

5TH BANGLADESH LEAGUE
Transfers start from Sept 1

SPORTS REPORTER

The players' transfer window for the upcoming fifth Bangladesh League will be opened on September 1 and continue till November 15, the Bangladesh League Committee decided yesterday.

The committee also decided to run the ten existing clubs and not permit any new inclusion in the top-tier league.

The meeting also confirmed the standings of the fourth edition of the professional football league officially declaring Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club as champions and Muktijoddha Sangsad KC as runners-up.

As per the standings, Chittagong Mohammedan and Chittagong Abahani will be relegated to the second tier while no clubs will be promoted as there is no second tier league in existence.

However, the Bangladesh League committee will start a second tier league from the upcoming season and, in that end, will sit with 15 clubs, who showed their interest, on July 25 and 26 to finalise the number of teams for the second-tier professional league.

Bresnan in, Finn out

AFP, London

England on Sunday named fast bowler Tim Bresnan in their squad to face India in the first Test, which begins at Lord's on Thursday, but there was no place for Steven Finn.

Bresnan takes Finn's place in the only change to the squad that beat Sri Lanka 1-0 in the recent Test series.

Yorkshire paceman Bresnan is returning to the England squad for the first time since the fifth Ashes Test in January.

SQUAD

Andrew Strauss (captain), James Anderson, Ian Bell, Tim Bresnan, Stuart Broad, Alastair Cook, Eoin Morgan, Kevin Pietersen, Matt Prior, Graeme Swann, Chris Tremlett, Jonathan Trott.

Isinbayeva's winning return

AFP, Heusden

Olympic pole vault champion Yelena Isinbayeva defied strong winds to clinch victory in her first outdoor meeting of the season on Saturday as the Russian golden girl began her build-up to the World Championships.

Isinbayeva recorded a modest winning effort of 4.60m, way below her world record of 5.06m set in Zurich in August 2009.

The 29-year-old, who has suffered a series of setbacks in the last two seasons, will continue her preparations for the August 27-September 4 world championships in Daegu, South Korea, by competing at Lugano (July 18) and Lucerne (July 21).

Law's focus

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Iqbal, Junaed Siddiqui, Rubel Hossain and Nazmul Hossain have come across Law as player during the Bangladesh A team's matches against MCC and Lancashire. Apart from that occasion, Law, as Sri Lanka's assistant coach since 2009, has travelled to the country and knows a thing or two of what he's taking over.

"I've seen them play. They're very talented. Maybe there are areas away from cricket which they need to improve.

"Maybe it's not all about natural talent but a bit more mental toughness and self-belief. That's what I can impart on them," he said.

Law will join work tomorrow when the Tigers play another two-day warm-up game in Mirpur.

VVS banks on Duncan



AFP, Taunton

VVS Laxman believes India coach Duncan Fletcher will play a key role in his team's bid to win their forthcoming Test series against England.

Fletcher took over as India coach earlier this year and Laxman insists he felt the benefits of working with the former England chief during the recent Test series in the West Indies.

The batsman talks in glowing terms about Fletcher, who spent eight years as England coach and led them to Ashes victory over Australia in 2005.

Laxman expects the 62-year-old Zimbabwean to provide plenty of insight into how to beat the English on home soil, starting with the first Test at Lord's on Thursday.

"It has been brilliant working with Duncan," Laxman said. "The time we spent with him in West Indies was very encouraging and you know from just talking to him that he has such a deep knowledge of the game.

"The Lord's Test is going to be his 100th as a coach, which is a great achievement in itself, and he will be the first coach to achieve it.

"We are very lucky to have someone like Duncan with us because he is a

very experienced and very mature person.

"I feel I can learn from him. There is always scope for improving and having discussions with someone like Duncan can only make you a better cricketer.

"I talked with him a lot in the West Indies, especially about technique, and I found him really knowledgeable in that respect."

Laxman insists that defending their ranking as the top Test playing country in the world will be the last thing on India's mind when they take on England.

"We don't see it as being about proving ourselves the top nation," he said. "We just want to concentrate on winning each and every Test match, rather than thinking about number games and rankings.

"It is going to be a highly challenging series for us without a doubt because England have a very good side. They have a very formidable and balanced bowling attack with some real match-winners.

