

## Title in Sk Jamal's sights

SPORTS REPORTER



One professional league title in their debut season, a Federation Cup win and a trophy from abroad in the beginning of the next season - Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club's return to top-flight football couldn't have been any better.

That was until the early part of the last season. However, that initial success could not be sustained following a mass exodus of star players and even chopping and changing of coaches did little to stop the rot. The result was a lowly sixth-place finish the following season.

That ignominious result is perhaps what egged them on to get on the transfer market early and also start preparation a long before some of the other clubs. Boasting seven players from the national side and seven from the U-23 side, Sheikh Jamal's bench ably complements its main eleven. They can boast of having the deadliest strike force -- Sunday Chizoba and Mike Otojareni who scored 10 goals together in the Fed Cup -- in their side. Those two will be ably supplemented by Kester Akon, Towhidul Alam, Sohel Rana and the likes. The midfield is solid which includes Shakil Ahmed, Shahedul Alam,

Enamul Haque Sharif and Monaem Khan Raju among others. However, if there is a weak point it's in the centre of defence which has been left weaker by the departure of Monday. At goal though they have the safe hands of young national keeper Mostakur Rahman.

Their coach Joseph Afusi, who has only been promoted from player-cum-assistant coach to a full coach this season, has been impressive with his handling of team and style of play in the Federation Cup where they lost the final in extra time against Sheikh Russel KC.

Afusi is confident that he has got the players at his disposal who can go the distance. "It's my first time as a coach. I know the challenge. But I'm a hungry coach and I want to win. We have the best players from the country and abroad. So, we should be champions," is the observation of the young Nigerian.

There is a growing number of instances in Europe where fresh young coaches, who have just finished their playing career and taken the coach's job, turning around the flagging fortunes of clubs with their unique philosophy of football and good man-management skills. Afusi's boys certainly have the quality to endow their coach with success in his first season.

## SL-NZ final ODI washed out

CRICINFO, Hambantota

Rain robbed New Zealand's best chance of sneaking in a win in a one-sided series, after they restricted Sri Lanka to 123 for 8 in the fifth and final one-day international in Hambantota on Monday.

The match began under sunny skies, but little over two hours after the start, rain forced the players off the field and they remained indoors till half past eight, when another downpour brought a soggy end to an ill-timed series. All six matches on tour were affected by rain, with Sri Lanka taking the one-dayers 3-0.

While Sri Lanka were the superior side from the context of the series, New Zealand would have every reason to feel let down by the weather in this game.

## A day of

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**KHULNA v CHITTAGONG** Spinner Nizamuddin Ripon took a five-wicket haul as he, along with Razzaq, ran through Chittagong's batting order. Chittagong, having started the day with an overnight score of 40 for 3, slumped to trouble early in the day as they lost their foreign recruit, Milinda Siriwardana after adding just 10 runs to the board. Aftab Ahmed's half-century provided some glamour to the innings, which otherwise crumbled. They were bowled out for 153.

**RAJSHAHI v RANGPUR** Rangpur, who were set an mammoth target of 359, were bowled out for just 134 runs on the board. The hosts' batting performance was similar to their previous innings as they lost 6 wickets after having scored just 50 runs. Discarded national pacer Shaiful Islam picked up three wickets. Rangpur's Sajedul Islam, who picked up eight wickets, was the only bright spot for the hosts.

**DHAKA v SYLHET** At the end of the day it was Dhaka's first innings rout, when they were bowled for just 84, that led to their loss in Sylhet. The visitors, resuming the day on 289 for 8, were bowled out early in the day for just 307. Discarded left-arm spinner Enamul Haque Jr put the pressure on the national selectors with another five-wicket haul.

## ABAHANI, BROTHERS ABSOLVED Amer gets one month ban

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Premier League champions Abahani and Brothers Union have been cleared off the allegation of playing a fixed match in last season's Professional football league, but Brothers Union manager Amer Khan has been handed a one-month suspension for 'providing misleading information' about the league match between the two alleged teams.

"We could not reach a conclusion on Amer Khan's comments aired on a private television channel but it seemed to us that the footages had been added and overlapped (superimposed) and Amer Khan has been punished for providing misleading information," said professional football league committee chairman Abdus Salam Murshed yesterday.

Murshed also claimed that the television channel did not respond to their repeated requests of providing uncut footages, and thus they were forced to end the matter.

After hearing his one-month suspension, Amer Khan said, "It is a farce. The committee punished me without proving the matter."

Meanwhile, the sixth edition of the professional football league starts today even though the investigation of the match between Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Brothers Union has yet to see the light as the Match Fixing Identification Committee had only one meeting regarding the allegation till yesterday.

## We'll play cricket

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Without any doubt Bangladesh need a concerted effort to be competitive in the series and their inexperienced bowling attack need to be disciplined against a very dangerous batting line-up, but still the focus would be on star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who is just four wickets away from becoming the second Bangladeshi to achieve the 100-wicket mark in Tests after Mohammad Rafique. Much hope will also be pinned on left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal, who enters the series with three consecutive NCL hundreds under his belt.

The Bangladesh skipper also admitted the importance of the two world-class players' performances. "The world-class players we have in Tamim (Iqbal) and Shakib (Al Hasan), if they play well and then if we can add to their contribution, definitely our batting will be good," opined the little man.

Inconsistency is the main headache of the Bangladesh team but they are always considered a dangerous side in their own territory although that reputation has been garnered in the limited-over format. Bangladesh can draw their inspiration from the home advantage and

their healthy record (although the two wins in eight matches came against a weakened side) against the West Indies but they should know that this West Indies team have all the weapons in their arsenal to dominate in any condition. Refreshingly, Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur seemed aware of this fact.

"We played against them last year on this field (Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium). We have those memories with us. But now they are a much better team and have improved a lot and they are more skilful than before. Their spin, pace bowling attack, everything is good. We have to perform well. Mere home advantage won't matter," the Bangladesh skipper said.

"We will play good cricket and hard cricket, at the end of the day we will see what the result is. As long as we play consistent cricket it's good. Previously we couldn't do that. So this is our basic plan," he added.

Only if Bangladesh execute their plans to perfection in the middle will they have a chance of taking something from this series. The onus is on the Bangladesh team to push their opponents hard to make it a competitive and interesting series.

## Pinki is a man

Charged with raping

AFP, Kolkata

Indian police on Monday charged an international gold medal-winning athlete with raping her former partner after medical tests showed she was actually a man.

Pinki Pramanik, who retired in 2007 after winning team gold in the 4x400m relay at the 2006 Asian Games, was charged after a report was completed by a medical board set up to determine her gender.

"Medical tests have confirmed that Pinki is not a female," BN Kahali, chairman of the board, told AFP. "Pinki is a male pseudo-hermaphrodite. We have submitted the medical report to the medical sessions court."

Male pseudo-hermaphrodites are genetic males who develop some female physical characteristics and identities.

## Italian expat for Brothers

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union signed up a Bangladeshi-born Italian striker Ismael Hossain John for the Bangladesh Premier League which begins today.

"My target is to secure a place in the national team. That's why I have come here to play for Brothers Union. I may stay with Bangladesh football if I find things smooth here," said John, during the Brothers Union press briefing on their preparation for the professional football league. He also claimed to have played for a club of third division league in Milan.

Brothers manager Amer Khan's evaluation of John however is that he needs time to develop the footballing sense even though the striker has good running and shooting ability.

## Div I football

SPORTS REPORTER

Youngmen's Fakirpore Club registered a 2-1 win over Sunrise SC in the Popular Life Senior Division Football League at Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Milon and Shamim scored for Fakirpore while Mehdi Hasan pulled one goal back for Sunrise.

