



Abahani's new Iranian coach Ardeshir Pournimat Vodehi (R) relays his ideas to his charges during a practice session at the club ground recently. PHOTO: STAR

# Old not always gold

## Football

SPORTS REPORTER

They are the defending champions. They have won four of the league titles in the previous five seasons. They have an experienced side, the core of which has remained much the same over the last two to three years. Yet as they start their defence of the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League campaign on November 13, Abahani do not look like the team to beat.

The reason? There are quite a few. Firstly, they have lost some of the key players like Nasirul Islam, Linkon, Mamun Mia and Zahid Hasan who played a very important role in last season's success. Secondly, they have a new head coach who is only getting to know his players. Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, this is an aging side, with some of the more important players getting close to the age of 30. It is towards that age that players' fitness level takes a dip which affects performance. That phenomenon was quite evident on their nonchalant performance during the Federation Cup where they were beaten by Brothers Union before being knocked out at the quarterfinal stage by Sheikh Jamal DC.

However, Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu doesn't think that they are any weaker than last season. He puts a positive spin on it by saying, "It is true they are playing for a long time and maybe getting a little old. But this develops the understanding among players. Fitness may be not good at the moment, but those who will be playing ultimately will be there proving their fitness."

The team had a practice match at their club premises, the first under the new coach Ardeshir Pournimat Vodehi, on Thursday where they only managed to eke out a 1-1 draw against lowly Arambagh Krira Sangsad. The performance of the players, their lack of coordination and poor fitness level hardly impressed coach as well as team management.

The coach conceded it would be a difficult task to retain the title as there are good sides like Sheikh Russel, Sheikh Jamal and Mohammedan.

"I have just had an initial idea of the players. I know the task would be difficult but I will make sure we win tactically," said Ardeshir adding that he did not tinker with the formation (4-4-2) or the style of play because these players are so used to it.

Amalash Sen, a long time coach of the club, pointed out the reasons for

their struggle in the Federation Cup. "Apart from the fitness problems, there are obviously some concerns about the defence and the forward line. However, the coach will have his ideas and will no doubt use his experience to iron out those problems," said Amalash after watching the match against Arambagh.

The team is expected to be built around the experience of Sujon, Wali, Meshu, Arman, Awudu and Frank. The performance of these players, their experience and cohesion together with the fitness level may go a long way in deciding whether the Sky Blues will win the professional league title for the fifth time.

### SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Shahidul Alam Sohel, Mazharul Islam Himel, Uttam Barua. **Defenders:** Mohammad Sujon, Waly Faisal (C), Kazi Nazrul Islam, Abdul Hamid Khan Vasani, Atiqur Rahman Meshu, Mohiuddin Ibnul Siraji, Saikat Bhowmik, Samad Yussif, Sahwkat Russel.

**Midfielders:** Pranotosh Kumar Das, Abdul Baten Komol, Arman Aziz, Choumrin Rakhain, Shahedul Alam Shahed, Abdullah Rintu, Yoko Samnick, Towhidul Alam.

**Strikers:** Shakawat Hosian Rony, Enamul Haque, Awudu Ibrahim, Twum Frank, Lucky Paul, De Silva, Wellington Santana.

## Hockey gets sponsors for India tour

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahimafrooz Ltd, Farr Ceramics and Nitel Group have come forward to sponsor the Bangladesh national hockey team for their tour of India where they will play in two this month, as part of preparation for the World Hockey League (Round-2).

Bangladesh will first participate in Nehru Cup in Delhi from November 14 to 24 and then play in the Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey Tournament at the same town. The hockey team is scheduled to leave here for India on November 13 by road.

Farr Ceramics and Nitel Group will provide Tk 5 and Tk 3 lakh respectively for Nehru Cup while Rahimafrooz will give Tk 8 lakh for Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey Tournament. Bangladesh Hockey Federation has estimated a budget of total 21 lakh taka.

