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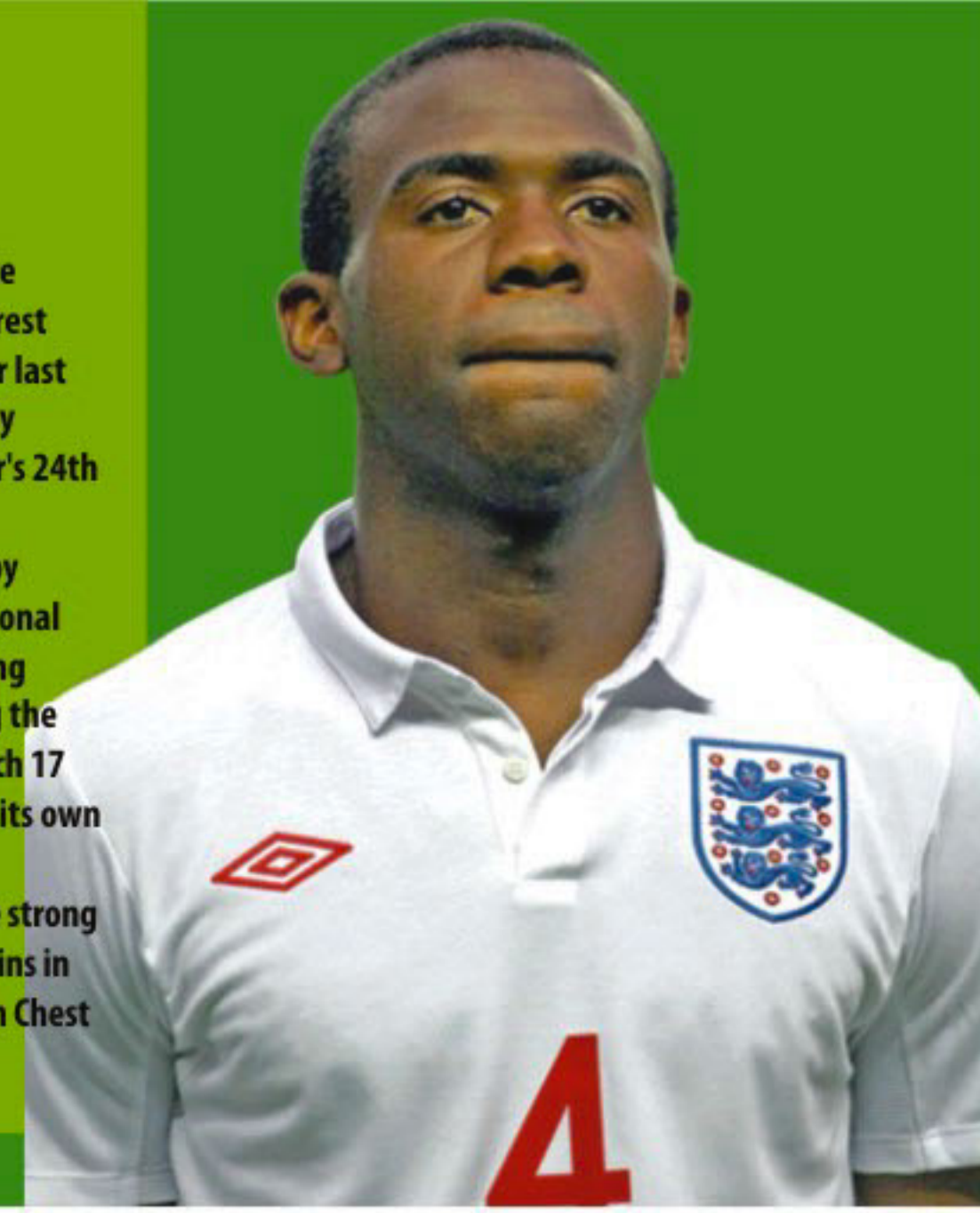
DHAKA SUNDAY APRIL 8, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Muamba turns 24 in hospital

Bolton Wanderers midfielder Fabrice Muamba, who suffered a cardiac arrest while playing at Tottenham Hotspur last month, is continuing to make steady progress, the club said on the player's 24th birthday.

