

# SPORT



**SHORT-LIVED JOY:** Abahani's English midfielder Lee Tuck (R) was ecstatic after opening the scoring in the 33rd minute against Team BJMC in their Bangladesh Premier League match at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday. However, his joy turned to despair as, with 10 minutes left in the game, he picked up a second yellow for arguing with the referee.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## Payment crisis continues

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union skipper Shahriar Nafees and his teammates met with Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday in order to discuss the payment crisis they are embroiled in. Brothers Union players have only been paid 30 per cent of their dues so far for the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) which ended on June 22.

As per the payment rules of the DPL, the country's premier 50-over competition, clubs should have paid the players in full by today. In fact, 60 per cent of the payments had to be completed by June 22.

However, players of Brothers and Victoria Sporting, which includes the likes of Mominul Haque, have just been given a third of their dues so far. The BCB had said that they would take responsibility of the players' payments in case the clubs failed to clear the dues. As a result, players from Brothers and Victoria are hoping that the board can solve their problem.

"As per the rules of the league, the clubs should have paid 100 per cent of the payment by now, but we just received the first instalment. There were two other clubs who hadn't disbursed their second instalment before Eid and the BCB stepped in at that point and cleared those dues.

"We hope they can do the same for us. That's basically what we requested the BCB to do in the meeting. They have taken the issue very seriously and they have said that they will take action within a week," Nafees told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"You see, this time the Dhaka Premier League took place after two years. And you all know that this is the league that most of the domestic players look forward to because 90 per cent of our players depend on it financially. If the situation of our premier league derails, then it will directly affect the game," he added.

Many players have blamed the new transfer system -- player-by-choice, where players are assigned set values and the clubs have the liberty to buy any player they want -- for the payment issues. As per the new system, the clubs can make their payments in three instalments.

"The player-by-choice system was introduced because the clubs had complained that they couldn't meet the players' financial demands. Prior to that players could make their own demands to the clubs. During those days players didn't get five to 10 per cent of their payments. But we accepted that because we know that clubs run on donations and they have done a lot for our country's cricket.

"But what's unfortunate is that the clubs still haven't been able to make their payments despite the new system in place. We hope that a resolution is reached quickly," said Nafees, adding that the players have stopped contacting the clubs for payments since the practice has proved to be futile.

As far as the 100 per cent payments are concerned, Abahani and Prime Dolleshwar have paid their dues in full. The rest of the clubs are yet to complete their payments, although the deadline is today.

## Abahani go joint-top

SPORTS REPORTER



A first-half strike from Englishman Lee Tuck helped

title contenders Abahani beat Team BJMC in the JB Bangladesh Premier League at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Tuck's 33rd-minute strike was enough to see four-time champions Abahani join Chittagong Abahani at the top of the table as each team now have seven points from three matches. However, Tuck received his marching orders 10 minutes from time after arguing with referee Jalaluddin's decision to book him.

Austrian coach George Kottan's charges enjoyed the better possession throughout the match with

crisp passing in midfield, but they could hardly penetrate the opposing backline and they only found the back of the net once as they did against Feni Soccer (1-0) and Chittagong Abahani (1-1) in previous matches.

However, the Sky Blues could have conceded the lead in the 20th minute had Sohel Rana not unbelievably headed a Jakir Hossain Jiku cross over the post from the edge of the six-yard box. That proved to be the only chance for BJMC, who tasted their first defeat in three matches after previously playing out two draws against Mukijoddha Sangad and Brothers Union.

Following a nice combination between Sunday Chizoba and Nabib Newaj Jibon, Lee Tuck broke the deadlock with a left-

footed strike in the 29th minute but the goal was canceled out due to an offside. But the English player did not take much time to make amends, finding the back of BJMC net with a 30-yard free kick.

**MOHAMMEDAN VS FENI SOCCER**

**ABAHANI 1-0 TEAM BJMC**

played another dismal performance as they played out a goalless draw with Feni Soccer Club, who played better than their superior opposition in the dull match. It was the first match in which either side failed to score after all previous 14 matches saw at least one goal struck.

Following a 4-2 drubbing at the hands of Chittagong Abahani,

Mohammedan needed to display an improved performance to regain confidence, but a poor performance from the popular Black and Whites was evidence of Mohammedan's gradual downfall in the top flight.

With two points from three outings, Mohammedan remain at the 10th position while Feni Soccer were just ahead of Mohammedan by virtue of better goal difference.

Feni Soccer, however, impressed with their spirited show to keep Mohammedan at bay. There would have been little surprise had they inflicted a defeat on Mohammedan as Ghanaian striker Twum Frank squandered at least three opportunities in the first 15 minutes before referee Bhaban Mohan ruled out a goal from Feni Soccer on the half-hour mark.

