

# SPORT

## Starting leagues quickly is the priority: Inam

SPORTS REPORTER

Even three years ago, when young left-arm spinner Tipu Sultan was practising in Jessore and awaiting an opportunity, he would never have thought that he would be named in the Bangladesh Under-19 squad that will fly to New Zealand on December 26 to take part in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in January.

The left-arm spinner made his Dhaka League debut in 2016 for Kakrail Boys in the second-division league after his coach referred his name to Mahboob Elahi Murad, the official of Kakrail. Sultan grabbed the opportunity with both hands and went on to become the highest wicket-taker in the league, scalping 32 wickets to help his club gain promotion to the first division.

In the next season, the teenager made his maiden first division appearance for Kakrail and had an immediate impact, once again becoming the highest wicket-taker of the tournament with 34 wickets in 16 games. He eventually caught the attention of the age-level selectors with junior selector Ehsanul Haque having high praise for the youngster.

Sultan was the only one change in the Bangladesh U-19 squad that played the Youth Asia Cup in November, as the promising youngster replaced another left-arm spinner Shakhawat Hossain in the World Cup squad.

It might be a dream journey for Sultan but the Dhaka leagues have a legacy of producing and providing platform for cricketers from the grassroots level to later go on to represent the

national team.

However, the first, second and third division leagues are yet to get going this season as the clubs are still in the dark regarding the commencement of the 2017-18 season. Normally, the players' transfer for the first division league takes place by August and the tournament starts from late October or early November. The previous season of the first division league ended in January this year.

After its elections last month, the BCB finally formed the standing committees with Kazi Inam Ahmed, who headed the marketing and commercial committee in the previous term, named the new chairman of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan, replacing Gazi Golam Mortuza.

Since the committee was finally formed the clubs are now optimistic about the start of the league. According to Inam: "The new role of CCDM chairman is a challenging one. Of course, this is a very important position in Bangladesh cricket in terms of managing all the Dhaka leagues, which have been the heart of cricket with the historic rivalry between Abahani and Mohammedan being there for decades. I will have to work really hard."

"Yes, it is true that the leagues are still pending. Since I was given the responsibility only last week and immediately I have had meetings with relevant authorities -- especially directors of grounds, logistics, tournament committee and umpires committee to find out the slots and plan to start them as soon as possible. Our first goal will be to try and start the tournaments as soon as possible and also form a calendar for the future."



Captain Steve Smith's unbeaten 92 put Australia in a good position after the second day's play of the third Test against England in Perth yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Siddikur makes cut in Jakarta

SPORTS REPORTER

A spate of birdies in the back nine helped Siddikur Rahman salvage a precarious position and save the cut in the Indonesian Masters. The 32-year-old started the second round at 96th position with a score of one-over, and did his chances no good when he traded three bogeys for two birdies in the front nine of the Royal Jakarta Golf Club yesterday.

However, the two-time Asian Tour winner hit three birdies on the first three holes of the back nine before going bogey-free for the rest of the day to finish with two-under (70). That effort saw him save the cut by a single shot as he climbed up to joint 65th position with an aggregate score of one-under-par (143).

## V-DAY BASKETBALL Navy, Army in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Army set up a final clash in the Victory Day Basketball Tournament yesterday.

Navy beat Border Guard Bangladesh by 74-51 points in the first semifinal at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium after having led the first half by 52-30 points. Shoeb scored maximum 33 points for the winning side.

In the second semifinal, Bangladesh Army brushed off Bangladesh Air Force by 54-34 points after leading by 26-15 points in the first half. Tanvir of Air Force was the highest scorer of the match with 17 points to his name.

The final will be held at 9:30am today at the same venue.

## Mathews fit for decider

PTI, Visakhapatnam

In a big relief for Sri Lanka, team's star all-rounder Angelo Mathews has recovered from cramps and is available for selection for the series-deciding third ODI against India on Sunday.

Mathews, who suffered from cramps during his unbeaten century knock in the second ODI at Mohali on December 13.

