

Selectors on a spot of bother

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The recent allegations in the media against a national selector regarding a sponsorship deal dominated the discussion in a working committee meeting of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

The controversial issue was placed in the meeting at BCB's corporate office in Gulshan after it was disclosed that a selector 'brokered the deal' between Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar and ace batsman Mohammad Ashraful with the renowned sports-gear company Reebok, who offered a lucrative package to the players for displaying the sponsors logo in their bat and clothing.

The selector in question Athar Ali, a former national opener, however completely denied his involvement in this deal. It was learnt that Athar sent a letter to the meeting, which was conducted by BCB president Ali Asghar, explaining his position where he dismissed the allegation saying that the two

cricketers had direct negotiation with the company.

Athar, a local agent of the American-based company, came under fire after it was leaked that both Bashar and Ashraful signed an agreement with Reebok.

BCB joint-secretary Rafiqul Islam Babu said that they have taken the matter seriously but have decided to wait until the return of general secretary Mahbubul Anam, who is also the chairman of the cricket committee.

"We discussed the matter in the meeting because the allegation is serious. But since the cricket committee is actually dealing with the issues involving cricketers, we need a report committee itself so that we can look into the matter properly. And we will definitely act if anyone breaches the job bindings," said Babu.

He also hinted that the board will request the cricket committee to clear some of the other issues that were raised against the selectors.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed is also running a sport-goods shop and there was a whispering that his outlet 'indirectly' involved in supplying cricket accessories to the board.

The selectors are paid handsomely, nearly one lakh taka per month, by the board to ensure their professionalism and accountability to the job.

Babu, who acted as acting general secretary in the long absence of Mahbub, informed that the working committee has decided to hold the next board meeting on August 20.

"In the marathon meeting we discussed the financial matters the most.

The committee has decided to start the renovation work of the indoor facilities at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium from September next to set up the BCB Academy," said Khondkar Jamiluddin, member of the committee.



PHOTO: STAR

WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD: Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar (L) greets newcomer Sakib Al Hassan (R) as the other new boy Forhad Reza looks on prior to leaving for Harare at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

Saiful bails out DU

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

A 33-minute strike by Saiful Islam saved the blushes of title contenders Dhaka University from a bigger win and it was Saiful who separated the two sides when the midfielder placed in a freekick by Monwar.

National rightback Hassan Al Mamun, still nursing an injury, had to watch the match from the sideline but his national teammates Parvez Babu and Abu Faisal were available for DU, who play Islamic University, Kushtia tomorrow.

Both teams are on the top of the table after Islamic University's solitary goal victory against Jahangirnagar University in the group opener earlier yesterday.

Milon slotted the match winner

just two minutes after kickoff. While all the qualifying matches are being played on knockout basis, the Education and Services zone matches are played in league basis.

The Services zone qualifiers will start today, also at the Army Stadium.

Meanwhile, 10-man Manikganj moved to the zonal semifinal at Padma zone beating Gopalganj 1-0 at the Shariatpur Stadium.

Wahidur Rahman struck the lone goal in the 71st minute but Manikganj were reduced to ten men two minutes later when their goalkeeper Moshirul Rahman was sent off.

At the Magura Stadium, Ohidul and Ujjal scored either side of the break to help Jhenaidah set a zonal

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PHOTO: STAR
Dhaka University and BKSP players are in action during the Jubok Phone National Football Championship education zone match at the Army Stadium yesterday.

Zim off to short SA trip

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

A 16-member Zimbabwe squad left for South Africa to prepare for the upcoming five-match series against Bangladesh that gets underway next Saturday.

The side is captained by off-spinner Prosper Utseya and contains four players who are yet to represent the country on the international scene -- left-hand batsman Friday Kasteni, opening bat Tintondera Mawoyo, wicketkeeper Batudzwa Mufambis and pace bowler Admire Manyuruwa.

Zimbabwe will play against the South African Academy and Highveld Lions with all the matches set for the High Performance Centre in Pretoria.

The team returns home next Thursday, just two days before the start of series against the Bangladeshi Tigers. All those matches will be held at the Harare

Sports Club.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) has been fined Zim\$130 million (£700) after using an offshore account to pay for the purchase of cricket balls from Pakistan.

A magistrate's court in Harare was told that the board paid £12,000 to Isham Sports in breach of the country's Exchange Control Regulations.

The board pleaded guilty to the charge. In its defence, it was pointed out that the balls were used for the good of the sport in Zimbabwe.

The existence of external accounts -- the main one is believed to be with Barclays in London -- has long been a controversial subject, with critics of the board questioning funds diverted to it. Its use is also, as evidenced here, in breach of the country's own laws unless transactions are authorised by the central bank.

Peter Chingoka, one of the ZC signatories and the board's chairman, signed the cheque, the Herald newspaper reported.

CTC prepares 226-man list for SA Games

SPORTS REPORTER

The coaching and training committee (CTC) of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has submitted a 226-member list for the Bangladesh contingent for next month's SA Games in Colombo.

The BOA president Lt Gen Moen U Ahmed will take the final decision after having discussions with the respective federations presidents and general secretaries. BOA's CEO Col (ret) Mohammed Waliullah informed reporters yesterday.

The number of football (24), hockey (22), shooting (10) and volleyball (12) team members will not be changed, he said.

However, it is expected that the members of the contingent would be reduced in other disciplines. The athletes' current and best performances and the Games records in respective disciplines would be considered before the final selection.

Bangladesh will take part in 17 disciplines and the women's kabaddi team, judo, squash and archery will send their participants at their own cost.

The government will bear the cost of 186 athletes, the CEO added.

Jamie steps in for Freddie

Cricket

AFP, London

Uncapped spinner Jamie Dalrymple was added to England's squad for the second Test against Pakistan at Old Trafford on Thursday as the side faced up to life without star all-rounder Andrew Flintoff.

The six players dropped from the 24-member squad are Mahbubul Shakil, Mustafizur Rahman, Dinar, Merajul Ahsan, Asif-e-Noor, Mosharraf Hossain and Zahid Bin Talib.

The four-team hockey competition also involving India, Pakistan and hosts Sri Lanka will be held in hill town Matala from August 21-25.

Bangladesh won bronze in 1995 in Madras, the only previous time hockey was held in the then SA Games.

SQUAD

Rasel Khan Bappi, Zahid Hossain, Issa Mia, Mashirul Rahman Biplab, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Shamsuddin Tuhin, Yamin Hossain, Hedayatul Islam Rajib, Musa Mia, Shahidullah Titu, Ashiquzzaman, Mahbub Ehsan Rana, Khondokar Hassan Ahmed, Russel Mahmud Jimmy, Zahidul Islam Rajan, Mazharul Islam Moksed, Maksud Alam Habul, Ariful Haque Prince.

Officials: Abul Kalam Azad (team leader), Ali Imam Tapan (manager), Jashimuddin Ahmed Kanchan, Jamal Haider (coach), Barkat Ullah (assistant coach), Maksudur Rahman (judge), Aslam Balim (umpire).

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PHOTO: STAR
THIS IS YOUR FUTURE: Simmi (L) makes a move against Tania Parvin as GM Ziaur Rahman with his five-month old daughter Tazwar looks on during the Premier Bank Women's first FIDE Rating Chess tournament at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hallroom yesterday.

Tigers off to Zimbabwe

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team left Dhaka yesterday morning to play a five-match one-day series against Zimbabwe.

Habibul Bashar's men had an eight-hour stopover in Doha on their way to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, where they are expected to reach today.

The Tigers will launch their campaign with a limited-overs warm-up match against Zimbabwe on July 26.

They will play all the matches at the Harare Sports Club ground on July 29, 30, August 2, 4 and 6.

Bangladesh team will depart Zimbabwe on August 7 for Kenya where they will be involved in a three-match one-day series against the ICC associate members.

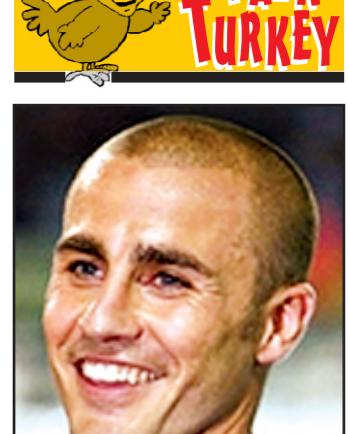
Rani shares lead with four others

SPORTS REPORTER

International Women's Master Rani Hamid shared the lead along with four other players after the end of the second round of the Prime Bank First Women's FIDE Rating Chess Tournament yesterday.

Rani secured maximum two points beating Masuda Begum

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Fabio Cannavaro

(Italy's World Cup winning captain) "Real (Madrid) are the type of club where you are expected to win every game. For a player who wants to be the best it is stimulating to feel the pressure to defend their interests."