



The Philippines women footballers, known as Malditas, limber up on the greens of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Threatened players looking elsewhere

NAIMUL KARIM



As the uncertainty with this year's Dhaka Premier League continues, an increasing number of cricketers are being compelled to look at alternative options for financial support and as a means to stay in touch with the game.

While some of the players were roped in to play local competitions outside Dhaka, a number of them have also been signed up to feature in tournaments outside the country.

A 14-member side, including cricketers such as Naeem Islam and Sohrawardi Shuvo, for instance, will be leaving for Dehradun in India on May 21 to participate in a limited overs competition.

"Since the Dhaka League is still uncertain, we decided to accept the invitation," said Shuvo. "We got the opportunity through BKSP. Cricketers from the Ranji Trophy are expected to participate in the competition, so it will be a good experience for us as well," he added. Nadif Chowdhury, Mukhtar Ali, Sanjamul Islam and Mithun Ali are among the other first-class players who'll be playing in this competition.

Slow left-armer Enamul Haque Jr, signed up with Wolverhampton Cricket Club in the United Kingdom and plans to continue playing there till September if the premier league does not begin.

Within the country, cricketers have been competing in different districts to make ends meet. Veteran batsman Tushar Imran played in three leagues -- Chittagong, Sylhet and Comillah. Opener Nazimuddin signed a Tk 2.5 lakh contract in Chittagong.

Marshall Ayub too played a few games in the port-city. "I took a break from the high performance camp with Richard McInnes's consent and played in Chittagong," said Marshall.

"I'm a bit more established, so it won't affect me as much, but players who depend solely on the league are struggling," he added.

The extent of influence that the league has on the players is perhaps best described by former national player Faisal Hossain Dickens who depends on it for 90 per cent of his income. "I am towards the end of my career. The other seniors are much better placed, but for me it's not the same. I am ready to play the league even if I get five takas instead of ten," said Dickens.

Rayhan Arafat, from Chittagong, faces a similar worry. "A third of my income comes from the league. So I'll obviously be affected," said Rayhan. "It's not just the finances; your chances of progressing into the National Cricket League decreases as well. If the Dhaka league does not take place I plan to join Clemon's cricket academy in Rajshahi to work on my skills," he added.

Confident Filipinos

SPORTS REPORTER



Philippines women's national football team have not qualified for the final round of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Premier League on Sunday.

Philippines, who had qualified for the AFC Women's Asian Cup for six times in a row from 1993 to 2003, are the third favourite in Group B qualifiers, according to the FIFA rankings. However, they are banking on those foreign-based players, who were the key behind their triumph in four-team LA Viking Cup in United States last November.

Apart from the 16 are US and Canada-based players, five players are high school students and the other two are from student-cum-workers.

Philippines coach Ernie Nierras is confident they can make it to the finals as they have won all four of their practice matches including one against a Mexican side and another against a Colombian side during their two-week stay in Corona, California last month.

"We are ready for Thailand, Iran and Bangladesh as our target is to top the group," said coach Nierras during the training session at the Sheikh Jamal DC ground yesterday.

Sunrisers seal final 4 spot

AGENCIES, New Delhi

Parthiv Patel (47) and Shikhar Dhawan (42) helped Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 5 wickets as the hosts booked the last available play-off spot of the sixth edition of the Indian Premier League on Sunday.

Sunrisers' victory left Royal Challengers Bangalore out of the play-offs stage.

In the playoffs, Chennai Super Kings will take on Mumbai Indians tomorrow in Qualifier 1. Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad meet in the Eliminator on Wednesday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PUNE: 172 for 5 in 20 overs (Uthappa 24, Finch 52, Mathews 30 not out, Wright 44; Kaul 2-27)

DELHI: 134 for 9 in 20 overs (Jayawardene 14, Chipli 16, Pathan 24, Gautam 30; Murtaza 3-15, Mathews 3-14)

Result: Pune Warriors won by 38 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Luke Wright.

KOLKATA: 130 for 7 in 20 overs (Pathan 49 not out, Kallis 24; Steyn 2-24)

HYDERABAD: 132 for 5 in 18.5 overs (Patel 47, Dhawan 42; Abdulla 3-29)

Result: Sunrisers won by 5 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Parthiv Patel.

Niaz wins

SPORTS REPORTER

National champion GM Niaz Murshed beat Docena Jerad of Philippines in the second round of open section in the Asian Continental Chess Championships in Manila on Sunday.

Niaz drew his first game on Saturday.

Hosts hoping for an upset

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday announced a 22-member squad for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers with a hope of producing an upset in one of their three encounters which start from Tuesday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Bangladesh are the lowest ranked side (108) among the four teams of Group B with Thailand being the group favourites with a ranking of 26 ranked followed by Iran (53) and Philippines (83). Bangladesh started their training 45 days ago, with 35 girls, and played three warm-up matches in Kolkata where they won two and lost one game.

Now the 22-member squad comprises 17 senior players, most of whom have experience of playing international matches. There are four U-19 players and one U-14 player as well.

