

## Sepp, Michel bans reduced

AFP, Zurich

A FIFA appeal committee on Wednesday reduced bans against Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini to six years but maintained they were still guilty of ethics breaches.

The appeal result was announced as UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino and Asian football leader Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim al Khalifa stepped up their rivalry in the campaign to take over as head of football's scandal-tainted world body in a vote on Friday.

The bans against Blatter, FIFA president for 17 years, and UEFA president Platini were reduced from eight years to six by the appeal committee.

Both were found guilty of conflicts of interest when Blatter approved a \$2 million payment to Platini in 2011 for consultancy work done without a contract a decade earlier.

French football legend Platini had been favourite to take over from Blatter but the ban demolished his hopes.

He and Blatter said they would take their cases to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in an attempt to have their bans overturned.

## Carneiro to meet Jose

AGENCIES, London

Eva Carneiro will meet with Jose Mourinho and officials from Chelsea on March 7 in a final bid to reach a settlement over the former team doctor's employment case.

An Employment Judge will conduct a private hearing to try to settle the five-month dispute following Carneiro's controversial departure from Stamford Bridge last September.



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza proves to be a busy man on and off the pitch. Here the Tigers skipper receives the certificate of UNDP National Goodwill Ambassador for Youth in Bangladesh from Robert Watkins, the Bangladesh resident representative of the global body, at a local hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## A dream comes true for Mashrafe

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh ODI and T20I skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has said that he was glad to have received an opportunity to work with the country's youth in partnership with the UNDP and described the prospect as a 'dream' opportunity.

The skipper was officially appointed as the national Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme yesterday. His main focus, according to UN representatives, will be to inspire the youth of the country and help them get employment.

He is only the fourth cricketer, after Shahid Afridi, Sachin Tendulkar and Muttiah Muralitharan, to join the UNDP.

"I would like to thank the UNDP for giving me this opportunity. Working with the youth has always been a dream of mine and now that I have a chance to do something for them, it is really great."

"That is why I grabbed this opportunity

the moment it arrived. I feel that this is a dream come true for me. I honestly believe that the youngsters of the nation have plenty of potential and they can take the country ahead," said Mashrafe during the signing ceremony at a city hotel yesterday.

"I want to keep working for the youth not only during my playing career but also after that if the BCB [Bangladesh Cricket Board] or different organisations help me out," he added.

One of Mashrafe's main focus areas while working with the UNDP will be to inspire youngsters to receive training in information technology. According to research done by the UNDP, there is plenty of scope in this arena and they have taken it upon themselves to train youngsters and then help connect them to a job market that is yet to be tapped.

Apart from Mashrafe, UN Resident Coordinator Robert Watkins and UNDP official Lamia Islam were also present at the programme.

Yesterday was the 50th anniversary of the UNDP. The organisation first started its operation in Bangladesh back in 1972.

## Mominul powers East City outclass Kiev

SPORTS REPORTER



Amid all the limited-overs frenzy in the country, top-order batsman Mominul Haque provided a soft reminder of his existence by scoring a century for Islami Bank East Zone on the second day of the third round of the Bangladesh Cricket League, the country's premier four-day cricket competition, yesterday.

The left-hander, who until last year was a regular member of the ODI squad, scored 112 off 118 balls and led East Zone's reply against Prime Bank South Zone at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar.

The left-hander was ably supported by Tasamul Haque's 87. Fresh from his under-19 stint, young Zakir Hasan remained unbeaten on 92. The team finished on 345 for 5 in response to South Zone's first innings score of 262.

A 156-run stand for the third wicket between Mominul and Tasamul helped East Zone recover from 33 for 2 and gave them control of the game. While Mominul hit 15 fours and a six, Tasamul played a more

cautious innings, scoring 87 off 209 balls. Once Mominul got out, his understudy Zakir continued. He smacked three sixes and nine fours in his 129-ball 92 and will hope to get his century today. The key for East Zone will be to bat for as long as possible and increase the lead as much as possible in order to put pressure on their opponents.

In the day's other game, Mosharraf Hossain-led Walton Central Zone bundled Naeem Islam's WCB North Zone for just 168 and managed to get a crucial 92-run lead in the first innings.

After the exchange though, Central lost Shamsur Rahman, who retired hurt, and finished the day on 23 for 1.

For Central, veteran pacer Mohammad Sharif took four wickets while skipper Mosharraf took two to bundle North Zone for a below-par first innings score.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SOUTH ZONE:** 262 v **EAST ZONE:** 345 for 5 (Mominul 112, Zakir 92 not out, Tasamul 87; Razzak 2-141)  
**CENTRAL ZONE:** 260 and 23 for 1 (Marshall 12 not out; Tajjil 1-2) v **NORTH ZONE:** 168 all out in 65.1 overs (Naeem 61, Junaid 28; Sharif 4-59, Mosharraf 3-55)

AFP, Kiev



Manchester City may be toiling domestically at the moment but they produced a superb European away performance to beat Dynamo Kiev 3-1 in Ukraine in their Champions League last 16, first leg on Wednesday.