## Smalley agrees to BFF role

SPORTS REPORTER

Australian Paul Smalley has changed his mind and decided to take the job offered by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for the post of technical and strategic director and the former New Zealand technical director has agreed to arrive here in mid-August.

The game's governing body had earlier decided to appoint Smalley following a fruitful meeting with the BFF president in June, but the 50-year-old was hesitant to take up the job in Bangladesh following the militant attack at Gulshan in July.

"We have been in touch since his [Smalley's] visit to Bangladesh, but it had been in a modest stage following the recent incident in Dhaka, but at the moment we are working on an agreement. We expect his arrival in the middle of August," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

As a three-member FIFA delegation is also scheduled to arrive here in mid-August, the BFF is trying to rope in Smalley so he can present the BFF's plan before the delegation.

"As we have to present a future plan before the FIFA delegation, we want Smalley to present it," said Shohag, adding that they were considering signing Smalley to a two-year deal.

Shohag also informed that Belgian coach Tom Saintfiet would return Bangladesh on August 18 and that they would sign a three-month deal with Saintfiet the next day.

The BFF is also trying to reappoint German goalkeeper coach Christian Schweichler as well as appointing a South African fitness trainer for the national football team ahead of the September 6 tie against Bhutan.

## Shakil slips to second

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Abu Sufian Shakil slipped from the top position of the Commonwealth Chess Championship at the close of the fourth round held at Waskaduwa in Sri Lanka yesterday.

Shakil, who was sharing the lead at the close of the third round with maximum three points, drew with Indian GM Sunildath Lyna Narayanan in his fourth board to fall to the second position along with 12 other players with 3.5 points each.

## Pradeep a doubt for 2nd Test

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka suffered another injury setback ahead of the second Test against Australia in Galle with seamer Nuwan Pradeep suffering a hamstring strain during practice, a cricket board official said on Tuesday.

Angelo Mathews' side are reeling from injuries to their fast bowlers with Dhammika Prasad and Dushmantha Chameera ruled out of the three-match series, while Suranga Lakmal was also absent from the opening Test at Pallekele due to an ankle complaint.

Another paceman, Shaminda Eranga, was recently suspended for an illegal action.

The 29-year-old Pradeep, who has played 21 Tests, was the lone frontline paceman at Pallekele, which the hosts won by 106 runs to take a 1-0 lead against the world's top-ranked side in the longest format.



**Bangladesh bowler Al-Amin Hossain (C) believes that maintaining fitness, especially for a pacer, has to be managed by oneself and he is putting in the yards to ensure that he is in peak physical condition.** PHOTO: STAR

## 'Will miss our biggest asset'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh pacer Al-Amin Hossain said yesterday that the Tigers will miss the services of Mustafizur Rahman in the coming series as he believes that no one can match the young prodigy from Satkhira.

"Mustafizur is our biggest asset. Every team made plans against him but it did not work and that's why the job from the other end became easy. When Mustafizur and Shakib [Shakib Al Hasan] bhai contain from one end, from other end it's easy to take wickets, so we will miss Mustafizur hugely," said Al-Amin while speaking to reporters at Mirpur yesterday.

He also added that the sooner the 20-year old, who is now in England and is set to undergo surgery on his injured shoulder, returns to cricket the better it will be for the Tigers.

Al-Amin, who has so far played six Tests and 14 ODIs since making his international debut in October 2013, however said that they should take the challenge to fill the vacuum of the young left-arm pacer.

"We may not do what Mustafizur is capable of because he is exceptional, but he was not in the team a year ago and Bangladesh played. I think whoever plays will try their best to make up for his [Mustafizur's] absence so that nobody can think that we are not a good team without any particular individual," opined the 26-year old right-arm paceman.

Injury is a common feature for the pace bowlers and Al-Amin believes that self-management is important for a pacer to avoid constant injuries.

"I think self-management like how I sleep, what I eat or how I respond to minor injuries are vital issues. It is very important that you follow the instructions of the physio when you face a minor injury," he observed.

"Rubel bhai [Rubel Hossain] or Taskin Ahmed bowl at 140kph but I may get it up to 130 or 135. There is always a risk when you bowl fast. On the other hand we bowl with normal grip but Mustafizur's grip is exceptional, so there is always a chance of injury. I am however not sure whether overwork played any role behind his injury; the experts can say better," he continued when asked about the reason behind his fitness.

During the long conversation Al-Amin rued the Tigers' long gap from international cricket -- at a time when even Zimbabwe are playing -- after such a wonderful performance last year.

