

## CWAB to meet to discuss transfers

SPORTS REPORTER

The new format of the Dhaka Premier League's players' transfer, which is scheduled to take place on June 20, has reportedly been opposed by a number of cricketers. The Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) has therefore decided to host a meeting on June 4, including players of all levels, in order to discuss the issue.

"A number of players are concerned about the new payment system for the players' transfer and have raised their voice against it," said Debaprotto Paul. "We are going to meet to address the issue. The players don't plan to boycott the tournament but just want to take everyone's views," he added.

For the players' payment, the board is expected to distribute the players into different grades. While the official values of the grades haven't been declared yet, it is estimated to range between Tk 5 lakhs to Tk 25 lakhs with four players in the top-most category.

The bidding process will follow a rotational system with each club getting a shot at buying a player. The buying order will be decided based on a lottery.

## Nat'l Junior Athletics begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

The two-day Walton 29th National Junior Athletics Championship begins today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Some 250 athletes, divided in four age groups - two for boys and two for girls -- will compete in 19 events of the meet.

The age group will be of 16-17 and 18-19 for both boys and girls events.

However, the athletes who won medals in the last Bangladesh Games will not be allowed to compete in the meet.

## Mayor Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Enamul Hossain Rajib earned 3.5 points after the fifth round of the 6th Mayor Cup International Open Chess Tournament in Mumbai yesterday.

FM Debaraj Chatterjee and FM Mehdi Hasan Parag earned 3 points each while GM Ziaur Rahman earned 2.5 points. In the fifth round matches, Rajib drew against IM Rahul Sangma of India, Zia drew against FM Akash Thakur of India, Debaraj beat FM Vinod Kumar of India while Parag beat S Prasanna of India.

## PROTHOM ALO AWARD Shakib wins

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan once again won the sportsman of the year award for 2012 at the Grameenphone-Prothom Alo Sports Award ceremony, which took place at a local hotel yesterday. He won this award for the fourth time. The runners-up award was shared between hockey's Russel Mahmud Jimmy and weightlifter Bidyut Kumar Roy.

The life-time achievement award went to former footballer Jahurul Haque. The popular choice award went to cricket all-rounder Nasir Hossain while Anamul Haque Bijoy won the emerging cricketer of the year. Weightlifter Sabira Sultana won the award for female sportsperson of the year.

# Five quit BHF

SPORTS REPORTER



The stalemate in hockey may get even more complicated after the premier league committee decided to stick to the prevailing stipulation of the number of foreign players to a team and made no suggestion on imposing any restrictions to BKSP players allowed for a team during its meeting at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) headquarters yesterday. These were two of the three demands made by the national players. However, the meeting approved the declaration of holding the players' transfers (July 2-4).

These decisions came on a day when five of BHF's executive committee members, including two vice-presidents, resigned from their posts citing non-cooperation of the current ad-hoc committee and ignoring of the players' welfare.

The five to step down are: Vice-presidents Khandaker Zamiluddin and MR Manzur, members Nazirul Islam, Sultanuddin Ahmed and Shafikul Islam Litu.

Zamiluddin, who was the general secretary of the preceding committee, claimed at the press conference organised at the Mohammedan SC tent that he was ignored by the members of the committee. He also said the players' demands were 'legitimate'.

"I was completely ignored by the current

committee as I was not invited to any activities of the federation. I thought it was not possible for me to work under these circumstances," said Zamil.

Zamil also made allegations against the current general secretary and supported the players' movement against the committee.

"I heard he (general secretary Khaza Rahmatullah) was one of the instigators when the players moved against me during the last committee. I think what the players are demanding now is completely logical," said Zamil.

Another member -- Litu -- said that the ones who are leading the committee are using it to get re-elected from a specific panel, and they are using it against the welfare of hockey. "They are setting up everything to get re-elected and things will get really bad the way they are dealing. For that, they have 'illegally' taken five nominations from the NSC quota under a single panel. If things go on like this, it will bear heavy consequences for hockey," said Litu.

However, Rahmatullah trashed the allegations saying that Zamil himself remained detached from the activities of the federation.

"We always send him letters from the federation at his business address and we have proof of it. He himself has stayed away from the meetings. Still we made him the chairman of the media committee. But he did not perform the duties properly," said Rahmatullah.



PHOTO: AFP

**Spain's Rafael Nadal unleashes a backhand return during his victory over Italy's Fabio Fognini in the third round of the French Open at Roland Garros yesterday.**

# Rafa, Novak march on

AFP, Paris



Defending champion Rafael Nadal and top-seeded Novak Djokovic both won comfortably in straight sets in their third-round matches of the French Open yesterday.

Nadal endured another slow start, but moved through the gears to defeat Italian Fabio Fognini 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 6-4 and qualify for the last 16.

Following him on the Philippe Chatrier centre court, Djokovic comfortably defused the challenge of rising Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov to win 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 although he needed treatment to a right arm injury near the end of the match.

All the excitement of the day however came on the lesser courts with, in particular, a pulsating third round match on Court 1 where Tommy Haas needed 13 match points before seeing off the challenge of the marathon man of tennis, John Isner.

The veteran German squandered 12 match points in the fourth set before finally converting on what turned out to be a lucky 13th occasion for a 7-5, 7-6 (7/4), 4-6, 6-7 (10/12), 10-8 win.

Earlier there had been a near punch up out on Court 7 where Serbian Janko Tipsarevic unleashed a foul-mouthed tirade at two noisy fans who kept up a running commentary during his match with Russian Mikhail Youzhny. The offending spectators were eventually sent packing, but Tipsarevic still lost 6-4, 6-4, 6-3.

In other matches, seventh seed Richard Gasquet defeated Nikolay Davydenko of Russia 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 to join countrymen Jo-

Wilfried Tsonga and Gilles Simon in the fourth round. He will next take on Swiss ninth seed Stanislas Wawrinka who defeated Poland's Jerzy Janowicz 6-3, 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 6-3.

Kei Nishikori, meanwhile, became the first Japanese man to reach the last 16 at Roland Garros in 75 years when he defeated Benoit Paire of France 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-1. He will face Nadal, who is bidding to become the first man to win the same Grand Slam for the eighth time.

In the final third-round match, Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany eased past Victor Hanescu of Romania 6-0, 7-6 (7/0), 6-1 to set up a fourth round clash with Djokovic.

In the women's draw defending champion Maria Sharapova and third-seeded Victoria Azarenka reached the last-16. World number two Sharapova clinched a 6-1, 7-5 win over China's Zheng Jie in a third-round clash which witnessed 11 breaks of serve. The second-seeded Russian will take on America's Sloane Stephens.

Azarenka overcame 10 double faults and 31 errors on her way to defeating France's Alize Cornet, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1. She goes on to face Italy's 2010 champion Francesca Schiavone, who ended French hopes in the women's singles by putting out 13th seed Marion Bartoli, 6-2, 6-1.

Bethanie Mattek-Sands made the last 16 with a 4-6, 6-1, 6-3 win over Argentine qualifier Paula Ormaechea.

With top seed Serena Williams already through, the United States could have four players in the last-16 if Jamie Hampton, the world number 54, can get past Czech seventh seed Petra Kvitova.



**Under-fire former national wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud answers questions about his involvement in spot-fixing at a city ground yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

# 'Never introduced bad elements to Ash'

SPORTS REPORTER



A day after being accused of introducing cricketer Mohammad Ashraful to a bookie by a Bengali Daily, former captain Khaled Mashud termed the allegations against him as 'baseless' and 'untrue'.

Speaking to reporters in Dhanmondi, Mashud said, "It is totally baseless. We toured many countries during our playing years and were introduced to many people, but it's not possible to remember all of them. It is unfortunate for someone to misuse these relations today."

"There is nothing wrong in getting introduced to people. What matters is how the person uses you. And I'm sure I never introduced anyone who had bad intentions to Ashraful. How will I know if a person is a bookie or not?" he added.

The former wicketkeeper also demanded that an investigation committee be formed.

"On what grounds did the paper publish the report? Ask them to produce the proof. I know (Khaled) Mahmud, (Mohammad) Rafique and I were never willing to give up a match. There needs to be a thorough investigation." said Mashud.

According to the report a bookie by the name of Javed was introduced to Ashraful by the three former

cricketers on the eve of Bangladesh's 100th ODI played against India in 2004. Ashraful's 41-ball 28 ensured that Bangladesh score 60 runs in 15 overs, a task which was reportedly dictated by the bookie, the report said.

Referring to that incident Mashud said, "If we needed to fix that match then Ashraful would have been opening and not playing at number four."

He also stated that the Anti-Corruption and Security Unit had questioned him regarding the BPL, but disclosing anything would be a breach of his agreement with the body.

With regard to Ashraful's alleged involvement in spot-fixing in the Bangladesh Premier League he said, "I think Ashraful was trapped. It can happen that the Gladiators owners asked him to lose the match in order to get the payment for his services. Being young, he thought that at least he would get his wages but he did not understand the overall implication."

Several reports published this week stated that the Dhaka Gladiators were involved in spot-fixing during the second season of the BPL and that Ashraful played a part in it. On Friday, a story published in Bengali daily Prothom Alo alleged that Mashud, Mahmud and Rafique had introduced Ashraful to fixers at different points in the batsman's career. Both Rafique and Mahmud denied the allegations on Saturday.

