


# SPORT

## BPL fixing investigated

SPORTS REPORTER

 “I talked to members of the ICC’s (International Cricket Council) Anti Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) and they said that they found nothing wrong.” This was the statement made on February 4 by the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL)’s governing council member secretary IH Mallick. It was in response the suspicions of “match-fixing” over the BPL game between Dhaka Gladiators and Chittagong Kings.

Three months on, the issue has reared its head again as ACSU officials were recently in the country to continue their investigation into that game and a few others in the last edition of the BPL. And whispers suggest that at least one high-profile name is among a number of cricketers against whom fingers have been raised.

The ACSU officials interrogate high-profile local and overseas players including Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan and Mohammad Ashraful, with the latter apparently

raising the most concerns as captain of the Dhaka Gladiators team in some suspicious games. ACSU officials may submit their findings to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) very soon.

It seems that the ACSU’s move has happened quietly with only a few BCB high-ups in the know about wrongdoings during the BPL. But the investigation threatens to lift the lid on what may become an altogether ugly incident for Bangladesh cricket. One BCB official, on condition of anonymity, said: “The signs are not good, we may have to pay a big price.”

When asked, IH Mallick said: “We are not in a position to make any comment regarding the issue because the investigation is ongoing.”

“Until or unless we get anything from the ICC, we can’t act upon on this issue,” said BCB’s CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, who however confirmed that the ACSU officials have visited the country on a few occasions in the last few months.

BPL’s governing council chairman Afzalur Rahman Sinha also claimed that he was not aware about the inquiry. “The nature of this inquiry is

that they keep everything secret. You know we spent huge amounts of money to designate anti-corruption personnel of ICC to take care of everything because our board president (Nazmul Hassan Papon) wanted to make sure that there was nothing wrong. Right at this moment we can’t say anything on an investigating matter but one thing is clear that we will take tough action if anybody is found guilty.”

The whispers of suspected foul play in the last BPL had been in every nook and corner and the manner in which Gladiators lost the last match of the Chittagong leg against Kings on February 2 had only served to deepen the suspicions. Gladiators skipper Mashrafe had added more fuel to the flame dismissing the team management’s claim that he was unfit to play the match and Shakib was absent due to injury. Ashraful led the team in that match and his performance also raised many eyebrows. “They (ACSU) questioned me and accordingly I co-operated with them. I answered their questions,” said Ashraful when he was asked about ACSU’s recent interrogation.

### BHF president to sit with clubs today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey federation (BHF) president Air Vice Marshall Enamul Bari will sit with the presidents of the premier league clubs at the federation headquarters in an effort to announce a date for the players’ transfers. This move seemingly comes as a measure to curb the tension between the federation and the players, who have threatened to boycott the training camp for the Asia Cup, unless as definite date for the transfers is not announced soon. The president is expected to announce a date sometime in June, before the executive committee elections take place.

### Rangpur leapfrog Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Rangpur leapfrogged Dhaka to the second spot in the sixth women’s national cricket league following their three wicket victory over Dhaka at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Rangpur got Dhaka bowled out for just 100 runs before reaching the target in 31 overs.

The Dhaka batting line up, following a 40-run stand for the opening wicket, collapsed after the departure of opener Ayesha Aktar (26). Rangpur’s Morshed K Soma and Dolly Rani Sarkar were the chief destroyers as they took three wickets each.

Rangpur made a sloppy start to their chase and at one point were in danger of losing the match. They were poised at 59 for 5 in 19 overs, but controlled partnerships in the seventh and eighth wickets however, took them home.

### Day One washed out

AFP, Leeds

Rain meant there was no play on the first day of the second and final Test between England and New Zealand at Headingley on Friday.

Heavy overnight and early morning rain meant the square was still fully covered when the captains should have been tossing up at 10.30am (0930GMT).

And after several showers Friday, the umpires abandoned play for the day shortly before 4pm (1500GMT).

## Room to grow for recovering Nasir

SPORTS REPORTER



Having top-scored for Bangladesh in both the one day international and the Test series in Zimbabwe, Nasir Hossain has undoubtedly been the team’s best batsman in the last two months. The 21-year-old’s record in 2013 has been outstanding.

Nasir has scored 273 runs this year at an average of 91 — so far the highest among cricketers who have at least batted in five ODI innings this year. It therefore is not a surprise to see many considering him as the fourth pillar of the batting side—alongside the likes of Shakib, Tamim and Mushfiq. In fact his grade value at the Dhaka Premier League this year will be at par with the three of them.

Nasir, who returned from South Africa on Wednesday, however, has his feet planted firmly on the ground. “They are the best players of the country and to be compared to them obviously feels really good. It’ll actually be an honour for me if I am graded at the same level as them,” said Nasir.

Despite the good run of form, the player described his African tour as ‘unsatisfac-

tory’. “I know I was among the runs, but I still feel that I should have done better. There were a few crucial moments in the series which I should have judged better,” said the 21-year-old, adding that his main focus had been to adjust himself to the wickets there.

Following the tour of Zimbabwe, Nasir flew to South Africa with an aim to fix an ‘unstable shoulder’ that he has been suffering from for the last one and half years. While the initial aim was to undergo surgery, he was eventually asked to go through a rehabilitation programme. “It does not affect my bowling or batting, but my side-throws are affected,” said Nasir.

“Because we have a five month break and the World Cup next year, I wanted to fix the problem with a surgery. But I have been advised against it,” he added.

With his rehabilitation programme around the corner and the Dhaka League beginning next month, it won’t be long before the batsman gets back to work. For the next ten days however, Nasir aims to stay away from cricket. “I am in a holiday mode now so I basically just want to forget the fact that I am a cricketer and enjoy as much as I can with my family and friends,” he said.



### SUPER CUP

## MSC thinking positive

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan SC are reportedly thinking positively about taking part in the Super Cup, just one day after their refusal to play in the money-spinning tournament citing the unavailability of the players.

Bangladesh Football Federation on Thursday announced their intention hold the third edition of the Super Cup from June 14 to 25 after having met with the club officials. However Mohammedan, the champions of the inaugural edition, refused to take part which raised criticism in and outside of the club.

The club management yesterday sat with

the football team management including the coaches and managers to ascertain the possibilities of assembling players, who were released from the camp soon after the completion of Bangladesh Premier League and the team management replied positively.

The team management has even started to search for new players to replace foreign players, who are not allowed in the tournament.

“We would be pleased if we can play in the Super Cup as we were the champions of the inaugural edition and the chance of participating in the tournament is not over yet. However it depends on the arrival of those players, who are now aboard,” said member-in-charge of administration of the club, Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan to reporters yesterday.

## Mumbai in final

SPORTS DESK



It took until the penultimate ball and some rank awful fielding from their opponents but the Mumbai Indians finally completed what had looked to be an altogether routine victory over Rajasthan Royals to reach the IPL final against Chennai Super Kings on Sunday.

Chasing 166 for victory, Mumbai were given a rapid start by the efforts of Dwayne Smith and Aditya Tare. The duo put on 70 in the opening stand and were then supported well by Dinesh Karthik. But some good bowling from Siddhart Trivedi and Kevin Cooper reigned them back before Harbhajan Singh’s late blows took Mumbai over the line, just as Rajasthan regained a foothold.

Earlier, Mumbai had bowled well and seemed set to restrict the Royals to a fairly low total. But a profligate last over from the usually deadly and reliable Lasith Malinga meant that Rajasthan put up 165 from their 20 overs. Rahul Dravid top scored with 43 in his final game while Dishant Yagnik and Brad Hodge provided late impetus after the innings had lost some impetus.

Ultimately though, their total was not enough.

#### SCORES IN BRIEF

**RAJASTHAN ROYALS:** 165 for 6 in 20 overs (Dravid 43, Yagnik 31\*; Harbhajan 3-23, Pollard 2-6).

**MUMBAI INDIANS:** 169 for 6 in 19.5 overs (Smith 62, Tare 35; Cooper 2-33).

**Result:** Mumbai won by 4 wickets  
**MoM:** Harbhajan Singh



The Bangladesh national women's team's booters practice at the astro-turf adjacent to the BFF House yesterday, ahead of today's AFC Asian Women's Cup qualifier against Philippines.

PHOTO: STAR

### AFC U-14 QUALIFIERS BD team to fly off today

SPORTS REPORTER

A 26-member Bangladesh squad will leave for Myanmar today with a hope of putting on a good performance in the AFC U-14 Championship Qualifiers which gets underway in Naypyidaw from May 28.

Bangladesh have been placed in Group E under ASEAN zone along with Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, Singapore and Cambodia. Only the group champions will move to the eight-team finals.

“Since we do not have any information about the opponents, we want to give a good show and the results should come automatically,” said head coach Uzal Chakrabarti at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

“From 300 players, some 36 players were selected initially in April and they have been training for the last one month,” said BFF technical director BA Jubair Nipu.

## Thailand look to seal spot

### Only pride at stake for hosts

SPORTS REPORTER



Favourites Thailand will look to seal their finals berth in the AFC Women’s Asian Cup when they take on Iran in their third and final match of the Group B Qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Meanwhile, hosts Bangladesh will also be hoping to replicate their performance against Iran in their third and final encounter against Philippines. “I think Philippines are the best side in the group and we will first try to tighten our defence to keep the scoreline respectable,” said coach Syed Golam Jinali. “I will be happy if the girls can keep their tempo like they did against Iran.”

Philippines will be praying that unfancied Iran can pull off an upset against Thailand and facilitate their slim chance of progress. If Iran can beat Thailand, the Philippines will have a chance to topple both Iran and Thailand, subject to win over Bangladesh with a bigger margin.

Thailand are top of the group with six points and a plus 10 goal difference while Philippines and Iran are sitting on equal

three points with the previous having plus five goals and the latter have minus four goals as difference. There will be needed no equation, if Thailand can secure a single point against Iran.

Understandably then, the Thai players yesterday looked more cheerful as they skipped the BFF Astro-turf due to the drizzle and indulged in some light stretching at the BFF premises.

“After the game against Philippines, my team is more relieved but I believe all teams are almost equal in strength in the group,” said Thailand coach Piyakul Kawanmkang. “A single point is enough to confirm our final berth but we will go there to secure full three points.”

Striker Nisa Romyen, who has scored five goals so far, is also confident although she was a bit of worried at the height of the Iranian players. “We believe we will win the game and I want to get more goals against Iran,” said law student Romyen, who has been playing for the national team for eight years.

Iranian coach Helena Costa knows that her charges face a tough task but stated their desire to do better, especially after securing a win over Bangladesh.

### Niaz draws, Sharmin loses

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Murshed drew against Indian GM MR Lalith Babu in the seventh round of the Asian Continental Chess Championships in Manila, Philippines yesterday. Niaz now has four points from seven matches. In the women’s section, Sharmin Sultana Shirin lost against Mendoza Shania Mae of Philippines. Sharmin has zero points from seven matches.

**KIIT INT’L CHESS**  
GM Ziaur Rahman and FM Nasir Ahmed earned 4.5 points each after the end of the seventh round in the elite category of the 5th Kiit International Chess Festival in Bhubaneswar, Odisha yesterday.

### R'ganj, Ctg Abahani win

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj MFS and Chittagong Abahani notched wins in their respective matches in the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League yesterday. Rahmatganj MFS beat Dhaka United SC 1-0 at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium, thanks to a 50th minute goal from Sentu while Chittagong Abahani defeated Victoria SC by the same margin at the MA Aziz Stadium where Soheli scored the only goal of the match in the 73rd minute.

## You'll never walk alone

STAR SPORT TEAM

Eminent sports journalist Lenin Gani passed away in London on Thursday. He was 46. He had been suffering from pulmonary hypertension and lung problems. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at a London mosque after Johr prayers today after his wife Sinthia Parvez returns to the UK. He will be buried at the Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery in Watford later.

Lenin’s condition deteriorated Thursday afternoon. He was rushed to a hospital in North Hyde Park where doctors declared him dead at around 5:00pm. Lenin left behind his parents, three brothers, wife and a daughter and a host of well wishers to mourn his death.

Born on December 9, 1967, Lenin began his journalism career with the now defunct daily Morning Sun and moved to The Daily Star in 1992 as a sub-editor for sports. He was with the newspaper until 2006 before joining New Age as sports editor. He left for London to facilitate his treatment in August 2008. He later joined the Daily Sun as its sports editor and was finally involved with online news portal bdnews24.com as sports editor at the English Desk. Lenin was a recipient of the Best Sports Report in 2001 by Dhaka Reporters Unity. He also taught economics at the Maple Leaf International School before taking up journalism as a fulltime profession.

Lenin, who left The Daily Star as Senior Sub-Editor, dedicated the best days of his life to make the sports section a publication of envy. For nearly a decade

and a half, he served The Daily Star Sport with integrity and dedication. A sports enthusiast to the core, Lenin continued to associate himself with the profession throughout. When a lung disease and other complications started limiting his mobility towards the end of 2012 it was in sports that he sought refuge and shared his years of invaluable experience in the form of online journalism.

The first thing to strike his former colleagues at The Daily Star about this rather methodical gentleman was his innate sincerity and punctuality. He was usually the first to reach office and the one to get the

telexes, copies, and later on the downloadables organised for the rest of the people at Sport Desk. After that he would single-mindedly set his eyes on editing and with equal tenacity concentrate on page make-up.

Lenin was a no-nonsense professional. Many trainees and would-be journalists who had the good fortune of coming under his wing have learned more

than our modern tutors of journalism would ever teach. He was a bridge between generations of sports journalism in Bangladesh. From the typewriter age to the tweets he held his own.

Beneath the professional gravity laid another Lenin. This was the Liverpool fanatic who stayed loyal to the Reds through thick and thin and absorbed all the good-natured ribbing of the colleagues. His love of cricket was West Indies-centric while keen following and vast knowledge of other games including tennis and golf told of a passion that drove the man despite his failing health.



LENIN GANI 1967-2013