"But I firmly believe that if we play to our potential we can beat any side in world cricket.

"We are looking forward to playing to our strengths and continuing the good work we have done in recent years. We will concentrate fully on our own performances and preparation

and if we do that we can definitely do well here."

Laxman has watched from the sidelines as India endured a frustrating rain-affected fixture against Somerset at Taunton.

India, fielding a side missing several stars, struggled to make any impact on Somerset's batting as the hosts scored 425-3 in the first innings of the three-day game, which concludes on Sunday.

That fixture is India's only match before the first Test but Laxman insists they will still be ready to take on England.

"We are not concerned at having only one warm-up game in England," he said. "With the hectic schedule of international cricket these days, even one such match is a luxury.

"When we went to the West Indies we didn't have a single warm-up game before the first Test so it is not a worry. I'm very happy with the way we have prepared for this tour.

"I am not playing against Somerset because I had three back-to-back matches at the end of the West Indies tour and it was thought better that I should rest.

"We have an experienced batting line-up, who have played in England before, and I am sure we will have some good net practice before Lord's so we will be ready for the First Test."

Raina the lone ranger

AFP, Taunton

Suresh Raina lifted India's spirits with an unbeaten 103 against Somerset as the tourists survived with a barely-deserved draw in their only warm-up match ahead of the first Test against England.

Raina's century was the only bright spot in a gloomy trip to the western country for India, who struggled with bat and ball and also allowed England Test captain Andrew Strauss to rediscover his form with scores of 78 and 109.

The Indians had been completely out-played by Somerset on the first two days of this three-day match and started Sunday's play on 138-8 after allowing the hosts to amass 425-3 declared in their first innings.

India's battling line-up had been demolished by South African left-arm seamer Charl Willoughby, who took 5-50 on Saturday and the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid failed to deliver.

Willoughby quickly claimed his sixth wicket on Sunday as he bowled Sreesanth, but Raina, who began the day on 30, cut loose after that to restore some pride for the tourists.

The 24-year-old added 84 for the final wicket in an explosive 12-over partnership with Munaf Patel, who contributed just six as Raina hit 15 fours and five sixes to reach 103 in 112 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Somerset 425-3 declared (Suppiath 156, Compton 88, Strauss 78, Jones 51) and 260-2 declared (Strauss 109 not out, Trego 85 not out) v India 224 (Raina 103 not out; Willoughby 6-76) and 69-0 Result: Match drawn.

Nafees warms

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fulfilled my part of the work so I'm happy. There is more bounce in Zimbabwe wickets though the nature is generally similar to ours. Like everyone else, I'm also working on the back foot shots in the indoors," added the man who last played a Test match in January 2010, against India.

Apart from Nafees, Mohammad Ashraful struck 77 while Mahmudullah Riyad blasted a 78-ball 75 with eight fours and three sixes.

It was an encouraging sign from Ashraful, who returned to the national team after being cast aside for the series against Australia in April.

For the Academy side, off-spinner Mahmudul Hasan took four wickets while Mukhtar Ali, Sanzamal Islam and Soumya Sarkar picked up one each.

Rajani, Munna MSC-bound

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national booters Rajani Kanta Barman and Motiur Munna are all set to join Mohammedan SC for the upcoming season, according to an MSC official.

Both Rajani and Munna, who played for Muktijoddha Sangsad last season, will be making their return to their old Black and Whites tent where they last played in the 2008 season, leading the club to second place finish the professional football league.

Japan win

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inflict a 3-1 defeat on France. The final had plenty of drama.

Despite the USA dominating the opening exchanges, the Japanese reigned supreme, just four months after the earthquake and tsunami devastated their country and sparked the crisis at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

With slick passing and a never-say-die spirit, many neutral fans in football-crazy Germany were won over by the Japanese and supported them as they progressed through the rounds.

Referring to the terror attacks of September 11 2001, Frankfurt business teacher Frank Forster summed up the feelings of many Germans when he said: "After 9/11 we were all a little American; since Fukushima we are all a little Japanese."

Miller looking for India loopholes



AFP, London

England selector Geoff Miller has warned India that Andrew Strauss's team are in the perfect form to take advantage if the tourists are below their best in the first Test at Lord's.