A joint statement issued on Friday by Bolton, Bart's Hospital and the National Health Service Trust was encouraging about Muamba's recovery following the incident at White Hart Lane on March 17 when his heart stopped beating on its own for 78 minutes.

"Fabrice Muamba continues to make strong and steady improvements and remains in the intensive care unit of the London Chest Hospital," the statement said.



Ashraf undaunted by pay delay

Claims situation not as bad as reported in English press

SPORTS REPORTER

It is now more than a month since the first edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 ended, but still some major issues remain unresolved. Except the fiasco with the semifinalists, the competition was more or less successful in terms of on-field affairs but off the field matters left a lot to be desired, especially the legal aspects as even the tri-party agreement between Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), event management company Game On and the six franchises is yet to be put on paper.

Local players have been complaining of unpaid wages for a while, and the BPL came under focus again as an article appeared in an English newspaper -- The Telegraph -- regarding unpaid wages.

"English county cricketers are owed a combined £500,000 in unpaid wages for appearing in the inaugural Bangladesh Premier League Twenty20 competition," stated the article.

"A total of 13 players employed by coun-

ties appeared in the BPL in February and signed contracts worth between \$25,000-\$75,000. None have been paid their full fees with a fraction having received up to 50 percent of the money owed," it added.

Some local players were surprised by the reaction of their franchise owners when they demanded the pending amount.

"As far as I know there are only a fortunate few who have received a handsome amount because most of the players got only 30 to 40 percent. The owners even sometimes threatened that they will not pay the remaining amount if we talk about the issue, saying that they are yet to sign the agreement," said a player on condition of anonymity.

BPL's governing body chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain however has remained undaunted, much as he had been when questions were raised during the tournament. He retains his faith in the mutual understanding between the parties.

"We checked the English player's unpaid issues and what we found was that a significant amount was already paid and we hope they will get that the rest of the money very

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League resumes April 10

SPORTS REPORTER

It took the Bangladesh Cricket Board ten days to restart the Dhaka Premier Cricket League on April 10 after its directors reached a decision in an emergency meeting last night.

Apart from the date, the BCB have come to the conclusion that Mohammad Yousuf will not be allowed to further participate in the tournament while the quote for foreign registration will be increased from eight to ten, though only three would be allowed to play in a Premier League game.

Crucially, the decision of the match referee on March 28 when Obaydul Haque Azam awarded two points to Victoria Sporting Club after Abahani refused to play and continue the encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, which was due to its protest of Yousuf's registration.



PHOTO: STAR

Team BJMC striker Ismael Bangoura (L) is congratulated by his strike partner Abdur Rasheed (C) for his brace against Arambagh during their Bangladesh Premier League tie at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

BJMC demolish Arambagh

SPORTS REPORTER

Team BJMC recorded the biggest victory of the season as they thrashed Arambagh KC 5-0 in their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The huge win lifted the newcomers to solo third position with 13 points from eight matches while Arambagh continue to struggle at ninth position with eight points from the same number of matches.

Guinean forward Ismael Bangoura scored a brace while Abdullah Parvez, Mohammad Biplob and Uche Felix scored the other three. However, Nigerian forward Ajagoun Abdur Rasheed was the chief architect of the big win as he created three of the chances that were scored of.

The visitors BJMC took the lead in the 14th minute, thanks to a fumble from the Arambagh goalkeeper Mostafizur Rahman who failed to grip Abdul Rasheed's shot. The ball fell to an unmarked Mohammad Biplob in front of goal and the striker neatly placed the ball at the back of the net.

The margin was doubled four minutes

later when midfielder Abdullah Parvez beat the keeper at the far post with a curling shot from the top of the box. BJMC onslaught continued as it took them only two more minutes to find the third. Ismael Bangoura, the Guinean forward, played a neat one-two with Rasheed before the Guinean striker finished with a placing shot at the near post.

There were no more goals in the first half, but Bangoura scored again on the hour mark. This time too he combined superbly with his striking partner as Rasheed played a through pass from the left flank and Bangoura tapped the ball in from close range. Nigerian midfielder Uche Felix put the icing on the cake with a fifth goal in the 79th minute as his fierce 25-yard shot was too good for the keeper to deal with.

BJMC coach Jakaria Babu was ecstatic about the victory as he said they are still in the title race. "We could have won by a bigger margin as the players were confident and we dominated the match. Even though we are at number three, there is still a long way to go for the league where we can take ourselves even higher," said Babu after the match.

BFF polls now on April 30

SPORTS REPORTER

The scheduled election and general meeting of the Bangladesh Football Federation has been deferred by two days, decided an emergency meeting of the executive committee of BFF yesterday. The polls will now be held on April 30 instead of April 28 after the some councillors of affiliated educational institutions appealed for a two-day deferment, informed BFF's senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy after the meeting at the BFF House yesterday. In line with the decision, the last date of sending names of delegates for the election has also been deferred to April 9.

The BFF polls will be contested for 21 posts-president, five vice-presidents and 15 members, to be elected by 129 of its members who represent district sports associations, clubs, and other BFF-affiliated institutions.



PHOTOS: STAR

Winners Scholastica (L) and Narinda Govt. High School players pose with their trophies after becoming champions in girls' and boys' groups of the Polar Ice-Cream 20th School Handball Tournament at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

Five-star Scholastica girls Narinda retain boys' national handball title

SAVEEM SHAMA

The girls of Scholastica banked on reputation, strategy and a whole lot of practice to win the Polar Ice-Cream 20th National Handball tournament at the handball stadium yesterday. The reputed English medium school completed a hat-trick of titles and picked up their fifth trophy in the competition.

Narinda Govt High School won the boys' competition by beating

Residential Model School 17-16 in a nail-biting contest with Monir Hossain of the winners scoring ten goals in the final.

But it was the earlier final which showed why handball is the main sport for schoolgirls across the country. Scholastica beat last year's runners-up Sunnysdale 7-4 amidst a packed house of cheering crowd of guardians and supporters. Scholastica were 3-1 up at the break before finishing the game on

top with Samaha, the tournament's best player, scoring four times.

The scoreline could have been bigger but for the two goalkeepers who showed athleticism to keep out many chances which came in the form of continuous shots and attempts from the forwards of the respective schools.

But Scholastica prevailed and now have brought one trophy home after another. They have raised the bar for

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England stay on top Swann scripts series-levelling win

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Graeme Swann claimed a match haul of 10 wickets as England roared to a series-levelling win over Sri Lanka in the second and final Test on Saturday to retain their number one ranking.

Swann followed his four wickets in the first innings with six in the second as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 278 at the stroke of lunch on the fifth day at the P Sara Oval in Colombo.

England, set a modest target of 94, coasted home by eight wickets despite a brief stutter at 31-2 following the dismissals of skipper Andrew Strauss for no score and Jonathan Trott for five.

Alastair Cook and Kevin Pietersen carried the tourists home with a brisk third-

wicket stand of 66 in 69 balls, amid wild celebrations from some 5,000 travelling English fans at the ground.

Left-hander Cook remained unbeaten on 49 and Pietersen, who hit a century in the first innings, smashed 42 not out from 28 balls, signalling his team's emphatic victory with a six off Tillakaratne Dilshan.

It was England's first win in five Tests on their Asian sojourn this year after being thrashed 3-0 by Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates and losing the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle.

The ICC confirmed that England and South Africa were level at the top of the Test charts with 116 rating points, but Strauss's men nudged ahead when the ratings were calculated beyond the decimal point.

Sri Lanka, currently

ranked sixth, paid the price for not reaching 300 in either innings of the match and will remain without a series win since 2009, when they beat New Zealand at home.

Skipper Mahela Jayawardene, who ended with 354 runs in four innings at an average of 88.50 with two hundreds and a half-century, was declared the man-of-the-series.

SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA: First innings 275 (M Jayawardene 105, Samaraweera 54, Mathews 57; Swann 4-75, Anderson 3-62)	
ENGLAND: First innings 460 (Pietersen 151, Strauss 61, Cook 94, Trott 64; Herath 6-133)	
SRI LANKA: Second innings (overnight 218-6)	
Prasad c Bresnan b Finn	34
Thirimanne c Strauss b Anderson	11
Dilshan c Anderson b Swann	35
Sangakkara c Prior b Swann	21
M Jayawardene c Cook b Swann	64
Samaraweera b Swann	47

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