

# SPORT

## Newcomers throw down the gauntlet

### Saif SC form formidable team

SPORTS REPORTER

Newly-promoted Saif Sporting Club formed a strong squad yesterday which may give the established heavyweights a run for their money in the upcoming football season.

Last season's Bangladesh Championship League runners-up, who have been promoted to the Bangladesh Premier League, signed seven national footballers as well as some promising talents on the penultimate day of the transfer window. In total, they signed 24 local players and three foreigners, from Colombia and Nigeria.

The national booters who will represent Saif SC are defenders Tapu Barman, Ariful Islam and Shakil Ahmed, while their midfield will be bolstered by the likes of Jamal Bhuiyan, Hemanta Vincent Biswas, Jewel Rana and Mohammad Ibrahim, who are expected to play pivotal roles if the club are to have success.

The club management also appointed Ghanaian-born British coach Kimberly Grand alongside a British assistant coach as they look to challenge the hegemony in their debut appearance in top-flight football.

"Although we [Saif PowerTec] are involved with a club [Chittagong Abahani], we have felt that we needed our own club to reflect our thinking and long-term plan in football. So when we were given the opportunity to play in the Bangladesh Championship League last year, we took that opportunity seriously and qualified for the top-tier football.

"We want to deliver beautiful football to entertain the spectators and if we can do it, then we will certainly reach our target of winning the league title. However our ultimate target is to take Saif SC to the standard of the subcontinent's other clubs like East Bengal, Mohun Bagan and Kolkata Mohammedan and produce good

results in tournaments organised by the AFC," said Saif SC managing director Nasiruddin Chowdhury during the players' transfers at the BFF House yesterday.

It has been learnt that the club has already spent close to Tk 6 crore, including the expenditure of their pre-season camp in Kolkata.

Saif SC also signed eight young footballers -- who were key cogs behind the club's success in the Bangladesh Championship League -- to four-year deals in a bid to reach their long-term target. They have also kept nine youth players as backups beyond official contracts so that they can pick them up in the mid-season window or play them next season.

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan believes Saif SC have formed a squad which are among the top three and he expects they will be in the race for all trophies next season.

"It is a good mixture of young and experienced players who are hungry for trophies. The young players are really good; striker Motin Mia may be in the national team in the near future. There is also good foreign group. I think we have a good chance to win the league title as well as other cups," said a confident Jamal.

Meanwhile, last season's league runners-up Chittagong Abahani and falling giants Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC also completed their players' registration formalities.

"While retaining the services of five players from last season, including Mamunul Islam and Zahid Hossain, we have also picked up those players who had played 90 minutes last season," Chittagong Abahani manager Arman Aziz said. "Despite roping in well-known players last season, we did not get the expected results. So we have formed a youthful squad this time."

Muktiyoddha formed a mediocre squad with the expectation of doing better than last season, when the All Reds finished fifth in the professional football league, informed coach Masud Parvez Kaiser.



Saif SC formed a strong side as national team players (from L) Jamal Bhuiyan, Tapu Barman, Ariful Islam, Hemanta Vincent Biswas, Jewel Rana and Shakil Ahmed completed their registration formalities yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Al-Amin Hossain (C) led Prime Bank's defence with a sublime five-wicket haul as his side defeated Legends of Rugganj by a handy 66 runs in their Dhaka Premier League encounter at the BKSP yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Doleshwar pull off a heist

### Al-Amin shatters Rugganj with five-wicket haul

SPORTS REPORTER



The game between Forhad Reza's Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club and Mohammad Ashraful's Kalabagan Kirira Chakra at Fatullah yesterday turned out to be the highlight of the Dhaka Premier League's ongoing fifth round as Doleshwar ended up snatching a one-run win at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium.

Batting first, Doleshwar were restricted to a lowly 202 for 9. Sanjit Saha had taken four wickets, while skipper Ashraful scalped two. And so, Kalabagan must have thought that the game was in their hands having put up a decent bowling performance.

They started the chase brilliantly as well, with openers Mehrab Hossain Junior and Tasamul Haque putting up a half-century stand. While they did lose wickets, they were at a comfortable 121 for 3 at the 30-over mark with Tasamul going strong.

At over number 40, they were poised at 162 for 3 and they needed just 40 more runs off the last ten

overs to win the game. However, that's when the game's momentum changed.

Tasamul was caught off Arafat Sunny in the first ball of the 41st over. Tasamul was the key man, having scored 89 runs prior to his dismissal containing six fours and two sixes.

Sunny dismissed Hamilton Masakadza in the last ball of the same over and suddenly the momentum swung Doleshwar's way. Wickets kept tumbling and from a position of control, Kalabagan went down to

178 for 7 in 45 overs.

The equation came down to 15 runs required off the last two overs with one wicket in hand. Nahid Hasan hit a brilliant six and brought that total down to four required off the last six balls.

They took two off the first ball but ended up conceding a run off the second.

Kalabagan eventually lost their last seven wickets for just 39 runs and conceded a one-run defeat.

The games at the BKSP were more

one-sided in comparison. Scores of 90s from Anamul Haque and Parvez Rasool, helped Gazi Group score a 25-run win over league holders Abahani Limited.

Batting first, Anamul scored a 109-ball 97, while Parvez hit an 87-ball 91 to lead Gazi Group to 282. While Anamul hit seven fours and three sixes, Parvez hit five fours and three sixes.