India have struggled against Somerset during their only warm-up match ahead of Thursday's clash in London and Miller believes they could pay the price for such a short preparation period.

Somerset piled up a massive 425-3 declared before bowling out India for just 224 and then cruising to 260-2 in the second innings of the drawn match.

To make matters worse for India, England Test captain Strauss rediscovered his form with scores of 78 and 109.

Miller hopes England take advantage of India's struggles and he said: "It's tough for India to come straight over from the West Indies and play in our conditions. It hasn't been ideal preparation for them.

"They didn't seem to do particularly well with the bat the other day in their first innings against Somerset -- but that doesn't mean they won't be able to turn it on at Lord's.

"We prepare very thoroughly and are ready. So we hope we can hit the ground running and I'm sure we will. We're playing

good cricket at the moment, and India will have to play very well to actually combat that.

"We know they're a good side and it could be a fascinating series."

Miller named a 12-man England squad on Sunday ahead of the Lord's clash, which included a return for Nottinghamshire pace bowler Stuart Board.

Miller revealed that a scouting trip in Nottingham had persuaded him and his colleagues Broad is returning to form in time for England's major assignment of the summer against the world's number one Test team.

Broad, almost bereft of international wickets so far this season as he has made his way back after a winter wrecked by injury, was dropped for England's one-day decider against Sri Lanka last weekend to accommodate an extra spinner at Old Trafford.

Instead he played in a County Championship match for Nottinghamshire at home to Somerset last week and responded with match figures of 6-162 on a benign surface.

"We watched him bowl at Trent Bridge in the four-day game," Miller told Sky Sports News.

"There were signs he was getting back to where he was. We know what he is capable of doing, and when he puts on that England shirt we feel sure he will show exactly that and produce the goods and make it difficult for India."

Convicted parties to appeal

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secretary Hazi Tipu Sultan adding that they would appeal for a full exemption of the monetary punishment due to the financial crisis of the 77-year-old club.

Having declared that he would appeal against ban on him, Salahuddin Kala questioned why he was given such punishment in lieu of the club's president and general secretary. He also alleged that those who have

taken these decisions (league committee members) are not fair.

"Why will I alone take the blame when eleven footballers played that game on the field," goalkeeper Iran Sheikh said. "I will hang up my gloves if they can prove my involvement. But they have punished me without any evidence and I will appeal against the decision."

"I haven't still received

the letter of punishment and I will take decision about appealing after getting it in hand. Besides, I will also look into the bylaws to see if they can punish me legally," said Maruf, who was given two month's ban for offering sweets of enormous amount to Rahmatganj officials if they could hold Sheikh Jamal in their second meeting of the professional football league.

BRITISH OPEN

Clarke ends title drought

AFP, Sandwich

Darren Clarke held his nerve to clinch victory at the British Open here Sunday, becoming the oldest winner of the championship in 44 years as he ended his long wait for a Major.

The popular 42-year-old from Northern Ireland kept his cool in demanding conditions to card a level-par 70, leaving him five under for the tournament and three strokes clear of Americans Phil Mickelson and Dustin Johnson.

The win capped a final round of twists and turns at Royal St George's, where wild fluctuations in the weather were mirrored early on by a fast-moving battle at the top of the leaderboard before Clarke's rivals fell away.



PHOTO: AFP

Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke poses with the 140th British Open Golf championship trophy at Royal St George's in Kent on July 18.



TESTS THROUGH TIME

New world order

Australia dominated through the latter part of the 1990s and into the first years of the new millennium. Nothing stood between them at that point, be it the Ashes, Frank Worrell Trophy or the World Cup.

After Steve Waugh called winning in India the 'final frontier', the Adam Gilchrist-Ricky Ponting partnership cracked that wall in 2004 and were the undisputed world leaders in cricket.

The summer of 2005 was the first time they were given a real shake-up when an England side coolly led by the graceful Michael Vaughan pipped them 2-1 in a memorable series.

From Ricky Ponting's bleeding cheek at Lord's, Andrew Flintoff's hostile spell and Geraint Jones's catch down the leg side in the thriller at Edgbaston to Ashley Giles's heroics in Nottingham, England were on top of Australia for the first time since the mid-1980s. Kevin Pietersen came of age in this Ashes with his monumental 158 in the final Test at the Oval, the signature of a series that was garnished with great quality.

