

# Star SPORT

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## Serena trying to get it in

Amateur players everywhere will know the feeling. Five-time Australian Open champion Serena Williams cares more about getting the ball in than smashing it hard.

When she was told she had served at a blistering 191 kilometres per hour (119 miles per hour) in her second round win over Barbora Zahlavova Strycova of the Czech Republic, she didn't have a clue what it meant.

"In the United States we have miles per hour so I don't know what that is, is that fast?... I was trying to get it in," she said.

- AFP



# Nasir richest among locals

SPORTS REPORTER

The hype might have been about Twenty20 superstars like Shahid Afridi and Chris Gayle being sold for the highest prices, but it was the handful of local cricketers who walked away happiest from the players' auction of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) that was held yesterday.

The six franchises filled up their squads, quite content with the four-and-a-half hours of bidding taking place at the Radisson Hotel in the city where player earnings in the country got a massive boost with Nasir Hossain racking up Tk 1.68 crore.

Nasir, who was snapped up by Khulna Royal Bengals, was over the moon in his instant reaction. "I was at practice so I couldn't catch it live. Our team official Pavel bhui told me about the price I drew. I am really very happy, I can't really tell you what it's like," he said from the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur where he was training with his Dhaka Premier League club Gazi Tank.

His bidding was greeted with raucous applause outside the auction room. The presence of four of the six icons, former cricketers, coaches including the foreign staff, members from the franchises and the media gave the IPL-like auction a festive mood.

The prized pair of Gayle and Afridi drew the longest bidding war with the Pakistani all-rounder being called at 500,000 dollars by five franchises. In the end, Dhaka won the battle with 700,000 dollars for Afridi while

Barisal outbid Rajshahi for Gayle with 551,000 dollars though the players themselves won't get paid more than 500,000 dollars. Both however will be paid through the pro-rata basis, i.e., paid according to availability as both will appear for only a few days in the BPL.

But the biggest beneficiaries were the local boys who pocketed a total sum of 2.38 million dollars from the auction. The case for the icon players hasn't been settled yet as some of the franchises haven't agreed on giving the Bangladesh stars five per cent more than the foreigners in their squads. It is likely that the icons will get five per cent more than the local players in their squads.

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PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

**JACKPOT!** Bangladesh all-rounder Nasir Hossain (L) is a happy man during training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on hearing the news that he was the top bid among local players at the Bangladesh Premier League players' auction (above) which took place at the Radisson Hotel in the city yesterday. Khulna snapped up the all-rounder for the winning bid of 200,000 dollars.



## MU legends Robson, Yorke to visit Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Football fans should mark the dates on their calendar.

Manchester United legends Bryan Robson and Dwight Yorke will be in Dhaka for an official trip with partners Bharti Airtel for two days next week.

And as an added incentive for Manchester United fans across the country, the two former players will be accompanied by the coveted 19th Premier League trophy which was bagged by the Red Devils last season. It is the same trophy that saw United overtake Liverpool for the record number of English top division titles.

The legendary duo, whose trip have been managed by Airtel, will arrive at the capital on January 23 and conduct a press conference in Banani the following day to make a special announcement for football lovers in the country. They are also scheduled to meet with the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF)

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## Jamal clings to top spot

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh golfer Jamal Hossain Mollah lost his way in the middle of the third round of the American Express Bangladesh Open to concede his three-stroke overnight lead, ending the round in joint top position with Indian R Murthy at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. The final day today will likely feature a three-way battle to the finish between the joint leaders and local hero Siddikur Rahman, who is one shot behind in third spot.

Jamal, who shot a seven-under-par-65 on the second day to topple his illustrious countryman Siddikur, failed to maintain the tempo in the third round, allowing Murthy, who shot a three-under-par-69 yesterday, to catch up.

Jamal, the 2009 Bangladesh Open champion, fired an even-par-72 that featured four birdies, two bogeys and a double bogey.

Jamal and Murthy now have identical totals of eight-under-par-208 and they will play the fourth and final round today in the same group along with Siddikur.

