

Star SPORT

Sunday Times sues Lance

British newspaper The Sunday Times said on Sunday that it was suing Lance Armstrong for over 1 million pounds over a libel payment made to the disgraced cyclist in 2006. The newspaper paid Armstrong 300,000 pounds to settle a libel case after previously suggesting that he may have cheated. But the United States Anti-Doping Agency subsequently found that he had led the "most sophisticated" doping programme in sporting history, leading to a life ban for the Texan, who was also stripped of his seven Tour de France wins. The Sunday Times is reportedly demanding the return of the original settlement payment,

New deals, old issues

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) Governing Council completed the signing of the two-party agreement with all seven franchisees when Barisal Burners and Sylhet Royals put pen to paper at the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) headquarters in Mirpur yesterday.

Earlier Dhaka Gladiators, Chittagong Kings, Rangpur Riders, Khulna Royal Bengals and Duronto Rajshahi signed the two-party agreement.

The organisers are trying to complete all the documentation before the start of the second edition which is set to kick off from January 17, but the money-spinning tournament is still being haunted by the nonpayment of the players from the first edition.

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim, who was bought by the Sylhet Royals for the second edition of the tournament, told reporters yesterday that he was yet to be paid his wages in full as the icon player of Duronto Rajshahi last season.

"I was supposed to get 210,000 dollars but received only 110,000 dollars. Would you please ask him

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Cycling is not a popular sport in Bangladesh. Yet it makes its grade once a year during the National Cycling Championships. Here cyclists compete in the 4000m point race at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhanmondi Progoti Sangha managed an exciting two-run victory against Uttara Sporting Club in the First Division Cricket League at BKSP yesterday.

In the day's other matches, Bangladesh Boys Club defeated BKSP by five wickets at the City Club ground, Indira Road Krira Chakra posted a 30-run victory over City Club at JUG and Partex Sporting Club beat Young Pegasus Club by 37 runs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

SCORES IN BRIEF
DHANMONDI PROGOTI SANGHA: 161 all out in 44.2 overs (Tushar 60, Rajib Proshad 3-29, Uttam Sarker 2-20, Manik Kumar 2-22)

UTTARA SPORTING CLUB: 159 all out in 45 overs (Rakin 50, Shahadat 41, Rajib Hossain 31 not out, Tushar 2-27, Rowshan 2-28, Shahbaz 2-28)
Result: Dhanmondi Progoti Sangha won by 2 runs.

BKSP: 213 all out in 50 overs (Mosabbir 65, Moinuddin 43, Rifat 29,

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BCL franchisees announce squad



SPORTS REPORTER

The squads for the newly-designed franchise-based 4-day cricket league named Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) were announced yesterday by the respective franchisees.

Tigers skipper Mushfiqur Rahim will lead the BCB North Zone, his deputy Mahmudullah Riyad will lead the Walton Central Zone, former national all-rounder Alok Kapali has been named captain for the Islami Bank East Zone while experienced left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak has been named captain of the Prime Bank South Zone.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, opener Tamim Iqbal and pacer Mashrafe Bin Mortaza were the notable absentees from the teams. Shakib is nursing his shin bone injury, Tamim is now playing in a domestic competition in New Zealand while Mashrafe is currently unavailable for longer-version cricket.

The first edition of the country's second four-day cricket league will begin from December 27 at two venues, the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium (SBNS) in Mirpur and the Shaheed Chandu Stadium (SCS) in Bogra.

Four zonal teams -- Walton Central Zone (Dhaka and Dhaka Metro), Prime Bank South Zone (Khulna and Barisal), Islami Bank East Zone (Sylhet and

Chittagong) and BCB North Zone (Rangpur and Rajshahi) -- will take part in the franchisee-based competition.

SQUADS

WALTON CENTRAL ZONE: Mahmudullah Riyad (captain), Rokibul Hassan, Mosharraf Hossain, Mohammad Ashraful, Shuvagoto Hom, Shamsur Rahman, Marshal Ayub, Mehrab Hossain, Elias Sunny, Nurul Hasan, Shahadat Hossain, Asif Ahmed, Mohammad Sharif, Arafat Sunny and Talha Jubaeer

RESERVES: Mahbubul Alam, Rony Talukder, Sahagir Hossain, Tarek Aziz, Mohammad Sharifullah.

ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE: Alok Kapali (captain), Shabbir Ahmed, Aftab Ahmed, Mominul Hoque, Nafis Iqbal, Faisal Hossain, Dhiman Ghosh, Abul Hasan, Tapash Baisya, Enamul Haque, Yasin Arafat, Nabil Samad, Kazi Kamrul Islam, Mahbubul Karim and Rajin Saleh.

PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE: Abdur Razzak (captain), Imrul Kayes, Mohammad Mithun, Soumya Sarker, Tushar Imran, Ziaur Rahman, Fazle Rabbi, Anamul Haque, Rubel Hossain, Al Amin, Shohag Gazi, Robiul Islam, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Salman Hossain and Murad Khan

RESERVES: Monir Hossain, Shahriar Nafees, Nasiruddin Faruque, Taposh Ghosh and Dollar Mahmud

BCB NORTH ZONE: Mushfiqur Rahim (captain), Junaed Siddiqui, Jahurul Islam,

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World Cities Chess Dhaka falter in 2nd round

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka stumbled in the second round of the World Cities Team Chess Championship when they lost to London 3-1 in United Arab Emirates on Sunday.

Dhaka, who on Saturday beat Al-Ain of UAE in the first round, saw GM Ziaur Rahman and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar draw against GM David Howell and GM

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BGB retain h'ball title

SPORTS REPORTER

Boarder Guard Bangladesh retained the title of the Exim Bank 22nd National Handball Championship beating Bangladesh Police by 31-26 goals in the final at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali Handball Stadium yesterday.

BGB dominated the first-half by 18-12 goals. Shudhon Barua and Imdadul scored nine and five goals respectively for

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Cycling strong at 47

SPORTS REPORTER

Winning a gold medal in cycling at the age of 47 is unusual, but it was not out of the ordinary for Akashi Sultana, who added another jewel to her crown by winning gold in the 20 kilometre Mass Start event of the Dr Abdul Basit 36th National Cycling Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Akashi has been cycling for the last 27 years for Bangladesh Ansar and over the years has become the most successful cyclist in the country. Yesterday's gold, according to Akashi, was her 49th out of 126 medals won since she began cycling in 1984. The Bangladesh Cycling Federation holds only two meets every year -- the National Cycling Championship and Club Championship.

Last season, the lady from Narsingdi had to be content with a bronze medal but her determination and willingness to regain the 20km Mass Start title paid dividends this season. It was a dramatic victory as she called upon her years of experience to overtake Sonia Yeasmin Ovi at the last moment.

After winning the gold, the obvious question to Akashi was whether she still loved cycling as much as when she started nearly three decades ago. Akshai said, "I still enjoy cycling and want to continue as long as I am fit."

Later however, she said that there was another reason to continue cycling -- as a Bangladesh Ansar employee the sport is her livelihood.

Akashi said that she enrolled at Bangladesh Ansar in 1984 at a wage of Tk 550 which has since increased to Tk 9,000, along with rations. Akashi, who has a 17-year-old son, also gets immense support from her athlete husband Mizanur Rahman, who always helps her train for championships and his best to be present during the races, although this time Mizanur could not turn up due to business commitments.

"My success does not mean that new cyclists are not coming to this field; rather I use my experience to win medals. The newcomers need some time to win medals as we don't have any cycling venue or practice venue," said Akashi, urging the government to build a Velodrome for the cyclists.

Akashi has also introduced her niece, Sharifa Akhter Tania, to cycling and Sharifa finished third in the 4000 metre Point Race event. Five more of her nieces are involved in various sports.

On the opening day, Tariqul Islam of BJMC won gold in the 40km Mass Start with a timing of 1:28.24 hours while his teammate Swapan Alam narrowly missed the gold, clocking 1:28.25 hours.

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AKASHI SULTANA



India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (L) and his Pakistan counterpart Mohammad Hafeez hold the Airtel T20 Trophy in Bangalore on Sunday. The two bitter rivals resume bilateral ties today after a gap of five years.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Hafeez happy to be in India after long Rivals open series in Bangalore today

IANS, Bangalore



The Pakistan team is delighted to be in India again after five years, albeit on a short visit to play two T20s and three one-dayers in five cities across the country from December 25 (Christmas night).

"We are very happy to be in India again to play some good cricket after a long time, as winning or losing will not make any difference to us. It is always a pleasure and challenge playing against India wherever, as there is lot of passion and intensity in the game," Pakistan T20 captain Mohammed Hafeez, 32, told reporters here Sunday.

Admitting that expectations were very high back home, as both countries love to win against the other, Hafeez said more than the result, it was important that both the teams play as often to enjoy the game

and rise to the expectations of the fans in both the countries.

"We are here to enjoy the game. Though there are security issues, we are not unduly concerned because of the love and affection the people of India have for us. It is the spirit of the game that matters, which is shared in both the countries," Hafeez asserted.

Regretting that international matches were not being played in Pakistan since the last three years for security reasons, the young Pakistan skipper hoped the situation back home would improve sooner so that youngsters get a chance to play in front of home crowds against visiting teams, especially from India.

"It is unfortunate we have not been able to play international cricket in our country for some time. But that did not deter us from playing some excellent cricket outside and winning in Tests and one-dayers. We wish international cricket

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Dav demands consistency

ANI, Karachi

Pakistan coach Dav Whatmore has said that his team will have to show consistency in order to achieve good results against India, ahead of their opening Twenty20 fixture in Bangalore on Tuesday.

The Express Tribune quoted Whatmore, as saying that he is hopeful of a good performance as Pakistan have prepared well for the series. Whatmore said he was not feeling the pressure to be in India as Pakistan coach, as he has previously worked with players from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, according to a team official, the Pakistan players were unperturbed with the presence of heavy security.