

Star SPORT

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Ramos handed 5-match ban

Real Madrid's Spanish international defender Sergio Ramos has been handed a five-match ban for insulting a referee after being sent-off, the Spanish football federation (RFEF) announced Thursday.

The world and European champion was sent-off in the 73rd minute for two yellow card offences during his team's 4-0 victory over Celta Vigo in the last-16 of the Spanish Cup on Wednesday.

The federation suspended Ramos one match for the red card and four additional matches for insulting the



Tamim ends on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal finished his stint for the Wellington Firebirds with a 41 against Otago at the Wellington ground yesterday. The Firebirds, who were chasing a target of 170, ended on 158 for 6 with Tamim the top-scorer. The left-hander will play no further part in the HRV Cup as he is scheduled to return to the country today.

In the six T20 matches that he played, he scored a total of 232 runs, including two half-centuries and two scores above 30.

Tamim will leave Wellington as the ninth highest scorer of the HRV

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Young Tigers cricket from Jan 14

SPORTS REPORTER

The 'Young Tigers National U18 Cricket Competition', a tournament that will feature 'three-day' matches between cricketers from the seven districts of the country, will begin on January 14.

The competition, which will be contested by 10 teams and played in five venues, will be conducted with an aim to build a formidable Under-19 team for the upcoming World Cup in 2013. The players, after an age verification programme, participated in a 50-over divisional competition.

Players selected from the competition were then

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BCB North Zone captain Mushfiqur Rahim (R) walks off the field with his teammates after beating Prime Bank South Zone by 170 runs on the fourth day of the Bangladesh Cricket League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Zaka sounds out another warning

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The already uncertain situation regarding the participation of Pakistani players in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) was made even murkier following Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Zaka Ashraf's latest salvo on the matter.

According to a report on popular cricket website ESPNcricinfo, Ashraf indicated that Pakistan players will play in the BPL only if the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) agrees to a tour of Pakistan.

"Bangladesh almost toured Pakistan but at the last moment they pulled out over the security concern and I don't want to repeat this again," Ashraf was quoted in the website as saying at the unveiling of the Pakistan Super League in Lahore. "We can't send our players like this, as Bangladesh have an agreement to fulfill. If they decide to come [to] Pakistan and play then we will consider supporting and favoring them [in this matter]," it added.

Despite repeated attempts it was not possible to talk with BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon over telephone

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North in final after big win

To meet Central Zone in day-night affair

SPORTS REPORTER



Walton Central Zone and BCB North Zone will face off in the final of the inaugural edition of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL).

As expected the high-scoring third-round match between Central Zone and Islami Bank East Zone ended in a draw at the batting paradise of the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday. The draw was however good enough for Central Zone to finish top of the table and

Saqlain Sajib's 10-wicket haul gives North Zone a 170-run win over South Zone.

Final will be played after the BPL T20 and before Bangladesh's Sri Lanka

they booked the seat for the final having drawn all three matches.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, North Zone posted a massive 170-run victory over Prime Bank South Zone on the final day to qualify for the final thanks to a ten-wicket match haul by left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib.

The final will be held after the completion of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20, which will get underway from January 17. The final match, which will be a day-night affair played with a pink ball, is likely to start from February 22 or February 23 as the Tigers are scheduled to fly for Sri Lanka on March 1 to play two Tests and three ODIs.

Central Zone's Marshal Ayub, the highest run-getter in the last National Cricket League (NCL), scored a double hundred and a hundred to become the top scorer with 454 runs, and like in the NCL, his

teammate Mehrab Hossain followed him with 350 runs. Off-spinner Shohag Gazi was the highest wicket-

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SCORES IN BRIEF

CENTRAL ZONE: First innings 655-7 (dec) in 159.4 overs.

EAST ZONE: First innings 396-8 in 107 overs (Nafees 49, Nafis 82, Mominul 42, Kapali 36, Faisal 92, Dhiman 58 not out; Shahadat 3-73, Sunny 3-84).

Result: Match drawn

Men-of-the-match: Marshal Ayub and Mehrab Hossain.

NORTH ZONE: First innings 291 and Second innings 362-7 (dec).

SOUTH ZONE: First innings 205 and Second innings 278 all out in 86.3 overs (Soumya 61, Rabbi 30, Tushar 23, Zia 35, Gazi 85; Saqlain 4-90, Nasir 2-0).

