

Bane for pacemen

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The season's transfer market for the upcoming Premier Division Cricket League may not have started yet, but it has already stamped its mark in the domestic arena with a few players signing whopping deals with the top-ranked clubs.

Captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan, dashing opener Tamim Iqbal, who added more spice to the whole thing by making a somersault, and former national skipper Mohammad Ashraful all have already significantly improved their price tags to kick-start the transfer market with record deals with the country's two popular sides -- Abahani and Mohammadan.

But there have been contrasting fortunes for the other national players like Shahadat Hossain, Rubel Hossain, Rokibul Hasan, Syed Rasel, Enamul Haque as these players almost begged to get a team for this season.

Especially the pace bowlers have been facing the adverse situation following

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) pool system where one club is eligible to sign a maximum of three players.

Right-arm paceman Shahadat urged the game's governing body to keep the pacers out of pool so that they can avoid the painful situation.

The lanky paceman talked with the reporters after sign-

ing for Kalabagan Krira Chakra from Bangladesh Biman yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. The inter-club players' transfer is originally scheduled from September 29 to October 1, but a special arrangement has been made to accommodate the players of the Bangladesh A team who will be touring Indian

state of Maharashtra from September 26 to October 17.

"It seems that I made a mistake by representing the national team. It's painful that nobody showed any interest in me. Thank God, I finally got a team. When some of my colleagues are getting huge amounts, players like me have been left suffering to even get a team. It's happened because of the pool system. I don't find any logic about it," complained Shahadat.

"Now nobody will show interest to become a pace bowler if this kind of trend continues. It is very sad that the pacers have never been rated either in the domestic scene or in the national side. Mashrafe is exceptional but think about Mohammad Rubel who is yet to get a team although he is a very promising pace bowler in the country," he said adding that the authority must take the matter seriously.

Experienced paceman Tareq Aziz, who switched to Biman from Mohammadan, also echoed the sentiment though he is not in the pool.

"I think only the pacers have been suffering for the pool system and they should be kept

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Opening batsman of the national cricket team Imrul Kayes signs for Abahani ahead of the Premier League at the club office yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Real Madrid's world record signing Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates his second goal against FC Zurich during their Champions League match in Zurich on Tuesday.

WC 2011 Inspection team to rule on Ctg

SPORTS REPORTER

The hosting of 2011 World Cup matches in Chittagong will only be confirmed after the International Cricket Council (ICC) inspection team's visit to Bangladesh between October 26 to October 27.

Bangladesh will host the showcase event for the first time along with India and Sri Lanka and they have been awarded eight matches including two quarterfinals and the opening ceremony to be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has selected two match venues -- Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and Chittagong Divisional Stadium while Khulna and Fatullah Stadium are being considered as alternative venues.

Initially Mirpur and Fatullah were the main venues but later the authority changed their mind following constant pressure from the port city organisers.

Meanwhile, a central organising committee (COC) meeting for the 2011 World Cup will

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Did U Know?

Clijsters took up tennis and won her first WTA Tour singles title at Luxembourg in 1999, and reached her first major final in 2001, losing to Jennifer Capriati in the French Open.



It is the third time that Bangladesh is hosting the regional showpiece event after 1985 and 1993.

Doel is the mascot

SPORTS REPORTER

The executive committee of the Bangladesh Olympic Association on Tuesday approved the mascot of the 11th South Asian Games that will be held from January 29 to February 9 in the country.

Doel (Robin Magpie), the national bird of Bangladesh, has been chosen as the figure of the mascot. The Doel, holding the Olympic torch, will entertain the athletes of the eight participating nations during the 12-day regional extravaganza.

It is the third time that Bangladesh is hosting the regional showpiece event after 1985 and 1993.

Mahmud Islam, a former student of Dhaka University

Art Institute, designed the mascot.

Prominent artist Mostafa Manwar had designed the 1993 meet mascot -- a Mishuk while a tiger's cub was the mascot of the 1985 meet.

The 11th edition of the meet will see highest 23 disciplines, with five disciplines cricket, golf, ushu, handball and cycling have been included for

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AFC U-16 C'SHIP Bangladesh to take part in qualifiers

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) finally decided to send its squad to the AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers in Philippines, scheduled for October 3 to 13.

The players have been asked to report to the coach today at the BFF House as their training camp resumes on Friday before leaving the country on September 30.

The governing body of local football had earlier decided not to send the team to the qualifiers, citing financial problems, and postponed the residential camp in Khulna on September 6 after one-and-a-half months.

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SOCERNET



Cristiano Ronaldo marked his first Champions League appearance for Real Madrid with a brace as the Spanish giants won 5-2 at FC Zurich, but the match was closer than the scoreline suggested.

The £80 million man netted twice from free-kicks, the first a trademark strike and the second comically let in by Zurich's goalkeeper Johnny Leoni, but Madrid's defensive failings were again evident.

The Portuguese opened the scoring in the 27th minute of the Group C clash and Madrid were three goals to the good by half-time thanks to further strikes from Raúl and Gonzalo Higuaín.

However their lead was reduced to one by Xavier Margairaz's penalty and Silvan Aegerter's header.

Ronaldo added a fourth with a free-kick which somehow found the net after a

comical attempt to punch clear by Leoni and Guti chipped in a fifth right at the end.

Filippo Inzaghi struck twice to fire AC Milan to a 2-1 victory away to Marseille.

The veteran put his team ahead in the 30th minute before Marseille's top summer signing Gabriel Heinze equalised early in the second half.

However, Inzaghi made sure his team claimed all three points with 15 minutes remaining.

