

Tamim's somersault!

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The season's transfer market for the upcoming Premier Division Cricket League has been stirred up by the high demands of some of the national players. The chief attraction for this year's transfer market was none other than star Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who not only signed a record deal with champions Abahani but also paved the way for some of his colleagues to up their price tags.

But it is the dashing opener of the national team Tamim Iqbal who has added new spice to the already heated up market as he has changed his mind suddenly to join the Mohammedan team from their bitter rivals Abahani which will without a doubt bring the country's two popular clubs on a course of collision. And the reason for this is simple; a better offer

from the Motijheel outfit. Mohammedan may have been a bit late in making their attempt to net the big fish but they have definitely served a huge jolt to their archrivals and made a bold statement that they are all set to put aside their disappointment of the last few seasons.

The move has already caused a sharp reaction in the Abahani tent as they believe that it would totally be unethical for the left-hander to drive back from his commitment.

"It's really shocking. He [Tamim] has verbally confirmed us [Abahani] after we fulfilled his demand, but suddenly he demanded more. What he told us was that he got a better offer and can only continue with Abahani if we fulfil his demand which is unacceptable," fumed Abahani's cricket committee vice-chairman Jalal Yunus.

"There is a question of morality. We think he has set a very bad example for our cricket. Anyway we have

already made up for his loss by confirming Imrul Kayes," he added.

Tamim however gave a different explanation regarding the controversy and said that the treatment he got from an Abahani



TAMIM IQBAL

official was unfortunate.

"What is for sure is that I will sign for Mohammedan tomorrow, but I have not

changed my mind only because of money," was the confirmation from the left-hander about joining the Motijheel outfit.

"I want to clarify my position regarding the issue. Yes, it's true that verbally I agreed with Abahani. And I was prepared to keep my commitment but during my visit to Malaysia, I got a phone call from a Mohammedan official who offered me one lakh taka more than the amount Abahani had offered.

"What I thought was that there was no point of changing mind for this small sum of money. But they increased the amount and there is a big difference between Tk 15 lakh and 18 lakh. After returning home I contacted an Abahani official and told him politely that I have got a better offer and if you have any scope to increase the amount please do. I can't see what's wrong with that," explained Tamim to this correspondent over phone yesterday.

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Abahani's Ghanaian recruit Awudu Ibrahim (L) and local boy Mehedi Hasan Ujjal stretch during a training session at the Dhaka University Ground yesterday as part of their preparation for the upcoming Federation Cup.

PHOTO: STAR

Alvaro slates BFF

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani's Argentine trainer Diego Alvaro slammed the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for delay in finalising the schedules of the season's curtain-raising tournament, the Federation Cup, as the Dhanmondi-based outfit began their second phase of training yesterday at the Dhaka University ground following a half-a-month conditioning camp at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan.

"With less than one week to go before the start the tournament, we still don't know who our opponents are and it is crazy. Football is not a game of only running behind the ball as it is a game of mind too and the players need to prepare themselves mentally according to their opponents," said Alvaro, who joined Abahani in the later part of July.

The BFF is scheduled to do the groupings today and the tournament will get underway on September 10 at two venues in the capital.

Two-time B. League champions Abahani are

the first side to appoint a foreign trainer and the 37-year-old trainer was pleased to have seen the facilities at the BKSP in Savar, but equally expressed his dissatisfaction over Abahani's Dhanmondi ground, which is still unprepared following the earth filling as well as the planting of new grass and it needs a couple of days more to be ready for training.

"I have just followed the training routines what your national team did and I am satisfied with the level of fitness the players gained during the short period of conditioning camp," said Alvaro, who was however not satisfied with the players' food habit.

The Argentine believes it is the responsibility of the players, who are professionals, and not me what to do to maintain their fitness level throughout the season.

Alvaro said that he would now be working on the match situations during the second phase of training.

Head coach Amolish Sen also expressed his pleasure over Alvaro's input and said that he now could focus only on the game plan as the trainer was looking after the fitness level of the players.

