DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Jankulovski calls it quits

Czech defender Marek Jankulovski, who won the Champions League with AC Milan in 2007, announced the end of his career Monday after grappling with a knee ligament injury for almost a

The 34-year-old returned from AC Milan to Czech top-flight side Banik Ostrava last summer after being sidelined with the knee injury since March 2011. But his hopes of a new start were dashed as he only managed seven minutes for his new team before hurting his knee again last October.



Franchises yet to sign agreements?

SPORTS REPORTER



Destiny-boishakhi With the inaugural edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 tournament already half-way through, a sensational disclosure came out yesterday that neither of the six franchises taking part in

the meet has signed a formal tripartite agreement that also involves the BPL Governing Council and Game On Sports Management.

After the auction for the teams was held on January 10, it was said that the agreement signing would take place as soon as possible before the tournament gets underway. It was also learnt that the BPL organising committee sat with the franchise owners on Sunday, where they expressed concerns over the delay in signing the agreements.

When contacted, Bangladesh Cricket Board director and BPL Governing Council secretary Sirajuddin Mohammad Alamgir claimed that they had already signed agreements with most of the teams.

"As far as I know five of the six franchises have signed the agreements. Since the tournament was arranged in a bit of a hurry, we could not get everything finalised before the start of the tournament."

Even if one team remains unsigned by the authority, it puts the whole tournament

in a state of legal quandary and raises doubts whether the BPL authority has received any payment from the teams, and if they did, through which legal frame.

BCB's acting CEO Nijamuddin Ahmed Chowdhury denied making any comment on the issue saying; "It is an internal matter of the BPL Governing Council and I cannot comment on the issue."

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PHOTOS: STAR

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim pays homage to the martyrs of Language Movement at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday. (Inset) Two Pakistan cricketers Imran Nazir (L) and Azhar Mahmood (2nd from L) are also seen placing their wreath at the altar of a shaheed minar in Chittagong where they are now featuring in the BPL T20.

Lack of chance, power and unfamiliarity

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



There has been no shortage of competitiveness in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 so far, even the low-

scoring encounters saw nail-biting ends. But two talking points remain with the inaugural tournament: poor turn-outs and the lack of important runs from the local batsmen.

Only on two occasions -- both involving hometown franchise, Chittagong Kings, playing at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium -- did the crowd really look like a decent one. Otherwise, despite the cut down of the ticket prices, it has been quite an embarrassment for the organisers who have only looked at each other for answers for such low interest.

There is also some curiosity about the semifinal line-ups right at this moment but the main question mark is on the local players. Why have they failed to steal the show in this tournament? So far it has been dominated by Pakistanis and West Indians; aged or not, experienced or otherwise.

The local spinners though have come to the limelight, particularly left-arm spinner Enamul Haque who has impressed one and all while Shakib Al Hasan has been Shakib Al Hasan: one can't compare the world's No. 1 all-rounder with anybody in the country as he has a mighty presence not only as Khulna Royal Bengals' captain but also as a leading wicket-taker with his left-arm spin (though he has yet to prove his class with the bat).

The unbeaten 89 by Junaed Siddiqui puts him as the lone local batsman on the top ten list but still his overall batting performance was not satisfactory. The experts however found few reasons behind the failure, namely, the lack of opportunity to bat at the top of the order, lack of power and overall the relative unfamiliarity with the newest version of the game.

"I think the quality of cricket is not too bad in the tournament because we watched some very entertaining matches no matter whether that were low-scoring affairs or not. Our bowling performance was not bad especially the spinners have done an excellent job so far and I want to particularly mention the name of Enamul [Haque] who came back strongly in the tournament," said Faruque Ahmed, the former national skipper who is a consultant of Duronto Rajshahi.

"Batting-wise, definitely we have to improve a lot. Some of our batsmen showed their ability but still the overall picture is not encouraging. In my observation we are yet to learn the tactics of how to handle the situation in T20 cricket. Once again I want to say that one can only become a good batsman if he is good in the longer-version cricket. You see that quality cricketers are good in all three formats," he added.

"In my opinion this tournament is helping us to know about our standard of the players. Without any doubt 80 per cent of the performances have come from the foreign cricketers but I am impressed by the bowlers. Our batsmen might not have got enough chances but still their batting performance should have been much better. Shakib [Al Hasan], [Mahmudullah] Riyad, Mushfiqur [Rahim] and Junaed [Siddiqui] played some good knocks but still what I felt is that we are yet to acclimatise with the newest version of the game," observed chief selector Akram Khan, who is also an official of the Barisal Burners.

Khaled Mahmud, the head coach of the Chittagong Kings, however is hopeful that the tournament will be much better in the

future as this year the franchises had hardly any time to prepare their teams. "The standard of cricket might not be

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MS worried of old legs

Cricket

MAIL TODAY, Brisbane

There is no place to hide in international cricket, especially when your captain points a finger at you in public. After being ripped apart by Australia in

their tri-series match here on Sunday, the Indians were left to lick their wounds. Sadly, they had to do it while enduring admonishment from Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

In the post-match press conference, Dhoni made it clear that the current side will always remain behind when it comes to fielding and that Australia and Sri Lanka will exploit the massive drawback.

And he took names.

FIFA's turf

consultant

FIFA astro-turf consultant

Eric Harrison arrived in

Dhaka yesterday to oversee

the foundation laid on the

'Balur Math' adjacent to

the Bangladesh Football

During his four-day stay

in Bangladesh, Harrison

in town

SPORTS REPORTER

Federation.

"It's not only these three players [Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir] that we are talking about. We also have quite a few other players who are slow on the field. It [playing them together] will just add on to that, and we will be left with just two or three good fielders. These are not bad fielders, but in these conditions with big outfields, they are slightly on the slower side.

Once the ball goes to them, the Australians or the Sri Lankans will try to exploit them, by taking twos and threes. It will put more pressure on their body," he said.

The senior members of the Indian team aren't used to such name-calling in team meetings, let alone in public. While he has been known to call it as he sees it, the captain is now letting loose his views left, right and centre. The danger of such assessments is that it alienates players. There is a sharp edge to the frankness of Dhoni and it is cutting the wrong way.

India were never known for their fielding and with the number of passengers in the side, runs were never going to be stopped The team is fiddling with a rotation policy and not filling the side with youngsters so as to provide stability. In the process, the youngsters have been given a free reign, and the seniors stationed on a merry-go-round. The not-so-old brigade too hasn't set the stage alight with its fielding. So if there are only three or four good fielders in the squad, Dhoni's angst seems unwarranted.

The Indian side didn't arrive at this juncture

ocas

Bangladesh Air Force and Bangladesh Army won their

respective matches of the Exim Bank-Noorjahan

Shaheed Smriti Hockey tournament at the Maulana

1 with Mamun Hossain and Saddam Hossain scoring

one goal apiece while Bangladesh Army also defeated

Abahani by an identical 2-1 scoreline with Milon

Bangladesh Police Athletics Club played out a goalless

draw against Shadharan Biman KC in the Destiny

Group Second Division Football League at the

Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in

Parash, Lal Chand, Rahich and Saifuddin moved to the

Hossain and Rokonuzzaman netting one goal each.

Bangladesh Air Force defeated Bangladesh Police 2-

Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

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Div-II Football

Kamalapur yesterday.

Pallima Badminton

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BPL resumes today Lanka overtake India

SPORTS REPORTER

Barisal Burners could have to play catch-up to the Dhaka Gladiators today in the BPL T20 which resumes after a day's break for the International Mother Language Day on February 21.

