

Star SPORT

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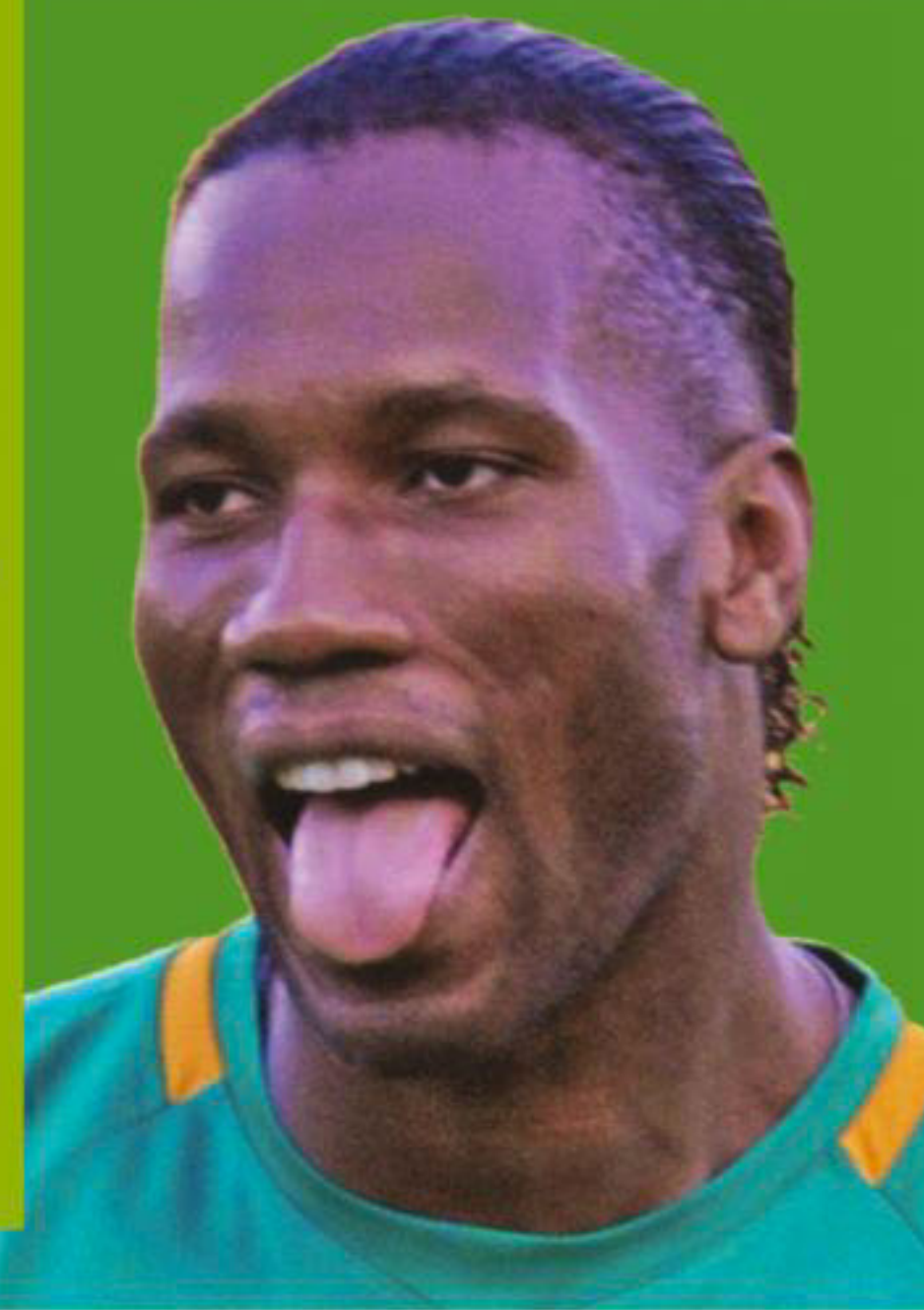
Drogba joining Galatasaray

Turkish top flight club Galatasaray confirmed on Monday that they are negotiating a deal that would bring Ivory Coast's veteran striker Didier Drogba to Istanbul.

"Galatasaray Sports Club has begun official negotiations regarding the transfer of Ivorian professional football player Didier Drogba from FC Shanghai Shenhua."

TRT television had reported on Sunday, quoting a source close to the club that agreement had been reached on an 18-month contract.

The Hurriyet newspaper reported that Drogba would be paid 7 million euros (\$9.5 million) for the contract with a bonus of



PHOTOS: ANURUP KANTI DAS

The BPL finally gets its soul back as fans, after no-shows in Dhaka and Khulna, pack Chittagong's MA Aziz Stadium to the rafters yesterday.

BCB CONSTITUTION SC stays HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed till February 7 a High Court verdict that declared the amendment to the constitution of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) illegal.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order after holding hearings on two separate petitions filed by the National Sports Council (NSC) and

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Royals spoil Kings party

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



The second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 got a new lease of life at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday. Cricket made an exciting return to the port city venue after a long break through an entertaining opening match in front of a capacity crowd. Sylhet Royals however spoiled the home party as the leaders continued their unbeaten run with a three-wicket victory against Chittagong Kings, but the main talking point was the huge turnout as the tournament had till then been struggling with empty stands in the Dhaka and Khulna legs.

