

## Today's ACC meet crucial for BD

SPORTS REPORTER

All the operation surrounding Bangladesh's capability to host this year's Asia Cup will be put to rest after today's Asian Cricket Council (ACC) meeting in Colombo. The meeting may raise concerns about the current security situation in Bangladesh, in which case the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) delegates will present a foolproof security plan for the Asia Cup, scheduled for February-March, to the representatives in the meeting.

While the Asia Cup is scheduled to start in February, the more immediate concern for the BCB would be the security measures for the tour by Sri Lanka, who will play two Tests, two T20Is and three ODIs in Bangladesh from January 27.

With regards to the tour, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) stated that they were monitoring the situation.

In order to allay security concerns, the BCB had met with the Sri Lanka High Commissioner in Dhaka on December 31, and reportedly appealed the high commissioner about the security preparations that the BCB were going to take for the series.

Amid all the concerns surrounding Bangladesh's capability to host both the Asia Cup and the ICC World Twenty20, SLC secretary Nishantha Ranatunga yesterday stated that Sri Lanka would be ready to host both events in case another venue was required.

"We are ready to host the Asia Cup if the ACC wants another venue. We have the grounds and the necessary infrastructure to host an event like that at short notice. We are also ready to host the World Twenty20 if we are asked," said Ranatunga in Colombo.



Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews raises his arms in celebration of a match-winning century on the fourth day of the first Test against Pakistan at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

## Mathews scripts stirring recovery

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews hit a pugnacious hundred to pull Sri Lanka out of trouble on the fourth day of the first Test against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi on Friday.

Mathews notched up 116 not out under pressure for his second Test hundred and put on invaluable 158-run partnership for the fifth wicket with Dinesh Chandimal (89) and 99 for the unfinished sixth wicket with Prasanna Jayawardene (48 not out) to take Sri Lanka to 420-5 at close at Sheikh Zayed Stadium.

Sri Lanka resumed the day at 186-4, but Mathews' career-best score and resolute innings by Chandimal and Prasanna helped Sri Lanka add 234 runs for the loss of only one wicket.

They now lead by 241 runs and with five wickets intact can harbour hopes of an unlikely win on the fifth and final day or at least a narrow draw.

Chandimal praised Mathews's knock.

"He batted well at a crucial stage and batted like a captain," said Chandimal. With a bit of spin on the pitch we keep our fingers crossed (for a win) and a 300-plus target might be a winning one."

Mathews batted with resolve, blunting off-spinner Saeed Aijmal and had the better of Pakistan's three-pronged pace attack, reaching his hundred in the final session, taking two off Irfan. His hundred came off 239 balls.

In all the Sri Lanka captain batted for 370 minutes, hitting 12 boundaries and six off Aijmal, who conceded 96 runs in 42 wicket-less overs.

### SCOREBOARD

**SRI LANKA:** First innings 294 (Mathews 116, Jayawardene 48, Chandimal 89, 100-4)

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 381 (Younis 136, Misbah 121, Shoaib 7-88, 100-5)

**SRI LANKA:** Second innings (overnight 106-4)

Kanaranthesa (Misbah) 24  
Misbah (Misbah) 81  
Saeed Aijmal (Younis) 55  
Misbah (Misbah) 8  
Chandimal (Misbah) 80  
Mathews not out  
Fayyaz (Misbah) 48

**PAKISTAN:** Second innings (overnight 106-4)

Younis (Misbah) 400  
Total (for Sri Lanka) (Misbah) 420  
Total (for Pakistan) (Misbah) 420  
Total (for Sri Lanka) (Misbah) 420  
Total (for Pakistan) (Misbah) 420

**Scorecard:** S L P R M  
Misbah 31 2 81 5  
Rahat 33 8 82 8  
Misbah 33 8 131 2  
Aijmal 43 10 96 8



Muktijoddha Sangsad KC goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Lito jumps to clear the ball away during their Bangladesh Premier League match against Mohammedan SC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## MSC, Muktis split points

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The 7th Bangladesh Premier League produced its first stalemate in five matches when two heavyweights -- Mohammedan SC and Muktijoddha Sangsad KC played out a 1-1 draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian hitman Nwocha Kingsley put Federation Cup runners-up Muktijoddha Sangsad ahead in the 86th minute of the match only to be cancelled out by a 93rd minute penalty conversion from Mohammedan skipper Zahid Hossain Emili.

Though it was the first big encounter of the league but the focus was mainly on how much Mohammedan's new Portuguese coach Rui Jose Capela Batista worked with his charges in two days of preparation.