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Aus clinch a thriller

Cricket

AFP, London

Australia captain Michael Clarke praised two of the newcomers to the tour of England as his side put their Ashes defeat behind them with a tense four-run win in the first one-day international.

Callum Ferguson won the man-of-the-match award for an unbeaten 71 at the Oval on Friday and Cameron White weighed in with 53 as Australia, returning to the scene of their 197-run fifth-Test Ashes losing defeat, went 1-0 up in this seven-match series.

Ferguson's innings was the centrepiece of Australia's 260 for five, a total that just proved too much for England to overhaul as they finished on 256 for eight.

The 24-year-old South Australian's score was his best in 15 matches at this level and took just 75 balls.

"We've got a lot of new players in our squad that didn't take part in the Ashes," Clarke, deputising for the resting Ricky Ponting, told reporters.

"One-day cricket is a lot different to Test cricket, I'm taking a lot of positives out of

tonight.

"Callum Ferguson played beautifully," Clarke added ahead of today's second match at Lord's.

"But for Cameron Wright get an opportunity at No 3 and play the way he did was fantastic. It shows he's a good all-round player and can bat in any position."

Clarke, whose 45 was subdued by his normally fluent standards, admitted: "I thought we were maybe 15, 20 runs short but that was mainly down to my batting. I took too many balls to score the runs I did."

"But the way we bowled and fielded was very good. We were very disciplined," he said after seeing left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Johnson take three wickets for 24 runs.

England fell just short with Ryan Sidebottom unable to score the six required off the last ball from fellow left-arm quick Nathan Bracken.

However, things ought not to have been so tight.

Ravi Bopara, who was dropped for the Ashes finale after averaging just 15 in the first four Tests, made 49 but took 88 balls and hit only three fours before he was stumped after off-spinner Nathan Hauritz beat his forward defensive stroke.

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Rajib slips to second

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Enamul Hossain Rajib slipped to second position in the 4th Kolkata Open International Grandmasters Chess after dropping a point in the fourth round game held on Friday at the Gorky Sadan.

Rajib drew with fifth seeded GM Guseinov Gadir of Azerbaijan to secure 3.5 points to share the second position with GM Nigel Short of England, GM Le Quang Liem of Vietnam and GM Safarli Eltaj of Azerbaijan.

Indian GM Sandipan Chanda took the solo lead with maximum four points.

GM Ziaur Rahman was in third position with three 3 points along with 20 other players. Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar earned 2.2 points.

In the fourth round games, Zia drew with GM Mchedlishvili Mikheil of Georgia, Sagar beat Indian IM Thekumar.

Debaraj Chatterjee earned 2 points, GM Reefat Bin Sattar and FM Abu Sufian Shakil secured 1.5 points each.

Debaraj beat Rahul Sangma, Reefat drew with Tejas Ravichandran and Shakil drew with Phadke Sohan.

Korea outclass Soccerroos

AFP, Seoul

South Korea outclassed Australia 3-1 in a friendly on Saturday in what coach Huh Jung-Moo said was a useful work-out ahead of next year's World Cup.

The South Koreans, who in June won their seventh consecutive berth at the World Cup finals, quickly gained control against the Soccerroos when Park Chu-Young scored after only four minutes.

The hosts doubled their advantage on 20 minutes when Lee Jang-Soo scored from close range.

Australia, who also qualified for South Africa next year, struck back in the 33rd minute when Patrick Kisnorbo headed home a free-kick.

But South Korea's Seol Ki-Hyeon headed in a cross from Manchester United star and national captain Park Ji-Sung in the 87th minute to make the game safe.

"Australia is a team that is on a level with European teams in terms of having a strong defence," coach Huh was quoted by Yonhap news agency as saying.

"The match gave us an opportunity to examine what we should do in facing teams of such level and what areas to supplement."

The South Koreans finished the World Cup Asian qualifying round on top, while North Korea and Japan also reached the finals.

Veeru fought the system

CRICINFO, undated

Virender Sehwag, who spoke out against the Delhi cricket administration's unfair selection process and forced top officials to pay heed to players' concerns, has said his intent in raising the issue of selection was to change the system and not target any individual.

