

DPL set to be List A

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The Dhaka Premier League is set to be recognised as a List A tournament from the 2012-13 season. This will be the first time that the league, the starting date of which has been rescheduled to July 03, will receive international recognition.

A press release sent by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) stated: "The Bangladesh Cricket Board is contemplating awarding official status to the competition as it is currently the highest level domestic limited overs tournament."

List A can be defined as a limited overs cricket match of a minimum of 40 overs per side played in the domestic circuit of a full member country, and it also includes ODIs between countries. Earlier, the National Cricket League's one-day tournament was recognised as List A since the teams participating in that competition already had first-class status.

Meanwhile, apart from the start of the Dhaka League, the players' recruitment process has also been pushed back by two days and will now take place on June 23.

Explaining the reason behind the delay, Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis chairman Jalal Yunus said, "We are in the process of finalising the by-laws of the tournament."

BD women to tour SA

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The Bangladesh women's cricket team will be touring South Africa in September this year to play three T20 Internationals and three One-Day-Internationals. The tour details were announced by the Bangladesh Cricket Board's women's wing yesterday. The Women in Green might also face India at home at the end of this year.



Feni Soccer Club forward Aminur Rahman Sajib (L) runs for joy after scoring a stoppage time equaliser with a 30-yard scorcher against Abahani during their Super Cup encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Sk Russel through, Abahani hanging

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Treble-winners Sheikh Russel became the first team to qualify for the semifinals of the Super Cup after a come-from-behind 2-1 victory over Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC while defending champions Abahani risked elimination as they were held 2-2 by lowly Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The latest victory for Sheikh Russel, coupled with their 2-0 win on Friday against Feni, put them atop Group B with six points, followed by Abahani on two points, and Muktiyoddha and Feni on one point each.

To avoid elimination from the group-stage like Federation Cup and Independence Cup, holders Abahani must win against Sheikh Russel on Tuesday, given that the Muktiyoddha-Feni match produces an outright result. Draw in both matches will see Abahani through while a loss for Abahani and an outright result in the other match will see the winners of the other match qualify.

Sheikh Russel have won a number of games this season coming from behind, including the two famous final wins -- in the Federation Cup and Independecne Cup -- and it was the same case yesterday as they scored two goals after Rokonzazzaman Kanchan had given Muktiyoddha the lead in the 53rd minute, heading in a corner. Sheikh Russel restored parity five minutes after going down when national winger Zahid Hossain raced past a couple of defenders to beat the keeper with a measured strike from outside the box.

Anwar Hossain sealed the fate of the match in the 86th minute, heading in

from goalmouth after a corner from Mamunul Islam was headed back to his was by Zahid. There was still time for Muktiyoddha to salvage something from the game, but when in the stoppage time Muktiyoddha midfielder Zahed Parvez's strike hit the woodwork, the match's fate was all but decided.

Earlier in the day, Abahani were held 2-2 by Feni despite dominating possession. The Sky Blues enjoyed lion's share of possession, but went down in the stoppage time of the first half conceding a penalty. Feni striker Aminur Rahman Sajib, arguably the best player on the pitch, was brought down by Abahani's

veteran defender Mohammad Sujon as the striker was darting inside the box. Akbar Hossain Ridon stepped up and sent the Abahani keeper the wrong way, to give Feni a surprise 1-0 lead into the break.

After resumption, Abahani looked much better and put pressure on Feni defence which resulted in two goals within two minutes. Atiqur Rahman Meshu headed in a Saikat Bhoumick cross to level the margin in the 67th minute before Shahedul Alam gave the Sky Blues the lead with a curving shot from inside the box in the very next minute.

Meshu could have put the game beyond Feni from a penalty in the 81st minute, but his feeble attempt was easily saved by Feni keeper Masud Ahmed Ujjal. Abahani had to a pay heavy price for that miss as Sajib stunned the Dhanmondi outfit by scoring a stunning goal from 30 yards out in the first minute of injury time.

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The last two days have seen the probabilities for the New Zealand series in October sweat it out in the ongoing fitness camp at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium with a number of new training sessions.

