

SPORT



Bangladesh's stand-in captain Mushfiqur Rahim draws the team together in a huddle before taking the field during their 134-run win over Sussex XI at the Central Cricket Ground in Hove yesterday. The light-hearted nature of their second practice match was underlined by the fact that Mahmudullah Riyad and Shafiu Islam were playing for the opposition.

PHOTO: BCB

Hefty transfers defy logic

Big clubs spend big bucks for insipid BPL

ANISUR RAHMAN

Despite the fact that Bangladesh are languishing in the lowest echelon of FIFA rankings (193 out of 211 nations) and the top-tier domestic league, the Bangladesh Premier League, drawing next to no crowd to the stadia, there seems to be no shortage of money for the clubs when it comes to spending in the transfer market.

While in an ideal scenario one would expect a reduction in transfer market spending due to the unattractiveness of the league and lacklustre performances of the national team, the trend seems to be going the other way. In fact, the transfer market is becoming more and more volatile these days as players are bought for hefty prices by the big clubs.

According to a gross estimate based on insider information of the 12 clubs of the BPL, the spending in the recent transfer market, which closed on April 30, is around Tk 46 crore.

In addition to this amount, the clubs are expected to spend an additional Tk 20 crore to cater to expenditures of coaching staff, food, transportation, accommodation, bonuses, sports gear and other things. Interestingly, these expenditures are not offset by cash revenues, rather these amounts are met through donations, as has been the tradition.

"The total expenditure of the clubs depends on how long the season prolongs and how long you pay the foreign players and run training camps," Sheikh Jamal DC manager Anwarul Karim Helal explained.

According to club officials, defending champions Abahani and last season's runners-up Chittagong Abahani were the biggest spenders in the transfer mar-

ket, with both clubs having spent around Tk 8 crore each while Sheikh Jamal have reportedly spent Tk 6 crore, followed by Tk 5 crore spent by Sheikh Russel KC and Mohammedan SC each. Newcomers Saif Sporting Club have spent Tk 4 crore.

"Though we did not sign up any star player, we roped in footballers who played 90 minutes regularly for different clubs last season. So we had to pay them good amount to ensure their services. The players' payment may stand at Tk 8 crore apart from other expenditures," informed Chittagong Abahani's newly appointed manager Arman Aziz.

"We are spending three times what we spent last season. We have to pay Tk 3 crore to only 12 players while there are payments to other local players and foreign players. I think the total players' payment will be around Tk 5 crore," claimed Mohammedan SC manager Amirul Islam Babu, whose side finished 10th last season.

Another interesting finding is that there is a big disparity in spending among the clubs that spend big and those that have less in their purse. The six less solvent clubs - Team BJMC (Tk 2 crore), Muktijoddha Sangsad (Tk 1.8 crore), Farashganj SC (Tk 1.5 crore), Arambagh KS (1.5 crore), Brothers Union (Tk 1.4 crore) and Rahmatganj MFS (Tk 1.3 crore) - have collectively spent only Tk 9.5 crore, which is just one-and-a-half crore more than what Abahani have spent.

"As we don't have enough donors or sponsors, we spend less money. This time we have estimated a total budget of Tk 2 crore in which the players' payment is nearly Tk 1.3 crore and the rest will be spent to run the camp," said Imteaz Hamid Sabuj, general secretary of Rahmatganj MFS, who finished seventh last season.

Mehedi, Imrul star in warm-up

STAR SPORT DESK



Imrul Kayes hit 92 and Mehedi Hasan starred with bat and ball as Bangladesh came out victorious in their second warm-up game on the tour of England and Ireland with a 134-run win over Sussex XI at the Central Cricket Ground in Hove yesterday.

If any reminder was needed that this was a light-hearted practice game, then one need look no further than the fact that Bangladesh squad members Mahmudullah Riyad and Shafiu Islam played for the opposition, a second-string Sussex side.

The unofficial nature of the game aside, Bangladesh will take confidence from a performance that saw them rack up 314 for nine after being sent in to bat in cloudy conditions, and they should be even more pleased that a three-wicket haul from off-spinner Mehedi helped skittle out Sussex for just 180 in 40.3 overs. Mahmudullah scored a 42-ball 32 for the opposition, batting at number four, before he was caught behind off Taskin Ahmed.

Bangladesh used seven bowlers as all 14 available players were fielded in the practice match. Bangladesh are currently without Shakib Al Hasan, Mustafizur Rahman -- both of whom recently concluded their Indian Premier League stints -- and skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who came back to Dhaka to be with his ailing wife. Batsman Tamim Iqbal was also rested because of back pain.

Taskin earlier had Sussex captain and opener Philip Salt caught behind for 25, before Sanjamul Islam bowled Angus Robson for 49. Mehedi began to turn the screws with the wicket of Delray Rawlins, before adding those of Alexander Woodland and N Smith to end with figures of three for 31 in six overs. Soumya Sarkar also picked one up, dismissing Michael Burgess with his medium pace while the other part-timer Sabbir Rahman got compatriot Shafiu's wicket. Subashis Roy then cleaned up the tail with the wickets of Abidine Sakande and Adam Barton to complete the clinical win.

Earlier, Imrul gave Bangladesh the early impetus and a late rescue act from Mehedi helped them recover after a middle-order dip.

Soumya departed for six, but Imrul and Sabbir Rahman put on a 100-plus partnership for the second wicket, which ended when Sabbir was caught off Dawburn for 52 with the score on 139. Soon afterwards, Imrul retired on a 78-ball 92 with 12 fours and a six to bring Mosaddek Hossain to the crease, but the youngster did not last long as he was trapped leg-before by Rawlins for seven. 186 for three became 211 for four when Nasir Hossain, recalled to the squad for the Ireland tri-series, was caught off J Smith for six and a below-par score was on the cards when stand-in skipper Mushfiqur Rahim departed five runs later, caught off the same bowler for 40.

But Mehedi took charge then, and with Nurul Hasan (27), Sanjamul (5) and Taskin (4) took the score to 314, with his contribution being a 55-ball 60 with four fours and three sixes. Shafiu bowled seven overs and conceded 37 runs without a wicket for Sussex XI.

Sadman corrects Abahani's course

Rupganj make amends; Abhishek powers Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER



21-year-old Sadman Islam scored his maiden List A century to lead holders Abahani to a thumping 107-run win against Prime Bank Cricket Club at the BKSP yesterday in the ongoing Dhaka Premier League.

After the departure of the national players, Abahani found life a bit difficult, losing two out of their last three games. However, their win against Prime Bank, considered to be the strongest team in the league sans the national players, will definitely give them a boost.

Batting first, Abahani were bowled out for a strong 305 in 49.2 overs. It was their brilliant start that set the roadmap of the 107-run win. Their openers, Liton Das and Sadman put on 119 runs in 19.5 overs with Liton scoring 65 off 63 balls with three sixes and four fours before getting out.

Saif Hassan then joined Sadman and put on another century stand. The duo shared a 101-run partnership before Saif was dismissed for 51 in the 36th over.

Sadman, who hit three sixes and nine fours, soon reached his century before being caught off Ariful Haque.

A few hits from Shuvagata Hom and Nazmul Hossain towards the end helped them cross the 300-run mark. However, they would have scored more had they not lost wickets at regular intervals.

After the exchange, Shuvagata, who had taken four for 19 in his last game, scalped a five-wicket haul and was the key reason behind Prime Bank's collapse. Salman Hossain, who scored an unbeaten 61 was the only batsman who scored a half-century as Prime Bank were bundled out for 198 in 44.5 overs.

In the other game at the BKSP, Legends of

Rupganj made amends for their pathetic display in the last game when they were bundled out for 84 on a good batting track, by chasing down Victoria's 155 without any headaches.

Batting first, Victoria were bundled out in just 45.3 overs courtesy of Raza Ali Dar's three for 13 and Mosharraf Hossain's two for 36. In the second innings, Pinak Ghosh scored a cautious 62 off 110 balls to lead them to a much-needed six-wicket win in 45.3 overs. Mosharraf, who promoted himself to four, scored 21 while Naeem scored an unbeaten 29 to support Pinak.

At the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, Mohammedan's Abhishek Mitra scored 95 to help his team chase down Prime Doleshwar's 228 with six wickets to spare.

Batting first, Doleshwar rode on Abdul Majed's 50 and a late blitz from Forhad Reza and Habibur Rahman to post 228. They were struggling at 153 for seven and that is



SHUVAGATA ... 5 for 47 ABHISHEK ... 95

when Forhad and Habibur shared a 64-run stand for the eighth wicket and helped them cross the 200-run mark.

