

Star SPORT

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Sheikh Russel's Bosnian defender Bojan Petric (C) heads home the winner against Abahani in their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bojan bites Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Title contenders Sheikh Russel ended holders Abahani's four-match unbeaten run in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League with a 1-0 victory at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Bosnian defender Bojan Petric struck the all-important goal in the 39th minute with a glancing header to take Sheikh Russel to second position with nine points from four matches. Sheikh Russel are just a point behind joint leaders Abahani and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, with Abahani playing a match more than the other two.

Sheikh Russel came into the match on the back of a 1-0 win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad and put in their best performance in the league so far. They kept Abahani on the backfoot throughout the first half with their pressing and passing football and eked out the decisive goal.

The first attack came in the tenth minute when right-back Mamun Mia ran down the and unleashed a shot which goalkeeper Shahidul Islam Shohel managed to tip over for

a corner. Three minutes later, Zahid Hasan Emily astonishingly floated over from the six-yard box after receiving a cut-back from Sony Norde.

Sheikh Russel kept pressing and snatched a free-kick outside the left-hand box which eventually resulted in the goal. Petric, playing his first match in the league in place of suspended Rezaul Karim, rose high to head Mamunul Islam's free-kick over the keeper to put Sheikh Russel ahead in the 39th minute.

Haitian attacking midfielder Sony Norde, arguably the best performer on the pitch, played the key role in Sheikh Russel's pressing football and unsettled the Abahani backline several times.

While he was threatening for the second goal after dodging past two players, he Norde brought down by Abahani defender Shawkat Russell from behind outside the box but referee Hannan Miron blew for a free-kick yet overlooked a second bookable offence for Russel.

After resumption, Sheikh Russel invited Abahani to come in attack with choosing to go for counter-attacks. The Sky Blues dominated possession but could hardly open Sheikh Russel's defence except once

when Emily wasted a great opportunity by having a go himself when he should have cut it back to unmarked Norde.

Abahani had another chance to equalise in the 83rd minute when Yoko Samnick put a chip inside the box and Twum Frank shrugged off his marker but Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee came out on time and rescued the danger. That effort ensured Sheikh Russel's second win against Abahani in 11 matches of the professional football league.

"We executed our plans well in the first half and changed it in the second half but the boys could not avail the opportunities they found on counter attack," said Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque alleging that referee Hannan Miron destroyed the harmony of the match by not protecting the good performers on the pitch.

"The players were under overwhelmed of the situation and afraid of the supporters. That was the key reason for poor performance. They needed to suffer a defeat and I can assure you that we will come back in the next match," said Abahani's Iranian coach Ardeshtir Pournemat.

Div I football

SPORTS REPORTER

Motijheel T&T Club and Dhaka Wanderers Club drew 0-0 in their Popular Life Insurance Senior Division Football League match at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Youngmen's Club of Fakirerpool will meet Mohakhali Ekadash in today's match at the same venue.

V-Day kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army and Border Guard Bangladesh won their respective matches in the Victory Day Kabaddi League at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Army beat Fire Service & Civil Defence by 31-22 points with one lona while Border Guard Bangladesh defeated Prison Directorate (BD Jail) by 34-20 points with two creditable lonas.

Cyril banned for a year

Montpellier defender Cyril Jeunechamp has been banned for a year for hitting a reporter after a Ligue 1 game last month, the French League (LFP) said on Thursday.

The League said after a meeting of its disciplinary committee that the sanction would take effect from December 24. Jeunechamp, 37, had already been suspended indefinitely after the argument with a L'Equipe reporter over a story published in the newspaper before the 1-1 league draw at Valenciennes. Champions Montpellier had apologised to the reporter and condemned their



Don't worry: Sinha

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SPORTS REPORTER



The completion of the players' auction of the second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) on Thursday brought an important segment of the T20 competition to close. With around 60 international players participating in the tournament, which includes the likes of Marlon Samuels and Sunil Narine, there's no doubt that the league has enough ammunition to provide its viewers an exciting competition.

However, the disputes and the problems that occurred in the previous year's competition continue to influence many in the cricketing fraternity. Most recently, Angus Porter, chief executive of the Professional Cricketers' Association expressed his concern regarding the participation of the English players in the league.

"We remain very nervous about the competition. I don't see any evidence that

the competition is going to be better off or better organised than it was last year. I'm not sure anyone involved in the game is very comfortable with this event," Porter told ESPNcricinfo.

Furthermore, Porter criticised the new payment structure of the league, according to which, the players would receive 25 per cent of their money before the tournament begins, 25 per cent more before the last match and the rest within the next six months.

"The proposed payment schedule for this year is actually worse than last year. The players will get to the end of the tournament with only 25 per cent of the fee in their pocket if it goes to plan and of that a chunk is having to go to an agent proposed by the BPL," said Porter.

The chairman of the BPL Governing Council, Afzalur Rahman Sinha, in a telephonic conversation with The Daily Star last night replied to Porter's comments by stating, "I haven't read the article but I can assure everybody that there is nothing to

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Dilshan ponders Test retirement



INTERNET, Melbourne

Veteran opener Tillakaratne Dilshan has revealed he is thinking about calling time on his Test career.