## Odoyin drives Sk Jamal

SPORTS REPORTER



Nigerian forward Raphael Odoyin continued his rich vein of form in the Bangladesh Premier League as his brace led Sheikh Jamal Dhandmondi Club to a 3-1 win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nurul Absar scored the other goal as the three-time champions reclaimed second spot with 40 points from 17 matches, two behind league leaders Chittagong Abahani.

Towhidul Alam scored the consolation goal for Muktiyoddha Sangsad,

**SHEIKH JAMAL 3 - 1 MUKTIJODDHA**  
(ODOYIN 20, 53, ABSAR 37) (TOWHIDUL 60)

**BROTHERS 0 - 0 SAIF SC**

who stayed at 11th position with 11 points from 17 outings.

Odoyin, who was ignored in the starting eleven in the first 10 league matches, showed his scoring ability with a four-goal haul against Farashganj SC when he was drafted in the starting eleven for the first time. Since then the Nigerian has scored in all six matches except for the match against Rahmatganj MFS.

The 24-year-old forward came into yesterday's match having scored a

hat-trick against Arambagh and he kept his scoring spree with a brace to enjoy his solo lead in the goal-scorers' chart with 13 goal including two hat-tricks.

"Actually I was not drafted in the playing eleven in the first leg because I could not do well but I am now trying to pay back the faith of the club," Odoyin said.

"I am happy to get goals regularly. I want to be the top-scorer in the league and win the trophy for my club," said Odoyin, who had scored 15 goals in 16 matches for a Nigerian Premier League club last season.

The prolific scorer put Sheikh Jamal ahead in the 20th minute with a simple tap-in from inside the six-yard box after Javed Khan's powerful drive came off the crossbar while Absar headed in a corner from Khan Mohammad Tara to double the lead in the 37th minute.

Muktiyoddha Sangsad applied heavy pressure at the start of the second half, but it was Sheikh Jamal who scored again in the 53rd minute, with Odoyin finding the back of net with a left-footed placing shot.

However, Towhidul reduced the margin with a tap-in on the hour-mark following a fumble from Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Samiul Hasan.

Muktiyoddha created a few more chances but forwards Towhidul and Malagan Ugochwu wasted those as Sheikh Jamal notched their second victory of the league against the same opposition.

Meanwhile, Brothers Union held Saif SC to a goalless draw in the second match of the day to raise their tally to 15 points as Saif SC remained in fourth position with 31 points.



Sheikh Jamal DC forward Raphael Odoyin celebrates one of his two goals against Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC during their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## FIXING SCANDAL

## Investigators to visit Aus

### Bookies offered BPL fix?

SMH



The International Cricket Council will send investigators to Australia as part of its probe into the game's latest corruption scandal after British newspaper The Sun alleged on Wednesday that two bookmakers, including an Indian "Mr Big", had offered to sell it details of rigged periods of play in the Test in Perth which could be bet on to win huge sums.

The ICC anti-corruption chief Alex Marshall signalled on Friday that it would take several weeks to interview witnesses and try and corroborate and cross-check the explosive allegations made by two alleged Indian fixers in a report by British tabloid The Sun.

Former Indian state cricketer Sobers Joban and Priyanka Saxena, described as a bookmaker and businessman, said

in secretly recorded video in Delhi and Dubai that they could arrange for parts of the third Ashes Test in Perth as well as Big Bash League games to be fixed using a figure they called The Silent Man, who had connections with current and former internationals and had players working for him as "puppets".

Joban and Saxena also boasted in the paper's report that they could arrange fixes on the Indian Premier League and the Bangladesh Premier League, saying they could provide full "scripts" for the latter for 175,000 pounds (305,000 dollars).

Former Australia cricketer Dirk Nannes, who played in the BPL in 2012 and 2013, said that there was suspicious activity with the owners coming onto the field with mobile phones and supposedly seeing spotters in the crowd.

Joban and Saxena claimed that a former Australian cricketer and an

Australian administrator had passed on information on games in the BBL that could be sold, and that "three to four" games in the upcoming Twenty20 tournament would be fixed.

Marshall has said that there was no evidence, based on his review of a dossier provided by The Sun, that the third Test was corrupted. However, he said a thorough investigation would take place into all the allegations throughout different competitions and countries.

The ICC anti-corruption unit already has an Australian-based investigator, John Rhodes, who has been at the WACA during the match and while he is set to lead their inquiries here, it is expected that other members of their team will join him.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland addressed the Australian team after the first day of the third Test on Thursday and has said he has "full confidence in our players".

## Smith spoils England's day

AFP, Perth



Australian captain Steve Smith again proved to be a major obstacle as England wasn't able to capitalise on their overnight momentum on the second day of the third Ashes Test in Perth on Friday.

England first innings centurion Dawid Malan urged his team to ramp up the pressure on the home side at the end of the first day's play, but a late order collapse by the visitors and the broad bat of Smith ensured the match was evenly poised at the end of the second day.

At stumps Australia were 203 for three, with Smith on 92 and Shaun Marsh on seven, a deficit of 200 runs with seven wickets in hand after dismissing England for 403.

The tourists appeared to miss a golden chance to remove Marsh just before stumps, when the left-hander hit the ball onto Mark Stoneman's foot at short leg and the fielder was unable to cling onto the rebound as he and wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow both lunged at the catch.

England had looked set to post a massive score when they were 368 for four with Malan and Bairstow seemingly in total control, but then lost six wickets for 35 runs in a stunning collapse before lunch.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Bairstow, who notched his fourth Test century in making 119, said the match was evenly balanced and conceded Smith's wicket was key, but believed England had a perfect chance to take control when play resumes on the third day.

"We have the capabilities of taking five or six wickets in a session, we have shown that previously and there is no reason we can't now," he said.

The 28-year-old played down his century celebration, which including knocking the helmet against his head several times, and said it was completely spontaneous and "a bit of a light-hearted fun".

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**ENGLAND:** First innings 403 (Stoneman 56, Vince 25, Root 20, Malan 140, Bairstow 119; Starc 4-91, Hazlewood 3-92, Cummins 2-84)

**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 203 for 3 (Bancroft 25, Warner 22, Khawaja 50, Smith 92 not out; Overton 2-46)

## Shakib misfires in Kerala loss

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh's star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan had a forgettable outing as Kerala Kings were soundly beaten by eight wickets by Punjabi Legends in their T10 Cricket League Group A match in Sharjah last night.

Coming out to bat at number five in the sixth over after Punjab chose to field first, Shakib hit a boundary off his second ball, before holing out in the eighth over off the bowling of Chris Jordan for seven. Kerala put up a challenging 114 for four in 10 overs, but Punjab -- powered by an unbeaten 25-ball 60 from Shoaib Malik -- cantered home with an over to spare.

Shakib bowled one over, the sixth of the innings, and was taken for 14 runs.

## Waugh's son in U-19 WC

IANS, Sydney

Australia legend Steve Waugh's all-rounder son Austin was on Friday named in the 15-man squad, led by promising Jason Sangha, for the Under-19 World Cup to be held in New Zealand next month.

The squad also includes Will Sutherland, son of Cricket Australia's Chief Executive James Sutherland, as the vice-captain.

## Teams turn up for SAFF

SPORTS REPORTER



All three participating teams - India, Nepal and Bhutan -- arrived in Dhaka yesterday for the inaugural SAFF U-15 Women's Championship, which begins tomorrow at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Soon after their flight landed, Bhutan held a one-hour practice session at the match venue while India and Nepal opted to rest at the hotel. Hosts Bangladesh also did not partake in practice yesterday.

On the opening day, India will play Bhutan at 11:30am before Bangladesh go up

against Nepal in the second match of the day at 2:30pm.

After FIFA stepped forward to help regional football governing bodies arrange age-group tournaments, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) scrapped its U-14 Girls Regional Championships. And now the South Asian Football federation (SAFF), a regional football governing body, is holding the first U-15 Women's Championship to develop women's football in the country.

Bangladesh clinched back-to-back titles in the 2015-2016 AFC Girls' Regional (Central and South) Championships and so this time as well, the hosts will keep their eyes on the prize.



India team arrive in Dhaka for the SAFF Under-15 Women's Championship, which begins here tomorrow. Hosts Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives are the other teams in the competition.

PHOTO: COLLECTED