

## NCL squads declared

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday announced the provisional squads of the six divisional sides that will play in the upcoming National Cricket League.

The season's curtain-raiser tournament begins on October 10 and will be played under the same format as previous seasons.

The notable absentees are obviously the fourteen cricketers who signed up with the unofficial Indian Cricket League (ICL), which incidentally will also start on the same day.

Defending first-class champions Khulna are without their captain Habibul Bashar and stalwart medium-pacer Monjurul Islam while last year's runners-up Rajshahi will only miss all-rounder Forhad Reza. Tushar Imran is likely to take up full-time captaincy duties this year while Monjurul's place would probably be contested by the likes of pacemen Mahmuduzzaman and Rabiul Islam.

Chittagong are the hardest hit with four cricketers -- Aftab Ahmed, Dhiman Ghosh, Mahbubul Karim and Nazimuddin -- having defected to the ICL. The national selectors have called up Partex's captain Tareq Ahmed and a place in the Chittagong side was also made available to Dhaka's Marshall Ayub, who missed last season to a knee injury.

Dhaka will be without left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique and his heir apparent Mosharraf Hossain while Mohammad Sharif will be replaced by Mohammad Azim but to find replacements for the two left-armers turned out to be almost impossible.

Barisal's captaincy might go to Hannan Sarkar as Shahriar Nafees is now with ICL and last season's bottom-placed side Sylhet are without batsman Alok Kapali, wicketkeeper Golam Mabud and paceman Tapash Baisya.

Likely replacements for the three  
**SEE PAGE 18 COL 2**



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan striker Robin races past Arambagh defender Akram (L) during their B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## MSC back with a bang

SPORTS REPORTER



A first minute goal by Nasir Hossain inspired Mohammedan Sporting Club to dump Arambagh 3-0 in the second round of the Citycell B. League yesterday.

After the opening round's dull 1-1 draw against Chittagong Abahani, league runners-up Mohammedan produced a much better display on a rain-soaked pitch and could have had won by a bigger margin.

But Alamu Bukola failed to add to Hedayetullah Robin and Arman Aziz's goals as the Nigerian missed a second half penalty at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Mohammedan were playing in

their second choice green strip but the organisers should have not allowed such a shirt as numbers were printed in black on dark surface, giving the spectators no chance to read from afar.

However, even before the players' jerseys got smeared, Mohammedan were leading 1-0 when Nasir scored his maiden professional league goal in only the second appearance.

Faisal Mahmud chipped in the ball from the left and Robin's smashing volley deflected off a defender to Nasir who pushed home from close.

Mohammedan coach Maruf Ahmed, who seemed to be a bit confused about a starting line-up even after seven matches including six in the Federation Cup, once again tried a new combination and it proved fruitful against

Arambagh, who were playing their first match after getting a bye in the first round.

Arman Aziz, who missed the first game due to injury, got the armband in absence of captain Jewel Rana and Maruf for the first time this season, used a flat-four backline instead of five.

The four-man midfield, featuring Faisal Mahmud at left and fullback Nasir at the right flank, won almost everything and they provided another chance in the 13th minute for Robin to finish.

After Egyptian midfielder Hazem Khaled tested rival goalkeeper Piru from long range, Bukola's defence splitting through picked up fellow striker Robin, who dodged Akram before drilling in a low drive to double the lead.

Robin and Rajani failed to make  
**SEE PAGE 18 COL 6**

## Rebels fail to show up

BCB receives ICC, BCCI boost

**Cricket**

SPORTS REPORTER

A day after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) slapped 10-year ban each on 13 rebel cricketers, speculation was ripe that the shocked players would meet the board high-ups.

But the banned cricketers were nowhere to be seen at the board headquarters in the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday following a hard line stance by the country's cricket authority.

According to a board official, the cricketers who joined the banned Indian Cricket League (ICL) must withdraw the resignation letters they submitted on Sunday before they can sit with the board officials.

In addition, the rebel cricketers must also be released from their

ICL contracts, something that they signed in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The unaffiliated cricket organisers launched the 'Dhaka Warriors' team with Bashar, Alok Kapali, Shahriar Nafees and Dhiman Ghosh brandishing swords in a ceremony held in the Indian capital.

Upon their return to Dhaka on Wednesday, Bashar was shocked by the 10-year ban that the board had imposed on them, and confirmed that they would sit with the board officials to decide their 'next course of action and explain everything'.