Australia immediately regrouped and their response was a 5-0 thrashing, a snatching back of the urn. But at the end of the 2006 series, some of the legends hung their boots with Shane Warne leading the way, closely followed by Glenn McGrath, Justin Langer and Damien Martyn (who retired after the third Test).

India came to Australia next summer, the 2007-08 season, and though they started off poorly, fought back in the second Test in Sydney. But the game was marred by Andrew Symonds's accusations of racism on Harbhajan Singh and later, the umpiring blemishes of Steve Bucknor, with all the decisions going against India. Australia were accused of cheating by then captain Anil Kumble. As governments got involved, the Test went on and India gave a fine riposte with a fine win at Perth. After a drawn final Test, the battle lines were drawn and Australia's castle was cracking at a rapid pace.

With only Matthew Hayden and Ponting and a fast waning Brett Lee left from that dream team, Australia faced the rampant South Africans. After a seesaw first three innings at Perth in the first Test, the visitors needed an improbable 414 for victory. Centuries from skipper Graeme Smith and AB de Villiers paved the way with Ponting's men clueless.

More drama followed at the MCG where Australia were all set to take a huge first innings lead, only to be thwarted by a late partnership by Dale Steyn and Jean-Paul Duminy. The pair added 180 for the ninth wicket and superbly gave South Africa the lead. Steyn completed 10 wickets in the game, Australia losing by nine wickets.

It was their first series defeat at home after 15 years. They won the final game but Smith's heroics (batting with a broken hand) in the end showed the grit South Africa had arrived with in Australia.

That was the tipping point and Australia never recovered. They haven't held the Ashes since the 2006-07 season after losing to England in 2009 and 2010-11 with Andrew Strauss, Flintoff and Graeme Swann heavily involved in the triumphs.

The new world order is ruled almost equally by India, England, South Africa, Sri Lanka and sometimes Australia but there's no clear leader. But if history is proof, something big is around the corner.

-- Mohammad Isam

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Phony coin
5 Bankroll
8 "Scrabble" piece
12 Sound of contentment
13 Ostrich's cousin
14 Elevator name
15 "No kidding!"
17 Works with
18 Kitchen whistler
19 Wine vessel
21 "Whadja say?"
22 Female red deer
23 Mueller's org.
26 Scarlet
28 Coral structures
31 Reply to "Shall we?"
33 Massage
35 Harvard rival
36 Retract one's words

DOWN

1 Skewer
2 Mandolin kin
3 — Major room
4 Board-illustration
5 Meteorologist's ken
6 Film buff's cable choice
7 Netherlanders
8 Series of contests
9 "Agreed"
10 Willingly, old-style

ACROSS

38 Shade provider
40 Sodium hydroxide
41 Commotions
43 Galley tool
45 Lectern
47 Blurry spot
51 Historic times
52 "Don't go in there!"
54 Riga resident
55 Excessively
56 Kachina worshipper
57 Adversaries
58 Height of fashion?

DOWN

11 Being, to Brutus
16 Tea time
20 Melody
23 Winter ailment
24 Stillier or Affleck
25 "Meet you then"
27 Payable illustration
29 Aviate
30 Witness
32 Mean ones
34 Open up, as a bud
37 Thee
39 One of the Three Bears
42 Surname meaning "maker"
44 Gordon and Westheimer
45 Money
46 Sandwich cookie
48 Let gravity take over
49 Stare stupidly
50 Grand story
53 Pirouette pivot

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	A	R	D	S	H	A	I	C	E	D
A	R	E	A	H	I	P	D	A	R	E
M	I	N	D	S	E	E	O	D	I	N
P	A	D	K	E	A	O	N	S	E	T
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T	A	L	E	S	B	E	R	M	U	D
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B	E	N	D	G	E	E	B	O	R	N

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54						55			56		
57						58			59		

CRYPTOQUIP

G Y F X B V Y T N T Z B F X T G J Y T

A W B D K X Z W N K V B B G K G B B F

G W X A W B F X Y Y F F K X Y K B T :

"Y D G D J T B T Y T B G G B J Y T."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SINCE MY MALE

TWINS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED FEET-FIRST, WE

OFTEN CALL THEM THE BREECH BOYS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals A