

## Del Piero dismisses Sydney exit talk

Alessandro Del Piero's uncertain future in Australia could be close to being resolved, with the former Italy striker pledging his support for struggling Sydney FC. The 38-year-old former World Cup winner arrived at the club to much fanfare this season but has failed to prevent Sydney's plummet to the foot of the A-League. But with negotiations to take up the option to extend his lucrative one-year deal dragging on, Del Piero appeared keen to dispel rumours he would



Sharmin Akhter is about to pull the trigger for the target during the 10m Air Rifle event of the IFIC 5th National Air Gun Championships at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday. She won the gold in the event with an aggregate score of 388.8 points.

PHOTO: STAR

## NATIONAL AIR GUN CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Sharmin dethrones Ratna

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharmin Akhter won her first gold in five years in national competitions when the 2004 South Asian Games gold medalist put behind holder Sharmin Akhter Ratna and national gold winner Suraiya Akhter in the 10m Air Rifle event in the IFIC 5th National Air Gun Championships at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

Sharmin, who won her last gold medal in the 2007 National Shooting Championships, fought neck and neck with Suraiya as she scored 101.8 in shoot-off that eventually helped her overcome a one-point deficit from the qualification round. Sharmin had scored 387 points in qualification against Suraiya's 388. However, that score was far below Sharmin's best effort of 395.

The gold medal was decided by a mere 0.1 points as Sharmin scored a total of 388.8 while Suriya scored 388.7 points to stay content with a silver medal.

However, defending champion Sharmin Akhter Ratna frustrated by scoring only 484.5 points to take the bronze. Ratna, gold medalist in the SA Games and Commonwealth Shooting Championships, scored 385 in the qualification, 13 points less than her best. Ratna, who represented Bangladesh in the London Olympic Games, had won the gold in the last edition with a score of 498.6 points (qualification scores was 396).

"I feel happy because I won a gold medal after a long time," was the instant reaction of Sharmin, who prepared herself in the last 15 days

while also studying for her honours final exam. Sharmin is a student Islamic History and she is supposed to sit for her last paper on Saturday.

"Having trailed by one point in the qualification, I had no option but to do very well in the shoot-off. I managed to hold my nerve to score 101.8 points," said Sharmin.

"Since winning gold in the 2007 national meet, I had often finished behind either gold or silver medalists at different competitions but could not finish on top," Sharmin said.

Meanwhile in the Air Pistol event, Raihanul Islam of Bangladesh Army won the gold medal with a score of 663, three ahead of her teammate Mahendra Kumar, who won the silver medal. Nadimul Islam of the same team finished third with a score of 652.2.

## Tamim hits his groove

SPORTS REPORTER

Dashing left handed batsman, Tamim Iqbal got into his groove in the ongoing HRV Cup -- a T20 competition in New Zealand -- as he hammered 35 runs off 18 balls in his second match of the competition yesterday. His innings included five fours and one six and eventually helped his side, Wellington, beat the Central Districts by 53 runs.

The opener was bowled for 14 runs in the first match of the competition against Otago, a match which Otago won by 82 runs. The batsman is expected to play his next game tomorrow, when Wellington face Auckland.

## Div I football

SPORTS REPORTER

Badda Jagarani Sangsad recorded a 3-0 win over Mohakhali Ekdosh in the Popular Life Insurance Senior Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Humayun Kabir put Badda ahead in the 28th minute before Mesbaul Haq struck twice in the 84th and 90th minutes to seal the victory.

# BCL starts amid high hopes

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The inaugural edition of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL), a new-look franchise-based four day competition and Bangladesh's second first-class cricket league is set to kick off today with the two opening matches taking place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium (SBNS) in Mirpur and the Shaheed Chandu Stadium (SCS) in Bogra.

The powers-that-be have added this new tournament to the cricket calendar with a vision to make it the highest standard of first-class cricket in the country. That vision may well be realised as the top players from the existing first-class competition, the National Cricket League (NCL), make up the four teams that will fight it out for prize money that is higher than in the NCL. This will have the knock-on effect of making the NCL more important, as players will strive harder to be part of the more lucrative competition.

In Mirpur, a Mahmudullah Riyad-led Walton Central Zone (Dhaka and Dhaka Metro) will take on Prime Bank South Zone (Khulna and Barisal) captained by Abdur Razzak, while Islami Bank East Zone (Sylhet and Chittagong) led by Alok Kapali will take on BCB North Zone (Rajshahi and Rangpur), who'll be led by Mushfiqur Rahim in Bogra.

Naimur Rahman, chairman of the league committee, stated that the new competition has the potential to be the

'prime domestic competition' of the country. "We obviously want this tournament to take place every year. Next year we plan to make it a double round, so we hope that the competitiveness will be more," said Naimur.

A 'possible tour of Pakistan' and the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in January compelled the committee to organise a single-round league this year. "Our aim is to create a stronger structure for the longer version of the game. We hope that the cricketing standard improves through this. If we don't stress in this area then our cricket won't improve," said Naimur.

Till now, it was said that the competition was yet to be bestowed first-class status, but according to the BCB officials, that will not be a problem as the ICC only need to be informed of the development of a second first-class competition in the country.

"Now that the date for this competition has been set we will inform the ICC on Thursday (today) regarding the tournament, after which it will be considered first-class," said Mahbubul Anam, member of BCB's ad-hoc committee.

"Generally when a country has more than one domestic competition, the ICC leaves it up to the board for the 'first-class' classification," added Naimur.

The BCL will also see an increase in both the players' match fees and the prize money. The champions will be awarded Tk 35 lakh and the runners-up will be

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## SA take series 2-1

STAR SPORT DESK

A fine innings from opener Henry Davids and incisive bowling from slow left-armed Aaron Phangiso carried South Africa to a series-clinching 33-run victory in the 3rd and final T20I against New Zealand at St. George's Park in Port Elizabeth yesterday.

Chasing 180 to win, New Zealand lost wickets regularly as first Ryan McLaren and then Phangiso pressured the batsmen out through tight bowling. Only opener Martin Guptill (24 off 20 balls) and skipper Brendon McCullum (25 off 22) scored above 20 when they put together a 47-run second-wicket partnership after McLaren dismissed Rob Nicol with only six runs on the board. Both batsmen however fell within three runs of each other to leave New Zealand at 56 for three in the ninth over.

Thereafter New Zealand lost wickets at regular intervals, and the life all but went out of the chase when James Franklin was dismissed to leave the Kiwis at 84 for five in the 13th. Eventually they could only manage 146 for nine. Phangiso took the key wickets of Guptill, McCullum and Franklin to finish with three for 25 in his four overs.

AFP adds: Henry Davids hit his second successive half-century as South Africa made a challenging 179 for six.

The slightly-built Davids struck 68 off 51 balls with seven fours and two sixes to enable South

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South Africa's Henry Davids lifts one over long-on on way to making 68 in the third and final T20 International against New Zealand at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Cycling meet ends with BJMC's domination

SPORTS REPORTER

Tariqul Islam and Sonia Yasmin drove Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) to complete dominance in the Dr Abdul Basit 36th National Cycling Championships which concluded at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Tariqul had started the meet with a gold in the 40km Road Race event on the opening day and ended the championships with five gold and silver medal. The boy from Jessore had also created a national record in 1000m Sprint on the second day. His fourth individual gold came in the 1000 metre Olympic Sprint

while the fifth gold came in 1600m Team Trial Race. He also won a silver medal as part of the BJMC team in the 4000m Team Pursuit event. Tariqul's success helped BJMC finish top of the medals table with 12 gold, 10 silver and seven bronze.

"It is always pleasing to be the top cyclist in any championship even though it is nothing new for me as I have been a top performer for the last seven years," said Tariqul while also expressing his disappointment that he would have to remain idle until the next championship, which is because the Bangladesh Cycling Federation holds only two championships

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# Sk Russel's chance to profit

SPORTS REPORTER



Title aspirants Sheikh Russel KC will have a chance to take the solo lead

in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League when they take on strugglers Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Sheikh Russel, the Federation Cup champions, set the early pace by beating Team BJMC in their first match. After a hiccup against Mohammedan SC, they recovered well by eking out 1-0 wins in their next two matches against Muktijoddha and Abahani. With 9 points

from four matches, Sheikh Russel can go two points clear of joint leaders Abahani, Mohammedan and Sk Jamal if they win today against a side who have yet to register a single point from four matches.

Apart from recent performances, statistics too gives Maruful Haque's side the clear edge as they have won four of their 10 previous encounters against Brothers in the professional league, losing twice and drawing the remaining four. Brothers Union on the other hand, are looking like a potential drop from the top flight, even at this early stage. In four matches they have managed only one goal so far, conceding 9. Nigerian coach Ladi Babalola, who took

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শিল্পের বিকাশে, উন্নয়নের প্রত্যয়ে হবিগঞ্জের বাহুবল উপজেলার মিরপুর বাজারে বেসিক ব্যাংক-এর ৬১ তম শাখার উদ্বোধন করা হয়েছে।

বেসিক ব্যাংকের বাহুবল শাখার শুভ উদ্বোধন করেন

ব্যাংকের পরিচালনা পর্ষদের চেয়ারম্যান জনাব শেখ আব্দুল হাই বাচ্চু।

ব্যাংকের ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক জনাব কাজী ফখরুল ইসলামের সভাপতিত্বে অনুষ্ঠিত এই উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠানে উপস্থিত ছিলেন ব্যাংকের উপ-ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক জনাব কনক কুমার পুরকায়স্থ, জনাব এ কিউ এম কিবরিয়া ও জনাব এ মোনায়েম খান। এছাড়া অনুষ্ঠানে উপস্থিত থেকে বক্তব্য রাখেন হবিগঞ্জ জেলা পরিষদের প্রশাসক ও হবিগঞ্জ জেলা আওয়ামী লীগের সভাপতি ডঃ মুশফিক হোসেন চৌধুরী, বাহুবল উপজেলার চেয়ারম্যান জনাব আব্দুল কাদির চৌধুরী, বাহুবল উপজেলা নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা জনাব হুমায়ুন কবির। হবিগঞ্জ চেম্বার অব কমার্সের সাবেক সভাপতি ও হবিগঞ্জ জেলা আওয়ামী লীগের সাংগঠনিক সম্পাদক এ্যাডভোকেট আলমগীর চৌধুরী, হবিগঞ্জ জেলা ইটভাটা মালিক সমিতির সভাপতি জনাব মোদাফির হোসেন, শমিক নেতা জনাব মো. আসকার আলী। আরও উপস্থিত ছিলেন ব্যাংকের মহাব্যবস্থাপকবৃন্দ, গণ্যমান্য ব্যক্তিবর্গ, স্থানীয় উদ্যোক্তা এবং ব্যবসায়ী ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীরা।



বেসিক ব্যাংক লিমিটেড  
শতভাগ রাষ্ট্র মালিকানাধীন ব্যাংক