"This is my first experience here and I am satisfied with what I have seen. But I need more time to make this side perform better," said Capela after the match.

The 44-year old Portuguese coach went on with a 4-3-3 formation, with national forwards Zahid Hossain Emili, Wahed Ahmed and Egyptian Mostafa Seddik in the first half before Seddik was substituted in the second

half. Emily and Seddik got two excellent opportunities in the first half to score, but failed to take advantage as Muktijoddha goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Lito and Egyptian defender Elgilani Nagi rescued them.

Winger Zahid Hossain should have put Mohammedan ahead in the 25th minute but the winger was too slow to catch a nice through-pass from Emily and goalkeeper Lito came out of his line to clear the danger while it was again Lito, who was forced to make a diving save off a Zahid cross from the right in the 34th minute. Just two minutes before the break, Seddik dribbled outmanned one defender inside the box, but could not get any power behind his shot.

The game assumed a fast pace in the second half and in the 62nd minute, Wahed darted into the Muktijoddha danger zone with the goalkeeper to beat but Nagi made a brilliant slide tackle to rescue the All Reds.

Muktis stepped up the ante and created some pressure but two timely interventions from defender Misra Sheikh kept the Black and Whites in the match, before Capela made two changes in the midfield to re-establish control.

Muktijoddha came close to taking the lead in the 81st minute but Nwocha saw his clever side-foot

attempt narrowly miss the target. But the Nigerian made sure that he got on the scoresheet five minutes later when he outmuscled, albeit a bit forcefully, Mohammedan defender Baybeck to drive the ball to find the far corner of the net.

Mohammedan stepped went desperate and played some long balls inside the Muktijoddha box in the closing minutes and Zahid came close to pulling at the stroke of ninety minutes but his close-range effort was saved by Lito before Zahid pored the way for the equaliser.

Zahid went down under the charge of Muktijoddha's Nigerian defender Eleta Benjamin inside the box and Emily converted the resulting penalty to earn a valuable point for the Black and Whites.

Muktijoddha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik felt the referee barked under the pressure of officiating a big match, but gave credit to his players to show work ethic.

"What I felt from a distance was that it probably was not a foul (the penalty incident). You see a referee has to make a number of decisions. But the decisions that he makes at crucial moments, make him a good or bad referee. BFF members sitting on the dug-out may also put them under pressure," said the veteran coach.

## Serena, Victoria showdown

AFP, Brisbane



World number one Serena Williams will meet the second ranked Victoria Azarenka in the final of the Brisbane International after she defeated Maria Sharapova in an enthralling semi-final Friday.

Williams, the defending champion, beat Sharapova 6-2, 7-6 [9/7] in one hour, 43 minutes on Pat Rafter Arena.

Earlier, Azarenka recovered from a disastrous first set to beat Serbia's Jelena Jankovic 1-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Williams and Sharapova have a fierce rivalry on the court, which is matched by an at times bitter relationship off it.

They didn't hold back during their semi-final, thrilling the packed stadium with the power and depth of their groundstrokes.

Both women struggled to hold their serves throughout, although Williams was slightly more consistent, breaking Sharapova three times in the first set while losing hers only once, despite making only 40 percent of her first serves.

"I think we are both very strong returners, and personally I couldn't get a first serve in today," Williams said.

"My first serve percentage was extremely low. I didn't serve nearly as well as I served in my first two matches."

"(I was) a little disappointed because that's what I've been working on, being consistent with my serve."

The serving struggles continued into the second set, with three breaks apiece, but both held when it mattered to send the set into a tiebreak.

Williams had match points at 6/5 and 7/6 in the tiebreak, which Sharapova saved, but at 8/7 and on her own serve she blasted an ace down the centre line for her 14th consecutive win over the Russian.

## Zia loses again

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Grand Master Ziaur Rahman suffered another defeat in the Masters event of 89th Hastings International Chess Complex when he lost against English FIDE Master Peter J Sowray in the sixth round at Horntye Park of East Sussex in England on Thursday.

After two successive defeats, Zia has 3.5 points from six matches.

## Fighting Nadal into Doha semis

AFP, Doha

World number one Rafael Nadal showed his trademark grit and determination on Thursday as he reached the semi-finals of the Qatar Open with a 7-5, 6-4 victory over Latvian Ernests Gulbis.

He will now meet qualifier Peter Gojowczyk who overcame the flamboyant, dreadlocked Dustin Brown 7-5 in the third set tie-breaker during an all-German quarter-final on centre court.