"Tourment preparation is very important for the national team ahead of the World Hockey League in February, 2013. It would have been tough to send the national team to India had the sponsors not come forward. We thank the sponsors," said BHF general secretary Khaza Rahmatullah.

## Senior Div football

SPORTS REPORTER

Jatrabari KC recorded a 3-0 win over Sun Rise SC in the Popular Life Insurance Senior Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Mohammad Ali put Jatrabari ahead in the 29th minute before Selim Reza struck twice in the 35th and 36th minutes to ensure a winning start in the seven-team league.

# Amla, Kallis rule Day 1

## Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Hashim Amla and Jacques Kallis became South Africa's greatest scoring partnership as the Proteas dominated Australia's bowlers to seize control on day one of the first Brisbane Test on Friday.

The pair rammed home the advantage with an unbeaten century stand as the world's best team blunted the Australian attack to have the South Africans in command after winning the toss.

When bad light stopped play eight overs before scheduled stumps, South Africa were 255 for two with Amla unbeaten on 90 and Kallis providing solid support on 84.

Kallis previously held his

country's aggregate record with current coach Gary Kirsten at 3592 runs in partnerships throughout 64 Tests, and has now surpassed that with Amla following their 136-run partnership for the third wicket.

At day's end, the pair had accumulated 3607 runs together in their 58th Test while Amla, the number one-ranked Test batsman, passed 5,000 Test runs.

South Africa reached their position of strength through resolute batting on a flattening wicket, mixed with some missed Australian chances and the rub of the green.

It was a strong statement of intent by the South Africans in their bid to follow up their first-ever series win in Australia on their last tour, in 2008-09.

"We wanted to really put

our peg in the ground and I think we did that really well," opening batsman Alvaro Petersen said.

"Two wickets down, we're in a comfortable position but tomorrow's going to be really important, to back that up and make sure today's work doesn't go to waste."

Kallis had a reprieve on 42 in the over after tea when he miscued Peter Siddle to mid-off where he was safely held by Nathan Lyon, but umpire Asaf Raud checked back whether Siddle had over-stepped.

Replays showed Siddle's heel on the line and the TV umpire ruled a no-ball for Kallis to stay at the crease -- much to Australia's anguish.

Siddle added to Australia's frustrations when he put down a caught and bowl chance six overs later when Amla was on 74 and South Africa at 206 for two.

Skipper Graeme Smith was out following a review in the 11th over after umpire Billy Bowden initially turned down James Pattinson's lbw appeal.

Television replays clearly showed the ball hitting Smith's back pad in front of the wicket and he was given out, with Pattinson enthusiastically celebrating the verdict.

### SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings				
Smith lbw b Pattinson				10
Petersen c Hussey b Lyon				64
Amla not out				90
Kallis not out				84
Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-2, nb-3)				7
Total: (For 2 wkts in 82 overs)				255
To bat: De Villiers, Rudolph, Duminy, Philander, M Morkel, Steyn, Kleinveldt.				
Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-119.				
Bowler				
	O	M	R	W
Hillfenhaus	20	5	53	0
Pattinson	20	4	53	1
Siddle	20	4	58	0
Lyon	12	0	61	1
Hussey	4	0	21	0
Quiney	6	3	7	0
AUSTRALIA: Warner, Cowan, Quiney, Ponting, Clarke (capt), M Hussey, Wade, Siddle, Lyon, Pattinson, Hillfenhaus, Starc (12th man).				



South Africa batsman Hashim Amla plays through the square during the first day's play of the first Test against Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane on Friday. PHOTO: AFP

## Myshukur

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Dhaka were bundled out for 84 runs in 32.1 overs.

### RAJSHAHI v RANGPUR

Opener Myshukur occupied the crease for five and a half hours during his 102-run knock that was scored of 211 balls. The innings saw seven fours and four sixes as Rajshahi scored 232 runs before getting bundled out.

Pacer Sajedul Islam bowled brilliantly for Rangpur, picking up four wickets.

Rajshahi however finished the day on a happy note as Shafiul Islam struck early to see Rangpur lose one wicket without any score before stumps.

### KHULNA v CHITTAGONG

A 74-run opening partnership between Imrul Kayes and Soumya Sarker gave Khulna a perfect start from where veteran Tushar Imran and Mohammad Mithun steadied the ship.

But it was hard-hitting batsman Ziaur Rahman and Dollar Mahmud who put the opponents' bowlers to the sword.

Khulna scored 414 for nine at stumps.

### BARISAL v DHAKA METRO

Number seven batsman Fariduddin Masud helped Barisal score 242 runs after recovering from 53 for four. Masud made an unbeaten 70 runs.

Arafat Sunny was the most successful Dhaka Metro bowler claiming four wickets for 55 runs.

In reply, Dhaka Metro lost two early wickets to finish the day on 27 for 2.

# LOCAL snippets

SPORTS REPORTER

National hockey striker Rasel Mahmud Jimmy recently declined two offers to play in a domestic tournament in Oman ahead of Bangladesh national team's engagements in Nehru Cup, Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey Tournaments and World Hockey League.

The prolific striker was first offered to play for Al-Nasir club of Oman during the AHF Cup in Thailand and recently he was approached by Oman's Al-Seeb hockey club to play the semifinals and final match in an ongoing tournament but the striker declined to accept both offers due to commitment with the national team.

"I refused both of them for the engagement with the national team. It could have been pleasing to play there but the national team is my first priority and there is no way of thinking any alternative," said Jimmy yesterday.

### Seminars on football laws

In a bid to reduce the misunderstanding between the players and referees during the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier Football League, the Bangladesh Football Federation is set to conduct nine separate sessions on laws of the games to aware the club officials, players and coaching staff.

The BFF will hold four separate sessions with Abahani, Muktijoddha Sangsad, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Cluba and Sheikh Russel KC today, and three more sessions tomorrow with Mohammedan, Arambagh KS and Brothers Union. Monday is slotted for Feni Soccer Club and Team BJMC. The sixth edition of professional football league will start on Tuesday.

### DRU sports carnival

Syed Mamun of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha retained the singles title of Table Tennis in the Dhaka Reporters Unity Sports Carnival beating Mahub Alam Khan of ATN-News at Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium on Thursday.

In the swimming competition held at Ivy Rahman Swimming pool, Zafar Iqbal of Sangram emerged champion, Kamruzzaman of Arthoniti Protididhi finished second while Abu Saleh of Nayadiganta bagged the third spot.

## On a comeback

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NCL. More importantly, he spent more than 12 hours on the crease for both those innings.

"I wanted to adjust myself to the longer version of the game, so I tried adapting to the game," said Naeem.

The player who was given the nickname "Sixer Naeem" for his ability to play aggressive innings said that he had to work hard to change his approach.

He performed in a similar way against the West Indies High Performance team that visited Bangladesh in September.

"I batted in the nets for hours and followed my coach's advice," said Naeem.

"I still don't know if I am going to make the team or what position I might bat in. If I do get selected I'll bat according to the situation," he added.

## Rain ruins

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permitting.

However, some of the other golfers were able to take to the field and Thailand's Chapchai Nirat held the share of the second round lead with England's Simon Dyson at six-under par through nine holes before the rain came.

Tournament officials are bracing for a long weekend ahead and are not ruling out a Monday finish for the tournament.

## A trying twelve years

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measured not in matches but in sessions. "There have been some highlights," recalls Islam, "...at Fatullah against Australia, in Multan, at the West Indies."

The rest though is an all-encompassing blur of darkness and defeat, which perhaps lend credence to those remarks from the former West Indian opener.

But Islam still does not believe Greenidge was wholly right.