Part of the new regime are the players' one-on-one sessions with the national team's physio, Vibhav Singh, in order to get a better understanding of their current physical condition. These sessions formed the basis of some diagnoses of the current level of fitness of some players.

In these 'musculoskeletal screenings' as Vibhav calls them, the cricketers are asked to perform a number of exercises based on which he analyses the fitness levels. A surprising development was that the squad had to be reduced because one player had entered the programme too injured to train.

Left-handed batsman Junaed Siddiqui had to be taken off the programme after his session with Vibhav. "He was carrying an injury from the BPL (Bangladesh Premier League) and participating in the camp would only further aggravate the injury," said Vibhav.

The physio also revealed special plans for Nasir Hossain who has been struggling with his throws from the outfield due to a slap lesion in his shoulder. "The orthopaedic in Cape Town (whom Nasir visited after the

tour of Zimbabwe) told us that while he does have a problem in his shoulder, the risk of him getting operated and not returning was too high and that's something we don't want," explained Vibhav. "We have decided to introduce him to a new throwing technique so that it doesn't hurt him while throwing the ball. He is also working on his shoulder muscles to further improve."

The sessions so far have revealed a number of issues. "A common thing is that a lot of boys were weak in their core (belly, mid and lower back). If you have got a weak core then you might lose power and stability and that could be affecting your bowling or batting. So that needs more focus," he added.

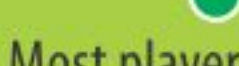
The physio was however positive about pacer Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's progress. "He has done all the exercises that the others have done without any special attention and he has been pain-free."

While he was positive about Mashrafe's comeback in the limited overs format, a return to Test cricket in October was still uncertain. "There are many stages. He needs to lose weight, be fit to bowl, be fit for cricket and then be match-fit. But the series is 16 weeks away so there's still time," said Vibhav. Regarding the other pacers the physio said that Nazmul Hossain, who recently returned from Australia after a surgery, would start bowling after four to six weeks. Abul Hassan, on the other hand, is still struggling with a back injury and will receive an injection on Wednesday to relieve pain.

Nasir Hossain to have throwing technique altered.



Weight loss in order for Mashrafe



Most players weak in their core

Clarke hopes to return today

REUTERS, London

Australia captain Michael Clarke hopes to be fit to return for Monday's final Champions Trophy Group A game against Sri Lanka after missing the first two matches with a back injury.

"I'm hopeful, no doubt about that, but I really have to wait to see how I pull up tomorrow morning after training again today," he told a news conference on Sunday. "My back is certainly improving, which is a positive."

Australia lost their opener to England before their clash with New Zealand was rained off, meaning they sit bottom of the group with one point knowing defeat at the Oval on Monday will knock them out of the tournament.

Clarke's recurring back trouble has led to speculation he could be a doubt for some of the five-test Ashes series in England which starts at Trent Bridge on July 10.

"Yes I'm confident (of playing in all of the Ashes), but I was confident I'd play every game in this series so you are asking the wrong guy," he said.

England have their own injury worries for the Ashes with their most dangerous attacking batsman Kevin Pietersen missing the Champions Trophy because of a knee problem.

Pietersen told a fan on Twitter on Sunday that he would return to county four-day action for Surrey against Yorkshire on Friday.



England captain Alastair Cook (L) rode his luck to score 64 against New Zealand in their Champions Trophy match at Cardiff yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

England scrape thru'

AFP, Cardiff



England put a ball-tampering row behind them to book their place in the semifinals of the Champions Trophy with a 10-run win over New Zealand in Cardiff on Sunday.

New Zealand, chasing 170 for victory in a match reduced by rain to 24 overs per side, were held by the tournament hosts to 159 for eight.

Victory saw England, yet to win a major 50-over tournament, into the last four as one of two qualifiers out of Group A after their build-up for this match was overshadowed by ball-tampering allegations made against them by former captain Bob Willis.

If Sri Lanka beat champions Australia in Monday's final Group A fixture at The Oval they will also feature in a last four that already includes Group B winners India and runners-up South Africa.