On the last day of the competition's Chittagong leg, Sylhet Royals will look to break their duck but it will be the Dhaka franchise that will be hard pressed for victory to re-enter the top four. The match following the afternoon encounter will be Barisal taking on the current table toppers Khulna Royal Bengals at the same venue (Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium), making sure the Burners will have a tougher task to hold on to their

fourth place. The toss-up between Dhaka and Barisal is set to go down to the wire though the slump of the Chittagong Kings of late could make the semifinals equation even more interesting. Both the Burners and the Gladiators will face each other next Saturday, right at the business end of the tournament.

Khulna and Rajshahi are sitting pretty on top with ten points each with both sides making late forays through excellent teamwork and riding on good performances in every win that they have picked up thus far.

Sylhet will also look to pick up a win or two, given their terrible campaign, but their track record in the six games is not an encouraging sign for their fans.

POINTS TABLE Team

L Pts Khulna 10 Rajshahi Chittagong 7 Barisal Dhaka Sylhet 0 6

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

An outstanding display of seam bowling from Nuwan Kulasekara and Thisara Perera helped Sri Lanka beat India by 51 runs in their one-day international triseries match in Brisbane on Tuesday.

After Sri Lanka scored 289 for 6, man-of-the-match Kulasekara took 3-40 and Perera 4-37 as India were bowled out for 238 in 45.1 overs, their second loss in three days following their defeat by Australia at the Gabba on Sunday.

Sri Lanka moved into second on the tri-series points table following the win and are now on 11 points, three behind the Australians and one ahead of India.

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene won the toss and chose to bat on a hot and humid Brisbane afternoon and his batsmen were always on top of the Indian bowling attack. Lahiru Thirimanne scored a quick-

fire 62 in the middle of the order and big-

hitting Angelo Mathews smashed 49 not out from 37 balls as the Sri Lankans blasted 91 runs off the last 10 overs.

Off-spinner Ravi Ashwin was the pick of the Indian bowlers with 2-50 while left arm seamer Irfan Pathan took 2-54. The Indian run-chase began badly

with skipper Virender Sehwag and Sachin Tendulkar both falling early and any hopes of overhauling the Sri Lanka total were dashed as they lost wickets at crucial moments.

Virat Kohli was dropped twice by Dinesh Chandimal on his way on his way to 66, once on 14 and the second on 32, with the only other real contribution coming from Pathan, who smashed 47 from 34 deliveries to ensure Sri Lanka missed out on the bonus point win.

India's innings got off to the worst possible start when they lost Sehwag in the second ball off the innings, caught at third man going after a short ball outside off stump from Lasith Malinga.

Fellow opener Tendulkar, still hunting an elusive 100th international century, looked in superb touch as he raced to 22 at a run a ball until he shouldered arms to Kulasekara, only for the ball to hit the inside edge of his bat and cannon into off stump.

Gautam Gambhir was next, perishing meekly after a promising start, guiding a ball from the impressive Kulasekera to Thisara Perera in the gully.

India were looking shaky at 54-3 but Kohli and Suresh Raina dug in and slowly nudged the run rate up, defying some tight bowling by the Sri Lankans. The pair put on 92 before Raina fell,

chipping a simple catch off Farveez Maharoof to Thirimanne for 32, leaving the Indians 146-4 from 31 overs.

Any hope of overhauling the Sri Lankans disappeared when Kohli was tucked up by Perera attempting a pull shot which went straight to Kulasekara at mid-on.

Pathan offered resistance but he kept losing partners and was last man out when Perera took a superb caught and bowled chance to wrap up the

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Sri Lanka seamer Nuwan Kulasekara celebrates after dismissing an India batsman during their tri-series ODI in Brisbane yesterday.

ever, the FIFA president Bangladesh on March 6.

"The astro-turf has SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

will also provide guidelines on how to lay the turf to Bosoti, the local agent of FIFA, in a bid to complete the ground by March. How-

Sepp Blatter is expected to inaugurate the astro-turf during his second visit to