# ACSU in town again

SPORTS REPORTER



Two members of the Anti-Corruption And Security Unit (ACSU) arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning in a bid to continue their investigation regarding the alleged fixing issues in the second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

Close sources revealed that the committee came to Bangladesh to quiz BPL franchise Dhaka Gladiators' owners Salim Chowdhury and Shihab Chowdhury. Salim is currently outside the country and is expected to return on Monday. His son Shihab however is in town. It was learnt that the interrogation list may extend beyond these two.

The members also have a meeting scheduled with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon on Tuesday and are expected to submit their report with their findings and suggestions.

During their previous visits, ACSU interrogated a number of players who played for the Gladiators this year, among them

Mohammad Ashraful. It was reported that Ashraful confessed to spot-fixing, reportedly following the franchise owners' instructions.

According to Ashraful's statement to the ACSU, before the start of the 2013 BPL, Salim Chowdhury had invited the player to his Banani office and told him that they would have to lose some matches in this year's competition in order to pay the players' wages.

It was further stated that Shihab had given Ashraful a note before the February 2 game against Chittagong Kings, outlining the plan by which they would have to lose the game. The owner had also reportedly convinced the franchise's foreign coach Ian Pont and player Darren Stevens to be a part of the plan.

Various reports of match-fixing in the BPL and in international cricket have stormed the media in the past week. A Bengali Daily on Friday had alleged that Ashraful was involved in spot-fixing in the international circuit since 2004. The Daily also accused former cricketers of introducing Ashraful to bookies at different points of the batsman's career.

## Afridi saddened

ANI, Islamabad

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi expressed his disappointment at the Indian Premier League (IPL) spot-fixing scandal, saying that it had left him 'sad' and added that he cannot understand why some players are lured into corrupt practices despite earning good money. Afridi had reportedly played a key role in bringing to the notice of the International Cricket Council (ICC) anti-corruption unit, the illegal activities of the banned trio of Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamir on the tour to England in 2010, the Daily Times reports.

Afridi said that he cannot grasp the fact that players resort to illegal means to earn money when there is already good money to be earned by playing cricket honestly and with 100 percent commitment and dedication.

# Pressure mounts on Srinivasan

*May quit at today's meeting*

AFP, New Delhi



Pressure mounted Saturday on the beleaguered president of India's cricket board N. Srinivasan to resign a day after two top cricketing officials -- board joint secretary Sanjay Jagdale and treasurer Ajay Shirke -- quit over an escalating spot-fixing scandal.

Eyes have now turned to an emergency meeting to be held Sunday by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in Chennai.

On Friday evening, the isolated BCCI chief, ruled out his resignation after earlier saying he would not be "bulldozed or railroaded" into quitting when he had done no wrong.

Srinivasan has been pressed to step down after his son-in-law Gurunath Meiyappan was arrested last week for allegedly taking part in the illegal betting row embroiling the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL).

BCCI joint secretary Anurag Thakur announced an emergency board meeting for Sunday so that he and other members could "speak their minds".

"All these issues will be discussed during the meeting," he told reporters.

IPL Commissioner Rajiv Shukla said "some announcement is likely to be made there", without elaborating.

Media reports say all the five vice presidents of the world's richest cricket body were ready to resign if Srinivasan refuses to step aside himself.

## Uttar Baridhara on brink of promotion

SPORTS REPORTER

Uttar Baridhara edged one step closer to realising their long-time dream of playing in the top-tier football when they held out Rahmatganj MFS 1-1 in their match of the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The New Dhaka outfit, who finished runners-up in the championship league last season, look likely to win the league this time as they are on 23 points, three ahead of second-placed Chittagong Abahani, with only two matches left. Rahmatganj are in third position with 18 points. Two teams will qualify for the Premier League this time. Only a draw in their last two matches -- against Victoria and Farashganj -- might be enough to see them through.

In yesterday's match, Sabbir Hossain broke the deadlock for Rahmatganj in the 69th minute with a neat freekick that was placed by the side of the wall and went into the net beating the goalie. However, Uttar Baridhara levelled the margin four minutes later when Mahmudullah Dalim toe-poked on a curling freekick to bamboozle the opposition goalie. Coach Alamgir Hossain said if they do qualify, it would be down to the club member's faith and cohesion of the players', who have been playing together for the last four years.

The new Dhaka outfit have won six of their matches this season, drawing five and losing only once, which came against Wari Club on May 25. Their striker Mohammad Jibon is the highest scorer of the league with nine goals.