

SPORT

NBR sets BCB deadline

SOHEL PARVEZ and BISHWAJIT ROY

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has asked the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to take necessary measures to ensure that the taxes on payment of foreign players in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) are paid by January 11.

The tax authority's directive came through a third letter sent to the BCB chief executive officer last week. The letter was sent after the BCB reportedly didn't respond to the NBR's previous requests to help the taxmen realise taxes on payment of around sixty foreign individuals, including both cricketers and coaches, who took part in the third edition of the BPL in favour of six franchises.

According to the officials, NBR first sent a letter to BCB on November 22 last year, day after the inauguration of the tournament, seeking the game's governing body's cooperation to get copies of contracts and as well as other relevant documents regarding the foreign players. The taxmen also sought details on payable money and other expenses of the tournament.

As the NBR did not get any response from the BCB, they sent a second letter on December 3, asking the cricket authority to deduct 30 percent taxes on the security money deposited by the six franchises prior to the start of the tournament.

When contacted, NBR chairman Md Nojibur Rahman said: "We expect their cooperation. It is their national responsibility to help mobilise

revenue for the state. The tax that is due must be collected and we want their support in this regard. We hope there won't be any issues regarding the revenue collection."

A special team was also formed by NBR in this regard. Sources said that NBR has so far received only Tk 40 lakh as income tax from payment to artists who performed in the BPL's inauguration ceremony.

Besides the tax issue, questions were also raised regarding the payment procedure followed by the franchises for the overseas players. According to a senior official, the Bangladesh Bank (BB) has so far given permission to pay nearly 2.5 lakh dollars to nine overseas players of two franchises.

However, BCB president Nazmul Hasan Papon prior to the end of the BPL had claimed that a majority of the payments of the foreign players were already completed.

Upon being questioned with regards to the latest developments, Papon said that the board will look into the matter.

"Tax must be paid. I was abroad for the last few days, so at first I have to check everything. That's also a reason why I am not aware that such issues have been talked about in the media. If there is a tax issue, it will be solved."

"It's the duty of the franchises to do everything in line with the country's law but as we are the hosts of the tournament we should look into the matter. It was a fantastic tournament and there's no way that we will allow its image to get tarnished," Papon told the Daily Star over phone last night.

The BPL's third edition ended on December 15.



Bangladesh ODI and T20I skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) and opener Tamim Iqbal have a chat during the Tigers' fitness session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Maruful tones down expectations

SPORTS REPORTER

Head coach of the Bangladesh national football team, Maruful Haque, has toned down his expectations for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup International Football Tournament after guiding the side to a first-round exit in the SAFF Suzuki Cup last month.

The 46-year-old coach, who had stated that his only target was to win the SAFF title before eventually bemoaning the 'lack of ability' of the players, said that people should base their expectations according to the ability of the team.

"We went to the SAFF with a big target but finished nowhere near that target. You have to build your expectations as per as the ability of the players. We have to realise our ability first," Maruful said during a practice session at the BUET Ground in the morning before the contingent flew to Jessore in the afternoon.

The Bangladesh team returned from Trivandrum in two phases on December 31 and January 1, and were allowed leave till yesterday morning. The team is supposed to undergo a few more practice sessions in Jessore over the next three days before taking on Sri Lanka in the opening fixture of the eight-team tournament on Friday.

Maruful said he would only be able to earmark a specific target after running at least a couple of sessions more, but nevertheless felt that since the team will be playing at home, they should ideally reach the final like the last edition.

"There are still some mental and physical barriers at the moment, which I hope the players can overcome in the next two days."

"Since we are playing at home and we are the runners-up of the last edition, I think the target should be the highest one. However, I will know more about the specific target after running two more sessions."

Personally I would like to overcome the damaging campaign with a good outcome here," opined Maruful, who was recently convinced by the game's governing body to extend his contract for this tournament.

Meanwhile, the players and coaching staff had sit for a meeting with the Bangladesh Football Federation high-ups in the afternoon where, it has been learnt that, the BFF boss urged the team to forget the past and try to capitalise on the opportunity through a good outing at the Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

However there has been no decision made as to whether

Mamunul Islam, who had stated his intention of stepping down from captaincy after the SAFF Cup, would stay as the captain or the captain's armband will be offered to someone else.

Bangladesh are in Group A along with the national teams of Sri Lanka and Nepal and Malaysia XI. Group B features the national teams of Maldives and Cambodia apart from Bahrain XI and Bangladesh Olympic team.

The 13-day tournament will be hosted jointly by Dhaka and Jessore, with the final scheduled for January 20 at the Bangabandhu National

Cricketers meet BCB boss over DPL

SPORTS REPORTER

A number of Bangladesh national cricketers, including Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Mushfiqur Rahim, had an unofficial meeting with BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon yesterday in which issues regarding the players' transfer of the upcoming Dhaka Premier League (DPL) and the cricketers' national contracts were discussed.

The DPL, Bangladesh's premier 50-over domestic contest, is scheduled to begin on March 24 and the BCB is likely to employ the 'player-by-choice' method for the players' transfer. It's a method that a number of national players and List-A cricketers are reportedly aren't happy about.

Traditionally, the DPL allowed for negotiations between clubs and cricketers and players always had the opportunity to select their desired club. However, as per the player-by-choice system, the cricketers will be assigned a fixed price and each of the clubs will get an opportunity to sign the players on a rotating basis.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Papon said that the board will try to find an amicable way to settle the issue.

"The CCDM (the organising committee of the DPL) did propose the player-by-choice system for the DPL and we will discuss the pros and cons of the system in the next board meeting."

"The main worry of the players is that

they might get signed up by a club in which they may not get the required cricketing practice, since the level of competition differs from one club to the other. But we also have to understand is that the system ensures a good amount of money for a majority of the cricketers, even though the income of a few leading cricketers does go on to decrease a bit, said Papon.

"I have asked the players to provide me with their opinions and we will discuss this in the board meeting," he added.

The board meeting is also set to offer new contracts to the national players and Papon said that there was an 'informal discussion' regarding that issue yesterday. The BCB's cricket operations committee, a few days ago, had in fact recommended the board to increase the salaries of the national players.

"We were having lunch when one of the players jokingly asked me about raising their salaries in the new contract. And I told them that there was no question of an increase since they just received an increment last year."

"The players were also provided with plenty of bonuses for their brilliant performance last year," said Papon.

Furthermore, the players also had a discussion with the president regarding the upcoming series against Zimbabwe. The BCB boss explained the reasons behind the BCB's decision to convert the supposed Test series into a T20I one.



Bangladesh coach Maruful Haque (2nd from L) relays his plans to his charges during a practice session at the BUET Ground yesterday. The team later flew to Jessore for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which begins on Friday. PHOTO: STAR

HC stays fine on Arambagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed a decision of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) imposing Tk 30 lakh monetary fine on Arambagh Krira Sangha for three months. The court also issued a rule upon the BFF to explain within two weeks as to why its decision should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Khushruzzaman came up with the order and rule after hearing a writ petition filed by Azaz Md Jahangir, general secretary of Arambagh Krira Sangha, challenging the BFF decision.

Petitioner's lawyer AKM Nurul Alam told The Daily Star that during a Bangladesh Championship match between Arambagh and Police AC at Birshrestha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur on December 22, some outsiders vandalised the BFF office.

In the letter issued on December 31, the BFF ordered the club to pay the fine by January 5, or else, the club would be suspended for one year, the letter warned, he said.

Nurul Alam also said his client filed the writ petition as the club was not responsible for vandalism. The club has not yet paid the money to BFF.

The HC's stay order, however, means that Arambagh will be eligible to play against Youngmen's Fkirerpubl Club today.

BFF tight-lipped on transgression

SPORTS REPORTER

A day after 12 players of the Bangladesh national football team took part in an 'unauthorised match,' the team flew to Jessore for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup with 'blessings' from the high-ups of the game's governing body.

The players were in a relaxed mood during the day as they underwent a practice session at the BUET Ground under head coach Maruful Haque. Later the players and the coaching staff held a meeting with the executive committee members of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), including its president Kazi Salahuddin.

It has been learnt that the BFF boss told the team to forget about the past and give their best at the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which would provide them with the right platform to regain their confidence.

However, it has been learnt that the issue of the players' turning up for a match for hire in Narayanganj, which projected their moral decay as well as an utter disregard towards the guidelines set for a professional footballer, was not raised in the meeting.

The BFF high-ups were tight-lipped about the incident as they were more concerned about rebuilding the shattered image of the team through a good performance in the Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

It has been learnt from an insider that the incident, which took place a day after the 23 players were officially called up for camp, will be discussed after a while.

It may be mentioned here that due to a similar offence, national team forwards Mithun Chowdhury and Zahid Hasan Emily, both of whom participated in Sunday's match, were handed domestic bans in 2011. Meanwhile, attacking midfielder Hemanta Vincent Biswas, who was also among the 12 national team players playing in Sunday's match, was handed a suspended sentence of one year for a similar transgression in October last year, with the sentence stating that a similar offence within six months would see him being suspended from all football activities for one year.

Rain plays spoilsport on Day 2

AFP, Sydney

Carlos Brathwaite provided some fireworks in a lively cameo as rain washed out all but 11.2 overs of the second day of the third Australia-West Indies Test on Monday.

The Barbados all-rounder clouted two massive sixes off one James Pattinson over on his way to a dynamic 69 after lunch at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Brathwaite smashed Pattinson over cover for his first powerful blow before flicking another off his pads for an effortless six over backward square leg.

But Pattinson had the last laugh, bowling the hulking all-rounder in his next over.

Brathwaite's 69 runs came off 71 balls with seven fours and four sixes and further enhanced his reputation after his 59 on debut during the second Test in Melbourne.

More rain was forecast for Tuesday.

SCORES IN BRIEF
WEST INDIES: First innings 248 for 7 (Brathwaite 85, Bravo 33, Ramdin 30 not out, Brathwaite 69; Pattinson 2-67, Lyon 2-78)

Amla leads SA fightback

AFP, Cape Town

South African captain Hashim Amla defied England's bowlers and batted throughout the third day of the second Test at Newlands on Monday.

Amla made an unbeaten 157 as South Africa reached 353 for three at the close, still 276 runs behind England's first innings total of 629 for six declared.

AB de Villiers was the only batsman dismissed during the day as South

Africa, 1-0 down in the four-Test series, dug in on a pitch which offered no assistance to the bowlers.

Steven Finn was the only successful bowler. He had De Villiers caught at midwicket shortly before tea after Amla and De Villiers had put on 183 in a third wicket partnership which lasted for two minutes short of five hours.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 629 for 6 decl.
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 353 for 3 (Elgar 44, Amla 157 not out, De Villiers 88, Du Plessis 51 not out; Finn 1-82, Stokes 1-67)



South Africa captain Hashim Amla (R) raises the bat as he celebrates his century against England on the third day of the second Test in Cape Town yesterday. He was unbeaten on 157. PHOTO: AFP

Changes in BCCI proposed

AFP, New Delhi

A panel appointed by India's Supreme Court on Monday proposed sweeping changes to the country's scandal-hit cricket board and said gambling should be made legal.

The panel headed by former chief justice Rajendra Mal Lodha was appointed after a string of corruption scandals at the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Its report, seen by AFP, recommends barring politicians from the sport's governing body and introducing time limits on holding office.

It also suggests legalising betting after the popular Twenty20 tournament run by the BCCI, the Indian Premier League (IPL), was rocked by allegations of corruption, match-fixing and crooked umpires.

The recommendations would bar ministers and government officials as well as anyone over 70 from holding office and would impose a three-year maximum term.

The panel also suggests a separate executive body for the IPL and the appointment of an independent ombudsman.