



Dhaka Division batsman Raqibul Hasan (L) and Dhaka Metro all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad practise at the BCB Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday ahead of the upcoming National Cricket League, set to begin on October 10.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## 'BCB working to start BPL on time'

SPORTS REPORTER



Less than a week after he had voiced doubts about the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) starting on December 6 as originally scheduled, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) media committee chairman Jalal Yunus yesterday expressed optimism about the T20 tournament starting on time.

"As I said before, we have a strong intention to start the special BPL on December 6. The BCB is already working, involving the CEO and different managers of the board, on maintaining the schedule. They are at the moment doing the homework. Soon, the plans will be set and we will sit with the companies that have shown interest to be team sponsors," Jalal told reporters yesterday.

The BCB had floated a notice seeking team sponsors on September 17 with a submission deadline set for September 22. The board have so far received six Expression of Interest (EOI) applications from parties wanting to sponsor teams in the upcoming edition.

The upcoming edition of the BPL -- which will be different from previous editions as it will not involve any franchises -- will be dedicated to father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

to mark his 100th birth anniversary. Jalal said that behind-the-scenes operations or player selections of this season, the seventh, will be carried forward to the next season and that the interested sponsors will be involved for this season only.

However, he added that the format of the tournament will be similar to previous editions, with each team allowed to field four overseas players in the playing eleven.

"The format will be similar to those we have seen in the last few editions of the tournament. Four overseas players will be allowed to be fielded. There are a few overseas cricketers that were signed with the franchises [who are not part of the tournament this time] and we can offer them places in this edition if they are free," he said.

Meanwhile, chairman of the BPL governing council (GC) Sheikh Sohel and member secretary Ismail Haider Mallick has not been seen at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur recently, and Jalal informed that they are out of the country for personal reasons and that their unavailability shall not affect preparations for the tournament.

According to Jalal, BCB president Nazmul Hassan has taken charge of organising the tournament and the board will come to a decision within a week after the various tournament paperwork is completed.



JALAL YUNUS

## BD A draw 4-day series

SPORTS REPORTER

The two-match four-day series between Bangladesh A and their Sri Lankan counterparts was drawn after the second unofficial test between the two sides ended in a stalemate at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Stadium in Hambantota yesterday.

Sri Lanka, who started the day on 126 without loss in their second innings and a 64-run lead, reached 357 for two in 107 overs at the close. Overnight batsman Pathum Nissanka missed out on a double ton, when he was run out after scoring a magnificent 307-ball 192 that was laced with 20 boundaries and a solitary six. The other wicket that fell was that of Sangeeth Cooray when the left-hander was caught behind off a Rishad Hossain delivery in the 63rd over, ending a 219-run opening stand with Nissanka.

Kamindu Mendis (67) and skipper Ashan Priyanjan (5) remained unbeaten as the match ended in a draw.

Bangladesh A were all out for 330 in their only innings.

## Sri Lanka seal series

AFP, Lahore

Sri Lanka beat Pakistan by 35 runs to win the second Twenty20 international in Lahore on Monday, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Bhanuka Rajapaksa struck an aggressive maiden international half-century as Sri Lanka made 182-6 before spinner Wanindu Hasaranga took 3-38 to help bowl Pakistan out for 147 in 19 overs.

Rajapaksa blasted 77 off 48 balls in an innings featuring six sixes and four fours after Sri Lanka won the toss and batted first.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
SRI LANKA: 182 for 6 (Rajapaksa 77, Jayasuriya 34, Shanaka 27 not out; Wasim 1-27, Riaz 1-31)

PAKISTAN: 147 all out in 19 overs (Sarfraz 26, Asif 29, Wasim 47; Pradeep 4-25, Udana 2-38, De Silva 3-38)

**Result:** Sri Lanka won by 35 runs and lead the 3-match series 2-0.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Bhanuka Rajapaksa.

## Extra security for Qatar team

SPORTS REPORTER



Qatar national team will be provided extra security protocol during their stay in Dhaka as the reigning Asian champions are scheduled to arrive here in the early hours of Wednesday for their World Cup Qualifying match against Bangladesh on Thursday.

Of the 57-member Qatari contingent, two officials already landed in Dhaka yesterday and they are scheduled to sit with Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) officials today to discuss details of the tour.

"Qatar do not have many requirements like we faced during Australia's tour of Bangladesh in the last edition of the World Cup Qualifiers, but they wanted business class Mercedes buses, two SUVs, one luggage-carrier van etc," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said. "We have already discussed with Dhaka Metropolitan Police, who will provide extra security protocol to the Qatar team."

Shohag informed that they are getting good response from spectators regarding ticket sales.

The Qatar team will have only one training session at the match venue on Wednesday ahead of Thursday's match before leaving Bangladesh on Friday morning.

Qatar coach Felix Sanchez has brought five changes to his squad from their goalless draw against India.

Bangladesh goalkeeper Ashraful Islam Rana is, meanwhile, taking inspiration from the performance of India goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh.

"Qatar is a strong team and it is tough to play against them. India goalkeeper played really well against Qatar and I believe we can also perform well if I am given the opportunity," said Rana.

## Rajshahi to open against Dhaka Div

SPORTS REPORTER



Even before the start of the 21st edition of the country's oldest four-day domestic competition, the National Cricket League (NCL), has already created more excitement in the cricket fraternity than many previous editions.

With the intention of increasing the standard of cricket, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) raised the bar for fitness requirements -- a leap from last year's nine to 11 in the beep test -- that players have to meet to be allowed to participate. The board has also talked about taking a sterner stance on the participation of national players in the domestic league this year.

With all the buzz surrounding the competition, the BCB announced the fixtures of



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) unveiled Walton as the official sponsor of the 21st edition of the National Cricket League in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

### ROUND-1 FIXTURES

DATE	MATCH	VENUE
Oct 10-13	Rajshahi v Dhaka	KSOAS
	Rangpur v Khulna	SANS
	Barishal v Sylhet	SKS
	Dhaka Metro v Chattogram	SBNCS

Tier-I Teams	Tier-II Teams
Khulna Division	Barishal Division
Rangpur Division	Dhaka Metro
Rajshahi Division	Sylhet Division
Dhaka Division	Chattogram Division

the NCL, set to begin from October 10, during a press briefing in Mirpur yesterday. The league will kick off with the first round pitting defending champions Rajshahi Division against Dhaka Division in Fatullah; Rangpur battling it out against Khulna at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna; Barishal face Sylhet in Rajshahi and Dhaka Metro taking on Chattogram in the port city.

Mominul Haque was the only captain to be named so far and he will lead Chattogram, which is also Tamim Iqbal's hometown. Tamim will be playing the NCL this season but he preferred not to be given the leadership role.

The eight teams will be divided in two tiers with each tier featuring a double league system. The team obtaining the highest point in Tier-1 will be crowned champions while the fourth-placed Tier-1 team will be relegated to Tier-2 for next season. The top-placed Tier-2 side will be promoted to Tier-1.

Although the BCB had mentioned the possibility of increasing match fees in this edition, it will remain the same with Tier-1 players earning Tk 35,000 per match and Tier-2 players netting Tk 25,000 per game. The travel allowance (Tk 1,500) and daily allowance (Tk 2,500) will also remain the same.

## Nkwe seeking the Guardiola touch for Proteas

AFP, Visakhapatnam



Cricket coach Enoch Nkwe wants to channel the philosophy of title-laden football manager Pep Guardiola to turn the suffering South African side into a winning force.

Following India's 203-run mauling of his team in the first Test on Sunday, captain Faf du Plessis and Nkwe pleaded for patience as the squad rebuilds after Dale Steyn's and Hashim Amla's retirement.

Nkwe, 36, said he wants to see South Africa follow Guardiola's innovative style and produce a brave team -- but he warned it would take time.

"What I want is this team to have the courage, in certain situations, to really back themselves," he said.

"I suppose that every coach that comes in has a different philosophy."

Nkwe has only an interim contract with South Africa so far, and was appointed for the Indian tour.

He caught the attention of the South African public and national federation after making a spectacular start as a coach, winning the four-day and T20 titles with the



ENOCH NKWE

Highveld Lions in one year. Nkwe said South Africa must "be able to control sessions a lot longer with both bat or ball."

"But also be a lot smarter and be very innovative in certain situations."

He said he was looking forward to how his team recovers from the past setbacks, and responds to each match.

The team put up a spirited fight before Mohammed Shami's 5-35 on the final day dealt a

devastating blow to the tourists in Visakhapatnam.

Opening batsman Dean Elgar stood out with his 160 in South Africa's first innings score of 431.

Nkwe said Guardiola has a knack of improving systems, and admires his total passion for football -- something that resonated with his love for cricket.

"I feel I have so much to offer to the game, especially back in our country."

### INDIA CHALLENGE

Nkwe's dream was to make a difference in people's lives, he said, and feels now he can.

"I will keep driving forward to ensure that the team keeps growing, keeps believing in themselves that they can achieve greater heights."

Nkwe, who played only 42 first class games in the South African provinces before injury cut short his career, said the challenge of touring India will define the team's character in the coming years.

"My biggest focus is to help this team create a strong foundation. We have lot of work behind the scenes [so] that this team grows in the next four years," he said.

"Ultimately it's about the big picture and we need to be patient with players that might take a bit of time to produce the type of performances we are looking forward to."

"And this is a great place to see that. What sort of character of the team we have and what sort of areas we need to really look at and look to rectify as quickly as possible."

With the second Test starting in Pune on Thursday, Nkwe has some quick thinking to do to start lifting his team.

## PLAYERS' TRANSFER WINDOW MSC, Arambagh appeal for deferral

SPORTS REPORTER



Casino-scandal-hit Mohammedan SC and Arambagh KS have requested to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to extend the timeframe of the ongoing players' transfers for the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League on financial grounds.

The window of the players' transfers, which opened on October 1, is scheduled to come to an end on November 20.

Mohammedan asked the BFF to extend it till December 31 while Arambagh requested to extend it for three months on the backdrop of RAB's raid on casinos at the two clubs last month. Mohammedan's director-in-charge of Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan has been under arrest in casino connection while Arambagh president AKM Mominul Haque Shaheed is currently in Singapore.

"It is not possible for the club to take part in players' transfers by paying remuneration of the players in current situation of the clubs and we request to extend it to December 31," read a Mohammedan letter to the BFF signed by the club's director Sarwar Hossain. The club submitted the letter on October 6.

"We can't operate the club, which has been under lock and key since September 18. Besides, the club is in financial trouble. In these circumstances, if the transfer window is not extended for three months, it will not be possible for the club to take part in it," read an Arambagh application signed by its general secretary Yakub Ali. It was sent to BFF on October 5.

BFF's competitions manager Zaber Bin Taher Ansari said that they have already informed professional league committee chairman Abdus Salam Mursheedy about the issue and a meeting will take a decision on it.