"Initially the players lacked fitness and endurance but we have overcome those things with hard training," said Syed Golam Jilani at an official press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

"Now we can expect to produce a surprising result, if the day belongs to us," said national men's team's assistant coach Jilani who is guiding the women's team for the first time. However, the Bangladesh coach did not point out which team he is targeting for an upset.

Captain Suinu Pru Marma also echoed the sentiment of the coach and believes home advantage will count.

"You all know that other participating teams are ahead of us in terms of ranking but we don't want to give them any space in the ninety-minute game," said Suinu. "However, we will be trying to show good football as we will be playing in front of home crowd."

Racket is bigger: Police

AGENCIES, New Delhi

Indian police said Sunday they had widened their probe into cricket spot-fixing after the arrest of three players and 11 bookmakers, warning that more teams were under the microscope.

Test discard Shanthakumaran Sreesanth was among a trio of players from the Rajasthan Royals arrested on Thursday over allegations they agreed to bowl badly during the Indian Premier League in exchange for tens of thousands of dollars.

But speaking to AFP, Delhi Police Commissioner Neeraj Kumar said players for some of the other eight teams involved in the ongoing domestic Twenty20 competition were now under suspicion.

"It is still early but some other teams are also involved" in the rigging, Kumar said by phone. "It is not established yet but we are



looking into that," the police chief said.

Kumar did not disclose the identity of teams now under the widened police investigation but said he was "hopeful" of a breakthrough.

The Mail Today newspaper also quoted Kumar as saying "there could be much more grime and dirt than we anticipated".

"Many more players and teams have now come under our microscope; the conspiracy is much, much larger," Kumar told the daily. President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India Narayanaswami Srinivasan made it clear that he didn't have the resources to check the menace, after an emergency working committee meeting in Chennai.

He also said that player agents will henceforth have to be accredited to the board and that there will be an ACSU official attached to every IPL team.

7-up Broad routs NZ

AFP, London



Stuart Broad bowled England to victory in the first Test as New Zealand suffered a dramatic fourth-day collapse at Lord's on Sunday.

New Zealand, chasing 239 for victory, were dismissed for just 68 in under two hours, with Broad taking seven wickets for 44 runs in a mere 11 overs.

South Africa born duo BJ Watling (13) and Neil Wagner (17), who got to 10 with a six

off Broad, were the only New Zealand batsmen to reach double figures in an innings that lasted less than 23 overs.

Broad praised the contribution of new-ball partner James Anderson, who became only the fourth England bowler to reach the landmark of 300 Test wickets.

For New Zealand, defeat was all the more painful as until their second innings they had very much been in the game.

What had been a see-saw contest was all but over in an hour before lunch that saw New Zealand reduced to 29 for six -- with Broad having then taken five for 22 in 32 balls after hitting a quickfire

26 not out earlier Sunday.

New Zealand however surpassed their all-time lowest Test innings total of 26 against England at Auckland in 1954/55.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND: First innings 232

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 207

ENGLAND: Second innings (overnight 180-6)

Cook c Brownlie b Boulton

Compton b Wagner

Trott b Williamson

Root b Southee

Bairstow b Southee

Prior c sub (Guptill) b Southee

Finn c sub (Guptill) b Southee

Bell c Brownlie b Southee

Broad not out

Swann c McCullum b Southee

Anderson c Southee b Williamson

Extras: (lb-3, w-1, nb-2)

Total: (All out in 68.3 overs)

Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-36, 3-159, 4-167, 5-171, 6-

171, 7-183, 8-200, 9-210.

Bowler

Boulton

Southee

Wagner

Martin

Williamson

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings

Fulton c Prior b Broad

Rutherford b Broad

McCullum lbw b Broad

Williamson c Finn b Broad

Taylor c Cook b Broad

Brownlie c Cook b Anderson

McCullum lbw b Broad

Watling c Trott b Anderson

Southee c Root b Broad

Wagner run out

Martin b Broad

Boulton not out

Extras: (lb-1)

Total: (All out in 22.3 overs)

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-16, 3-16, 4-21, 5-25, 6-29, 7-41, 8-54, 9-67.

Bowler

Anderson

Broad

BECKHAM bids bye in tears

AGENCIES, Undated

With the Beatles ringing in his ears and tears in his eyes, David Beckham admitted that his starring role in Paris Saint-Germain's French title party was the last chapter of his colourful career.

The 38-year-old former England captain, one of the most high-profile players to shuffle between football and celebrity, made his final home appearance for the Ligue 1 champions on Saturday before heading into retirement.

There followed a standing ovation for Beckham as coach Carlo Ancelotti withdrew him with 10 minutes remaining and the former Manchester United, Real Madrid, AC Milan and LA Galaxy star, watched by wife Victoria and his parents, left the arena in tears to warm applause from his teammates, who each afforded him a hug.

Beckham, who rose from modest beginnings in east London to amass a fortune of £165 million (\$252 million, 195 million euros), has been linked with a raft of future career possibilities.



PHOTO: INTERNET

England fast bowler Stuart Broad is overjoyed after dismissing New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor, the third of seven wickets for the bowler, during the fourth day of the first Test at Lord's yesterday.