



(L) Bangladesh women's football team will be looking to bounce back from their morale-shattering defeat against Thailand when they take on Iran at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today. (R) The Thais, on the other hand, will be looking for their second consecutive win as they take on Philippines.

PHOTOS: STAR



Relieved to start, but worries remain

SPORTS REPORTER

While the decision to start the Dhaka Premier League on July 1 received a positive response from cricketers, a number of them however were a little concerned about this year's new transfer system and payment procedure. Most of the leading cricketers were not available for their comments, but the ones who did go on record stressed upon the need for clarity in the new system.

Although a concrete structure for the players' transfer is yet to be formed, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon on Tuesday revealed that they were going to follow a 'rotational system' for the transfers, whereby the players would be graded as per their value.

As per the new system each of the 12 clubs would get turns -- the sequence decided by lottery -- to buy players according to their graded price.

"I don't have a good understanding of the new payment system," said national left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak. "But it's great that the Dhaka league is starting -- it's a big source of

income for everyone," he added. The bowler further stated that he and his teammates were worried that the BCB would include an auctioning system for the players' transfer. "That system would have been a loss financially speaking. We were all talking about this. I still haven't received my dues from the BPL (Bangladesh Premier League T20) and another auction-based system could have made it worse," he added.

The talk among clubs of possibly decreasing the advanced payments of the players this year has also made players uncomfortable. "The advance payment is a big issue. We will obviously want a major portion of the payment before the tournament," said former national captain Rajin Saleh. The Dhaka league has a good reputation of completing the payments. Last time I got 90 per cent of my fee before the tournament and the rest at the end," he added.

Left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain echoed Rajin's sentiments. "It's great that the league is finally taking place. However, it will be great if the payment part is properly done. I still don't know about the latest payment system but I hope it's ensured," said Mosharraf.

PROPOSED GRADING SYSTEM		
CATEGORY	NO. OF PLAYERS	PROPOSED VALUE
Grade A+	4	Tk 30 lakh
Grade A	20	Tk 25 lakh
Grade B+	1+	Tk 20 lakh
Grade B	58 apx.	Tk 15 lakh
Grade C	50 apx.	Tk 10 lakh
Grade D	50 apx.	Tk 5 lakh

NOTE: The four cricketers in Grade A+ are Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Nasir Hossain

Iran's complaint rejected

SPORTS REPORTER

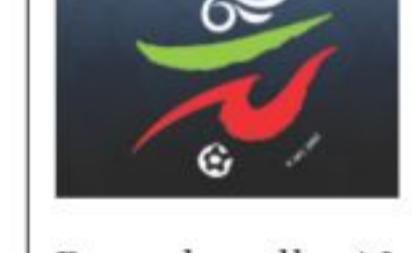
Iran lodged complaints about their accommodation and food after losing to Philippines in the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers, but the match commissioner rejected the complaints after visiting hotel Tropical Daisy in Banani yesterday.

"After their complaints, the match commissioner this morning (Wednesday) visited the hotel and found nothing wrong with accommodation and food. We have provided Iran with AFC designated hotel, which has the experience of serving Iranian food," said Mahfuza Akther Kiron, the chairman of the local organising committee.

Kiron however said that the match commissioner asked the hotel management to serve lunch and dinner on time as they were few minutes late in a couple of occasions to serve food.

Crunch tie today Bangladesh to play Iran

SPORTS REPORTER



The crucial second round of the Group B Qualifiers of the AFC Women's Asian Cup takes place today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Favourites Thailand will square off against a spirited Philippines before hosts Bangladesh face Iran hoping to secure a respectable scoreline.

Fresh from effortless opening victories, both Thailand and Philippines will look to continue the momentum by securing a win in a game where there seems to be no clear favourites. Thailand are ranked much higher but even as they put nine past Bangladesh, the Maldivians were arguably even more impressive in their 6-0 demolition of Iran -- a side ranked much higher than them.

History favours Thailand, who have beaten the Philippines eight times including a 12-0 mauling in 2008. Coach Piakul Kawnamang however, warned against complacency.

"We know a win over Philippines will give us an advantage before facing Iran but there is no guarantee of victory," said Piakul. "Many factors work in a football match and we will be trying to play our natural game."

Forward Nisa Romyen, who scored four goals in the first game is the biggest threat for the Maldivians who will also be wary of

speedy winger R Thongsombut and playmakers Naphat Seesrau and Warunnee Phetwiset.

"Thailand is a strong side and they are favourites," said Philippines coach Ernest Thomas Nierras. "But we have a good defence to foil their attacks. We worked on it in today's (Wednesday) practice."

The Maldivians coach also believed he has a good attacking side to turn the table around. "We will go there for victory but we know it will be a tough job," said Nierras.

The coach will count upon the talents of their US-based players, especially striker Jesse Anne Shugg and skilful midfielders Megan Marie Jurado and Jona Vaya Houplin.

"What we played against Iran was not the real picture of our strength and I hope we will play with our full strength tomorrow," said a confident Nierras.

There will be less academic focus on the second match between hosts Bangladesh and Iran but both sides will be hoping to restore pride following opening day humiliations. Bangladesh are ranked 55 places behind Thailand and will hope to concede less goals than in their previous game.

"Iran are a much better side than us but we will be trying to play better," said Bangladesh coach Syed Golam Jilani. "Our target is to leave the field with at least one point." Iran have no alternative way but to win against Bangladesh if they want to keep their chance of qualifying alive.

