

## DPL's final round on Thursday

SPORTS REPORTER

The final round matches of the Dhaka Premier League -- the country's lone 50-overs domestic cricket competition -- which were scheduled to be held today have been postponed due to the opposition enforced country-wide blockade.

The matches will now take place on Thursday.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis, the tournament's organiser, informed that they would hold the matches on Thursday, provided there would be no further obstacles.

The highlight of the final round will be at Mirpur where leaders Prime Doleshwar and second-placed Gazi Tank Cricketers, with 20 points each, will lock horns for the championship.

In the other matches, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi will take on Kalabagan Cricket Academy and Mohammadian Sporting face Prime Bank Cricket Club.

## Dissident clubs meet minister

SPORTS REPORTER

Four hockey club officials and few players met the newly appointed state minister for youth and sports Mujibul Haque Chunnu at the National Sports Council yesterday to press their demand for an ad-hoc committee by dissolving the existing executive committee of Bangladesh Hockey Federation.

The four clubs, led by Mohammadian SC, are boycotting all hockey activities as per their previous announcement since the elected committee took power in July. They did not even turn up for the recently concluded inter-club players' transfer leaving the 11-club premier division hockey league to a seven-club affair.

"Today (Tuesday) was my first day at the NSC office since taking over at the ministry of sports and youth. You know as a part of the interim government, our main responsibility is to hold a free and fair election by helping the Election Commission," Chunnu told reporters adding that he was not fully aware of the crisis.

"I heard one group's demands and I will hear the version of another group in a couple of days," said Chunnu. "I will call both parties, if needed, to find a

## Razzaq robbed

AFP, Lahore

Pakistani all-rounder Abdul Razzaq lost his passport, gold and cash when burglars broke into his house in the eastern city of Lahore early Tuesday, the player said.

The incident is the latest piece of bad luck for the 33-year-old, who was sent home from Pakistan's ongoing tour of South Africa after he injured his hamstring just two days before the first Twenty20 last week.

"Robbers broke into my house at around 5:30 am through the washroom window and took away the locker from the room, which had my passport, around 38 ounces of gold and 8,000 dollars and 2,500 pounds," Razzaq told reporters.

Lahore police said they suspected the thieves had prior information.

## Important BCB meeting today

SPORTS REPORTER

Important issues like forming the standing committees and appointing Mushfiqur Rahim as captain through the 2015 ICC World Cup are high on agenda as the much-awaited second meeting of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) takes place today.

Another important pending issue is picking the chief selector -- the post has been vacant since Akram Khan resigned in September.

"There is no fixed agenda and many things can come up in the meeting besides some routine work," said BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury when asked about the meeting agenda.

Ending all controversies surrounding the elections to the country's most high-profile sports body, Nazmul Hassan Papon became the first elected president of the board on October 11 through a 'voice vote' from 23 directors. Expectations were high following the elections that the new board would bring vibrancy into the activities, but frustratingly the BCB boss has yet to distribute the jobs among his board members.

It is expected that all the standing committees will be formed today and Papon may face a big hurdle to pick the head for the lucrative cricket operations committee. Enayet Hossain Siraj has been serving as chairman of this committee for long and he is interested in staying put, but former national skippers Akram Khan and Naimur Rahman have reportedly shown their interests. Again many are of the view that Mahbubul Anam can be a good choice.

Besides, the board also needs a strong commercial and marketing committee as it is struggling to sign a long-term TV rights deal which is the main source of income for the most affluent body of the country.

The name of former national skipper and former chief selector Faruque Ahmed has already appeared in different newspapers and in all probability he is going to succeed Akram. But he also faces challenge from within as current selector Minhazul Abedin too expressed his desire to head the committee.

The BCB high-ups reportedly chose Faruque as the former captain had proved his worth as the chief selector six years back. According to many Faruque will be the right choice as he has got the voice and calibre to keep the Tigers' progress in international cricket on track. The team's think-tank is also desperately looking for someone like Faruque beside coach Shams Jurgensen and captain Mushfiqur to set a long-term goal.

After being elected as president, Papon said that his first priority would be to draw up a long-term plan in the next three months with a focus on how to elevate Bangladesh's position from the bottom among the ten Test teams and without any doubt the appointment of Faruque will serve his purpose.

And in the end it is expected that the board will no longer continue with their useless short-term policy regarding appointment of the captain and Mushfiqur, as expected, will get an extension till the 2015 World Cup. But it may not be possible for the board to appoint a vice-captain on a long-term basis due to Mahmudullah Riyad's recent incon-



Muktijoddha Sangsad's Nigerian forward Eleta Kingsley (L) runs to celebrate his strike against Sheikh Russel KC during their group phase clash of the Walton Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## All Reds stun Sk Russel

SPORTS REPORTER



Muktijoddha Sangsad and Team BJMC emerged champions in Groups B

and C respectively to complete the quarterfinals line-up of the Walton Federation Cup after beating their respective rivals at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

A second half strike from Nigerian forward Eleta Kingsley handed Muktijoddha Sangsad to a 1-0 defeat over defending champions Sheikh Russel KC, to set up a quarterfinal clash against Group C runners-up Brothers Union on Sunday.

Team BJMC emerged Group C champions with a 2-1 win over Brothers Union and will play against Group B runners-up Sheikh Russel KC in the last eight on Saturday. Samson Ilias put Team BJMC ahead

in the sixth minute and Abdullah Parvez doubled the lead in the 51st minute with a neat side-volley before Victory Anthony pulled one back from a penalty-kick ten minutes from time for the losing side.

But the big upset of the day was in the first match where three-time champions Muktijoddha Sangsad beat holders Sheikh Russel. Both teams came into the group-deciding match having ensured their quarterfinal berths and Sheikh Russel took the opportunity to test a couple of new foreign players, by sending in new recruit

Maxim Eric Roger is one of them who arrived just a day earlier and the midfielder did not disappoint as he provided two defence-splitting throughpasses and a well-judged cross. But neither Jamaican Ricardo Cousins nor local striker Mohammad Robin could cash in on those opportunities. Team BJMC

goalkeeper Aminul Haque was also brilliant as he thwarted a close-range header from Robin after Rogers set him up from the left flank in the dying minutes.

The exodus of nine local players and Sony Norde in the transfer market has evidently left treble-winners Sheikh Russel a lot weaker and their problems at the back, which was marshalled by veteran Rajani, Mamun, Reza and Mamun Mia, left a lot to be desired.

On the other hand, Muktijoddha Sangsad are showing their progress after beating Chittagong Abahani 3-2 in the previous match as the All Reds enjoyed lion's share of possession and created numerous chances. But their forwards too were profligate as Mohammad Biplob and Nkwocha Kingsley squandered numerous chances before Eleta Kingsley found the back of Sheikh Russel net with a fierce left-footer

from inside the box on 62 minutes.

The margin of victory could have been bigger though had Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee not thwarted two close-range efforts from Nkwocha Kingsley and the woodwork not denied them twice.

"It is not the Sheikh Russel that won three trophies last season, but we are trying to rebuild the squad," said Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque. "But I am confident that we will get our rhythm back once a few problems in defence and upfront are sorted out."

"The win over defending champions will boost the players before the quarterfinal and I am happy with the way the boys played even though I believe there are some areas like the attacking third which needs to improve before the quarterfinal," said Muktijoddha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik.



Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan after a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Shakib is taking part in the ongoing CJKS Corporate Twenty20 tournament in Chittagong.

## PAKISTAN SERIES Jayawardene to skip one-dayers

AFP, Colombo

Former captain Mahela Jayawardene has opted out of Sri Lanka's limited-overs series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates next month due to personal reasons, an official said on Tuesday.

Jayawardene, 36, will miss two Twenty20 games and five one-dayers to be played from December 11-27, but was expected to be available for the three Test matches that start on December 31.

"Mahela was not considered for the limited-overs part of the tour as he had requested leave on personal grounds," Sri Lanka Cricket's media manager Rajith Fernando said.

## Ind-WI series decider today

PTI, Kanpur

Unfavourable bowling conditions had pegged them back in the last match but India will look to assert their supremacy and clinch the series against the West Indies when the two teams clash in the decisive third one-day international here on Wednesday.

India have been a dominant force in this contest since West Indies' arrival to the country but the hosts suffered a surprise two-wicket defeat in Visakhapatnam, failing to defend a competitive total under difficult conditions.

That victory must have boosted confidence of the West Indies who would now aim to leave the country by pocketing at least the ODI series, following their debacle in the Tests.

They, for the first time on this tour, will approach a match with self-belief and confidence.

For India, it is last international match at home before they embark on a challenging tour against South Africa and they would like to finish this series on a high.

The Indian batting line-up sports a solid look. Barring a few individuals, the batting department is in great form in the recent past.

The top three -- Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan and Virat Kohli and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni -- have been the real force behind India's batting.

## Black Caps to be without Vettori

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand spinner Daniel Vettori said Tuesday he will miss the upcoming series against the West Indies because his injured ankle is not ready for the rigours of international cricket.

Vettori had surgery on a recurring Achilles tendon problem in June and returned to domestic cricket earlier this month.

But the 34-year-old said he did not want to attempt a premature international return and would sit out the West Indies tour, which opens with a warm-up match against a New Zealand XI on Wednesday.

The left-arm said he would reassess his condition in the New Year, which could make him available for limited overs matches against the West Indies.

## Warne moving closer to Liz?

AFP, Sydney

Australian spin legend Shane Warne has sold his sprawling Melbourne home for around 15 million Australian dollars, reports said Tuesday, amid speculation he is relocating to Britain.

Warne has been looking to sell the Victorian Italianate mansion, Kilkerran, for more than a year, the Sydney Morning Herald said, so he could be closer to UK-based model and actress partner Liz Hurley.

The trophy five-bedroom Melbourne home had an asking price of 15 million dollars and sold within the past two weeks, the reports said. Agent Jonathan Dixon confirmed the sale but not the price.

Warne bought the house for around 8.55 million dollars in 2009 as a family home with wife Simone and their three children before the couple split in 2010.

Warne and Hurley went through a rough patch in September with widespread reports that their affair was over, but the pair is now believed to be back together.

## Root can replace Trott: Athers

AFP, Sydney

Mike Atherton Tuesday said Joe Root was the obvious replacement at number three for troubled Jonathan Trott as Australian newspapers came under fire for being insensitive in their treatment of the player.

The former England captain said the baby-faced Root had proved he could handle fiery paceman Mitchell Johnson in the tense climax of the first Ashes Test on Sunday to survive on 26 not out.

"I thought Root played really well at the dying end of the Test at the Gabba; he looked really solid," he told Sky News of Root, who is an opener by trade and

played that role with Alastair Cook in the previous Ashes series earlier this year.

"He played Mitchell Johnson well, he looked compact, he got a nice strike into the ball.

"He also dealt with all of the verbals. It was a very intense passage of play and his angelic smile seemed to disarm Mitchell Johnson as well."

Atherton said this made Root the obvious choice to move up the order from six to replace Trott, who dramatically left the Ashes tour of Australia on Monday with a "stress-related illness", widely reported to be depression.

The England and Wales Cricket Board said Trott, 32, would take an indefinite break from cricket and would not be returning to the five-Test tour, which has been tarnished

by constant sledging as frustrations boiled over.

While Trott received widespread sympathy and support from England players past and present, several Australian newspaper headlines were taken to task by a leading mental health charity, which said they were insensitive and inappropriate.

None was cited but the Sydney Daily Telegraph said on its front page "Trott takes his bat and ball and heads home", while The Australian referred to "Shaky Trott quits tour due to stress".

If Jonathan Trott had returned to the UK for attention for a broken arm, he would not have been treated so disrespectfully by some of our media," charged the head of charity "beyondblue", Jeff Kennett.

That he is suffering a stress-

related illness that cannot be seen is no excuse for a lack of understanding by some of our media.

"Today's coverage just shows we have a long way to go with some in educating them how to report on mental illness."

Trott's illness sparked widespread commentary on cricket forums and newspaper websites, with most remarks understanding of his plight, although others suggested he should never been selected for such a gruelling tour if his condition was already known.

Australian players have not commented.

While Atherton favours Root at three, another former England skipper Nasser Hussain threw his support behind Ian Bell, who has long batted at five.