Murthy, who has yet to win his first professional title, had a profitable front nine in round three as he picked up birdies on the third, fifth and seventh to make the turn at three under. Murthy missed an eagle on the fifth as his chip shot from the edge of the green lipped out. The 34-year-old made an incredible recovery on the seventh after a poor tee shot. He hit his third shot (four-iron) within five feet of the hole to set up a birdie.

Siddikur is breathing down the neck of the joint leaders with a total of seven-under-par-209 as the celebrated local

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## Premier Div resumes today

SPORTS REPORTER

After four days' break the Premier Division Cricket League will resume today at three different venues.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was supposed to return to competitive cricket after eight months' break due to injury when Biman take on Gazi Tank in their sixth round match at BKSP, but Biman was not ready to field the pace spearhead.

"I'm now okay but as per our national team physio's (Vibhav Singh) advice I have to make gradual progress. I can only bat in tomorrow's match, which is why Biman is not interested to field me in the match," informed Mashrafe.

"Maybe it will happen in the next round (January 24, Biman v Mohammedan) but still it's not sure as I will be able to bowl only four overs," he added.

In today's other matches, Abahani meet Kalabagan Krira Chakra while Mohammedan

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## BJMC aim at history

SPORTS REPORTER



Securing a berth for the final will be the only objective for newcomers Team BJMC when they take on the star-studded Muktiyoddha Sangsad in the first semifinal of the Grameenphone Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The match starts at 4pm.

Having returned to top-flight football after a 29-year gap, BJMC are virtually one step away from becoming the eighth team to make it to the Federation final after Abahani,

Mohammedan, Brothers, Wanderers, Muktiyoddha, Arambagh and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club provided that they repeat their group league feat against the Reds, who lost 3-2 two weeks ago.

"After the convincing win over Rahmatganj in the quarterfinal, the boys are ready to face Muktiyoddha Sangsad again and we are hopeful to make it to the final," said an excited BJMC coach Zakaria Babu, who is keen to make an impact in his first assignment at the helm of a professional football league side.

The coach believes the determination among the players to do something better

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PHOTO: STAR

**BJMC players practise at the Dhaka University Central Ground yesterday, ahead of their Grameenphone Federation Cup semifinal against Muktiyoddha Sangsad today.**

## 3 games, 3 teams



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) named three different Bangladesh Under-19 teams for the first three one-day matches against the visiting England Under-19.

The selectors had to name different teams due to the ongoing Premier Division Cricket League clubs not willing to go without their players for long periods; a similar scenario to that which transpired during England Lion's matches against Bangladesh A.

The first three matches will take place at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong on January 21, 23 and 24 while the fourth and fifth matches will be held at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium (January 28 and January 30).

The sixth match will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on February 3 and the seventh and final match

will take place at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on February 5.

### SQUAD FOR FIRST ONE-DAYER

Asif Ahmed, Anamul Haque, Al-Rasel, Liton Kumar Das, Salman Hossain, Touhid Tareq Khan, Mosaddek Hossain, Nur Hossain, Nasum Ahmed, Taskin Ahmed, Shahriar Sumon, Zakaria Masud, Dewan Sabbir and Al-Amin.

### SQUAD FOR SECOND ONE-DAYER

Asif Ahmed, Al-Rasel, Aslam Hossain, Liton Kumar, Salman Hossain, Touhid Tareq Khan, Mosaddek Hossain, Nurul Hasan, Nasum Ahmed, Abu Haider, Shahriar Sumon, Zakaria Masud, Dewan Sabbir and Al-Amin.

### SQUAD FOR THIRD ONE-DAY

Soumya Sarkar, Abu Zayed Choudhury, Aslam Hossain, Liton Kumar Das, Salman Hossain, Asif Ahmed, Mosaddek Hossain, Nuruzzaman Md. Rubel, Nasum Ahmed, Abu Haider, Nayeem Islam, Zakaria Masud, Dewan Sabbir and Al-Amin.

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