

AUSTRALIAN PAY DISPUTE

## Lingering uneasiness in Tigers' camp

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers have been going through a tenacious fitness camp which they consider will bolster their energy stock for at least the next one year. It is hard but everybody seemed to be enjoying the camp to ensure that there will be no questions regarding their fitness in the coming busy international schedule. Skill training is also being done and Courtney Walsh was seen doing an extensive session with Mustafizur Rahman, who has been struggling to get back to full rhythm after recovering from shoulder surgery.

But when a team is going through all of this then they have an immediate purpose and the Tigers are putting in all the hard yards with their eyes on their next home assignment against Australia. The question however remains whether Australia will come to play the two-match Test series come next month.

They players have been enjoying their practice and having fun but one cannot avoid the uneasiness regarding the uncertainty of the tour. Generally a player comes to attend to the media almost every day to say something about the upcoming series against Australia and their personal goals from the series. But yesterday, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury was required to say something following the news that the BCB had apparently 'been informed it should be prepared for the possibility of the

tour's cancellation'.

Chowdhury however repeated what the board's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus told this newspaper on the previous day.

"There was no talk with Cricket Australia (CA) regarding cancellation of the tour. But we have had communication with them today. An inspection team will come to visit Bangladesh on July 25," informed Chowdhury. "The BCB is taking preparations to host Australia and we are working accordingly. We hope CA is also working same way and what is going on now is simply their internal issue. It would not be wise to comment on it," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Australian Cricketers Association chief Alistair Nicholson has warned the players via email that the showpiece Test series against England, due to begin in Brisbane on November 23, is under threat.

Negotiations over a new MOU between players and Cricket Australia have all but broken down, although Nicholson and CA counterpart James Sutherland are scheduled to meet on Sunday, Fairfax Media said.

"If there is agreement, the next step would be the more intensive MOU and contract drafting period," Nicholson told the players in an email, seen by Fairfax Media. "Given past experience and the massive detail involved, this would take some time and still may not be completed with time enough to meet the needs of fans, sponsors and broadcasters invested in the upcoming tours and the [Australian] summer of cricket."



THE MENTOR AND HIS PUPIL: Bangladesh's bowling coach Courtney Walsh (R) shows something he captured in his laptop to left-arm pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman during yesterday's fitness session at the BCB Academy ground.



Mezbah Uddin Ahmed (R) and Shirin Akter have made the blue riband 100m sprints their personal property. Both have defended their crowns in the Summer Athletics Championship at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday with Mezbah clinching the national title for a record sixth time against Shirin's five.

PHOTO: STAR

## Mezbah, Shirin reign again

SPORTS REPORTER

Mezbah Uddin Ahmed and Shirin Akter of Bangladesh Navy stretched their dominance in domestic sprint by winning gold medals in their respective 100m events on the second and final day of the 13th National Summer Athletics Championship at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

While the two top awards went to the two Navy athletes, it was Bangladesh Army who retained their team supremacy with a tally of 48 medals including 18 gold, 17 silver and 13 bronze medals. Bangladesh Navy became runners-up with 33 medals including 12 gold, 11 silver and 10 bronze medals.

Mezbah, who came into limelight after winning gold in the 2013 Bangladesh Games, tasted his sixth successive gold medal in his favourite event, clocking in at 10.80 seconds. Three of his five previous gold medals came in the national championships

while two others came in summer meets.

Mezbah's teammate Shah Emran claimed silver by clocking 10.90 seconds while Shariful Islam of Bangladesh Army finished third at 11.10 seconds.

The sixth gold medal on the trot for the country's fastest sprinter put him within one gold medal shy of the record set by Mosarraf Hossain Shamim, who had won the title seven times.

Mezbah, however, was not satisfied with his timing. "I'm not satisfied with my timing but at the same time it is not possible to produce great timing on this track because it has become old and slow," he said.

"I didn't want to make a mistake today. I'm leaving the country for the World Championship on August 1. If I'd made any mistake, it would have been a setback for my participation in that event," Mezbah added.

Meanwhile, Mezbah's teammate Shirin beat Sohagi Akter to claim her fifth gold medal, which also includes three others in the national meet and two in the summer meet.

Shirin clocked 12.30 seconds to retain the title of fastest woman while Sohagi took 12.40 seconds to claim the silver while Susmita Ghosh of Army managed the bronze medal.

Like Mezbah, Shirin's timing was way off her career best of 11.84 seconds which she had set in 2014.

"I feel really good to become the fastest woman of the country for the fifth time," Shirin said. "If I can continue practice till the SA Games, I believe I can win a gold medal there. Nothing is impossible."

