

# SPORTS



**Gazi Tank's Rokibul Hasan pulls one towards mid-wicket during his 64-ball 98 against Kalabagan Cricket Academy at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

## SL itinerary announced

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the itinerary for their home series against Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka will arrive on January 24 to play two Tests, three ODIs and two T20Is.

The tour's dates have been advanced by a few days to allow the Asia Cup to begin on February 24. The first Test will begin at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka on January 27. The second Test and two T20Is will be played at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong. The first ODI is set to take place in Sylhet, and the second and third ODIs will be played at Mirpur.

The two teams last met in March 2013, in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka won the two-Test series 1-0, the ODIs were tied 1-1, and the hosts won the one-off T20.

### ITINERARY

First Test: January 27-31, Mirpur

Second Test: February 4-8, Chittagong

First Twenty20: February 12, Chittagong

Second Twenty20: February 14, Chittagong

First ODI: February 17, Sylhet

Second ODI: February 20, Mirpur

Third ODI: February 22, Mirpur

## Gazi Tank blow Kalabagan away

Prime Doleshwar top Super League table

SPORTS REPORTER



In a breathtaking display of batting pyrotechnics, Gazi Tank Cricketers got off to a winning start in the Super League round of the Dhaka Premier League yesterday when they brushed aside Kalabagan Cricket Academy by a massive 142 runs courtesy of a late blitzkrieg from Rokibul Hasan and Ryan ten Doeschate at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other matches, Prime Doleshwar went to the top of the table after beating Prime Bank Cricket Club by 56 runs at Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club beat Mohammedan Sporting Club in a low scoring game at the BKSP-2 by four wickets.

Yesterday's highlight however was at Mirpur, where Gazi Tank -- boosted by four half-centuries -- posted 337. In reply, Kalabagan were restricted to 195 for nine. After electing to bat Gazi Tank's openers Imrul Kayes (64) and Aftab Ahmed (53) shared a 114-run partnership in 22.5 overs. After the openers were sent back to the

pavilion Rokibul and foreign recruit Ryan ten Doeschate romped Gazi Tank past the 300-mark by smashing 124 runs in 7.4 overs.

The period saw Rokibul score four out of his ten fours and smack all his five sixes in his 64-ball 98. Ten Doeschate, who hammered 54 off 24, went one step ahead as he launched seven sixes and a four. The innings ended with Gazi Tank scoring 27 runs in the last over.

In reply Kalabagan got off to the worst possible start and were struggling at 26 for 4 in 12 overs. Half centuries from Sharifullah (55) and Sahagir Hossain (70) in the middle order avoided an even bigger defeat.

Prime Doleshwar's skipper Forhad Reza put in a good all-round performance to help his side go to the top. With the bat he posted a 32-ball 43 at number seven to help his side post 244.

In reply, Prime Bank CC were bundled out for 188. Their openers were removed by Forhad, who took 3-33 with the ball within the first eight overs and Prime Bank failed to recover.

At the BKSP-2, Sheikh Jamal rode on an unbeaten 44 to overcome Mohammedan's

<b>GAZI TANK:</b> 337 for 4 (Rokibul 98 not out, Imrul 64, ten Doeschate 54; Abhishek Mitra 1-28)	<b>142 runs</b>	<b>Result:</b> Prime Doleshwar won by 56 runs
<b>KALABAGAN CA:</b> 195 for 9 (Sahagir 70, Sharifullah 55; Arafat 3-45, Rubel 2-14)	<b>PRIME DOLESHWAR:</b> 244 for 7 (Mehedi 49, Forhad 43 not out; Enamul Haque Jr 3-53)	<b>MOHAMMEDAN:</b> 165 all out in 46 overs (Mashrafe 49; Shuvashis Roy 4-30, Tanvir Haider 3-26)
<b>Result:</b> Gazi Tank won by 142 runs	<b>PRIME BANK CC:</b> 188 all out (Shehan 45; Forhad 3-33)	<b>SHEIKH JAMAL:</b> 167 for 6 in 34.2 overs (Mushfiqur 44)

## Fed Cup kicks off today

Abahani face Rahmatganj, Sk Jamal play Uttar Baridhara

SPORTS REPORTER

The new football season kicks off today with the Walton Federation Cup at the Bangladesh National Stadium with eight-time champions Abahani taking on Rahmatganj MFS and 2011 champions Sheikh Jamal DC playing against Uttar Baridhara Club.

Considering their collection of local and foreign recruits and the time for pre-season preparation, Sheikh Jamal DC are being considered as the pre-tournament favourites. Boasting nine current national players, the Dhanmondi outfit have a reserve bench which is arguably as good as the main elevens of defending champions Sheikh Russel KC, traditional powerhouse Mohammedan, Abahani and Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

The inclusion of Haitian Sony Norde along with his compatriot Wedson Anselme and Nigerian striker Emeka Onuoha has strengthened Sheikh Jamal's attacking verve. But it has also created a problem for their Nigerian coach Joseph Afusi, who will have the hard task of picking the best eleven from such a quality squad before the match against Uttar Baridhara Club, a side which just got promoted to top-flight football.

The coach and club management are targeting nothing less than regaining the title to justify the tag of being the biggest-budgeted team in the country's history.

Eight-time champions Abahani have almost retained the same quality squad they had last season but the Sky Blues are not certain about the quality and combination of their foreign players. Two Brazilian midfielders Andre Luis Souza and Luiz R

Castro and Cameroonian striker Ekele Patrick are with the squad but trusted guards like Awudu Ibrahim and Lucky Paul are still waiting for a green signal from the club to arrive here.

"Our first target is to confirm the semifinal berth by beating Rahmatganj tomorrow (Thursday) and then Mohammedan," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu, adding that they might field one of the Brazilians along with Yoko Samnick in midfield while Osei Morison, the highest scorer last season, will play up front.

Abahani's archrivals Mohammedan have a comparatively better collection of local players such as national booters Emily, Zahid, Arif, Wahed and goalkeeper Mamun but the 10-time champions may suffer due to the poor quality of foreign recruits. Assistant coach Jewel Rana admitted that the lack of quality foreign players and only three weeks of preparation is a worry for the club.

Interestingly, among the three giants -- Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan SC and Abahani -- two will have to face elimination before the final as they will face each other in the group stages and knock-out-phase encounters.

The elimination of two giants means either defending champions Sheikh Russel KC or revamped Muktiyoddha Sangsad will have a chance of reaching the final but it will be a tough task for Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque to defend the title following the departure of some of his star players.

However, it may not be a surprise if any underdogs such as Team BJMC or Brothers Union make it to the final in a tournament which has previously seen underdogs, like Arambagh in 1997, reaching the final.

## Siddikur eyes strong show

World Cup begins today

SPORTS REPORTER



A day after celebrating his 29th birthday, Siddikur Rahman will be embarking on the most important event of his golfing career by teeing off at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club of Australia in the ISPS HANDA World Cup of Golf early this morning.

Siddikur is part of a select 60 elite golfers from across the world, including 13 from Asia, who will be competing in the 8-million-dollar event which is held biannually. The world cup has a team category as well as individual event, with the bigger purse (7 million dollars) reserved for the individual event and 1.2 million dollars for the winner. As Siddikur is the only Bangladeshi to participate in the event, he will only be competing in the individual event.

Siddikur will be teeing off at 9:36am local time (4:36am BST) alongside Stuart Manley of Wales and Tim Sluiter of the Netherlands.

Having made a 75-place leap in the World Golf Rankings (257 to 172) by winning his second Asian Tour title in New Delhi two weeks ago, Siddikur is relishing the challenge of playing in the world cup.

"I'm really excited and I'm glad to play in this tournament. I'm proud of what I have achieved...It's good for me and good for golf in Bangladesh," said Siddikur to Asiantour.com on the eve of the tournament.

With his confidence still high following his Indian Open victory a fortnight ago, Siddikur, one of the straightest hitters on tour, knows he must master the tricky greens at the Royal Melbourne Club to mount a title charge.

"These kinds of greens, it's my first experience playing on them. I played really good (at the Talisker Australian Masters last week) but it took me a long time to learn about them. I've practised a lot on the greens the past few days and I think I'm doing good now. Even though I missed the cut last week, everything is still good, I just need to putt better. The key will be to manage my game well on the greens."



PHOTO: REUTERS

**Argentina's Lionel Messi poses with the Golden Boot, for scoring 46 goals in Europe's domestic leagues last season, at a ceremony in Barcelona yesterday.**

## Youth hockey reaches last 4

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinal line-up of the Agrani Bank 24th National Youth Hockey Championship was completed yesterday when Rajshahi, Chittagong and Dhaka advanced to the last four.

In the day's matches, Rajshahi beat Dinajpur 1-0, Dhaka thrashed Rajshahi Division 5-0 and Chittagong beat Narayanganj 11-0 at the Maulna Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

## Fed Cup gets co-sponsors

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation roped in three co-sponsors for the season's curtain-raiser Federation Cup, scheduled for Nov 21 to Dec 6.

Walton had earlier earned the title sponsorship rights for Tk 20 lakhs for the 12-team tournament while co-sponsors Amber Group, Pragati Insurance Company Ltd and BDL Group will provide Tk 5 lakh each as the game's governing body has currently no long-term sponsors after the three-year contract with Grameenphone expired in July this year.

## Abahani get rid of Hall

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani released their Australian coach Nathan Hall yesterday, just few hours before their season starts with the opening match of the Federation Cup against Rahmatganj MFS.

Hall, who took charge of the Sky Blues on October 20, oversaw the team's training session on Tuesday but was released before yesterday's session.

"It seemed to us that he was not handling the team properly which is why we have decided to release him before things get worse," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu yesterday.

Iranian coach Ali Akbar is going to replace Nathan Hall as the club has already held talks over phone with their former coach. "He (Akbar) will arrive in Dhaka as soon as possible, subject to his obtaining Bangladesh visa," said Rupu.

Abahani's long-serving coach Amalsh Sen will guide the eight-time champions in today's match.

## No Test in India till '17

Who will watch Bangladesh play, questions BCCI official

MAIL TODAY, New Delhi



Bangladesh continues to be a cricketing pariah for India. Thirteen years after an Indian ensured that the neighbouring country got the Test status, Bangladesh is yet to play a Test match in India, and it will not play one at least till March 2017.

As per the Indian team's schedule, which is part of the tender document for team sponsorship between 2014 and 2017, Bangladesh is not scheduled to visit India at all even as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has ensured that two teams visit India every winter, fetching more income.

India will play a minimum of 37 Tests, 65 one-day internationals and

17 T20 Internationals, including the ICC events, during the period January 2014 and March 2017, as mentioned in the tender document.

Asked about this continued Bangladesh anomaly, a top BCCI official tersely conveyed the official thinking. "Who will come to watch Bangladesh play in India?" the official told Mail Today.

The last time Bangladesh played in India was more than 15 years ago, when they took part in an ODI triangular series, in which Kenya was the third team, in 1998. The only other time Bangladesh visited India was for the 2006 ICC Champions Trophy, but on that occasion they didn't play against India and it wasn't a bilateral series, anyway.

Ironically, it was Jagmohan Dalmiya who, during his tenure as ICC president, ensured that

Bangladesh got the Test status in 2000 -- many people say he did that as a return of favour for supporting him for the post of the ICC chief.

But since then, in over 15 years, India have played a mere seven Test matches against Bangladesh, but none in India.

All these years top BCCI officials have made several promises to the Bangladesh Cricket Board, and they all have turned out hollow.

Bangladesh players are particularly keen to play a Test match at the historic Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

The BCCI's line of thinking vis-à-vis Bangladesh clearly reflects that of sponsors/ broadcasters who have either held the rights or would be interested in winning the bid in future.

The new team sponsorship tender was floated on November 11 and the

document can be purchased till December 7 for a fee of 2 lakh rupees. Bids can be made till December 9 and they will be opened -- and the winner announced -- the same day.

BCCI president N Srinivasan sometime back had said that he would try to make the Indian domestic season count. "We are starting to look at and define our prime season, and during your prime season you should be playing at home. This is something we are conscious of," he had told a website.

"We want to have possibly one or two visiting teams during our domestic season, starting in September, all the way up to March, and we'll see the extent to which we don't tour outside. Given the Future Tours Programme that is there, we are going to see how we can adjust," he had said.

## Hockey transfers lean as ever

SPORTS REPORTER

With only one day left to the closure of the inter-club hockey players' transfers, the enthusiasm among players and clubs remained at a minimum as only five players signed up for two clubs on the penultimate day yesterday.

Dhaka Wanderers Club signed up three players while Usha Kria Chakra roped in two players.

With the registration of five players, the number of players signed up in the six days has reached 12 and all eight clubs are expected to complete their registration formalities today.

Meanwhile, the officials and players of Mohammedan SC, Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club, Wari Club and Hockey Players' Welfare Association are to stage a sit-in protest today at the stadium as they have declared not to take part in any hockey activities under the current executive committee.