

ACSU report top priority

SPORTS REPORTER

There are a plethora of issues facing Bangladesh cricket at the moment but Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon has placed highest importance on the Anti-Corruption and Security Unit's (ACSU) report on suspected match-fixing in the country.

Papon's appearances before the press are so rare that when he does take the stand to answer questions on pressing issues, they pour in thick and fast. At the press conference in Mirpur yesterday, Papon talked on the entire range of issues -- match-fixing, the uncertainty over the Dhaka Premier League, Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) non-payment, the staging of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) elections -- that have dogged the cricket community of late.

The upshot of the press conference was that the Dhaka Premier League, the sole 50-over domestic tournament in the country, is facing further uncertainty as the president was considering the postponement of the league till the delivery of the report, which according to him may be at International Cricket Council's (ICC) Annual General Meeting at the end of June.

"The ACSU report is my topmost priority. It will be difficult for me to host the players' transfer (scheduled for June 23) before we get the report," said Papon.

"I have to see all the sides. What if more players are named? I pray that no new players are named, but if they are then what will I do?" he asked rhetorically.

The Dhaka Premier League was already in trouble with the players' recent decision to boycott the league if it did not revert to its old player payment scheme. There were also complaints that the board had ignored the players' views and was merely adhering to the clubs' calls.

"We are not in a situation to host the league.



Nazmul Hasan Papon

Dhaka Premier League uncertain until delivery of ACSU report

ICC expected to vet election scenario at AGM this month

Asks players to trust the board regarding BPL payment

We always thought of hosting it during September or October. It's the rainy season, the grounds are not free. Only because players like Mushfiquir (Rahim) and others asked us to host the league within this season, we decided to go ahead," said Papon.

"The clubs can say a lot of things, so can the players, but the final decision regarding the payment will be taken by the BCB. Nobody else can decide the rules of the leagues," he added.

With regard to the players' boycott he said, "The problem is that centrally contracted players will have to play in a BCB league. I don't know if they said it knowingly. Whatever be the case we will try to find a solution," said Papon.

The board's election was the other issue in question. As per the ICC's guidelines, the BCB was supposed to have elected an executive committee by June this year. However, the amended constitution sent in by the National Sports Council last

year, which fell in line with ICC's demand for an elected president, was deemed illegal by the country's High Court.

Thereafter, the NSC and BCB filed a Civil Miscellaneous Petition for Leave to Appeal before Appellate Division to stay the High Court ruling and the Appellate Division stayed the rule.

"If we don't do the election according to ICC's guideline and the court declares the 2008 constitution valid, Bangladesh stands to lose its ICC membership," said Papon. He further stated that the ICC will give an opinion on the election scenario at the AGM later this month and the board will wait till then.

Meanwhile, the president also stated that the board would take a tough stance against the Bangladesh Premier League payment defaulters and also asked the players to trust the board regarding the payment dues. Furthermore, he stated that banned umpire Nadir Shah's request for minimum punishment would be discussed in the next board meeting.

BCB-BKSP DEAL New cricket grounds to be built

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Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) for the development and use of two new cricket grounds at the country's lone sports institute.

Under the agreement the board will develop the venues, BKSP 3 & 4, at its own cost and resources and the development work will include modern drainage system, separate pavilions for each ground complete with dressing rooms, match officials' rooms, hospitality area, media facility, dining area and dormitory with accommodation for approximately 44 persons.

The BCB will use the venues for hosting domestic and international matches and training programmes under its jurisdiction while the BKSP will also have access to the facilities for its training purpose.

BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury and director general of BKSP Brig Gen Md. Emadul Haque exchanged the files at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Linu Walton ambassador

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Legendary table tennis player Zobera Rahman Linu became the sports ambassador of Walton as she signed a two-year deal with the local electronics company yesterday.

Linu, the Guinness World Record holder for winning the most number of national titles in the sport, will represent Walton in the local and overseas sports meets and her monthly remuneration will be Tk. 20,000 and other facilities, informed SM Zahidul Hasan, executive director of Walton.

"It is the honour rather than money which is more important and I believe I will be able to help females in choosing sports as a path of life. Moreover, it is a double delight for me as this year I have completed my 40th year in sports arena," said an ecstatic Linu.



PHOTO: AFP

England paceman Stuart Broad, who troubled South Africa with three wickets, celebrates one of the dismissals in the Champions Trophy semifinal at The Oval yesterday. England, 179 for 3, beat South Africa, 175, by 7 wickets to reach the final.

Eng romp into final

AFP, London



Hosts England cruised into the Champions Trophy final with a seven-wicket win on Wednesday after South Africa once again underlined their reputation as cricket's 'chokers'.

Alastair's Cook men outplayed the Proteas after electing to bowl on an overcast day at the Oval where England had lost to the West Indies in the final of the same event in 2004.

South Africa were reduced to 80-8 by the 23rd over before a record ninth-wicket partnership of 95 between David Miller and Rory Kleinveldt gave the total some respectability.

But Jonathan Trott hit 82 not out and Joe Root made 48 during a 105-run stand to help England surpass the modest target in the 38th over of a disappointing semifinal.

In Sunday's final at Edgbaston, Birmingham, which will be worth 2 million dollars for the champions, England will meet the winners of Thursday's all-Asian semifinal between India and Sri Lanka in Cardiff.

South Africa, the top-ranked Test team and a formidable opponent in world cricket, have struggled to get past the semifinal stage in major one-day tournaments since winning the inaugural version of the Champions Trophy in Bangladesh in 1998.

England lost openers Cook and Ian Bell cheaply to become 41-2, but South Africa-born Trott and Root flayed the attack on a good batting wicket to steer the hosts towards victory.

Root was bowled by JP Duminy for 48 when 30 more were needed in 18 overs, leaving Trott to bring up the emphatic win by driving Robin Peterson to the cover fence.

Earlier, Miller hit an unbeaten 56 and Kleinveldt chipped in with a career-best 43 in South Africa's best one-day partnership for the ninth wicket, surpassing the 65 by Wayne Parnell and Dale Steyn against India in Jaipur in 2010.

SCOREBOARD					
SOUTH AFRICA					
Ingram lbw b Anderson				0	
Amla c Buttler b Finn				1	
Peterson lbw b Anderson				30	
Du Plessis c Buttler b Tredwell				26	
De Villiers c Buttler b Broad				0	
Duminy b Tredwell				3	
Miller not out				56	
McLaren run out				1	
Morris c Buttler b Tredwell				3	
Kleinveldt c Buttler b Broad				43	
Tsotsobe c Buttler b Broad				0	
Extras: (lb-6, w-6)				12	
Total: (All out in 38.4 overs)				175	
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-4, 3-45, 4-50, 5-63, 6-70, 7-76, 8-80, 9-175					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Anderson	8	1	14	2	
Finn	8	1	45	1	
Broad	8.4	0	50	3	
Tredwell	7	1	19	3	
Root	3	0	22	0	
Bopara	4	0	19	0	
England					
Cook c de Villiers b Morris				6	
Bell c de Villiers b Kleinveldt				20	
Trott not out				82	
Root b Duminy				48	
Morgan not out				15	
Extras: (lb-4, w-4)				8	
Total: (For 3 wkts in 37.3 overs)				179	
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-41, 3-146					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Morris	8	1	38	1	
Peterson	9.3	1	49	0	
Duminy	5	0	27	1	
Tsotsobe	5	0	26	0	
Kleinveldt	4	0	10	1	
McLaren	6	0	25	0	



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan winger Shariful islam (L) rides a sliding tackle from Brothers Union forward Yusuf Sifat (C) on a soaked BNS pitch during their Super Cup match yesterday.

BU join MSC in semis

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Brothers Union grabbed the second spot from Group B for the semifinals of the Super Cup after holding Mohammedan SC, who had already qualified from the group, to a 0-0 draw at a rain-soaked Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The result took Brothers Union to five points from three matches, two behind eventual group champions Mohammedan SC, and turned the second match of the day between Sheikh Jamal DC and Team BJMC into an academic affair.

Brothers will face treble-winners and Group A champions Sheikh Russel KC in the first semifinal on Friday while two-time finalists Mohammedan will take on Muktioddha Sangsad in the second semifinal on Saturday.

Having confirmed the semifinal berth in the previous match with a 1-0 win over Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan rested seven players from their starting eleven as they had nothing to lose but the prospect of facing Sheikh Russel in the semifinal, had

they lost the match.

The absence of regular players, however exposed Mohammedan's backline several times but Brothers, who needed only a draw to qualify, provided some nervous moments to their opponents in the first half.

Jewel Rana, the find of the tournament who struck three goals in two matches, penetrated the Mohammedan backline a couple of times and went close to giving the Gopibagh outfit the lead.

But the 19-year old marksman from Jhenaidah could not keep his cool as he drove miles off target from inside the box with goalkeeper Sujan Chowdhury to beat in the sixth minute while the on-loan striker's second attempt was foiled by defender Yeasin's timely intervention.

With players from both sides struggling to control their balance on the soggy pitch, Mohammedan hitman Mohammad Robin, being set up by a squarepass from Ansiur Rahman, forced Brothers goalkeeper Sujan Chowdhury to a brilliant save with a low drive on the half-hour mark.

The game was suspended for five minutes due to lack of sufficient light and after the game resumed Mohammedan's substitute winger Shariful Islam rattled the crosspiece.

Siddikur's chance at hand

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Siddikur Rahman will be looking to make amends for his near-miss in the Queen's Cup earlier in the week, as the 28-year-old takes field in the Worldwide Holdings Selangor Masters which starts in Malaysia today.

The Madaripur man, who held a one-shot lead going into the last round in the Queen's, fluffed his chances of a second Asian Tour title by scoring an out-of-character six-over-par in the fourth round.

However, he will get another shot at title in the 400,000-dollar event in Malaysia and therefore try to improve his Order of Merit standing, which is 11th at the moment.

BU & BJMC in King's Cup

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Brothers Union and Team BJMC will represent Bangladesh in the King's Cup in Bhutan, informed Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

Apart from Brothers and BJMC, popular outfits Mohammedan, Abahani and Sheikh Russel also showed their interest to play in the tournament, but they later backed away as the national players will not be released for the tournament by the BFF.

Two teams each from India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan are scheduled to take part in the eight-club tournament, which will start on July 30.

Nat'l cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rohan hit 83 as Brahmanbaria moved into the second round of the 33rd National Cricket Championship with a four-wicket victory against Chittagong at Chandpur yesterday.

Brahmanbaria made 211 for six in reply to Chittagong's 210 runs. Mithu top scored with 73 for Chittagong.

In Narail, Faridpur earned a second round berth when they registered a four-wicket victory over Manikganj.

Manikganj were bowled out for 112 runs and Faridpur, in reply, scored 116 for six.

India impress Jayawardene

Ind-SL second semifinal today

AFP, Cardiff



Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene is under no illusions about the scale of the task confronting his side when they face India in a Champions Trophy semifinal in Cardiff on Thursday.

The latest high-profile one-day international contest between the teams is a repeat of the 2011 World Cup final in Mumbai.

That clash saw the 36-year-old Jayawardene make unwanted history by becoming the first man to score a century in a World Cup final yet finish on the losing side, with India victorious by six wickets.

On Monday, Jayawardene was in the runs again, but on the winning side, with his unbeaten 84 helping secure a 20-run victory over defending champions Australia at The Oval that booked Sri Lanka's place in the last four.

Jayawardene saw India beat Sri Lanka in a warm-up match at Edgbaston earlier this month and has been impressed by their form in the tournament proper.

"I think they're playing some really good cricket," he said. "Their batting looks really strong, so that's a key area we need to focus a bit on."

The India team set to take the field in Cardiff has been transformed so dramatically in the past two years it will likely feature just three players -- captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni plus batsmen Suresh Raina and Virat Kohli -- who appeared in the World Cup final.

India were the only side in the group stage of this Champions Trophy with a perfect record following wins over South Africa, the West Indies and arch-rivals Pakistan.

No contest in BHF polls

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The Sajed-Munir panel, backed by Mohammedan and Mariner Youngs Club, yesterday pulled out of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) polls paving the way for the Khaza Rahmatullah panel, backed by Abahani and Usha KC to be elected unopposed.

Returning officer Syeda Arzuma Akhter told reporters that they would announce the final candidates' list and declare the winners today as there are only 28 candidates against as many posts. On the last day, Wednesday, of withdrawal, a total of 34 nominations were withdrawn.

This means Rahmatullah will get a four-year period to run the federation while Abdus Sadek, Sabbir Yousuf, Mirza Fiard Ahmed Milu, Abdur Rashid Shikdar and Mostaq Ali Mukul will act as vice-presidents. Anvir Adil and Mohammad Yousuf will be joint secretary while Kazi Moinuzzaman Pila will act as the treasurer.

However, it seems that Rahmatullah will have to pass a tough time after six

premier league clubs, who backed the Sajed-Munir panel, decided not to take part in any kind of activities under the newly elected committee in future.

"On Tuesday, we met the BHF president [Air Marshal Enamul Bari] to seek his interference in stopping the propaganda and unethical practice ahead of the elections. We have not received any response as yet.

"Despite having the support of 44 councillors [out of 71], we are pulling out of the elections in protest of unethical, unlawful practices, use of power and muscle," read out general secretary candidate and chairman of Mohammedan hockey committee, Safiullah Al Munir, at a press conference at the Mohammedan Sporting Club premises yesterday.

The main objection of the Sajed-Munir panel was about the National Sports Council nominated five councillors, who are close to Abahani. However, they never approached the sports minister or put up any objections before the election commission on this issue.

Rahmatullah meanwhile refuted the allegations made by Munir. "The allegations they have brought against us are not proven. They did it in a bid to find a way out of the elections," said general secretary candidate Rahmatullah.

"I can't understand why they are mixing the election and sport. I must admit that every club has good contribution in hockey and I believe all the clubs will be coming forward in the greater interest of the game," said Rahmatullah, adding that they had taken an initiative to form a consensus panel but failed due to lack of assistance from the opposition panel.

Niaz in 3rd

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GM Niaz Murshed was occupying the third position in the Dr. Nazrin Shah International Masters Chess tournament at the close of the sixth round in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday.

Niaz beat GM Wong Meng Kong of Singapore to earn 3.5 points and he enjoyed a rest day yesterday.