Meanwhile, 2010 SA Games silver medallist Sumita Rani of Bangladesh Jail regained the women's 100m hurdles gold medal by clocking in at 15.30 seconds.

Sumita, who is considered the best female hurdler of the country for winning 12 gold medals, was ruled out of the track for the last two years due to injury.

Around 450 male and female athletes took part in 50 events of this meet, but no new national records were set during the two days.

## 'Premier League to start as scheduled'

SPORTS REPORTER

The tenth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League will kick off on July 28 as previously announced, claimed chairman of PFLC Abdus Salam Mursedy after an emergency meeting at the BFF House yesterday.

Mursedy said that the league will start on time and definitely with a title sponsor finalised. "The emergency meeting was called in regards to settling the schedule and other issues of the league. There is no reason for the league to be deferred. We can say that we will start the league on July 28 and there will be a title sponsor for the league."

There were whispers going around that the start of the league, which was originally scheduled for June 12, may defer yet again

after the marketing rights holders, Saif Global Sports, sent a letter to the game's governing body raising their concern over a few issues including not getting title sponsors for the event. Mursedy, however, brushed aside such concerns. "We did receive a letter from the official marketing rights holders and discussed about it. All we can say is that the league is going to start on time, whether with old sponsors or new ones, we can't yet say."

"There has never been a case where the league started without a title sponsor no matter how small or big the sponsors were. It won't happen this time either. We will unveil the sponsors before the start of the league and will complete other formalities," the BFF's senior vice-president added.

There has, however, been no schedule or format of the league released by the game's governing body as yet.

## National V'ball from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Shahjalal Islami Bank National Volleyball Championship will get underway tomorrow at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur. The championships, which will feature the 28th men's and 23rd women's championships, will reach its conclusion on July 31, according to the organisers who briefed on the event at a press conference at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium yesterday.

State minister for youth and sports Sree Biren Sikder MP will inaugurate the event at 3:00pm.

## India eye history

AFP, London

India have the chance to alter the course of cricket history when they face hosts England in the Women's World Cup final at Lord's on Sunday.

Since the tournament's inception in 1973 -- two years before the men's World Cup started - it has been dominated by England and Australia, with New Zealand, in 2000, the only other country to have won the event.

The final sees this year's edition come full circle, with India having upset the form book to beat England by 35 runs in the tournament opener in Derby on June 24.

"It isn't going to be easy for England," promised India captain Mithali Raj after her side's stunning semifinal win over six-times champions Australia in Derby on Thursday. A 36-run victory over the title-holders

was built on Harmanpreet Kaur's stunning 171 not out.

An innings full of correct yet powerful shots ought to have banished any remaining stereotypes about 'demure' women's cricket in general and the India team in particular.

Certainly there was nothing 'ladylike' about the fiercely competitive Kaur's angry reaction towards batting partner Deepi Sharma after almost being run out on 98.

For Raj and India pace bowler Jhulan Goswami, the leading run-scorer and wicket-taker in women's one-day international history respectively, this could be the last chance the two 34-year-olds have to win the World Cup.

But the significance of the day goes far beyond what it means to their cricket careers.

India's win in the 1983 men's World Cup final at Lord's turned the country on to limited overs cricket and led the world's second-most populous nation to become the sport's financial powerhouse.

## Dhaka metro football tourney from July 27

SPORTS REPORTER

The Walton 1st Dhaka Metropolis Football Tournament gets underway on July 27th, with 12 teams from the Second Division, Third Division and Pioneer League taking part. The 12 team tournament, which also includes a BKSP side and a BFF U-16 side, will be split into four groups and the teams will play in round robin format before playing the semifinals and the final.

The organisers, Dhaka Metropolis Football League Committee (DMFLC), said that since there is some time left before the start of the Bangladesh Championship League, they tried to squeeze in this tournament, which will feature a total of 15 matches.

"Since we are holding this for the first time in this way, we may have some shortcomings," DMFLC chairman Harunur Rashid said during a press conference at the

BFF House. "We have tried to involve clubs from the second division, third division and pioneer league as well as a BFF team and a BKSP team. The objective of this tournament is to find young players, most of whom will be at the under-16 to under-18 level. Other division teams can loan players to these teams, but foreign footballers will not be allowed," he continued.

The tentative date for the final is 10 August and the matches will be held at two venues - the Bangabandhu National Stadium and the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

The press conference was attended, among others, by chief sponsors Walton's director Iqbal Bin Anwar, co-sponsors Minister Fridge's Abdur Razzak and tournament committee chairman Saleh Zaman Selim.



Chinese athletes produced a spectacular display to win the women's free combination gold in the synchronised swimming competition at the 2017 FINA World Championships in Budapest yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP