

SPORT



England middle-order batsman Jonny Bairstow scored a composed 140 to help his team navigate muddy waters on the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka yesterday. The right-hander's 183-ball knock saw him smash 13 fours and a six. PHOTO: REUTERS

De Kruif cuts squad to 30

SPORTS REPORTER
Lodewijk de Kruif yesterday reduced the size of the preliminary squad for the Asian Cup qualifying play-offs to 30 from 36 by releasing five out of the six new faces after veteran defender Atiqur Rahman Meshu had ruled himself out of the camp due to an Achilles tendon injury. The five new faces being Nurul Absar, Mannaf Rabby, Saikat Rahman, Kowshik Barua and Khalekuzzaman Sobuz, were picked up on the basis of their performance in the Independence Cup, but have now been released as they failed to impress the Dutch. Only striker Syed Rased Ahmed Turzo, who is a new face too, is still with the squad. "De Kruif told them [the five omitted players] that they are promising players but still need to improve themselves for the national team. The coach believes those players can improve by playing in domestic competitions and if they perform well, they will be considered in the future," said national team manager Satyajit Das Rupu. The coach also had called up Sheikh Jamal's Sweden-based midfielder Joseph Noor Rahman for two training sessions, but the expatriate booter failed to impress the Dutchman as well. "The coach felt that Noor needs more time to get ready for the national team," Rupu said, adding that the coach also wanted a practice-match against UAE on their way to Tajikistan, who will host Bangladesh on June 2.

Fizz heroics go in vain

SPORTS REPORTER
Mustafizur Rahman's scintillating four overs went in vain as Sunrisers Hyderabad suffered a six-wicket defeat to the Delhi Daredevils in Raipur yesterday. Karun Nair top-scored for Delhi with an unbeaten 59-ball 83, smashing eight fours and three sixes. Mustafizur gave away just 24 runs in his four overs and put on a bowling master class during his last and the innings' 19th over. With Delhi requiring 16 from 12 and Carlos Brathwaite on strike, Fizz pulled out his patented cutter, which Brathwaite completely missed. The ball after, the West Indian slashed at another cutter which took a thick edge and Barinder Sran picked up a magical catch. By the end of the 19th over, Delhi needed 11 from six and Bhuvneshwar Kumar stepped up. His first four balls yielded five runs, but he was smashed for fours on his final two balls as Delhi just about scraped home. **SCORES IN BRIEF:** HYDERABAD: 158 for 7 in 20 overs (Warner 73, Brathwaite 2-27) DELHI: 161 for in 20 overs (Pant 32, Nair 83 not out; Mustafizur 1-24, Sran 2-34) **Result:** Delhi won by 6 wks. **Player-of-the-match:** K Nair.

Sri Lanka capitulate after Bairstow rescue act

AFP, Leeds
James Anderson recorded his best Test figures at Headingley as Sri Lanka were made to follow-on on the second day of the first Test against England on Friday. Sri Lanka were dismissed for just 91 in reply to England's first innings 298, a deficit of 207 runs. Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker, took five for 16 in 11.4 overs including a spell of four for one in 29 balls. That surpassed his previous Headingley best of three for 91, also against Sri Lanka, two years ago. New-ball partner Stuart Broad had figures of four for 21 in an innings that was completed inside 37 overs. Wicket-keeper Jonathan Bairstow held five catches after scoring 140 -- his first Test century in England -- on his Yorkshire home ground earlier Friday. Sri Lanka were one without loss off two balls in their second innings when bad light forced an early close. That single had come via a leg-bye, with Dimuth Karunaratne sweating on a pair overnight, and Kaushal Silva both nought not out. Broad, now the world's top-ranked Test bowler, made the initial breakthrough as forecasts that a Sri Lanka top order missing retired batting greats Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene would struggle in typically overcast English conditions proved all too accurate. Coming from round the wicket, Broad had

Karunaratne out for a duck as the left-hander edged an excellent delivery that nipped away to Bairstow. Silva was then caught behind off a sharply rising ball from Anderson for 11. Kusal Mendis, like Karunaratne, fell for a duck when he fell to the Broad/Bairstow combination. Sri Lanka were then 12 for three. Mathews defiantly cut Broad through point for four. But the all-rounder eventually fell lbw to Anderson, roared on by the crowd despite playing for Lancashire, Yorkshire's traditional rivals. His exit saw Anderson move past Indian Kapil Dev's tally of 434 Test wickets and into sixth place in the all-time list. Dusan Shanaka then fell for a golden duck, caught behind by Bairstow, to leave Anderson on a hat-trick. Rangana Herath blocked the next ball but he too fell to Anderson, with Ben Stokes holding a catch at fourth slip. Broad then dismissed Dushmutha Chameera and Thirimanne with the aid of diving low catches by Steven Finn at mid-off and mid-on to leave Sri Lanka 91 for nine. And that became 91 all out when Eranga was caught down the legside by Bairstow off Anderson. **SCORES IN BRIEF** ENGLAND: First innings 298 (Cook 16, Hales 86, Stokes 12, Bairstow 140, Finn 17; Chameera 3-64, Shanaka 3-46, Herath 2-25) SRI LANKA: First innings 91 all out (Mathews 34, Thirimanne 22; Anderson 5-16, Broad 4-21) SRI LANKA: Second innings 1-0 (Karunaratne 0 not out, Silva 0 not out)

Bangladesh can dream big

SPORTS REPORTER
Back-to-back success in the AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship has given Bangladesh a glimpse of hope in the immediate upper-tier tournament -- the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers -- as the girls from those two U-14 squads are set to be included in the Bangladesh U-16 women's team. The matches of Group C, which feature Iran, Chinese Taipei, Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Kyrgyzstan and Singapore, are likely to be held in Dhaka from August 27 to September 4. Winning the first-ever trophy of the AFC U-14 Girls' Regional championship in Nepal last year was not a fluke for Bangladesh as it was proved by their title defence in Tajikistan last month. The same group of girls can now dream big in the upcoming U-16 women's qualifiers. In this specific championship last year, Bangladesh had given teams like Iran and India a run for the money before finishing third in the five-team group. In the last edition in Dhaka, Bangladesh team, comprising mostly of players from the U-14 squad, beat Jordan 1-0 and UAE 6-0 but went down by 2-1 against India and eventual group champions Iran despite taking the lead against both teams. "The girls are now more matured compared to the last edition as those who are going to be included in the squad have played at least 15 international matches by now. I believe the girls will play better football this time," coach Golam Rabbani Choton said yesterday. Choton also added that the girls have high morale after winning back-to-back titles at the under-14 level. "The successive triumphs will play a big role in the minds of the girls towards performing better this time as their confidence level is high," Choton said. "I could have assured you of progression to the second round if Chinese Taipei were not drawn in our group. We did not watch Taipei, but from the information I have, I think they are as strong a team as North Korea. But we will fight strength for strength against Iran." Krishna Rani, Sanjida Khatun, Swapna, Moushimi, Sheuli Azim, Nargis, Josna and Ruma could not play in the 2016 AFC U-14 Girls' championship due to being over-aged, but they are set to join the likes of Marzia, Maria, Tohura, Monika, Nazma, Anai, Anuching, Akhi, Nazma for the under-16 team. One thing which might be of concern to the coach and team management is the fact that these girls have been out of action since the completion of the AFC U-14 Championship. "To be honest, we had a plan of keeping these girls in training, but we can't take a long-term plan for them due lack of accommodation facilities. It takes less money to run a training camp, but it is quite expensive to keep them at a hotel. We are trying to find a govt. accommodation facility," said BFF women's committee vice-chairman Mahfuza Akter, who also informed that they are going to start the U-16 team's camp by June 12.

Easy win for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER
Abahani maintained their winning spree in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a 3-1 win against Bangladesh SC at Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Rajib Das, Sheikh Mohammad Nannu and Mohammad Irfan scored a goal apiece for the Sky Blues while Shahbaz Ali scored the only goal for Bangladesh Boys. Abahani started the tournament crushing Railway by 14-0 goals and sealed their second win against Wari Club by 10-0 margin. In the day's other match, Ajax SC played out a 2-2 draw against Wanderers. Rahat Sarwar and Mohammad Rubel scored for Ajax while Sarwar Morshed and Al Nahiyon Shubho scored for Wanderers.



An Abahani player shields the ball away from opponents, Bangladesh Sports Club players, during their Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

My wife wouldn't let me skip CPL: Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER
Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, in an interview with the tournament's media, revealed that while he was very excited to be joining the Jamaica Tallawahs for his stint in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), one of the driving forces behind his decision to play has been his wife's love for the beautiful islands. "I enjoy it [the tournament] very much. And even if I didn't want to, my wife always wants me to play because we get to see all the Caribbean islands, which are beautiful!" Shakib said he had already visited several popular tourist destinations with his wife, and that the couple was looking forward more to the parties at Chris Gayle's house this time around. "I've already been to the landmarks, so I think this time we [my wife and I] will go to Chris's house and have parties there. Of course, there are parties everywhere you go to play, but the main focus will be on the pitch and how I perform." The 29-year-old was also asked how he felt about playing in a team with Chris Gayle and Kumar Sangakkara in it and his immediate response was that the interviewer had left out one of his friends. "I also have my teammate Andre Russel in it. I think we have a very good team, now we need to just perform and play as a team and win games. So far it has been great. The first year I played was really good and I'm looking forward to this edition."



A kaleidoscope of performers

SPORTS REPORTER
Khaled Mahmud is vastly respected for his shrewdness when it comes to any domestic competition. That's why Abahani, one of the country's most popular clubs, hired him as their coach this season as they bid to regain glory in the country's most coveted 50-over domestic competition -- the Dhaka Premier League. However, things are not going according to expectations so far, especially as their sordid performances have put their Super League berth at risk. Interestingly, while Abahani have been struggling under a high-profile coach, their traditional rivals, Mohammedan, are top of the table after the completion of the seventh round under the guidance of little-known coach Sohel Islam. This aspect is only a whiff of the league's fragrance which has many more scents as it enters a short break after the seventh round and is scheduled to resume on May 24. Understandably, former national skipper Mahmud -- who is also a director of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) -- was the most disappointed man. While the former all-rounder pointed to his players' lack of commitment behind the team's poor showing, he was lavish in praise of the dedication from the other teams. "I am really disappointed. I must say there was a lack of commitment from my players. On paper we are still a good team but so far we could not show that in the middle. The shortage of good players on the bench seemingly gave my players the wrong signal," said a frustrated Mahmud. However, he was impressed by the quality of the competition. "If I put aside my team's performance, I must remark what a league it has been so far! The competitiveness is very high. Young players have been showing their character, as have national and some other senior players. Everybody looks hungry to perform." When so much has happened before the halfway point of a competition, it is bound to charm everybody. So far there has been no shortage of excitement in the ongoing league. What could be more captivating than when

POINTS TABLE					
Teams	Mat	W	L	T	Pts
Mohammedan	7	5	2	0	10
Prime Dolshwar	7	5	2	0	10
Victoria	7	4	2	1	9
Rupganj	7	4	2	1	9
Gazi Group	7	4	3	0	8
Prime Bank	7	4	3	0	8
Brothers Union	7	4	3	0	8
Sk Jamal	7	4	3	0	8
Abahani	7	3	4	0	6
Kalabagan KC	7	2	5	0	4
Cricket Coaching	7	1	6	0	2
Kalabagan CA	7	1	6	0	2

beloved Mashrafe Bin Mortaza hits the fastest hundred, a pace bowler like Mohammad Sharif scalps the first hattrick, young cricketers show their mettle to lead their teams to wins or when seasoned cricketers who might no longer be favoured in international cricket prove their vitality in the domestic circuit? National cricketers have been performing but some proven domestic performers and upcoming cricketers have not allowed them to dominate the league. One Mahmudul Hasan scored a hundred to give his side, Kalabagan Cricket Academy, their first win against giants Abahani. A 22-year old right-handed batsman, Al-Amin, contributed heavily to help Victoria Sporting Club at number three. A forgotten Mahbubul Karim reignited himself with a hundred after a five-year break. A seasoned campaigner like Tuskar Imran showed that he was not yet finished in domestic competitions. Imtiaz Hossain overshadowed the big stars by smashing two hundred to secure the second spot behind Hamilton Masakadza in the batting charts. There are more examples of stellar performances from other cricketers. For a change, spinners were not completely dictating the terms rather pacers were also making their mark on good batting tracks. And most importantly no team can take the field with the notion of taking a win for granted which has augmented the competitiveness of the tournament.

Windies trio lash out at WICB

AGENCIES, Kingstown
West Indies cricket stars Dwayne Bravo, Chris Gayle and Darren Sammy have taken potshots at the WICB after their exclusions saw the return of Kieron Pollard and Sunil Narine for the tri-series against Australia and South Africa. "Joke of the day: WI selectors?? One minute Pollard & Narine were not good enough & now are perfect for Tri-Nation series? It's like magic!" Bravo wrote on Twitter. "One minute we have to be available for domestic super 50 to be selected and the next minute, it seems we don't. Magic! Get serious people!" he wrote in another tweet. In a series of tweets and retweets, Gayle and Sammy also hit out at the selectors for ignoring them. "@KieronPollard55 & #SunilNarine selected for Tri-Series. How is that possible @westindies?" asked Gayle. "WICB stop Sunil from playing super 50 and now they pick him. If @KieronPollard55 was fit he would've played the B Bash just like the rest of us!!" Gayle again tweeted. Sammy, while congratulating Pollard, asked him how he had managed a comeback. "@KieronPollard55 great to see u back in odi team but tell me how did u qualify for selection having not played the super50 or ODI since 2014."