

# Star SPORT

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## Zaheer likely to become PCB COO

Former Test captain Zaheer Abbas is likely to secure the important position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

Sources close to Zaheer said that the former Test batsman, who has remained a selector and manager with the national team previously, is confident of getting the top post once Zaka Ashraf takes charge.

"He has been going around telling his close friends and supporters that he is prepared for the position and in some instances he has even been inquiring about the pay package and responsibilities of the COO in the PCB," a source confirmed.

-- PTI



## Another picnic edition?

### National Cricket League starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

There have been a lot of promises made about the country's lone first class competition, but the thirteenth edition of the National Cricket League (NCL) will start quietly today at four different venues across the country.

The number of participating teams has been increased this season from six to eight as Rangpur Division and Dhaka Metropolis have been added to the existing pool of teams: Dhaka Division, Rajshahi Division, Sylhet Division, Barisal Division, Khulna Division and Chittagong Division.

In the opening four-day matches, defending champions Rajshahi take on Dhaka Metro at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi, Dhaka face Rangpur at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Sylhet hosts Khulna at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium and Barisal meet with Chittagong at BKSP.

The Tigers will not feature in the first few rounds as they are now busy with the home series against West Indies but it is mandatory for contracted cricketers to appear in the NCL if they do not have international commitments.

After every poor showing by the national team, those close to the game often raised their voices in favour of a true first-class competition in the country, but in practice the authorities

concerned hardly paid any attention in the past to the most important domestic competition, and this year is no exception. The question remains how serious the authorities are about this tournament?

Like the previous season the NCL is going to take place without any sponsor, although the tournament committee insist that they had informed the marketing committee about the matter three months back.

BCB's CEO Manzur Ahmed however was still hopeful that they will get a sponsor. "Still we are working and we are hopeful about getting a sponsor for the tournament. They (the divisions) should also try to get sponsor for their respective teams," hoped Manzur.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) made it an eight-team competition; a whimsical decision which created chaos when it was found that there was a shortage of quality players to fulfil the demands of eight teams.

To make up for the shortfall, the national selectors chose 32 icon players with each team allowed a maximum of four icon players. The selectors also distributed the free icon players as Nur Hossain Munna of Dhaka will play for Chittagong, Nadif Chowdhury of Dhaka will play for Sylhet, Dhaka's Nasiruddin Faruque will turn up for Barisal, Rajshahi's Shafiu Islam will represent Rangpur, Syed Rasel of Khulna will play for Barisal and

Khulna's Robiul Islam given to Sylhet.

"True, it would be nice if we can continue with the six teams. Unfortunately we found that we have a lack of quality players in the country, so you may raise questions about the quality of the tournament, but it also gave us a chance to test our strength," said Manzur.

"I think there are some positive things in this year's competition as we are very much sincere about providing good wickets, which I believe was the major problem. The participation of the national players has been made compulsory while the national selectors picked 32 icon players and equally distributed them which I think will make the tournament competitive. We also allow the teams to field one foreign player this season," continued Manzur adding that they also increased the prize money and allowance of the players.

Each team will be allowed to register up to three overseas players but can field only one who has the experience of playing first-class cricket, in each game.

Manzur also said that they scrapped the home and away basis system due to time constraints.

Many believe that there will never develop the sense of belonging among the players for their respective divisions if things carry on like this but Manzur however said that it takes time

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Mushfiqur Rahim (R), the young Bangladesh captain, has the weight of the world on his shoulders as he arrives at the Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong yesterday for the 3rd ODI and the 1st Test against the West Indies. Mushfiqur's Caribbean counterpart, a carefree Darren Sammy leads his teammates.

PHOTOS: ANURUP KANTI DAS



Players of Dhaka Division go through catching practice at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday, ahead of their opening match of the 13th National Cricket League against Rangpur Division today.

PHOTO: STAR

## Hope's flower must go

Cricket

ARCHITECT DR. NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

Most of you Bangladesh cricket aficionados have no doubt, but are perhaps convinced that the three selectors, all with supposed cricket knowledge, have for some time now for whatever strategic reason decided to field ten players against international opposition fielding eleven. I would have been inclined to say 'they know best' except for the fact that their poorly conceived decision has cost us already two heavy defeats against an opposition with whom we have a mission to redeem our esteem. You will remember 58 for 10 in 18.5 overs, if not the World Cup on home ground only last March.

Unfortunately, to put a spanner in their works, our oft-heard 'most talented' batsman (whatever that connotes) scored two runs in eight balls against West Indies in the ongoing ODI series, making him visible as the eleventh man. But the bottomless loyalty of the selectors is now being questioned because the average of their favoured batsman in seven ODI innings this year as top-and-middle-order reads a measly 5.28. He

was out caught all seven times against three different oppositions, and the guys behind the wicket love him for his commitment to fish, flick, and flash.

Call him casual and careless, a mindless part focused on destroying the whole, a mover of the head and shaker of the bat as he makes his now customary walk back to the pavilion, the guy has hit only five fours the whole of 2011, and suffers from dementia when it comes to six. His innings by innings score in his last seven ODIs read 1, 11, 2, 6, 15, 2 and zero. And we still have to bear with him in the third ODI in Chittagong Tuesday only because once upon a time he hit a flamboyant century against Sri Lanka in a match that we lost.

There is genuine talent waiting in the wings to take on the big guns. Otherwise why call us Tigers? The selectors must have an eye, the wisdom, maturity and mentality to recognise the ability, pick the genius, and grant debut to these hard working youngsters. The flower that blooms once in a century has no place in a competitive market, including international cricket. Remove the wilted, and pick the budding. They did when he was barely 17.