However, that was not enough as a resolute Abhishek, who hit two sixes and three fours, saw them through in 47.4 overs. He was well supported by skipper Rakibul Hasan's 49 off 60 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ABAHANI V PRIME BANK CC

ABAHANI: 305 all out in 49.2 overs (Sadman 103, Liton 65, Saif 51; Al-Amin 3-47, Ariful 3-58, Salman 2-38)

PRIME BANK: 198 all out in 44.5 overs (Salman 61 not out, Mehedi 31; Shuvagata 5-47, Manan 2-41)

Result: Abahani won by 107 runs.

Player of the match: Sadman Islam

PRIME DOLESHWAR V MOHAMMEDAN

PRIME DOLESHWAR: 228 for 9 (Majid 50, Forhad 46, Zakir 40; Charith 3-29, Sajedul 3-30)

MOHAMMEDAN: 232 for 4 in 47.4 overs (Abhishek 95, Rakibul 49 not out; Imtiaz 1-7, Sunny 1-60)

Result: Mohammedan won by six wickets.

Player of the match: Abhishek Mitra

LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ V VICTORIA SC

VICTORIA: 155 all out in 45.3 overs (Uttam 35, Rubel 28; Raza 3-13, Mosharraf 2-36)

RUPGANJ: 156 for 4 in 45.3 overs (Pinak 62, Naeem 29; Arafat 1-16, Rubel 1-17)

Result: Legends of Rupganj won by six wickets.

Player of the match: Pinak Ghosh.



Abahani opener Sadman Islam scored his maiden List A century to lead holders Abahani to a thumping 107-run win over Prime Bank Cricket Club in a Dhaka Premier League match at the BKSP yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

5-star Rashid routs Ireland

AFP, Bristol

Adil Rashid returned the second-best figures by an England spinner in a one-day international as the hosts eased to a seven-wicket win in their series opener against Ireland at Bristol on Friday.

Leg-spinner Rashid took five for 27 as Ireland collapsed to 126 all out after visiting captain William Porterfield won the toss. Andrew Balbirnie top-scored with 30 in an innings where only openers Ed Joyce (23) and Paul Stirling (20) got to 20.

England lost Jason Roy for a duck in the first over of their reply.

Alex Hales then went on to make a quickfire 55 that stopped any thoughts of a stunning upset in their tracks.



England spinner Adil Rashid (2nd from R) celebrates one of his five wickets against Ireland in the first ODI at the Brightside County Ground in Bristol yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Holder wants repeat

AGENCIES, Bridgetown

West Indies captain Jason Holder has praised the focus and commitment of his embattled side following their crushing win over Pakistan on Thursday, and has urged them to maintain the intensity heading into next week's decisive Test at Windsor Park.

Entering the Kensington Oval contest on the back of a seven-wicket defeat in the opening Test at Sabina Park two weeks ago, West Indies turned the tables on Pakistan to level the three-match series with a 106-win on the final day.

"We had to win the game to keep the series alive. Everybody knew what was at stake and we wanted to win the game," Holder told a media conference.

"We wanted to win the series and start making strides in the right direction, so everybody knew the importance of the game and it was all about giving a big effort.

I told the guys to leave everything out on the park.

"We highlighted a few areas before this game that we wanted to touch on and I feel as though we have really touched them and hit them. It's just a matter of being consistent and carrying it into Dominica, which will be very crucial."

"The series is wide open and we have the perfect opportunity to win the series."

Holder said preparation and execution had been the vital keys to winning the encounter.

"It feels really good. It just shows what hard work can do. I think the guys put in a really good effort in the preparation leading up to this game," he explained.

"We took it to the end. We set out some plans in the dressing room and I think we went out and executed them so credit must go to everybody, especially to the fast bowlers who just kept running in."



Sheikh Jamal edge Saif Sporting

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club inflicted a 3-2 defeat on Saif Sporting Club in a pre-season preparation match at their own ground in Dhanmondi yesterday.

Gambian forward Momodou Bah put Sheikh Jamal ahead in the 19th minute before Nurul Absar doubled the margin a minute later.

After resumption, Matin Mia pulled one goal back in the 47th minute before Colombian Hember Arley scored the equaliser three minutes later.

However, Bah scored his second goal of the match in the 79th minute as the hosts came out with a victory.