

# SPORT

## BCB confirms SL participation

SPORTS REPORTER



The Sri Lanka cricket team's visit to Bangladesh this month is considered by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) as a key feature to keep the two multinational events -- the Asia Cup and the ICC World Twenty20 -- on track. And the BCB received confirmation from their Sri Lankan counterparts yesterday that Sri Lanka will arrive in Dhaka on January 24 as scheduled to play two Tests, three ODIs and two T20Is.

The security has been the most talked-about issue in Bangladesh's cricket fraternity in the wake of the prevalent political turmoil but the reconfirmation that the five-team Asia Cup in February-March will go ahead in the country had brought relief, which can now only be greater with the confirmation from Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) ensuring that this year's cricket carnival will kick off as planned -- with the Sri Lanka tour.

BCB President Nazmul Hassan Papon, who is in Dubai for a meeting of ICC full member countries, said Papon in a statement: "The SLC representatives have confirmed here today that the Sri Lanka team will tour Bangladesh as planned. The standard security inspections and monitoring in

regards to the arrangements will continue side by side.

"There was a discussion among Asian nations about the Asia Cup and that event will be hosted by Bangladesh as decided in February-March," added the statement provided by BCB.

CricInfo however reported that Sri Lanka Cricket was more guarded in its response as its president Jayantha Dharmadasa said: "We have said we are touring and we have taken the FTP [into consideration], so the assurance is there. At the present time we can't say we're not going, and that's what I told them [BCB]. We have two people going to assess the situation, because it's changing day by day."

The report added that the security committee will comprise former CEO Ajit Jayasekara -- an air commodore with the Sri Lanka Air Force -- and vice-president Mohan de Silva. Incumbent CEO Ashley de Silva had said the board would make its final decision on the tour by January 15, with the team set to depart for Bangladesh on January 24.

It is expected that the security team will discuss details of the tour, including venues.

"There has been no talk of changing any venues for security reasons. Everything remains as scheduled," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus, reacting to suggestions that Sri Lanka had demanded a change

in venue for the first ODI, scheduled to take place at the newly-built Sylhet Divisional Stadium, which is supposed to make its international debut through this match.

There have also been reports of uncertainty over the participation of Pakistan in the Asia Cup but Papon has reportedly also gotten a positive response from his Pakistan counterparts.

"We have also received a positive response from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) regarding Pakistan's participation in the Asia Cup. The PCB has requested enhanced security measures for the cricket team during the Asia Cup and we have given our assurance of providing the same."

The security aspects surrounding the Pakistan team's participation in the Asia Cup was discussed among representatives of the Asian nations on the sidelines of the ICC meeting in Dubai yesterday.

"We have had a positive discussion. The PCB has requested additional security measures for the Pakistan team which will be incorporated in our security plan. We have assured the PCB that their requirements will be fulfilled. The PCB has also confirmed that they will send their representative for the security briefing scheduled in Dhaka on 20 January," informed BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, who is also in Dubai with the board president.



**TOO COLD TO HANDLE!** On a chilly morning like yesterday's Bangladesh cricket captain Mushfiquur Rahim, after batting for a while at the Mirpur Indoors, opted for a workout in the gym of the nearby National Cricket Academy.

PHOTO: STAR

## Shakib fails as Adelaide strike out

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan's performance took a sharp dip from his Big Bash League debut match as he failed to contribute either with bat or his left-arm spin for Adelaide Strikers in his second match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

And the result was also same as in Shakib's first match as James Faulkner and Lasith Malinga led a high-class Melbourne Stars pace attack to demolish the Strikers by eight wickets.

It was however English pace bowler Luke Wright who dismissed Shakib for two runs. Adelaide Strikers could manage only 90 for nine, a total the Stars overtook in just 7.3 overs with eight wickets in hand. Shakib conceded ten runs in his only over.

Adelaide Strikers will play their next match against Perth Scorchers at the Western Australia Cricket Association Ground in Perth on January 16.

## Long-term training camp from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The much talked about intensive training camp for top athletes ahead of August's Commonwealth Games and September's Asian Games will get underway today in Dhaka Cantonment with 26 athletes from four disciplines taking part.

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has arranged this long-term training schedule to assess the capability of the country's top athletes in shooting, boxing, archery and taekwondo to come close to winning medals at the international level.

The BOA is bringing foreign coaches for each of the disciplines to provide the highest facilities as well as handsome remuneration to each of the athletes and local coaches. Ukrainian boxing coach Gurenko Oleksandr is scheduled to arrive here today while coaches for shooting, archery and taekwondo from South Korea are also expected to arrive within this month.

The camp consisted of 12 shooters, seven archers, four taekwondo athletes and three boxers, who will have to stay inside the Cantonment until the completion of the Asian Games and it is expected that they will get seven to eight months' preparation to fulfill the expectations of BOA.

## Hill quits

INTERNET, Hamilton

New Zealand umpire Tony Hill has ended his 15-year international career to take up a role as an umpires coach in his homeland.

Hill's decision to step down from the Elite Panel of Umpires comes after he was used only as a third umpire during the recent Ashes series.

## Abahani, Sonali Bank in semis

SPORTS REPORTER



Sonali Bank confirmed their semifinal berth of the UCB Club Cup hockey tournament with a convincing 4-1 win over Dhaka Wanderers Club in their first match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The victory of Sonali Bank also took Abahani into the last four from the same group and the teams will square off in the group-deciding match today.