New Zealand could yet reach the semifinals themselves if Australia win but fail to do so by a large enough margin to better

the Black Caps' net run-rate.

England captain Alastair Cook, the man-of-the-match, was dropped three times by Nathan McCullum on his way to top-scoring with 64 in a total of 169 all out.

This victory also meant England won their 'decider' with New Zealand after they triumphed 2-1 in a one-day series in New Zealand earlier this year before the Black Caps turned the table by the same margin in a series in England in the run-up to the Champions Trophy.

Kane Williamson kept New Zealand hopes alive with a 48-ball fifty completed when he struck Anderson for his seventh four before lofting Tim Bresnan for six.

Anderson wrapped up victory by having Nathan McCullum caught behind off the final delivery of the match.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 169 all out in 23.3 overs (Cook 64, Root 38; Mills 4-30, McClenaghan 3-36)
NEW ZEALAND: 159 for 8 in 24 overs (Williamson 67, Anderson 30; Anderson 3-32, Bopara 2-26, Bresnan 2-41)

Result: England won by 10 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Alastair Cook.

Fed breaks duck

REUTERS, Halle



Roger Federer clinched his first title of the season before the start of his Wimbledon defence when he battled back from a set down to beat Russia's Mikhail Youzhny 6-7, 6-3, 6-4 and win the Halle Open on Sunday.

The world number three, who has now won the Wimbledon warm-up event on grass six times, needed to dig deep for his 77th career title and extend his head-to-head with Youzhny to an impressive 15-0.

"I have won a lot in my career but not recently," said Federer, whose last tournament win was in August 2012 in Cincinnati. "I am happy it worked for me today."

King of Queen's

AFP, London



Andy Murray was crowned king of Queen's Club for the third time as the world number two roared back to defeat defending champion Marin Cilic 5-7, 7-5, 6-3 in Sunday's final.

Murray was pushed hard by the Croatian fifth seed, but the US Open champion responded to the challenge with the kind of classy display that bodes well with Wimbledon just eight days away.

He picked up a cheque for 73,315 pounds for his latest triumph at the pre-Wimbledon warm-up event, but more importantly his dominant week's work served as the perfect preparation ahead of his latest bid to end Britain's long wait for a male winner of the singles' title at the All England Club.

Jamaican sprinter Veronica a dooper?

AFP, Kingston

Jamaica's Veronica Campbell-Brown has tested positive for a banned drug and won't defend her 200-metre world title this year, Jamaican media reported Saturday.

The Gleaner newspaper and Television Jamaica both reported that the sprinter tested positive for the banned diuretic lasix, although an official with the Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association said the federation had been notified only that a Jamaican athlete's "A" sample had tested positive. The JAAA official could not confirm the gender of the athlete, the substance discovered by the test nor whether the backup "B" sample had also tested positive.

HOCKEY POLLS

Nominations submitted

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Two panels submitted their nomination papers yesterday for the June 27 elections of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation.

Shafiullah Al Munir, who burst onto the scene a year ago after being appointed chairman of Mohammedan's hockey committee, submitted his nomination for the most important post of general secretary. However, he is contesting for the post as a councillor of Dhaka Mariner Youngs after Mohammedan nominated their old guard Sajed AA Adel as their preferred lone councillor. Sajed and Shamsul Bari of Ajax Club submitted their nominations for vice-president's posts from the same panel. The Munir-Sajed panel could manage to submit 25 nominations against a total of 28 posts.

On the other hand, the Combined Panel, led by incumbent general secretary Rahmatullah, submitted 37 nomination papers with 15 former national players among them.

A total of 62 nominations against 28 posts were submitted yesterday. A total of 71 councillors will elect five vice-presidents, one general secretary, two joint secretaries, one treasurer and 19 members.

Premier b'ball starts today

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Rangers will take on newly-promoted Old DOHS when the Citycell Premier Division Basketball League starts at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium today. The ten teams will play against each other to decide the champions.

Europa Youth are the two time-defending champions of the league. The Gregs are the other team to have been promoted to the Premier League this year.