The home crowd was obviously

disappointed by the Kings' defeat but there was no shortage of entertainment

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SCORES IN BRIEF

CHITTAGONG KINGS: 172-6 in 20 overs (Bopara 34, Naeem 72, Doeschate 21, Oram 13 not out, extras 13; Nannes 1-28, Halder 1-19, Shuvo 2-35, Gazi 2-21).

SYLHET ROYALS: 176-7 in 19.3 overs (Stirling 38, Nabi 43, Nazmul 32, Chigumbura 31 not out, extras 11; Oram 1-22, Cooper 3-21, Enamul 1-38, Bopara 1-22).

Result: Sylhet Royals won by three wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Mohammad



PHOTO: STAR

Afghan cricketer Mohammad Nabi turned the match on its head for Sylhet Royals against the home side in Chittagong yesterday.

Nabi embraces local flavour

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

Afghanistan cricketer Mohammad Nabi has gotten quite fond of Bangladesh's staple diet -- rice and lentils -- and it might have helped the Sylhet Royals all-rounder sustain the pressure in front of a huge crowd at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday. It was something of a new experience for Nabi, who considered himself lucky to be playing in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), and to play a match-winning knock in

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Rajshahi win high-scoring thriller

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



The home team might have disappointed the fans in the opening game, but at least the local boy gave some cause for celebration as Tamim Iqbal's

Duronto Rajshahi scored a four run victory over Barisal Burners in a high-scoring BPL clash at the MA Aziz Stadium last night.

In getting their second win in five games, Rajshahi put their opponents under a pile of runs, amassing 213 for 6, the highest score in the BPL, thanks to sparkling half-centuries from the Chittagong bred Tamim and Charles Coventry. The

earlier best total was 208 made by Dhaka Gladiators against Barisal Burners in the first edition.

The imposing total looked to have taken the match out of Barisal's grasp but a committed batting performance saw them drive home a close finish. Every batsman got runs, with the Pakistani Azhar Mahmood top scoring with a 28 ball 54 with three fours and four sixes that saw them finish at 209 for 7 from their 20 overs.

Earlier, Rajshahi's huge total came courtesy of a whirlwind opening stand between Tamim and Coventry as the pair put on 85 in just over six overs. Dashing opener Tamim was top scorer with a

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Tigers' Lanka tour dates announced

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will play two Tests, three one-day internationals and one Twenty20 match on their month-long tour of Sri Lanka in March, the Sri Lankan board announced yesterday.

This is Bangladesh's first away tour this year. The last time the Tigers went on a complete tour to Sri Lanka was in 2007 when they were white-washed in both the Test and ODI series' by three games to none.

ITINERARY

March 3-5: Three-day match, Matara
March 8-12: First Test, Galle
March 16-20: Second Test, Colombo
March 23: First ODI, Hambantota
March 25: Second ODI, Hambantota
March 28: Third ODI, Pallekele
March 31: T20 international, Pallekele

Abahani take solo lead

SPORTS REPORTER



Holders Abahani regained the lead in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League by defeating Feni Soccer Club 3-2 at the Bhasa Shaheed Salam Stadium in Feni as the second leg of the league kicked off after an eight-day gap yesterday. Former champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, who had the chance to snatch the lead later, had to settle for a 0-0 against Team BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The sixth win in nine matches put Abahani on 20 points, one ahead of Sheikh Russel KC and Sheikh Jamal DC. Sheikh Russel, who have played a match less than both Abahani and Sheikh Jamal, can regain the lead when they take on Team BJMC on February 3.

Four-time champions Abahani took just two minutes to gain the lead against strugglers Feni Soccer when Ghanaian forward Awudu Ibrahim fired home a cross from Atiqur Rahman Mishu. However, the champions had to wait for another 45 minutes to double the lead. The second goal came when Ibrahim snatched the ball from a Feni defender to set up his compatriot Twum Frank, who put the ball into the open net. Abahani took a stranglehold on the game through a

tap-in from in-form striker Shakhawat Hossain Rony, who took his tally to five goals.

Feni Soccer though made a game of it by scoring two goals within 10 minutes. New-signings Ariful Haque Saikat and Anthony Pele of Liberia scored in the 63rd and 73rd minutes respectively to set up an exciting final quarter. The defending champions though held their nerves to eke out a valuable win. The defeat kept Feni Soccer firmly at the basement with just three points from nine outings.

Here at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Sheikh Jamal, the only unbeaten side in the league, faced some stiff resistance from Team BJMC, a side they had defeated 3-2 in the first leg. Sheikh Jamal survived a close call on the half-hour mark when Eleta Kingsley played a low cross for unmarked Nigerian Abdul Rasheed and local Toklish Ahmed, but neither of the strikers could make contact with the ball.

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PHOTO: STAR

Sheikh Jamal DC midfielder Shakil Ahmed (R) fights for possession with Team BJMC's Abul Hossain during their Bangladesh Premier League match at the BNS yesterday.

Tamim sorry for outburst against fan

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal has apologised for his outburst at fans in the stands of the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna following the fall of his wicket in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) match between Duronto Rajshahi and Dhaka Gladiators on January 22.

A recent video that went viral on Facebook showed the player abusing fans on his way back to the dressing room. While it wasn't clear in the video whom Tamim was abusing, the caption alleged that he had abused a girl who was looking for his autograph. The batsman, however, claimed that he had confronted a guy who was 'abusing his parents'.

The player through his Facebook page issued an

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