"See, even Zimbabwe playing Tests. If we want to beat Zimbabwe we can do it. We performed so well in the World Cup, Asia Cup, against India, Pakistan and South Africa in home series but still we have been going through a long break. We are not getting international matches," lamented Al-Amin.

"There are credible losses, and there are losses when you lie down and are steamrollered... Old Trafford was clearly that. I told the guys I thought we were warriors at Lord's. We were completely the opposite at Old Trafford," said Arthur.

Masood has become something of a 'bunny' for James Anderson, falling six times for just 15 runs in 57 balls to the Lancashire paceman dating back to last year in the UAE.

Pakistan could promote number three Azhar Ali to open and bring Sami Aslam, yet to feature this series, into the side in place of Masood.

"We're very clear on what we're going to do this Test, but it's not for public consumption."

England also have selection worries with the injury to Ben Stokes that ruled him out of the third Test. They have recalled fast bowler Steven Finn, who is set to replace Stokes.

## Runs at a premium for Pakistan

Third Test against England from today

AFP, Birmingham

Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur is desperate to see a greater return from his top-order batsmen in the third Test against England at Edgbaston starting Wednesday.

England levelled the four-match series at 1-1 with a crushing 330-run win in the second Test at Old Trafford -- a margin of victory that was testimony to the tourists' batting woes.

It was all a far cry from Pakistan's 75-run win in the first Test at Lord's, which featured an inspiring century from captain Misbahul Haq.

Mohammad Hafeez and Shan Masood are struggling in English conditions as Pakistan opens traditionally do.

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## India run away with lead

AFP, Kingston



A jinky a Rahane completed a seventh Test century and Roston Chase

claimed his first five-wicket innings haul as India declared their first innings at 500 for nine in reply to the West Indies total of 196 on the rain-interrupted third day of the second Test at Sabina Park in Jamaica on Monday.

Persistent showers prevented any play after tea and more rain is forecast on the fourth day with the West Indies facing a massive deficit of 304 runs at the start of their second innings.

India's resolute batting performance extended through two sessions of play on day three to put the tourists in complete command and on course for victory and a 2-0 lead in the four-match series barring protracted intervention by the elements over the remaining two days of the match.

Indian captain Virat Kohli's declaration came at the fall of the ninth wicket, when Umesh Yadav miscued a swing at Chase for West Indies captain Jason Holder to take the catch at midwicket and give the 24-year-old innings figures of five for 121 off 36.1 overs in just his second Test match.

Rahane had survived a searching examination from Holder and benefited from a dropped chance on 65 off Bishoo in the morning session under clear skies and blistering sunshine. His sixth-wicket partnership with Wriddhiman Saha reached 98 as 67 runs were added in the two hours' play before the wicketkeeper-batsman fell leg-before to Holder for 47 on the stroke of lunch.

That success was no more than the West Indies captain deserved for an excellent nine-over spell during which Rahane survived a succession of LBW appeals and struggled to cope with the probing accuracy of the fast-medium bowler.

### LATEST

West Indies were hurtling towards another heavy defeat when they lost four quick wickets on day four of the second Test against India at Sabina Park in Kingston on Tuesday. Starting their second innings with a deficit of 304 runs, the home team collapsed to 48 for four by lunch.

### SCOREBOARD

| WEST INDIES: First innings 196   |      |    |     |   |
|--|------|----|-----|---|
| INDIA: First innings (overnight 358 for 5)                                     |      |    |     |   |
| Rahul c Dowrich b Gabriel  | 158  |    |     |   |
| Dhawan c Bravo b Chase   | 27   |    |     |   |
| Pujara run out   | 46   |    |     |   |
| Kohli c Chandrika b Chase  | 44   |    |     |   |
| Rahane not out   | 108  |    |     |   |
| Ashwin lbw Bishoo  | 3    |    |     |   |
| Saha lbw Holder  | 47   |    |     |   |
| Mishra c Chandrika b Chase   | 21   |    |     |   |
| Shami b Chase  | 0    |    |     |   |
| Yadav c Holder b Chase   | 19   |    |     |   |
| Extras: (b-8, lb-3, w-6, nb-10)  | 27   |    |     |   |
| Total: (For 9 wickets in 171.1 overs) 500                                      |      |    |     |   |
| Fall of wickets: 1-87, 2-208, 3-277, 4-310, 5-327, 6-425, 7-458, 8-458, 9-500. |      |    |     |   |
| Did not bat: Sharma  |      |    |     |   |
| Bowler   | O    | M  | R   | W |
| Gabriel  | 28   | 8  | 62  | 1 |
| Cummins  | 26.4 | 4  | 87  | 0 |
| Holder   | 34.2 | 12 | 72  | 1 |
| Chase  | 36.1 | 4  | 121 | 5 |