(The author is former Advisory Editor, DailyStar Sport)

## Trouble in hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

The crippling state of hockey in the country was dealt another painful blow yesterday as players got into scuffles with match officials during the National Youth Hockey League match between Rajshahi and Dinajpur DSAs at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The fracas ensued when Dinajpur captain Khairul was shown a red card for arguing with the umpire's decision of allowing the third goal for Rajshahi, 52 minutes into the match with Rajshahi leading 3-0 at that stage. The umpire's decision enraged the Dinajpur players and they engaged with the other team's players and match officials and declined to take further part in the game, deeming Rajshahi 3-0 winners.

According to the bylaws of the tournament, any team refusing to play are to be fined Tk 10,000 and in case of non-payment, be banned from the tournament along with a two-year suspension. Dinajpur's representative Mosaddek Hossain Chowdhury, when contacted over phone, said they were not eager to take further part in the league protesting the decision of the umpire.

However, there was no tournament committee member or federation official available during the incident to comment, reflecting the casual approach employed by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation.

Meanwhile, in the other matches of the day that ended peacefully, Rangpur defeated Narail by 5-3 and Chittagong blanked Rajshahi Division by 6-0.

## FIFA Futuro III starts

SPORTS REPORTER

A six day long FIFA Futuro III Refereeing Instructors Course got underway yesterday at the Ruposhi Bangla Hotel.

A total of 33 participants from 9 neighbouring countries are taking part in the course which is split into three groups -- technical instructors, fitness instructors and heads of refereeing -- in the joint-effort to take Asian refereeing to a higher level.

The course uses a regional format, assembling and educating instructors and heads of refereeing selected by the member associations from neighbouring countries in a centralised venue.

Seven Referees and Developments officers -- Mohsin Arif (Sri Lanka), Samsul Maidin, Ganeshan Manyam (Singapore), Masud Enayet (Iran), Victor Kolpakov (Kyrgyzstan), SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

## Fed polls welcomed

### 'Make way for real organisers to be elected'

SPORTS REPORTER

The decision to hold elections in the national sports federations have been welcomed by organisers but they urged the authorities to find out a way so that the dedicated organisers can come to office.

The executive committee of National Sports Council (NSC) discussed the elections issue in its meeting and it is expected that the much-awaited polls in different federations will take place early next year on completion of the NSC annual general meeting in December.

Bangladesh Athletics Federation president and former NSC secretary Ali Kabir emphasised the need of real organisers in the federations and urged State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker to find out a way to accommodate real organisers in the executive committees of different national federations as well as stop the vote-buying culture.

Of the 43 national federations and associations, 25 are currently being run by ad-hoc committees and three more are being operated by committees whose tenures have already expired.

Kabaddi, chess, tennis, badminton, handball, gymnasium, cycling, karate, judo, wres-

ling bodybuilding, carrom, judo, kho kho and rowing are the major federations which are being operated by ad-hoc committees for a couple of years now.

While federations and associations like squash, billiard, bridge, kite, golf, martial arts, rugby, fencing, baseball, soft-ball and kickboxing are also traditionally run by ad-hoc committees.

There have been no elections in the sports federations since the Awami League-led grand alliance came to power in December, 2008. And instead of holding elections, the government allegedly opted to appoint ad-hoc committees to run different bodies on expiry of the elected committees. But those committees, except for a few federations, could hardly keep the game on field round the year.

It has been learnt that the government initially planned to hold the elections of the district sports associations (DSAs) first to bring like-minded organisers in a bid to keep the pro-opposition organisers away and then hold the polls of the national federations and associations.

But NSC, the country's sports regulatory body, neither completed the DSA elections

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## Football League Second tier still in doubt

SPORTS REPORTER

The second tier of professional football league was thrown into further doubt after Victoria SC and Wari Club refrained from letting the League Committee know about their decisions whether to take part in the league till yesterday.

The league committee will sit for an emergency meeting today to decide the fate of the inaugural second-tier league with six teams.

The player transfers window is scheduled to open from October 20 and the league is supposed to get underway from November but Victoria SC and Wari Club decided to pull out of the league over the issue of Bangladesh Football Federation councillorships.

## Siddikur finishes 9th

Golf

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished ninth in the Hero Indian Open with a last round 11-under par (277) score at the Delhi Golf Club yesterday. The 27-year old, who was tied for 11th place overnight, shot a 4-under-par (68) to finish among the top ten in the 1.25 million dollar Asian Tour event.

The winner's title was taken by Australia's David Gleeson who carded a final round four-under-par that ended his three-year title drought.

Gleeson, who missed five consecutive cuts earlier this year, showed no sign of losing his overnight lead as he closed with a 20-under-par 268 total, the lowest winning score on the Indian Open.

Chiragh Kumar of India enjoyed his best finish on the Asian Tour, finishing second after shooting a 70, three strokes from the champion while Scotland's Ross Bain and Taiwan's Lu Wei-chih shot matching 67s to share third place on 272.

Meanwhile, Siddikur's last round 4-under-par was the culmination of his good form he showed throughout the four days, starting with two 2-under-par scores followed by a 3-under-par third round.

With this feat, Siddikur's standing in the Asian Order of Merit was enriched by 25,000 dollars, even though he remains fourth in the ladder with the lead again assumed by SSP Chowrasia of India who finished one stroke ahead of Siddikur.

Nonetheless, this performance will give Siddikur a boost before the last few events in the Asian Tour calendar, especially after his poor show in Macau last month where he unexpectedly missed the cut and followed it with a modest 24th place finish in the Panasonic Open in Japan.