"My fight is against the system," Sehwag told news channel CNN-IBN. "You have to change the system and put some good people who can look after the cricket. Lots of

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Manikganj football

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Dautia Bulbul Club came from behind to register a 3-1 win over Katigram Sporting Club in the Hafijul Islam Khan Uttu Smriti First Division Football League at the Shahid Miraz-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

Jewel scored two goals and Jamal struck the other for the winners after Rasel gave the vanquished a 39th minute lead.

It was Dautia Bulbul Club's first win after two consecutive defeats while Katigram Sporting Club suffered their third defeat in a row.



PHOTO: AFP

ON SONG: Former world number 1 and third seed at this year's US Open Spaniard Rafael Nadal clenches his fist after winning a point against Nicolas Kiefer of Germany during their second round match at the Flushing Meadows in New York on Friday.

Nadal, Murray move on

AFP, New York



Six-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal, trying to complete a career Slam, and British second seed Andy Murray withstood fightbacks to reach the third round on Friday at the US Open.

Spanish third seed Nadal weathered the storm to defeat Germany's Nicolas Kiefer 6-0, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4. The reigning Australian Open champion showed no sign of the knee trouble that kept him out two months and caused him to miss Wimbledon.

"I feel good," Nadal said. "I started playing well but I think he started low and later played better. It's difficult like that because you are not on rhythm. Nicolas is a very difficult player and

I'm very glad to beat him."

Murray, last year's US Open runner-up, answered a sluggish second set by winning seven games in a row and fired 15 aces in defeating Chile's Paul Capdeville 6-2, 3-6, 6-0, 6-2.

"I played three very good sets and one poor one," Murray said. "You're allowed to play a bad set sometimes but I came back well from it. I just felt a little lethargic, low in energy. I don't know why."

"But I managed to pick it up when I needed to." The 22-year-old Scotsman, trying to become the first British man to win a Grand Slam title since Fred Perry in 1936, will play for a spot in the last 16 against 196th-ranked US wild card Taylor Dent.

All 16 top seeds advanced to the third round, the first time this has happened in any Grand

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Kiwis sweep it clean

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Daniel Vettori's New Zealand recorded their second

Twenty20 success over Sri Lanka in three days with a 22-run victory on Friday that helped them sweep the two-match series.

The Kiwis, who won the first match on Wednesday by three

runs, piled up 170-4 after winning the toss and then restricted the World Twenty20 finalists to 148-8 under lights at the Premadasa Stadium.

Fast bowler Shane Bond led the Black Caps charge with 3-18 in four overs, while seamer Kyle Mills and off-spinner Nathan McCullum claimed two wickets each.

The 2-0 win helped the Kiwis overcome the disappointment of losing both the preceding Test matches and boosted their confidence ahead of a tri-series, also featuring India, that opens on Tuesday.

New Zealand's innings revolved around an explosive opening stand of 84 in 10.2 overs by Brendon McCullum and Jesse Ryder after Vettori called correctly for the second time in a row.

Left-handed Ryder smashed three sixes and as many fours in his 52 off 37 balls, while McCullum hit a 34-ball 49 with two sixes and four boundaries.

Martin Guptill and Jacob Oram further boosted the total with a 43-run stand for the fourth wicket in 27 balls, before Guptill was bowled by Lasith Malinga off the final ball of the innings.

Sri Lanka, chasing a target of almost nine runs an over, made a disastrous start when they were reduced to 2-2 off the first seven deliveries and slid to 11-3 soon after.

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PHOTO: AFP

BACK IN BUSINESS: New Zealand quick Shane Bond (R) celebrates with wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum after dismissing Sri Lanka's Tillakaratne Dilshan during the second and last Twenty20 at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Friday. Bond, playing only his second game on comeback after a two-year ICL hiatus, finished with three wickets conceding only eighteen runs.



Did U Know?

Chelsea striker Didier Drogba has a beer named after him in his native Ivory Coast.



Sachin Tendulkar

(Indian cricket superstar)
"The bat speaks to me. For me the curve is quite important but the most important is the bat stroke."
On how he chooses his weapon.



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