## Sammy

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have," he added.

Regarding the wicket, the captain stated that apart from the outfield being re-laid, he didn't see a major change in the conditions and expected the wicket to be slow and similar to the ones on which they played last year. The captain also claimed that the team was ready to perform in the longer version of the game despite being busy with T20 cricket the last couple of months.

"We got a professional unit and it's not the first time we have to transform from T20 to Test cricket. We have prepared well for this tournament. We had a three-day game against the academy team and a national camp back home," added Sammy.



CAPTAIN'S KNOCK: Australia skipper Michael Clarke kisses his helmet after reaching 200 on the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa at the Gabba ground in Brisbane yesterday.

## Roger-Novak showdown

AFP, London

Roger Federer remains on course for a seventh ATP Tour Finals title after the defending champion defeated third seed Andy Murray 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 on Sunday to set up a final showdown with Novak Djokovic.

Federer produced another of the supremely dominant displays he seems to reserve for this tournament as he cruised past Murray in one hour and 33 minutes at London's O2 Arena and the Swiss great is now one win away from completing a hat-trick of titles at the prestigious season-ending event.

## Different WI

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In one of the rare positives for Bangladesh, perhaps one of the best examples of how much of a world-beater Shakib can be came quite recently during his sublime 144 in December 2011 against a formidable Pakistan attack. It is performances like that the home side will be hoping for from Shakib, whose left-arm spin will be as important to the team's hopes.

The vaunted South African bowling attack was toothless at times. Skipper Graeme Smith, without the services of incapacitated part-time spinner JP Duminy, brought his own off-spin into the attack to add variety.

Duminy ruptured his Achilles tendon while warming down after Friday's first day's play and will be out for six months.

The Proteas bowled 22 no-balls with debutant Rory Kleinveldt (11) and Vernon Philander (8) the main culprits, to blow out extras to 34 in the Australian innings.

**SCOREBOARD**  
**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 450 (Kallis 147, Amla 104; Patterson 3-93)  
**AUSTRALIA:** First innings (111 for 3 overnight)  
 Cowan run out (Steyn) 136  
 Warner Kallis b Steyn 4  
 Quiney c Steyn b Morkel 9  
 Ponting c Kallis b Morkel 0  
 Clarke not out 218  
 M Hussey not out 86  
 Extras: (lb-11, w-1, nb-22) 34  
 Total: (for 4 wkt in 121 overs) 487  
 To bat: Wade, Lyon, Siddle, Patterson, Hillenhaus.  
 Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-30, 3-40, 4-299.

**Bowler** O M R W  
 Steyn 27 1 109 1  
 Philander 25 2 82 0  
 Morkel 26 6 109 2  
 Kleinveldt 17 0 81 0  
 Kallis 12 3 30 0  
 Smith 9 0 36 0

It was the only wicket South Africa took all day.

The left-hander backed up too far at the non-striker's end and was out when bowler Dale Steyn got his fingers to a stinging Clarke drive and deflected the ball onto the stumps.

It was Cowan's first century in his eighth Test match and dispelled doubts about his Test credentials after coming into the series with a record 259-run stand for the fourth wicket.

Clarke continued his flourishing batting form as skipper with his 20th Test hundred and his third double century of the year, after his unbeaten 329 and 210 against India at home in

January.

He is the highest scorer in Tests this year with 1,000 runs at 111.11 and as Australian captain is averaging over 60 with the bat.

His stand with Cowan was the highest fourth-wicket partnership by Australia at the Gabba, surpassing Clarke and Mike Hussey's 245-run effort against Sri Lanka in 2007.

It was also the biggest fourth-wicket stand by Australia against South Africa and the fifth biggest overall against the Proteas in Test history.

The partnership was only ended by a freakish run-out of Cowan for 136 shortly before tea. He batted for 388 minutes and hit 18 boundaries.

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**CROSSWORD** By Eugene Sheffer

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