Free Hit from June 14

SPORTS REPORTER

An eight-a-side competition entitled 'Corporate Free Hit Indoor Cricket Tournament' will begin at the Shaheed Sohrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur from 14 June. 32 corporate houses will participate in the contest, which will see 55 matches played in eight days with the finals scheduled for June 21.

The rules of the tournament includes a 'free hit over' in which the stipulations of a free hit applies for an entire over.

Organisers of the tournament include former cricketers Faruk Ahmed, Khaled Mahmud and Naimur Rahman under the banner Moments360. Managing director Tasbih Hussain and CEO Anthony Philip along with the former cricketers briefed journalists on the competition at the Press Club yesterday.

Hill Tracts hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Dinajpur and Bandarban got off to winning starts on the opening day of the 3rd Hill Tracts Hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Dinajpur thrashed Panchagarh 4-0 while Bandarban beat Rangamati 2-1.

Hodge eliminates Sunrisers

INTERNET

 Australian veteran Brad Hodge played a scintillating knock to take Rajasthan Royals through to the second qualifier after eliminating Hyderabad Sunrisers in a low-scoring thriller at the Feroz Shah Kotla in New Delhi yesterday.

Hodge walked on to the pitch with Royals reeling at 57 for five, needing another 66 off the last ten overs. The Aussie veteran stroked the ball to all parts of the ground as he single-handedly carried the Royals to the victory target with four balls and four wickets to spare. Hodge's unbeaten knock of 54 off just 29 balls featured two boundaries and three massive sixes.

Earlier, Rajasthan Royals produced a disciplined bowling performance as they restricted Sunrisers Hyderabad to 132 for seven.

All the Royals bowlers did a splendid job as Sunrisers batsmen could never really force the pace during the entire 20 overs save West Indies skipper Darren Sammy (29) striking a few lusty blows during the final end of the innings.

Shikhar Dhawan (33) was the other significant contributor although his innings was an uncharacteristic one by his standards as the slowness of the track did not help his cause either.

While Vikramjeet Malik (2/14) provided twin breakthroughs, James Faulkner (1/28) and Siddharth Trivedi (1/18) consistently hit the right length on a track that was totally different from the one on which Chennai Super Kings batsmen ran riot in the Qualifier yesterday.

Portly Himachal Pradesh medium pacer Malik was rewarded for his wicket-to-wicket bowling as he removed Parthiv Patel and Hanuma Vihari off successive overs.

Two down for only three runs, it was skipper Cameron White (31), who joined Dhawan as they started the damage control, adding 52 runs for the third wicket in 8.3 overs.

Dhawan, who was a spectator all this while, finally got into the act with a couple of cover driven boundaries -- one each of Faulkner and Malik.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD: 132 for 7 in 20 overs (Dhawan 33, White 31, Sammy 29; Malik 2-14, Trivedi 1-18).

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 135 for 6 in 19.2 overs (Hodge 54 not out, Watson 24; Sammy 2-27).

Result: Rajasthan Royals won by four wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Brad Hodge.

Niaz wins, Shirin loses

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Murshed notched his third win in the Asian Continental Chess Championships after beating Indian GM Parimarjan Negi in the fifth round in Manila, Philippines yesterday.

Niaz has now 3.5 points from five games. However, Niaz's compatriot Sharmin Sultana Shirin kept her losing streak on as she suffered her fifth consecutive defeat yesterday, this time against Romero Gladys Hazel of Philippines.

Afghan captain Nabi's father kidnapped

AFP, Jalalabad

Unknown gunmen dragged the father of Afghanistan's cricket captain from his car on the outskirts of Jalalabad city and have taken him hostage, officials said on Wednesday.

Mohammad Nabi, who took over the captaincy of the team in March, confirmed that his father, Khobai Isakhel, had been kidnapped in the eastern province of Nangarhar on Tuesday.

"I have no idea who the kidnappers might be, they have not contacted me," Nabi told AFP, declining to give any more details.



New Zealand's former captain Ross Taylor relaxes during a training session at Headingley in Leeds yesterday, ahead of their second Test against England which begins on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladesh player linked to IPL spot-fixing!

CNN-IBN, New Delhi

 Involvement of a prominent Bangladeshi player, who never played in the IPL, has now emerged in the IPL spot-fixing scandal, police sources told CNN-IBN on Wednesday.

Investigation moved forward at a rapid pace on Wednesday when name of the BCCI president N Srinivasan's son-in-law Gurunath Meiyappan, who is also the Team Principal and CEO of Chennai Super Kings, also surfaced -- allegedly for

illegal betting. But the involvement of the unnamed Bangladeshi player is the latest development, though police sources said questioning the player is not possible because of jurisdiction.

Sources also revealed that Sunil Abhichandani alias Sunil Dubai, who is considered to be running this whole racket, took Railways' player Baburao Yadav to play in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Baburao, a cricketer-turned-bookie, was arrested over the weekend by Delhi Police. He had represented Vidarbha in the Ranji Trophy before joining Railways in

2006.

He was suspended by Indian Railways after his arrest.

Also on Wednesday, Delhi Police gathered more proof to nail Ajit Chandila, the Rajasthan Royals player who was arrested along with Sreesanth and Ankeet Chavan, as he was contacted by a Patiala-based bookie Deepak Kumar.

Sources told CNN-IBN that Kumar contacted Chandila on April 4 in Chandigarh to spot-fix Rajasthan Royals' May 17th match in Hyderabad. Chandila agreed to spot-fix the match and took an advance of Rs. 15 lakh but was arrested before the match.