"I think it [Test status] was right. Bangladesh had to start from somewhere and even if he had gotten Test status now, the story would probably have been the same," says Islam.

"There is no proper infrastructure, there is no proper school cricket, the pitches are poor and there is no planning on how to develop the pipeline," he says.

Naimur Rahman Durjoy was the Bangladeshi captain in that historic encounter against India, and he also picked up six wickets in the first innings. Speaking to The Daily Star, Rahman also mirrored Islam's concerns over the lack of a proper first class system. The portly all-rounder though, was slightly more optimistic.

"Our problem has been our pace of growth," says Rahman. "Test cricket is not an easy game and our technical quality to combat the challenges are very limited," he adds.

But Rahman said that he was 'not too

## Reefat, Mostafa

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while Mostafa beat Mohammad Sirajul Kabir Bhuiyan in the second round matches to secure maximum two points from as many matches.

In the day's other matches, FM Nasir Ahmed and FM Mehdi Hasan Parag drew against holder GM Ziaur Rahman and runner-up GM Niaz Murshed respectively.

IM Abu Sufian Shakil beat Jamal Uddin, IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar defeated against Debaraj Chatterjee while FM Mohammad Javed beat FM Taibur Rahman. Zia, Niaz, Sagar, Nasir, Parag have one and half point each.

### HIGHEST SCORERS

Batsmen	Matches	Runs
Habibul Bashar	50	3026
Mohd Ashraf	57	2419
Tamim Iqbal	24	1748

### HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES

Mohd Ashraf 158* vs India in Chittagong on 17 Dec 2004
Tamim Iqbal 151 vs India in Dhaka on 24 Jan 2010
Aminul Islam 145 vs India in Dhaka on 10 Nov 2000

### HIGHEST TOTALS

- 488 vs Zimbabwe in Chittagong on 6 Jan 2005
- 427 vs Australia at Fatullah on 9 April 2006

### MOST WICKETS

Bowlers	Matches	Wickets
Mohammad Rafique	33	100
Shakib Al-Hasan	26	96

### MOST MATCHES

- Mohd Ashraf: 57 matches

unhappy' about the course of Bangladesh cricket. "I am not disheartened; you need a lot of time to grow in Test cricket." There is truth to Rahman's words. New Zealand needed 26 years and 44 matches to break their Test match duck and although that is often used as a blanket for Bangladesh to hide behind, consider that Zimbabwe have won just nine in their lifetime.

There is change brewing however. "There are a lot of new and exciting players changing the face of Bangladesh cricket," says Rahman. "That can only be a good thing."

In many ways, Bangladesh have come a long way from that brilliant November day at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, but in many other equally important ways, they remain a team struggling to find a foothold in the real bastion of cricket.

Over the years our dark moments may have made Greenidge's words out to be prophetic, but the only way for Bangladesh to silence him and other harsher nay-sayers is to start performing. And there is no better time to start than just after the 12th anniversary of their debut Test.

## Injury woe for Duminy

AFP, Brisbane

JP Duminy took some gloss off South Africa's brilliant opening day in the first Test against Australia Friday by being ruled out of the tour with an Achilles injury following play at the Gabba.

The lower-order batsman was warming down by kicking a rugby ball around with teammates on the playing field, after the Proteas reached stumps at 255 for two, when he suffered the injury.

Duminy, 28, a star of South Africa's historic 2-1 series victory in Australia four years ago, was carried from the ground by medical staff.

In a statement late Friday the team said Duminy would "take no further part in the Test series" after rupturing his left Achilles tendon following what was described as a fitness training drill after the opening day.

Duminy could have played an important role for the Proteas in the remainder of the first Test with his off-spin after leg-spinner Imran Tahir was left out of the team for the Gabba opener.

"The diagnosis of an Achilles' tendon rupture was confirmed by the MRI scan this evening and he will undergo surgery to re-attach the tendon on Saturday morning," said team manager Mohammed Moosajee.