But BCB's stance on the entire matter remained strict and they received a further boost when the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) backed their move to ban the players.

"Our position is that at the moment ICL is still unofficial cricket," an ICC spokesman told

AFF from the governing body's headquarters in Dubai.

The BCCI said it will play help out Bangladesh cricket by including a team in the 2010 edition of the Champions Twenty20 League and include more Bangladeshi cricketers in the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL).

BCCI vice-president Lalit Modi, who also heads both these tournaments, told Cricinfo: "We will definitely play an active role in helping them out. We are looking at adding a few of their (Bangladesh) players for the next IPL auction and we are also looking at a team from Bangladesh participating in the Champions League from 2010 onwards."

The next IPL auction is tentatively scheduled for January 29, about two months before the second season begins on April 10.

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak

is the only Bangladesh player currently in the IPL and Bangalore Royal Challengers signed him up for US\$50,000.

Although national boards don't get a share of IPL's revenues, they will receive a significant sum for participating in the Champions League, along with a separate participation fee for the domestic Twenty20 teams that are invited. The Champions League is hoping to expand from eight teams this year to 12 in 2009.

The ICC, meanwhile, said that any discussion on Bangladesh's Test future will have to be within the committee it had formed in July on unofficial cricket. "Any decision on this will be taken at the ICC board meeting and it will be the working party that will decide on such an issue," an ICC spokesperson told CricInfo.

**SEE PAGE 18 COL 1**

## Mendis resists Academy

CRICINFO, undated

The result of the four-day match between Bangladesh Cricket Board Academy and Sri Lanka Cricket Development XI at the Premadasa Stadium will hinge on how long the hosts' lower-middle order can resist the Bangladesh Academy attack on the final day.

Sri Lanka Academy XI were reduced on 212-5 on the third day, after wiping out a first-innings deficit of 69, with a 143-run lead in the second innings.

SLC Development XI's situation was dire in the second innings after they lost their first four wickets for 82, effectively leaving them 13 for 4.

They were rescued by a 125-run stand for the fifth wicket, between Jeewan Mendis and Nadeera Nawela, which spanned nearly 53 overs.

Nawela played 148 balls for his 50 while Mendis remained unbeaten  
**SEE PAGE 18 COL 8**

## Tigers still worry Vettori

**Cricket**

CRICINFO, undated

Daniel Vettori says New Zealand's upcoming tour of Bangladesh will be difficult, despite 13 of Bangladesh's leading players walking out on their national team to join the Indian Cricket League (ICL).

New Zealand depart in a fortnight for a trip that will include two Tests and three one-day internationals and their captain Vettori said he was still wary of a potential upset.

"The expectations are on us to win and that's fair enough," Vettori told the New Zealand Herald.

"But Bangladesh can be a tricky country to tour."

On New Zealand's only other Test tour of Bangladesh, in 2004-05, they wrapped up innings victories in both matches. However, Vettori said it was worth remembering that less than two years later



DANIEL VETTORI

Bangladesh nearly beat Australia in a Test in Fatullah.

He also noted that while the hosts have lost several batsmen to the new ICL team the Dhaka Warriors, their bowling attack had not been greatly affected.

But the departures of key players including Aftab Ahmed, Shahriar Nafees and Dhiman Ghosh will weaken a team that has already struggled in the Test arena. Bangladesh have won only one of their 53 Tests but Vettori said it was important the stronger teams continued to schedule series against Bangladesh to help them improve.

"You look at history and how long it took New Zealand to start to perform consistently, and countries like Sri Lanka," he said. "You have to give Bangladesh due respect. I'm not going to sit here and say they're not good enough. They need to be given opportunities to try and progress."

New Zealand's batsmen meet in Christchurch next week for a training camp while the bowlers with gather in Auckland ahead of the tour.

The first one-day international is in Dhaka on October 9, while the Test series begins in Chittagong on October 17.

## Momin hat trick sinks Prantik

SPORTS REPORTER

Momin's hat trick guided Sadharan Bima to a 3-2 win over Prantik in the Second Division Football League at the Army Stadium in Banani yesterday.

Sadharan Bima were cruising 3-0 in front after Momin's hat trick, scored in the 10th, 67th and 69th minute before Sagar and Ferdous added two in the space of four minutes later in the second half.

