

# SPORT



Dhaka's Rony Talukder celebrates his double-century on the second day of the four-day National Cricket League match against Barisal in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Tigers in Brisbane

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
The Bangladesh national cricket team began their World Cup journey as they reached Brisbane yesterday morning. They will have a 14-day camp in the Australian city and play two practice matches. Those matches are scheduled to take place against domestic teams. Apart from these matches they are also scheduled to face Pakistan and Ireland next month for their official World Cup warm-up games. Except for Tamim Iqbal, the rest of the team management is currently in Brisbane. Tamim is scheduled to take an injection at Melbourne today as part of his recovery from his knee surgery and then join the team tomorrow.

## Baki 7th

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
Commonwealth Games silver medallist Abdullah Hel Baki finished seventh among eight finalists in the 10m Air Rifle event of the Amir of Kuwait International Shooting Grand Prix in Kuwait City yesterday. Baki scored 99.7 points in the final after having qualified in fifth position for with an aggregate score of 622 points. The other Bangladeshi participant, Shovon Chowdhury, failed to qualify for the final round finishing 13th in the qualification round.

# Two Dhakas on top

**SPORTS REPORTER**



Rony Talukdar's run-fest continued as the Dhaka right-hander hit his maiden double century to slander Barisal at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Resuming the day on 103, the promising 24-year-old batsman ended with 227 runs, while out-of-favour Rokibul Hasan scored 145 as Dhaka declared their first innings at 591 for four with a 452-run lead on the second day of their National Cricket League game. Dhaka began the day at 180 for no loss. The writing was on the wall for Barisal, who were bundled out for a meagre 139 runs in their first innings, and they will have to surmount a huge task when their

second innings begins today. During his nearly six-hour stay in the middle, Rony smashed 26 fours and three sixes, while Rokibul smote 12 fours and two sixes. The BKSP also witnessed a big score from veteran campaigner Tushar Imran who was not out on 177 runs before Khulna declared their first innings at 536 for 8, after resuming the day on 280 for four. Nurul Hasan contributed 115 in the run-riot. The day was more satisfying for Khulna as they picked up four Sylhet wickets, thanks to pacer Robiul Islam who took two wickets as Sylhet finished the day on 86 for 4. At Fatullah, the bowlers put Rangpur on top against Chittagong. Rangpur managed a notable 192-run first innings lead after Chittagong were bundled out for just 107 runs.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>BARISAL:</b> 139 all out in 50.3 overs	<b>DHAKA METRO:</b> 302 all out and 115 for 3 in 29.4 overs (Saykat 46, Mehedi 46; Saglain 3-47)
<b>DHAKA:</b> 591 for 4 declared in 128.4 overs (Abdul 76, Rony 227, Rokibul 145, Taiabur 85, Shuvagoto 40)	<b>RAJSHAHI:</b> 218 all out in 62.5 overs (Junaed 55, Zubair 54; Shohid 3-86, Sharifullah 3-84)
<b>KHULNA:</b> 536 for 8 declared in 156 overs (Amit 60, Imrul 63, Tushar 177 not out, Mithun 57, Nurul 115; Sadqur 3-108, Kapali 3-76)	<b>RANGPUR:</b> 269 all out in 112.5 overs (Irfaan 32; Shuvashis 3-37, Bishwant 2-1, Ariful 2-32)
<b>SYLHET:</b> 86 for 4 in 22 overs (Sayem 44, Enamul 23; Robiul 2-7)	<b>CHITTAGONG:</b> 107 all out in 59.3 overs (Irfaan 32; Shuvashis 3-37, Bishwant 2-1, Ariful 2-32)

Pacer Shuvashis Roy was the highest wicket-taker with three, but Bishwant Halder and Ariful Haque played their part too, taking two wickets each to initiate the Chittagong collapse. At another ground of BKSP, Dhaka Metro took control of the match after dismissing Rajshahi for 218 runs. Dhaka Metro managed an 84-run first innings lead and then finished the day on 115 for three in their second innings to take the overall lead to 199. Young paceman Mohammad Shohid and spinner Sharifullah claimed three wickets each to put Metro on top.

## Shakib haircut an instant hit

**SPORTS REPORTER**



Close to two hundred thousand facebook users by yesterday evening 'liked' Shakib Al Hasan's post where he sported his new haircut. The left-hander's Mohawk almost instantly created quite a stir on his official facebook page. While a majority of his followers appreciated the new look, a few others preferred his older hairstyle. "If we can copy Neymar, Ronaldo and Messi's hairstyles, why can't we copy his? He is our local icon after all," wrote Mahmud Hasan, a comment that received close to a hundred likes. Some fans even posted pictures of themselves with Mohawks on the comments section and proclaimed their support for the world's number one all-rounder.



"I already have a Mohawk and now I feel better about my haircut," said Ashfaque Chowdhury. Others hoped that the new hairstyle would bring the player and the team luck. "Hope the new haircut brings about a change in Bangladesh's fortunes in the World Cup. Go TIGERS!" wrote Tarikul Ahmed. With the World Cup around the corner, it remains to be seen as to whether Shakib's latest style will become a trend among the cricket fans of the country. The all-rounder joined the Bangladesh team in Brisbane yesterday. While the rest of the team attended a training camp in Dhaka, Shakib played four matches in the Big Bash League in Australia for the Melbourne Renegades.

## Low-key opening, colourful closing

*Malaysia team arrive today*

**SPORTS REPORTER**



Thursday's opening ceremony of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup international football tournament in Sylhet will be a low-key affair as the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is keeping the main attractions for the closing ceremony in Dhaka on February 8. The opening ceremony, which will be staged an hour prior to the kick-off between Bangladesh and Malaysia at the Sylhet District Stadium, will be officially inaugurated by the finance minister and the chairman of the tournament organising committee Abul Maal Abdul Muhith. The ceremony is likely to feature popular artists such as Mila Islam and Shuvro Dev as well as Manipuri dance by local performers, informed ceremonies committee chairman Shamsul Haque Chowdhury. There will also be fan fest on the Keane Bridge over Surma river on every match day in Sylhet while a giant screen is being installed on the bridge to air the matches. The Sylhet venue will host the first three group stage matches as well as the first semifinal. The BFF is planning a colourful closing ceremony at the Bangabandhu National Stadium where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be present as the chief guest. There will be a laser show projecting the

history of sports in Bangladesh and the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. There will also be song and dance shows followed by firecrackers which will bring an end to the 11 days of football festival, informed the ceremonies committee chairman. Meanwhile, the BFF yesterday officially introduced all the sponsors of the tournament before the media. There were representatives of presenting partner AB Bank, air partner Novo Air, beverage partner Muscan Water, head broadcaster Channel 9, official partners Ha-meem Group, National Bank, Madhumati Bank and Beximco Group. BFF president Kazi Salahuddin said he was pleased to see that such big corporate houses have come forward to sponsor the tournament, hoping that these sponsors will stick with the football's organising body in its future endeavours. The matches of the tournament will be telecast locally on Channel 9 and BTV World and through Fox Sports in different parts of the world. The production team will be coming from India. Meanwhile, Malaysia U-23 team will be the first team to arrive here for the tournament at 9:00am today and will leave for Sylhet at 12:00pm. The Bangladesh team, which will take on Malaysia in the opening match in Sylhet on January 29, already reached there yesterday afternoon.

## Rain keeps India alive

**CRICINFO, Sydney**

India got from the game the two points they needed to keep their chances of making the final alive on Monday after persistent rain ensured only 16 overs were bowled. Looking at the overcast skies and the tackiness underfoot, Australia's returning captain George Bailey put India in, and saw India struggle to 69 for 2 in 16 overs. Shikhar Dhawan clocked another failure, scoring 8 before gloving Mitchell Starc to first slip while trying to open the face of the bat. Ambati Rayudu didn't look at home batting at No.3, and top-edged Mitchell Marsh while coming down the track and slashing. India might have issues, but they stayed alive in the tournament. Had they lost they would have been left with the task of beating England by a bonus point and also correcting their net run-rate significantly in the final league match, to be played in Perth on Friday. India now have two points to England's five and Australia's 15. The India-England match is now a virtual semifinal.



The Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association, in association with Bangladesh Cricket Board, honoured legendary leg-spinner Ram Chand Gowala for his 30-year-long contribution to cricket. Here the octogenarian (L) receives a Tk 5 lakh cash award along with a crest from the State Minister for Youth and Sports Biren Sikder during the BSJA Awards Night (2009-2012) at the Ivy Rahman Swimming Pool adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium last night.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'Chokers' will come out as 'history-makers'



In a column written on the International Cricket Council's Media Zone, former South Africa captain Graeme Smith believed the current South Africa squad would have a new tag of 'the history-makers' associated with them. The word 'choke' is a term that has various connotations and also found significance within the sporting world. The history of professional sport is littered with teams and individuals that have failed to win a specific match or tournament in which they were heavily favoured, or thrown away a considerable lead or advantage to, ultimately, lose. "This term has shadowed the Proteas for the best part of two decades in the context of the ICC Cricket World Cup. It was spoken about when I made my debut and still about upon my retirement 12 years later." A popular adage in sports is to stress that the history annals only record the statistics of the respective match or tournament, and not the comments around it. However, that would be doing an injustice to the six games in which the Proteas were knocked out of the ICC Cricket World Cups in which they have competed. The history of the Proteas in the ICC Cricket World Cups is recorded in cricket folklore, not for the losses them-

selves, but for the context of the losses. There is a certain degree of pride that can be taken as a result of the fact that for 19 years the Proteas were able to maintain a consistent standard around, leading up to, and during the respective ICC Cricket World Cups that ensured they were always amongst the tournament favourites. It is in turn for this very reason that the losses were always magnified due to the fact that these normally went

and ensure that there is no repeat. But no plan in cricket is ever foolproof. I personally poured over our exits in the three tournaments in which I played wondering how the end result could have turned out differently. "I cannot deny that the Proteas have exited the ICC Cricket World Cups in bizarre circumstances (Sydney 1992, Birmingham 1999 and Durban 2003) but they have also been outplayed on the day in others (Karachi 1996, St. Lucia 2007 and Dhaka 2011). "At each of these ICC Cricket World Cups, the Proteas showed good form during the event. However, I cannot categorically say that we were without doubt the best team or would absolutely have gone on to win any of the tournaments if we had got through our knock-out game. We can only surmise as to what would have been. "Regardless of whether or not the chokers tag is justified, it is a label that the current Proteas side have to live with in preparation for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015. They have made peace with it given their history, but are resolute in their belief that they are on the verge of shedding this tag once and for all. "I know that the current squad are good enough to win this year's tournament and I expect that they will go deep. I am hoping that come March 29, this team will have a new tag of 'the history-makers'."



**GRAEME SMITH**

against the form book and bucked the trend that the team had set. "For three of these losses, I was either on the field or in the changing-room, and for the other three I can still recall exactly where I was as well when they occurred. "Every one of these losses has been dissected and analysed in order to try



That the sports stars of Bangladesh are catching up with the latest tech-trends is becoming more and more obvious each day. (L) Cricket stars Mominul Haque, Taijul Islam, Sabbir Rahman and Mushfiqur Rahim pose for selfies after landing in Brisbane ahead of the ICC World Cup while (R) back home at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, football stars Mamunul Islam and Zahid Hasan Emily capture a moment prior to boarding a flight for Sylhet ahead of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup. PHOTOS: COURTESY