

## Prime Bank title sponsor of BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Prime Bank Limited signed a Tk 7 crore deal with Game On Sports Management Ltd to become the title sponsor of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 2013 at a signing ceremony held at the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) Media Center of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Destiny Group was the title sponsor of the inaugural BPL T20. They had signed a deal worth Tk 7.5 crores last year.

Regarding the international coverage of the tournament, chairman of Game On Sports Management Ltd

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Game On Sports Management chairman Enayetur Rahman (L), BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon (C) and Prime Bank chairman Sirajul Islam Mollah (R) pose with the cheque of Tk 4.5 crore which the latter handed over as an advance for the title rights of the Bangladesh Premier League 2013 at the media centre of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Uncertainty lingers over Pak players

SPORTS REPORTER



The participation of Pakistani players in the second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 remains uncertain following Bangladesh's refusal to tour Pakistan this month.

While the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), through a press release claimed that associating the release of the Pakistani players with Bangladesh's tour would 'not hold any merit', the board president Zaka Ashraf stated that the Pakistani players 'might not be free' as they'd be hosting their own first-class competition. "For the 2013 edition of BPL, we have to see the commitments and engagements of our players before releasing them for the tournament," stated the PCB.

The president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board Nazmul Hassan Papon, however remained optimistic regarding the arrival of the Pakistan players. "I still believe that a large number of Pakistani players will play in the BPL. I am hopeful," said Papon.

He admitted that the absence of the Pakistani players would have a negative effect on the league. "If the good players from Pakistan don't come, then BPL will obviously lose some of its shine. There is no doubt about that. I don't think we have the time to find so many replacements either," said Papon.

The BCB's decision to postpone the tour based on security grounds created uproar amongst the fans and media in Pakistan. The decision was severely criticised by the board as well. "It is inappropriate to cite the security situation in Pakistan as the main reason behind this decision. A lot of cricket-related activity took place in Pakistan in which many international players have participated without any security issue whatsoever, which in itself reflects that the atmosphere in Pakistan is congenial for any international team visit to the country," said the PCB's spokesman.

Commenting on the reaction, Papon said, "I am not blaming Pakistan, I understand their sentiment. We would have reacted the same way if we were in their position. But this is not intentional. There is no politics in it. It's the situation that has compelled us not to tour Pakistan at this point of time."

"I believe that the Pakistani players have contributed to the growth of our cricket. They played in various leagues here before. We have good relations with them and I believe that we can continue to maintain that," he added.

Afzalur Rahman Sinha, Chairman of the BPL's governing council, echoed the president's sentiments. Commenting

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## BCB boss mending fences with BDDSOC



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon on Tuesday met with the leaders of the Bangladesh District and Divisional Sports Organisers' Council (BDDSOC) to discuss the current crisis regarding the board's amended constitution.

The High Court on December 13 last year issued a rule nisi on the National Sports Council (NSC) asking them why the amended constitution of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) should not be considered illegal and also issued a stay order on the amended constitution for three months.

The writ petitioners were Mobasher Hossain, the architect and former BCB director, and Yousuf Jamil Babu, president of the BDDSOC.

After the meeting both BCB boss and BDDSOC president told reporters that they made some progress in their discussion and will meet again to solve all the problems.

"Today we had a meeting with the district leaders as

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## ACADEMY NOT READY YET

# BFF plans training elsewhere



SPORTS REPORTER

Almost a month after being chosen for Bangladesh Football Federation's Sylhet Academy, some young 64 booters are sitting idle as the Academy which is supposed to accommodate them and give them all the facilities to play football, is yet to be prepared fully. Repeated requests from the BFF has failed to get things into completion, which is why the football's governing body is now thinking of starting training of the selected U-14 booters somewhere else.

They are eager to start the training by January, either at the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan or at dormito-

ries at the BFF or at Birsreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in order to give get them well [prepared for the AFC U-14 Championship which will be held in Myanmar in June.

"We are going to begin the training camp for the U-14 booters by this month [January] temporarily and those footballers will be shifted to the BFF Academy in Sylhet as soon as the academy gets underway," said BFF's vice president and chairman of development committee Badal Roy yesterday.

The BFF Academy was originally built as the regional centre for BKSP, but it was handed over to the BFF to run the academy in December 2011 on a five-year lease. However, when handed over, there were things left to be done and the BFF requested the

NSC to get things done to start the training in full swing from August last year. But NSC, country's sports regulatory body, is yet to do those required works as a 2 crore taka budget for that purpose is yet to get the approval of Finance Ministry.

