a 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 win.

"I am happy to be back in the semi-finals. I love coming back here to challenge myself to go further in the tournament," said Sharapova, who can reclaim the world number one spot if she gets to Saturday's final.

"I won two tournaments coming into Paris in Stuttgart and Rome and they gave me a lot of confidence. But every event is different. I am just happy to improve and I know it'll get tougher from here."

Kanepi was broken seven times in the match and admitted that Sharapova had too much firepower for her.

"She attacked all the time, I didn't have any time to hit my shots and I just couldn't get any rhythm out there. I was also very nervous and I am just sorry I didn't get to spend more time on the court," she said.

"Maria is playing really well, she can win the tournament."

On another chilly, gloomy day in the French capital, Sharapova and Kanepi, who made the quarter-finals in 2008, exchanged breaks in the first two games before the Russian picked up two more in the third and seventh games.

Kanepi, the 23rd seed, saved two set points in the eighth game, but was powerless on the third when Sharapova unleashed a fierce serve down the middle which the Estonian could only deflect into the stands.

The start of the second set was just as untidy as the first with the world number two giving up a break to slip 2-0 down on a fourth double fault and then retrieving it immediately in the next to trail 2-1.

Kanepi, who put out former world number one Caroline Wozniacki in the third round, was quickly another break down while a Sharapova hold

to love gave the Russian a 4-2 lead. Sharapova squandered the opportunity to serve out the match in the eighth game when she was broken to love, but it was a brief respite for the 26-year-old Estonian who ballooned a forehand wide to hand Sharapova the tie in the next.

Kvitova reached her first French Open semi-final with a battling victory over world number 142 Shvedova who had knocked out defending champion Li Na in the fourth round.

Shvedova was bidding to become the first qualifier to make the last four at Roland Garros and she got off to a roaring start against Kvitova and was even 4-2 ahead in the deciding set before she wilted.

Kvitova held in the seventh game of the decider and immediately put pressure on

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## Muktis, Sk Russel face off today

SPORTS REPORTER



After a two-day break, the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League resumes today with title contenders Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC locking horns with Sheikh Russel KC in a crucial tie at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Last season's runners-up Muktiyoddha Sangsad are just three points behind leaders Abahani having played equal 16 matches after Sheikh Russel forced Abahani to drop points with a 1-1 draw in their previous match.

Now the same team, Sheikh Russel, are against Muktiyoddha Sangsad, who are looking forward to closing the gap with Abahani and have no alternative but to win against Sheikh Russel in their bid to clinching the maiden professional league title.

"All the remaining four matches are crucial for us if we want win the title," said Muktiyoddha Sangsad coach Shafiqul Islam Manik. "The boys have been putting up consistent performance and going to the field with a positive mind set. If they can keep the tempo and show the same attitude against Sheikh Russel, then we can expect a win tomorrow (Thursday)."

Muktiyoddha Sangsad handed a lone-goal defeat to Sheikh Russel in their first meeting of the fifth edition of the professional football league. The All Reds will be boosted by the return of Brazilian midfielder Willington de Lima though some of the other players are nursing minor injuries ahead of the crucial tie.

Muktiyoddha know all too well that a win in today's match is of paramount importance because they have big opponents left to face in the remaining matches; those being defending champions Sheikh Jamal, three-time champions Abahani and a hard-working Team BJMC.

Sheikh Russel, on the other hand, are looking forward to consolidating their position after they dropped seven points in the last six matches.

"We will definitely go for a victory, which can only lift our position now since we are already out of the title race," said Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque.

## MSC in semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Mohammedan moved to the semifinals of the Walton Club Cup Hockey Tournament with a third consecutive victory yesterday. Mohammedan defeated Mariner Youngs by 5-0 in the match played at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium, after taking a 2-0 lead in the first-half.

Mohammedan took a third minute lead through Golam Mostafa Manik before Rasel made it 2-0 in the 14th minute.

The young side from Motijheel put up some resistance after that against the star-studded Black and Whites as the first half ended 2-0. However, Mohammedan scored three more times in the second half, two of those coming from penalty corner specialist Mamunur Rahman Chayan and the other from Sheikh Mohammad Nannu. The two goals took Chayan's tally

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## Ex-stars light up Manikganj

Football

ZAHANGIR ALAM BISWAS, Manikganj

For one week, the clock was turned back at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj as numerous ex-footballers gathered to participate in the Dr Jibon Kumer Saha Smriti Veterans (Over-45) Football Tournament.

Organised by the Manikganj District Sports Association and the District Football Association, the tournament began on May 26 and continued till Tuesday.

The star attractions were a sprinkling of famous footballers from the past including Aminur Rahman (1975-79), Haji Kashem (1967-70), Hasanuzzaman Khan Bablu (1975-82), Ajmat (1984-85), Humayun Ahmed (1987), Ajmat Ali (1980-88), Rauf Babul (1985), Harun Ar Rashid (1985-86), Jobayer Nipu (1988-89), Shahid Hossain Swapan (1993-96), Riazul Haque (1993), Ahsanullah Mantu, Khurshid Alam Babul, Ilyas Hossain, Mahfuj Mamun Babu, Nurul Haque Manik, Mahmudul Haque Liton, Josim Uddin Joshi, Daulat Khan Babul, Satyajit Das Rupu and Shafinur Rahman Samrat (1995-97), rolling back the years in boots.

The tournament was participated by eight teams Sonali Ateet Clubs from Dhaka, Narayanganj, Bogra, Tangail, Munshiganj, Manikganj and Gazipur and Rajbari DFA.

Abdus Salam Murshedi, BFF senior vice-president and former national footballer, formally inaugurated the

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Action from the Dr Jibon Kumer Saha Smriti Veterans (over-45) Football Tournament final between Manikganj Sonali Ateet Club and Dhaka Sonali Ateet Club at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj on Tuesday. (INSET) Manikganj Sonali Ateet Club players receive the trophy during the prize-giving ceremony after winning the final 2-0.

PHOTOS: STAR



## JCTA opens with a win

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Junior Cricket Training Academy beat Bangladesh Boys Club Cricket Academy by 35 runs in the inaugural match of the CJKS-Urban American Under-18 T20 tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Batting first, JCTA scored 78-6 in 20 overs with man-of-the-match Tanmay making 25.

In reply, Bangladesh Boys were kept down to 43-9 in 20 overs.

In the day's other match, JDC Udyoman Cricket Academy (83-5 in 19.3 overs) beat Millennium Cricket Academy (82-9 in 20 overs) by five wickets. Saidul Islam from the winning team was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Earlier, CJKS general secretary AJM Nasiruddin inaugurated the tournament in the morning. Humayun Kabir Shahin, chairman of the sponsors Urban American Development, was present as special guest on the occasion.