Paul Scholes popped up 13 minutes from time to ensure Manchester United's bid to reach a third successive Champions League final got off on exactly the right note against Besiktas in Istanbul.

Sent off at the weekend at Tottenham, the 34-year-old ghosted into the penalty area unseen to nod home after Hakan Arıkan had saved Nani's blistering shot to seal a 1-0 win for the visitors.

Wolfsburg joined United at the top of Group B after they marked their Champions League debut with an assured 3-1 victory over Juande Ramos' CSKA Moscow at the Volkswagen Arena. Grafite was the star of the show with a hat-trick.

The German side were in need of a European pick-me-up after three straight defeats in the Bundesliga and received just that as their Brazilian talisman hit the goal trail.

Grafite netted twice in the first half to put them in the driving seat and completed his hat-trick three minutes from time after Alan Dzagoev's effort for the Russians had threatened to spark a CSKA fightback.

In Group D, Nicolas Anelka proved Chelsea can survive and prosper without banned Didier Drogba as the France international earned the Blues a 1-0 win at home to Porto.

Anelka, given the task of filling a lone role in attack in the absence of the suspended Ivory Coast international, struck three minutes after the interval with a neat clipped finish.

Chelsea are in pole position in the group after Atletico Madrid were held to a disappointing goalless draw at home by Apoel Nicosia.

Thomas Müller made it four goals in four days as his double helped Bayern

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Del Potro basks in glory

AFP, New York

Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro sees plenty of room for improvement on Tuesday as he targets more titles after stunning the tennis world with his maiden Grand Slam victory at the US Open.

Del Potro's 3-6, 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 victory over Roger Federer snatched the Swiss star's five-year title run at the US Open.

"I would like to be top 4, top 3 or top 1 in the future. But I have to play like today many, many weeks in the year. I don't have the shape to do that but maybe if I'm still working and still going in the same way, maybe in the future I can," said the 1.98m star who is dubbed the 'Giant of the Pampas'.

Del Potro, who turns 21 next week, became the first South American to win a US Open since compatriot Guillermo Vilas in 1977 and the first non-European player to win a major since countryman Gaston Gaudio won the 2004 French Open.

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Sachin Tendulkar and his wife Anjali attend a condolence service for former BCCI president Raj Singh Dungarpur in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Mokaddes refutes allegations

SPORTS REPORTER

Mokaddes Hossain, general secretary of the newly formed ad-hoc committee of Bangladesh Chess Federation, yesterday urged all to refrain from negative activities for the greater interest of the game.

The allegations, brought against the newly formed ad-hoc committee in two separate press conferences on September 13 and 15, were false, baseless and indecent and everyone is urged to refrain from such activities for the greater interest of chess, said a press release from chess federation yesterday, which was signed by the general secretary.

The press release said that it was sad to see the new committee being termed as

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Ricky Ponting (L) gave Andrew Strauss plenty to think about during the 5th ODI between England and Australia at Trent Bridge on Tuesday.

Ricky helps Aus go 5-0 up

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

Australia captain Ricky Ponting's superb century paved the way for the world champions to beat England by four wickets in Tuesday's fifth one-day international (ODI) at Trent Bridge.

Victory saw Australia go 5-0 up in the seven-match series as they stayed on course to whitewash their oldest foes.

Set a seemingly challenging 300, master batsman Ponting's 126 -- his best ODI score against England, surpassing the 119 he made at Melbourne in 2002 -- took Australia to within sight of victory.

They still needed 39 off 36 balls after Stuart Broad had struck twice in the 44th over, Callum Ferguson plumb lbw and Ponting driving to Owais Shah at long-off.

But Cameron White and Mitchell Johnson, who ended the match with a six off Ryan Sidebottom saw them home with 10 balls to spare.

England's batting had repeatedly

failed this series.

But here they made 299 -- and still it wasn't enough.

Former Ireland batsman Eoin Morgan top-scored with 58 -- his best for his adopted country.

But Ponting, who shared a third-wicket stand of 133 with vice-captain Michael Clarke (52), showed how hundreds, not fifties, win games.

Ponting was soon into his stride and struck a huge straight six off left-arm quick Sidebottom.

But on 40 he was dropped by opposing captain Andrew Strauss, a drive off leg-spinner Adil Rashid skimming the England skipper's fingers at short extra-cover on its way to the boundary.

Ponting went on to complete a fifty off 51 balls under the floodlights and two magnificent sixes as in many deliveries from Rashid took him to 97.

A single off Rashid saw Ponting to his 27th hundred in 317 ODIs off 92 balls with three sixes and 10 fours.

Despite losing Clarke and Michael Hussey in quick succession, Australia

started the last 10 overs needing 70 more runs for victory.

Earlier 22-year-old left-hander Morgan, a Middlesex colleague of Strauss, reached fifty with a six off Nathan Bracken.

And he later audaciously reverse-hit Bracken for four, a shot Morgan has said previously was developed out of the Gaelic sport of hurling.

But, trying for a repeat next ball, he was caught at short third man.

Fast bowler Johnson saw his 10 overs cost an expensive 80 runs.

Both the new ball duo of Peter Siddle, recalled in place of Brett Lee despite the rested fast bowler's five-wicket haul in Australia's seven-wicket win at Lord's on Saturday, and Bracken started with a maiden apiece.

But Strauss, who after leading England to Ashes glory has won five straight ODI tosses but not much else, was again in good form with three boundaries in four balls off Siddle.

However Strauss, who the previous ball had driven off-spinner Nathan

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