In another match, T&T Club edged past Gazirchot by a solitary goal at the Kamalapur Stadium. Jewel scored the all-important goal for the winners in the 19th minute.

In the other match at the same venue, Basabo defeated Bangladesh Boys by a lone goal scored by Tariq in the 29th minute.

## Sagar takes solo lead

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE Master Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar took solo lead in the Destiny 2000 3rd Open FIDE Rating chess tournament after the sixth round yesterday.

Sagar defeated Debaraj Chatterjee at the Chess Federation hall-room to  
**SEE PAGE 18 COL 5**

## Dull draw for champions

AFP, Paris



Manchester United began their European Champions League title defence with a damp squib Wednesday as wily Spaniards Villarreal held them 0-0 at Old Trafford, while Arsenal and Celtic also drew.

United similarly failed to batter down the same rivals - nicknamed the yellow submarine - home and away three seasons ago - and subsequently saw their group hopes embarrassingly sink without trace.

Celtic took a leaf out of United's book as they could only manage another scoreless showing against Danish minnows Aalborg, coached by Scot Bruce Rioch, at Parkhead.

United fans welcomed back Cristiano Ronaldo into the fold after injury despite his overtures in the direction of Real Madrid for much of the summer - but the Portugal winger was unable to oblige with a match-winning contribution after rising from the bench.

United had won their previous 12 home matches in the tournament going back to Villarreal's last

visit - but Ronaldo, who netted 42 times last season including in the final win over Chelsea, and company drew a blank.

Jonny Evans hit the woodwork late on from a Ronaldo cross but United must now ensure they move swiftly on by collecting full points in Denmark in two week's time.

Manager Sir Alex Ferguson, who says ten points should mean passage to the last 16, said he believed the Ronaldo saga was now resolved.

"He now realises what a great club he is at and how loyal and supportive the fans are to him," said Ferguson, who added of the result: "I've no complaints. On another day we might have scored four or five."

But the experience of 2005, when a loss to Benfica ended United's interest early, will serve as a timely reminder not to count chickens ahead of a double-header with Celtic, who actually beat the English Premiership champions in a group match in 2006 in Glasgow.

United were still aggrieved after Wednesday's action given that television replays suggested they should have had a penalty for

Sebastian Eguen's trip on Park Ji-Sung just inside the box.

Aalborg meanwhile frustrated the Celts, who missed a first-half penalty when Barry Robson saw his effort saved.

The visitors' Michael Beauchamp was wrongly red-carded in a case of mistaken identity for a foul on Georgios Samaras, but Aalborg held on for a precious away point.

Arsenal needed a late William Gallas equaliser to salvage a 1-1 draw against Dynamo Kiev in their Group G opener but at least Arsene Wenger's side ended a three-match losing run in Ukraine.

Defeat loomed again after Guinea striker Ismael Bangoura stroked home a second half penalty at the Valeri Lobanovsky Stadium but skipper Gallas struck from close range two minutes from time.

"A point isn't bad but we feel we could do better and could have taken the three points," Gallas said.

Group rivals and two-time champions Porto saw off Turkey's Fenerbahce 3-1 after early goals from Lisandro Lopez, with a fine volley, and Lucho Gonzalez had put  
**SEE PAGE 18 COL 1**

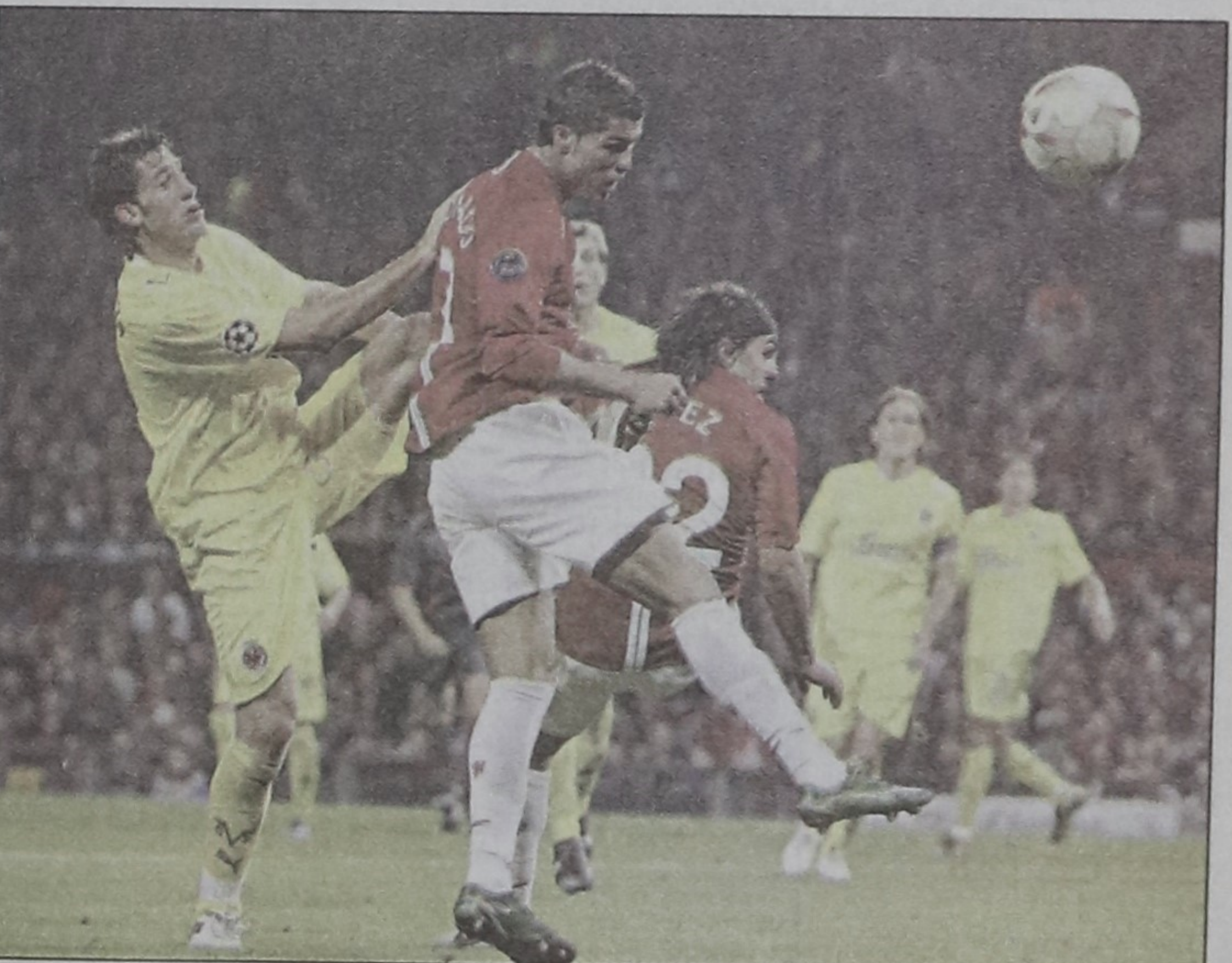


PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo (2nd from L) wins a header in the box during their Champions League stalemate against Villarreal at Old Trafford on Wednesday. Ronaldo made his much awaited first appearance of the season but failed to inspire Man Utd to a win.

## VOX POP: Readers speak out on player exodus

ECB took more pragmatic approach on this thing. I want to see Bangladesh do the same, instead of taking emotionally biased decisions. It is true that the players have mentioned a few things in public which certainly looks like being emotionally biased.

I say it's the BCB who has to take the responsibility and not ban these players from the domestic circuit. It's a good news that BCB has not accepted their resignation. But they have threatened to go to the court. I say BCB accept the decision of the players to play for ICL and be prepared for national team. As simple as that.

Zahirul  
Ottawa, Canada

The abrupt retirement of the six professional cricketers from the Bangladesh National Team is a very disappointing news both for BCB and the inquisitive cricket-loving citizens of our country. The mass resignation of these players created

a stir in the country's fraternity. BCB never thought that a sudden incident (like this) will occur just before the tour of the Kiwis to Bangladesh.

From my point of view, I will not blame the players who resigned from the national team to play in the ICL. They are offered a large sum of money but I think that the players should think about their future career too. If they fail to perform well then they might lose their place both in ICL and in the national side also. Players like Habibul Bashar and Mohammad Rafique can play in ICL as they have almost no chance to play for the national side. But I think that, players like Shahriar Nafees, Farhad Reza, Aftab Ahmed and Dhiman Ghosh might have a brilliant career in the future. They have just started their career and one cannot perform that well at the very start of his career. I also think that the major reason of the massive failure in the tour of Australia is ICL. If the players play in ICL, then they will never get any chance in

the national team again.

Khandker Saadiqul Quader  
Maple Leaf International

As a Bangladeshi living in America over the past ten years I am used to seeing players move from one team to another. There is very little loyalty among athletes these days. I do not blame them and if I were in their situation I would probably do the same as well. When there is an opportunity to make great sums of money, especially in Bangladesh, why would you not do it? If it can improve your quality of life and those around you, it's an understandable thing to do. I realize that these Bangladeshi players were not beggars on the street but compared to probably other nations our players were making very little money. The other issue is that these players who have "retired" are not primary cogs in our team. Other than Aftab Ahmed I really can't think of anyone else who really was going to be a longer term player for us. Even Aftab, with his injuries,

seems to have fallen out of favour with BCB. Speaking of the BCB, I think they are equally to blame for the situation. If what I have been reading is true, then shame on BCB management for not taking care of its players. Lastly, I think ICL will be a positive thing for Bangladesh cricket. It will provide another avenue for players and fans alike. I think in this day and age we cannot be so narrow minded about things such as these. I think these players gave Bangladesh cricket lot's of excitement but they should have the freedom to make their own decisions. The national side will suffer from this mass exodus. There are plenty of youngsters ready to take over and represent our country.

Rezwan A. Mallick  
Houston, Texas, U.S.A

Playing for Bangladesh should be the ultimate achievement for a player who truly loves this poor motherland. Our cricketers are not paid to give away this pride. They

are the best paid among all sports in Bangladesh. They are paid even more than any highly qualified people working in our country. They are provided with all the modern facilities our country can provide.

I think they are paid much more than what they are giving us back. Playing for the Motherland is a responsibility. They have the ability, that's why they are in the national team. But most of them lack the attitude & responsibility that should exist in a national team player. The word "Professionalism" exists in their dictionary only when compensation is concerned. They are not even 1% professional. Otherwise how does our beloved national team players play so poorly even in the premier league?

For the people who are giving advice to BCB to act against BCCI, I have a question. When all other cricket boards are taking the same measure regarding players going to join ICL, why should BCB act the opposite? To face a ban like Zimbabwe? Where do you want to

see our cricket? The players are lowering our head day after day by their effortless play and poor result and now these 14 guys are showing that the Bangladeshi national players are greedy too. Shame on them. They are no better than our beloved corrupt politicians. Is their any difference between them when both are thinking about money first leaving our country behind in shame? Hate is the only thing they should get. And thanks to the rest of the national team players who came in front to stand by BCB, by Bangladesh Cricket.

Mohammad Hossen  
IBA Hostel, Dhaka

Dear readers, this is a crucial moment in the history of sport in Bangladesh. The Lalit Modi led BCCI are trying everything to stop the ICL from continuing. The players who are about to join must understand one thing that what they are thinking is wrong.

If the ICL closes down then they won't be able to continue their

cricketing career. They will be completely banned from the cricketing arena. Whereas, if they continue their international career they may get a chance to play in the IPL, which is much more rewarding than ICL. At this very moment my message to the cricketers would be to think and rethink the matter.

You can earn money but you'll not be remembered by people. If you perform well, not only the national team but IPL, EPL and the Australian county cricket associations will be looking for you.

And if you want to give this all up it's your choice.

Tasbib Ahmed Arnob

Some very patriotic players of the Bangladesh national cricket team have decided that it is not worth playing for the country that is their motherland. They prefer to play in ICL, a rebel league that has offered them a few bundles of cash. After all what is motherland when put against raw hard cash? Come on, you cant  
**SEE PAGE 18 COL 2**



## Did U Know?

The UEFA Champions League title has been held by 21 different clubs, 12 of which won the title more than once. The all-time record-holder is Real Madrid with nine wins.



ESPN  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm



Citycell B. League  
Farahgan v Abahani (3:30pm)  
Venue: Birshreshtha Mafur Rahman Stadium, Narsingdi



Luiz Felipe Scolari  
(Chelsea manager)  
"Frank Lampard is fantastic. He is a midfielder and he arrives many times in front of goal and makes goals. He loves football. He is training hard every day. When you do this I think God helps you."