Manuel Pellegrini's side did enough to win the game in the first half with Sergio Aguero and David Silva both scoring to underline their importance to City.

Dynamo pulled a goal back in the second half through midfielder Vitaliy Buyalskiy, but Yaya Toure's late beauty ensured that City are very much on course to reach the quarter-finals for the first time in their history.

"It was an exceptional result away from home. We couldn't have hoped for better," City captain Vincent Kompany told BT Sport.

"The performance was good and 3-1 is a good result. We're happy with it, we just don't want to get carried away with it."

"We could have scored many more goals. It was a Man City performance that we'd like

to see more often."

They have been eliminated by Barcelona at this stage in each of the last two seasons but this was a far kinder draw for City against opponents who were playing their first competitive match since December due to the long Ukrainian winter break.

While Dynamo coach Sergiy Rebrov might have been concerned about a lack of match sharpness in his side, Pellegrini had complained of not having enough time to prepare his team for this encounter.

With Joe Hart, Kompany, Toure, Silva and Aguero in the side, City are a different proposition and, after three consecutive defeats, they looked in the mood here.

There was an early fright when an Andriy Yarmolenko cross was parried by Hart only for the ball to drop down onto the bar, but the visitors played with a degree of hunger and intensity not seen in recent weeks.

They were rewarded with the opening goal a quarter of an hour in, as a Silva corner from the left was headed down by Toure for Aguero, who controlled before lashing in his 19th goal of the season.



Manchester City midfielder Yaya Toure (C) celebrates scoring the third goal against Dynamo Kiev during their Champions League Round of 16 match in Kiev on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## BSL logo unveiling on Sunday

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Super League (BSL) is all set for fruition on Sunday with the launching of its logo.

A gigantic dais is being built on the north side of the Bangabandhu National Stadium to hype up the franchisee-based football league, which is expected to get underway from November with eight teams from each division playing on a home-and-away basis.

"We believe the BSL will start a new era in Bangladesh football," said BFF vice-president Badal Roy at a press conference yesterday.

Tarafder Ruhul Amin, managing director of tournament sponsors Saifpowertec Ltd, said that there would be an open auction for the sale of teams in April, after the presentation of a financial model to interested corporate houses in March.

## Pakistan get World T20 clearance

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan on Thursday gave permission to the country's cricket team to play next month's World Twenty20 in India.

PCB announced Thursday it had received the green light after seeking extra security measures.

"I am pleased that our government has given its consent for our team to visit India," said Khan.

## Zahid admits, others refute

SPORTS REPORTER



Six national footballers save Zahid Hossain pleaded innocent while appearing in front of a three-member committee at the BFF House yesterday.

Captain Mamunul Islam, defenders Yeasin Khan, Yeamin Ahmed Chowdhury Munna and Atiqur Rahman Meshu, midfielder Sohel Rana and goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel claimed innocence, while only Zahid admitted that he breached the code of conduct.

"I told them everything that happened and I am repentant for my



Mamunul Islam (L) and Zahid Hossain wait for their turn during a hearing at the BFF House yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

actions," said Zahid, who was expelled from the squad during the Bangabandhu Gold Cup on disciplinary grounds.

"I have been representing the national team at age level since 2003 and playing for the senior team since 2007. Since then I am punctual about everything such as training and theory class. I not only follow the rules and regulations of the national team strictly but also club teams. I have requested them to clear me of the allegation," said Meshu.

The national teams committee will take a final decision on those seven players in next meeting, which is likely to be held on Monday.

## Stalemate in Eindhoven

AFP, Eindhoven



PSV Eindhoven held out with 10 men to leave their Champions League last-16 tie with Atletico Madrid finely balanced at 0-0 after the first leg on Wednesday.

Atletico had chances to kill the game before half-time as Luciano Vietto and Antoine Griezmann missed one-on-ones with Jeroen Zoet.

The hosts had to resist for the final 20 minutes a man light when Gaston Pereiro saw red for a second bookable offence.

However, Atletico failed to take advantage meaning all is to play for when the sides meet again on March 15 at the Vicente Calderon for a place in the last eight.

"From the start of the game we pressed them, played in their half and created chances," Atletico boss Diego Simeone told beIN Sports.

"In the second half we controlled the game and (Jan) Oblak didn't have a save to make, so I am very happy with the team."

And despite his side's struggles to score goals of late, Simeone is confident their excellent home record in Europe will see Atletico into the quarter-finals for a third consecutive year.

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