Enamul Bari Turjo struck twice while Masum and Manik scored one goal each for Sonali Bank while Taher Ali netted the consolation goal for Wanderers, who left the tournament with two consecutive defeats in as many matches.

In the day's other match, Azad Sporting Club kept their hopes of qualifying for the semifinals alive after playing out a 1-1 draw against Ajax SC and the result threw Usha KC into the semifinals from Group B.

Rajib Das gave Azad a 24th minute lead which was cancelled by Nurunnabi in the 51st minute.

Azad, who suffered a 13-1 thrashing by Usha, will have to wait for the result of today's encounter between Usha and Ajax.

## Goalless draw for misfiring Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Four-time champions Abahani stumbled in their second match of the Bangladesh Premier League, playing out a goalless draw against Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The first draw in two matches meant Abahani are in second position with four points, two points behind joint leaders Sheikh Russel KC and Sheikh Jamal DC.

Abahani came into the game on the back of a hard-fought 1-0 win over Brothers Union and the Dhanmondi-based outfit could hardly improve on that performance, thanks to misfiring from striking duo Nigerian Osei Morison

and long-serving Ghanaian Awudu Ibrahim, and had to be content with a single point.

The Sky Blues initially showed signs of an improved performance with Ibrahim blasting a set-piece to the side net on the edge of the danger area in the very third minute but they failed to keep up the initial momentum in front of a few hundred spectators under floodlights.

The inclusion of Ibrahim in the starting eleven along with Morison engendered thoughts of a lethal attack but the forwards hardly got any support from the midfielders, who missed a lot of passes in the face of still challenges from the opponents.

"It is tough to expose the opposition backline when an opponent plays for a single point," said Abahani's Iranian coach Ali Akbar.

"Despite that, our strikers squandered a few scoring chances and so we were forced to play out a draw against them."

Ali Akbar also complained of poor refereeing as the opponents put up a physical show instead of a technical game, and he thought such negative football would hinder Bangladesh's football from going forward.

After resumption, Abahani stepped up the attack for the lead and they got the two easiest chances but Ibrahim and Morison surprisingly squandered both sitters from inside the danger zone.

Cameroonian midfielder Yoko Samnick placed a nice defense-split through for Ibrahim, who received the ball and darted into the box with goalkeeper Nehal to beat but the Ghanaian hitman saw his low drive

to the far post go narrowly wide in the 58th minute.

Later, Morison squandered the easiest chance of the night from point-blank distance in the 69th minute. The Nigerian striker, standing on the near post, drove it to Feni goalkeeper Nehal, standing in the middle of the post, instead of tapping it into the net.

Ali Akbar then brought three changes within ten minutes but it had no impact on the game, although Ibrahim got another chance in stoppage time but he floated the ball over the crosspiece.

"We were underdogs in the game and I am happy to have earned one point against big opponents," said Feni Soccer's Gambian coach Omar K Sise. "I thanked my boys for following the instructions and implementing the strategy properly."

## 12 suggested for contracts

SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) have recommended the names of twelve players for the new central contracts.

The number has been reduced from 15, the number of players who signed the 2013 contracts, which was expired on December 31 last year.

"Yes, we got the list from the selectors and will place it in the next board meeting," said BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan.

When asked about the chance of an increase in the players' wages, Akram said: "Definitely, we suggested a rise in player remuneration -- let's see what finally happens."



**Abahani's Awudu Ibrahim (C) is sandwiched in between two defenders of Feni Soccer Club during their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

## Mahela puts SL on top

AFP, Dubai



Mahela Jayawardene defied a left-hand webbing injury to notch his 32nd century and Kaushal Silva missed

his by five runs as Sri Lanka gained an upper hand over Pakistan in the second Test in Dubai on Thursday.

Jayawardene, who received three stitches after he dropped a catch on Wednesday, scored 106 not out and shared an invaluable 139-run partnership with Silva (95) to guide Sri Lanka to 318-4 at close on the second day.

Sri Lanka have gained an important 153 runs lead over Pakistan's first innings score of 165 and a chance to take a lead

in the three-Test series after the first match ended in a draw in Abu Dhabi last week.

Jayawardene, grimacing while playing strokes, toiled his way to a remarkable knock, hit paceman Bilawal Bhatti for his 12th boundary to reach three figure mark off 215 balls, raising his bat in delight before he was embraced by skipper Mathews.

Mathews, 42 not out, has so far added 91 for the unbroken fifth wicket stand with his illustrious partner to consolidate Sri Lanka's position.

Jayawardene, the 36-year-old former captain, has so far batted for 330 minutes for only his second century against Pakistan and his first in 21 months since his hundred against England in Colombo in April 2012.

### SCOREBOARD

<b>PAKISTAN:</b> First innings 165 (Manzoor 73; Pradeep 3-62, Herath 3-26)			
<b>SRI LANKA:</b> First innings (overnight 57-1)			
Karunaratne lbw b Junaid	32		
Silva lbw b Hafeez	95		
Sangakkara lbw b Rahat	26		
Chandimal c Rahat b Junaid	12		
M Jayawardene not out	106		
Mathews not out	42		
Extras (lb-1, lb-2, nb-1, w1)	5		
Total: (For 4 wks in 106 overs)	318		
To bat: P Jayawardene, Lakmal, Eranga, Herath, Pradeep			
Fall of wickets: 1-40, 2-75, 3-88, 4-227			
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>
Junaid	26	5	75
Rahat	26	5	109
Ajmal	27	9	45
Bhatti	21	2	75
Hafeez	6	1	11

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