The 36-year-old made the admission ahead of the Boxing Day Test against Australia in what he admits could be his last tour with Sri Lanka in the longest format.

"I spoke to my managers and my family about how far I want to play Test cricket and one-dayers," said Dilshan, who blasted a superb 147 in the opening Test defeat in Hobart last week. "I'm definitely going to play in the 2015 World Cup, that's my target but I'm not sure how long I'm going to play Test cricket."

He added: "After this series, I'll sit down with my wife and family and discuss when I'm going to finish Test cricket - [the Test in Sydney] might be my last outside of Sri Lanka."

Dilshan, who has 83 caps, quashed talk of a potential return to Test cricket for paceman Lasith Malinga, who has spent time with the team's bowlers ahead of Wednesday's MCG clash.

Malinga retired from the Test arena in 2010, electing to focus on one-day and Twenty20 cricket and he has flourished for the Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash League this season -- leading the bowling charts with eight wickets.

His form has sparked calls for a return ahead of the third and final Test in Sydney, but Dilshan played down such suggestions.

"I don't think he is coming back to Test cricket," he said. "He wants to concentrate on one-day international and Twenty20 cricket. He wants to be 100% in the shorter form of the game and that's why he made the decision to

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SL may call up Lasith for Test

ANI, Sydney

Sri Lankan selectors might recall fast bowler Lasith Malinga for the third Test match against Australia in Sydney if their current pace battery failed to impress in the Boxing Day Test match.

Bowling coach Champaka Ramanayake, credited with discovering Malinga, conceded the tourists lacked the firepower needed to run through the Aussie line-up.

Malinga, who has taken eight wickets for the Melbourne Stars in the Twenty20 Big Bash, including a haul of 6-7, has played only short-form cricket for Sri Lanka since the last of his 30 Tests in 2010.

Ramanayake said a serious knee injury had prompted Malinga to stay away from the arduous work of Test cricket, but there was a place in the side for him.

"We need him, I would like to see him back, and he might reverse his decision. We haven't got firepower in the team, someone like

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V-Day tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

Mixed doubles event of the Runner Victory Day Open Tennis Tournament advanced to the final stage yesterday with the Sharmin Alam Sarda-Sajib Passi pair and Ishita Afroz-Mamun Bepari pair making the final berth.

In the day's semifinals at the Ramna National Tennis Complex, Sarda-Sajib pair eliminated Moumita Jannat and Akter Hossain pair 7-5, 6-2 while Ishita-Mamun pair beat Bhabna and Sohan pair 6-4, 6-4.

Earlier, in men's singles, men's doubles, women's singles and women's doubles matches reached the semifinal stages while the mixed doubles and senior doubles (above 50) events advanced to the final stages.

WI to host tri-series

CRICINFO, Port of Spain

West Indies will host an ODI tri-series against India and Sri Lanka in Jamaica and Trinidad from June 28 to July 11, 2013. It will substitute for Sri Lanka's limited-overs leg of their full tour of the Caribbean, which has been reshaped so that the cricketers from both countries can participate in the Indian Premier League.

According to the original FTP schedule, Sri Lanka were due to play two Tests, three ODIs and two Twenty20s in the West Indies. The Twenty20s have been done away with, and the two Tests will be held later at a later date, allowing the players to play the IPL between April 3 and May 26.

The tri-series comprises seven matches, with each team playing the other twice before a final.

MS hails Yuvraj



BBC ONLINE, Pune

India captain Mahendra Dhoni praised the performance of Yuvraj Singh after the all-rounder led his side to a five-wicket win over England in the first Twenty20 international in Pune.

Yuvraj took 3-19 from his four overs and top-scored for the hosts with 38 from 21 deliveries.

"Yuvraj was brilliant. He bowled really well at the right pace," said Dhoni.

"And he made sure the batsmen coming in after him did not have too much work to do."

Dhoni added: "The way Alex Hales started [the England opener scored 56 from 35 balls], the pressure was on the bowlers.

"So it was important that from the eighth over onwards we brought the team back into game, once the ball became slightly old."

England captain Eoin Morgan said: "We lacked a bit of discipline with our batting, ended up 15 or 20 runs short, and we didn't get the early wickets."

"But we have a young side and the guys showed a lot of promise tonight. We have to pick ourselves up for Saturday."

The second and final game of the series takes place in Mumbai.

IHC beat BSJA in friendly T20

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian High Commission, Dhaka defeated Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) by 29 runs in a friendly T20 cricket match at the Sahara-BCB Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

Indian High Commission restricted BSJA to 145 for seven in the stipulated 20 overs after putting up a fighting total of 174 for three, thanks to a brilliant 68-run innings from Ajai.

Skipper Mohammad Afsar scored unbeaten 30 while Bhaskar (21) and Sujit Bose (16) also contributed.

Reazur Rahman Rohan, Rabeed Imam and Ariful Islam Roney took one wicket each.

In reply, BSJA lost

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Sri Lanka's Tillakaratne Dilshan is thinking of Test retirement to lengthen his limited-overs career.

PHOTO: STAR FILE