Nadal, who needed three sets to overcome German Tobias Kamke to reach the last eight, took the opening set 7-5 before going down a break and trailing 3-0 in the second set against the 1.90m (6ft 3in) Riga native.

"This is a tournament I really like to play and I've won here before and reached the final so I'm really happy," he said.

## Smith, Haddin worsen England misery

AFP, Sydney



Australia recovered on the back of a Steve Smith home-run century and more Brad Haddin batting heroics to put reeling England on the rack again in the final Sydney Ashes Test Friday.

The Australians, sent into bat after Alastair Cook's first test win of the series, stormed back from a parlous 97 for five to leave the beleaguered tourists in familiar trouble by opening day stumps.

Australia were all out for 326 late in the day with England losing the wicket of Michael Carberry for a duck to reach stumps at eight for one with Cook on seven and nightwatchman Jimmy Anderson one.

Smith and Haddin rescued the home team with a 128-run sixth-wicket stand before Haddin went for his sixth score over 50 in the series and Smith was last man out for 115.

### SCOREBOARD

|                                                                                 |                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>AUSTRALIA:</b> First innings                                                 | Bruce 19.5 5 65 2     |
| Rogers/Stokes                                                                   | 11 Stokes 19.5 1 99 6 |
| Waller/Broad                                                                    | 16 Barkin 8.2 0 34 8  |
| Waller/Bow & Anderson                                                           | 40 Northwick 7 0 49 1 |
| Clarke/Sell/Brakes                                                              | 10                    |
| Smith: Best ball & Stokes                                                       | 115                   |
| Bailey/Cook/Bruce                                                               | 1                     |
| Haddin/Cook/Stokes                                                              | 75                    |
| Johnson (Fast ball)                                                             | 1                     |
| b Northwick                                                                     | 12                    |
| Harris/Anderson/Stokes                                                          | 22                    |
| Siddons/Bailey/Stokes                                                           | 8                     |
| Lyon not out                                                                    | 1                     |
| Extras (b 14, lb 3, w 2, nb 4)                                                  | 20                    |
| Total (All out in 76 overs) 126                                                 |                       |
| Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-51, 3-76, 4-94, 5-97, 6-121, 7-269, 8-321, 9-321       |                       |
| <b>England:</b> First innings                                                   | 1-6                   |
| Carb not out                                                                    | 7                     |
| Carberry/Cook/Stokes                                                            | 1                     |
| Anderson not out                                                                | 1                     |
| Extras:                                                                         | 8                     |
| Total (For 1 not out) 126                                                       |                       |
| To bat: Bell, Pietersen, Baillance, Stokes, Baillance, Northwick, Broad, Rankin |                       |
| Fall of wicket: 1-6                                                             |                       |
| <b>England:</b> Second innings                                                  | 1-6                   |
| Items 1 1 5 0                                                                   |                       |
| Johnson 1 1 1 1                                                                 |                       |
| <b>Test England:</b>                                                            |                       |
| Umpires: Kiern Dar and Mark Benson                                              |                       |

## Javed bids bye after friendly

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Former national opener Javed Omar officially announced his retirement from all forms of cricket yesterday after a friendly Twenty20 game at the BCB's National Cricket Academy.

Javed, who last featured in a domestic tournament in 2012, led the Legends XI, which included the likes of Aminul Islam, Habibul Bashar, Khaled Mahmud, Khaled Masud, Habibul Hossain, Mehrah Hossain, Enamul Haque and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza yesterday.

"I have always believed in working hard. I was dropped a number of times, but I fought back. One of the best moments in my career to be chosen for the 2007 World Cup. It was getting very difficult for me to play in the team then, and I had to work really hard," said an emotional Javed during the ceremony.

The right-handed opener initially wanted to announce his retirement after having played a domestic tournament this year, but could not do so as he was not selected to play in this year's Dhaka Premier League.

The legends played against the Bangladesh Sports Journalist Association and beat them by 93 runs. Khaled Mahmud top-scored for them with 67 runs and helped them post 281 for six. Javed scored 40. In reply, a fighting 108 from Rezaul Karim went in vain as BSA were restricted to 158 for six.



Former national opener Javed Omar Belim is given a guard of honour by his Legends XI teammates while going out to bat in the friendly match against the Bangladesh Sports Journalist Association at the National Cricket Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday. Javed officially announced his retirement from all forms of cricket after the match.

PHOTO: STAR