Abahani kept losing wickets at regular intervals during the chase and by the time Afif Hossain had come to their rescue with an unbeaten 76, it was too late. They eventually got bowled out for 257 in 48.1 overs. Alauddin Babu, who scalped three wickets, was the chief wrecker.

The other game at the BKSP saw Prime Bank Cricket Club, arguably the strongest team in the Dhaka Premier League following the departure of the national players, scoring a thumping 66-run win over Legends of Rugganj.

Prime Bank's Riffat Ullah scored a brilliant 128 off 125 balls to lead Prime Bank to 284 for 6. He hammered 10 fours and six sixes during his knock.

After the exchange, Al-Amin Hossain took a five-wicket haul to help dismiss Rugganj for 218 in 49.2 overs.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME DOLESHWAR v KALABAGAN KC

PRIME DOLESHWAR: 202 for 9 (Nafees 39, Jakir Ali 38 not out; Sanjit 4-28, Ashraful 2-34)

KALABAGAN KC: 201 all out in 49.2 overs (Tasamul 89, Mehrab 29; Forhad 3-32)

Result: Prime Doleshwar won by one run.

Player of the match: Sharif Ullah

GAZI GROUP CRICKETERS v ABAHANI LIMITED

GAZI GROUP: 282 for 9 (Anamul 97, Parvez 91, Nadif 41; Saifuddin 3-56, Kazi 3-58)

ABAHANI: 257 all out in 48.1 overs (Afif 76, Liton 42; Alauddin 3-45, Hider 2-37)

Result: Gazi Group won by 25 runs.

Player of the Match: Parvez Rasool.

PRIME BANK CRICKET CLUB v LEGENDS OF RUGGANJ

PRIME BANK: 284 for 6 (Riffat 128, Asif 47, Salman 33 not out; Sharif 3-42, Jalaj 1-38)

RUGGANJ: 218 all out in 49.2 overs (Naeem 95, Mosharraf 42, Sharif 34; Al-Amin 5-49, Nazmul 2-35, Nahidul 2-37)

Result: Prime Bank won by 66 runs.

Player of the match: Riffatullah

## Navy put 43 past Narail!

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Navy continued their goal fest in the ATN Bangla National Hockey Championship as they posted another thumping 43-0 win over Narail district at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

National players-studded Navy, who handed a 31-0 defeat to Gazipur on the opening day, showed no mercy to the lightweights, who were helpless throughout the 70-minute match.

Deen Islam Emon struck a team-high nine goals followed by Krishna Kumar, who netted seven. Fazle Hossain and Rimom Kumar scored five each and Roman Sarker scored four. Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Ashraful Islam, Kamruzzaman Rana and Imran Hasan Pinto struck at least three goals each.

Bangladesh Air Force followed in Navy's footsteps as they handed a massive 27-0 defeat to Khulna, while Gazipur bounced back to beat Meherpur 6-1. In the day's other match, Patuakhali beat Rajshai 2-1.

## NEW REVENUE SHARING MODEL 'This model may also be overlooked'

AGENCIES, New Delhi



Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar said that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) was well within its right to pull its team out of the 2017 Champions Trophy.

"If they go strictly by the book when the 2014 model came into being, I think with that legal agreement, they are entirely within their rights if they decide to withdraw from the tournament," Gavaskar told NDTV. "The agreement that was there in 2014 has been completely overlooked. I don't think we should forget that."

The legendary batsman also questioned the sanctity of the latest revamp.

"The thing is, if the 2014 model has been overlooked maybe you can overlook the 2017 model also in a couple of months. That is also entirely possible because, in this world of constantly changing loyalties and constantly changing friends, anything can happen," Gavaskar continued.

Gavaskar also rubbished the notion that India would be isolated if they boycotted the Champions Trophy, saying that other than Australia and England every other country needs them.

Gavaskar also questioned the new revenue sharing model, saying that it did not live up to its goal of being equitable.

"If the USD 590 million or whatever the BCCI was supposed to get, if that is wrong, then how is the USD 290 million or the other USD 100 million that is being offered, right? If the whole idea is equitable distribution among all cricket boards, then every board must get exactly the same amount."



SUNIL GAVASKAR

## Siddikur climbs up to 28th

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace Bangladesh golfer Siddikur Rahman had a great outing in the third round of the Yeangder Heritage in Chinese Taipei yesterday, hitting a three-under par to move up to 28th place in the leaderboard with an overall score of one-under-par (215).

After carding one-over-par in the first and second rounds in Miaoli's National Golf Country Club, the 32-year-old began the third round in sublime touch.

After hitting five birdies and looking set to make a big leap, Siddikur carded two bogeys on the final two holes, which took some of the gloss off his outing.

South Korea's Yikeun Chang continued to set the pace, playing a bogey-free round to maintain his position at the top in the USD 3,00,000 event.

Chang hit a four-under-par to take his overall score to 10-under-par (206).

He was one stroke ahead of Malaysia's Gavin Green, whose outstanding round saw him card six birdies against no bogeys to jump up to second from eighth.



Bangladesh Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (INSET) was all smiles ahead of the second day of the Tigers' training camp in Sussex, before he took to the nets.

PHOTOS: BCB/COLLECTIVE