"Regarding the BFF academy, I talked to the sports minister on Monday and he informed me that they were going to start the work soon as they were supposed to get the final approval from the Finance Ministry," said Roy.

"Anyway whether the academy gets underway in a couple of months or not, we want to make sure that the selected players are kept in football activities and don't get disheartened," said Roy.

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## Tamim scores quickfire 68

SPORTS REPORTER

Dashing Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal scored a 49-ball 68 against the Northern Districts in his fourth match for the Wellington Firebirds in the HRV Cup yesterday. Wellington, however, ended up losing the match by nine wickets as their total of 197 was comfortably chased down in 19 overs.

Four 4s and four 6s freed off Tamim's bat against Northern Districts. It was a vastly improved performance by the left-hander, who had scored 0

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## Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Salahuddin Pappu hit 136 as Partex Sporting Club posted a five-wicket victory against Dhanmondi Progoti Sangha in the First Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

In the day's other matches, BKSP secured a four-wicket victory against City Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Bangladesh Boys Club defeated Uttara Sporting Club by 25 runs at the Jahangirnagar

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# Emotional 3rd Test from tomorrow



AFP, Sydney

Australia are eyeing a series sweep over battered Sri Lanka in a poignant third Test starting in Sydney on Thursday overshadowed by the death of Tony Greig and marking the end of Mike Hussey's prolific career. Michael Clarke's Australians swept Sri Lanka aside by an innings and 201 runs to win the second Test inside three days in Melbourne and seal the series after a comprehensive win in the first Test.

The Lions have lost talismanic batsman Kumar Sangakkara with a fractured finger and have other injury issues, adding to an uphill task as Sri Lanka chase their first ever Test win Down Under at the 13th attempt.

Given the gulf between the third-ranked Australians and Sri Lanka, ranked number six, the chances of an against-the-odds win appear remote as Australia build towards their tour of India, starting next month.

Sri Lanka's efforts for redemption come as the cricket world mourns the death of former England captain and broadcaster Greig from a heart attack at the age of 66 in Sydney on Saturday. Sangakkara said Greig had been a champion of Sri Lankan cricket.

"Tony Greig in Sri Lanka will be very fondly remembered for embracing Sri Lankan players and the Sri Lankan people from 1995 onwards, and getting behind us and promoting us positively across the world," Sangakkara said.

"He's been a very good friend of the Sri Lankan cricket team. He has been a great non-Sri Lankan ambassador. Everyone in Sri Lanka feels sad."

Both teams will observe a minute's silence before the start of the Test and will wear black armbands in his honour.

The match also marks the final Test appearance of veteran batting mainstay Hussey, who announced at the weekend that he wanted to spend more time with his four young children.

Hussey, 37, holds the record for most Test centuries against Sri Lanka, with five tons among his 19 hundreds in 78 Tests at 51.52.

"I feel like I can come into this last Test match with no pressure whatsoever," said Hussey. "I can just really go out there and enjoy it."

Depending on pitch and weather conditions there could be a Test debut for allrounder Glenn Maxwell, who has come into the Australian squad as a replacement for injured Shane Watson, while left-arm Mitchell Starc will return.

Experienced batsman Thilan Samaraweera said his Sri Lankan teammates were desperate to put the Melbourne debacle behind them.

"It was really hard to digest that defeat, but that's the past now," Samaraweera said, adding the team could make history by winning their first Test in Australia.

"That is the kind of attitude we are taking into the New Year's Test," he said.

Skipper Mahela Jayawardene will be under extra pressure to perform in the absence of Sangakkara who, like his skipper, has 10,000 Test runs under his belt.



Prolific Australia batsman Michael Hussey prepares for his last Test match against Sri Lanka, due to start tomorrow, at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

## BCL second round from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The second round of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) will start from today at two different venues across the country.

Walton Central Zone will play against BCB North Zone at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra while Islami Bank East Zone will face off against Prime Bank South Zone at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur in the second round encounters.

Central Zone captain Mahmudullah Riyad will miss the round due to a hamstring injury he has suffered during the first-round match against Prime Bank South Zone at Mirpur. South Zone however will get their regular skipper Abdur Razzak, the experienced left-arm spinner who didn't play the first round due to personal reasons.

East Zone have included Shahriar Nafees, who was actually in the South Zone reserve list, and Abu Zahed Chowdhury Rahi as replacement players for

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