PREVIEW: DURONTO RAJSHAHI

Onus on top order

SPORTS REPORTER



Duronto Rajshahi's strategy at the Bangladesh Premier League's (BPL) players' auction last month raised many eyebrows. The franchise surprised many by pitching a bid of 121,000 dollars for young pacer Abul Hasan. It was a figure that surpassed the values of the foreign players in the team. Off the field too, Rajshahi's owner Mushfequr Rahman Mohan consistently hit the headlines.

At first it was a payment-related rift with the national captain Mushfiqur Rahim which was wittily publicised by various media organisations as the 'battle of the Mushfiqs'. Then it was his rather curious move to bring Pakistani all-rounder Abdul Razzaq to Dhaka in the first week of January, which in his words was a step to prove that the Pakistani players would participate in the second edition of the BPL.

While the Pakistan Cricket Board hasn't yet barred its players from participating in the BPL, it isn't them that Rajshahi should be worried about. Two of their most prominent players, Marlon Samuels and Alex Hales, may not be there for the whole competition. Both players are yet to confirm the exact number of matches that they will be available for.

KEY PLAYERS

The most expensive player in the side, Tamim Iqbal, was bought by Rajshahi for 165,000 dollars following a close bidding contest with Dhaka. At the end of the day, it was a coin-toss that sent the hard-hitting opener to Rajshahi. With three 60-plus scores in his last seven T20 games, Tamim has hit form at the right time. As bad as his experience in the inaugural BPL was, Rajshahi will hope that the left-hander continues his recent good form. Ziaur Rahman has proved time and again that on his day he can tear bowling attacks

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Coaches' deal all but sealed

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is all set to appoint Dutch coaches Lodewijk de Kruij and Rene Koster, as its head coach of the national team and his deputy-cum-Academy coach today. The two parties, who had had some differences as regards to the terms and conditions of the contracts, have been learnt to have minimised them through talks over the last couple of days. The two coaches will depart for the Netherlands tonight after attending a press conference where they are likely to be officially unveiled as coach. The signing is expected to take place in the morning.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin said the negotiations were at the latest stage and

the differences they had were being eliminated. "Everything is going in the right direction. I am as hopeful as you all are. There are tiny little things which will be fine-tuned by tonight (Friday). You will know everything in tomorrow's press conference," said Salahuddin after having a brief discussion with the coaches during the Grameenphone Premier League match between Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal yesterday.

Salahuddin could not confirm when the two coaches will be available for the Bangladesh job, but reiterated that the SAFF championship in September is his main target while the AFC Challenge Cup in March will be seen as a trial.

Member of National Teams Committee Tabith M Awal said that the talks they had so far with the coaches centred mostly on

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Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruij dribbles with the ball by the pitch of the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Shahjahan picked up five wickets but his effort was not good enough for Young Cricketers to avoid a 36-run defeat against Young Pegasus Club in the curtailed-over match of the First Division Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other curtailed-over match, Dhanmondi Progoti Sangha secured a comfortable seven-wicket victory against BKSP at the Jahangirnagar University ground.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BKSP: 92 all out in 27.1

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Dull draw puts Jamal on top

SPORTS REPORTER



Former champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club played an insipid goalless draw against new leviathans Sheikh Russel at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, to take solo lead in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League.

The much-hyped tussle between the two powerhouses failed to live up to the billing and failed to produce any goals both teams took a cautious approach, but it did them no harm as Sheikh Jamal went top with 17 points from seven matches while Sheikh Russel stayed on their heels

with 16 points, tied with defending champions Abahani.

Sheikh Jamal, the lone unbeaten side in the league, preferred the aerial route -- fielding Sunday Chizoba and Mike Otojari -- the two tall Nigerians upfront. However, their attacks were successfully thwarted by Sheikh Russel's backline, which was marshalled by two tall defenders Bojan Petric and Abass Inusah alongside stocky Mamun Mia and Nahidul Islam.

At the other end, Sheikh Russel's dangerous striker Sony Norde was kept under heavy marking by Sheikh Jamal's Guinean defender Mohammad Conte and the striker hardly got space to work throughout the match.

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Sheikh Russel striker Sony Norde (L) is being tackled by a Sheikh Jamal defender during their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League match at the BNS yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

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BPL T20
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