

Star **SPORT**

DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2023, FALGUN 2, 1429 BS

What to WATCH

Star Sports 2 and GTV
 ICC Women's T20 World Cup
 West Indies vs India
 Live from 7:00 pm
 Ireland vs Pakistan
 Live from 11:00 pm
Star Sports Select HD1

English Premier League
 Arsenal vs Manchester City
 Live from 1:00 am
 (Thursday)
Sony Sports 2
 UEFA Champions League
 Club Brugge vs Benfica

Live from 2:00 pm
 (Thursday)
Sony Sports 1
 UEFA Champions League
 Dortmund vs Chelsea
 Live from 2:00 pm
 (Thursday)

Mashrafe's Sylhet make BPL final

SPORTS REPORTER

Locals' effort, guided by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza – the ultimate captain in Bangladesh cricket – saw Sylhet Strikers make the BPL final in expense of a strong Rangpur Riders outfit in the second qualifier on Sunday. Sylhet franchise had never played in a BPL final before and had performed poorly in recent editions. The turnaround was spectacular just as it was during Tuesday's game.

"If you look at our journey, we have been outstanding. We have bounced back really well. We needed to break the momentum. (Tanjim Hasan) Sakib's two overs brought us back into the game," Mashrafe said at post-match presentations.

Sakib was the hero with the ball while Zakir Hasan, who made a meal of a simple catch of Rony Talukdar in the 10th over that almost saw the game slip away from Sylhet's grasp, came up with vital contributions in the end as Sylhet defended 182, winning by 19 runs in the end.

Rangpur opener Rony had taken over from Fortune Barishal's Shakib Al Hasan to become the third-highest run-getter in this BPL and showed that his form was not a fluke in this crucial game. He drove with ease and his pick-up shots made Sylhet sweat as he appeared to have taken the game under his control. He had the rub of the green as well when Zakir missed a dolly of a catch.

Rony and skipper Nurul Hasan carried the game into the 15th over, needing 46 runs off the last five with seven wickets in hand. Mashrafe conceded just four in the 16th over and then Sakib bowled a massive 18th over, removing Nurul for a 24-ball 33. Zakir then effected the run-out of Rony in the same over before Luke Wood and Rubel Hossain defended the score as Sylhet won from a precarious position, conceding just 28 runs in the last five overs.

It was a collective effort with the bat following the solid platform from Najmul Hossain Shanto and Towhid Hridoy that saw Sylhet put on a challenging score. Both Hridoy and Shanto were getting into their groove but the momentum was broken by an unfortunate leg-before decision which left Shanto flummoxed, given out despite coming down the wicket. After Shanto's 25-ball 40, Hridoy top edged a Hasan Mahmud delivery after a run-a-ball 25.

Mashrafe brought himself at number three to up the ante and played an important knock under the circumstances to give his side a chance. He smashed a six off the very first delivery and saw Zakir and Ryan Burl depart soon after each other before he too was dismissed for a 16-ball 28. Hasan shone at the death and picked up the experienced Mushfiqur Rahim to finish with two for 34 and top the wicket takers' chart this BPL. However, Burl's five-ball 16 had an impact and then Thisara Perera and George Linde closed the innings at 182 for 7.



Sylhet Strikers captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) pumps his fist to celebrate their 19-run victory over Rangpur Riders which sealed them a final berth in the BPL in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Sayed attends BHF meeting after three-and-a-half-year hiatus

SPORTS REPORTER

AKM Mominul Haque Sayeed, the general secretary of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF), suddenly appeared at a meeting of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation's (BHF) executive committee today after a three-and-a-half-year hiatus following his alleged involvement in the 'casino scandal' in 2019.

Sayed fled aboard after the crackdown in Motijheel's Club Para in September of 2019 and had not attended any BHF executive committee meetings since. In February, 2022, on the back of a 27-month investigation, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed a charge sheet against the former Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) councillor for amassing about Tk 5.60 crore from undisclosed avenues of income.

Sayed joined the meeting at the last moment. When asked about his sudden appearance, BHF president and Air Chief Marshall Shaikh Abdul Hannan said: "If there is no hindrance, he [Sayeed] will be included in the general process. If there is no restriction in principal, then I there are restrictions from my side. The vice presidents and other members will take the appropriate decision."

The BHF president added in a separate response: "He can assume responsibility as general secretary if there are no barriers."

However, one of BHF executive member, seeking anonymity, informed that the BFF executive committee had released Sayeed from his responsibilities before in line with the constitution due to his continued absence from meetings and had communicated that decision to the National Sports Council.

Another source, preferring to remain unnamed, said that Sayeed was going to manage a sponsor worth Tk 50 lakh for the youth hockey team's training camp ahead of Asian Youth Championship and that Sayeed was likely to represent the BHF in the upcoming Asian Hockey Federation congress.

The meeting also decided to continue the training of the youth team under the guidance of local coach Mamunur Rashid and Hedayetullah Razib.

India to host SAFF C'ship in June

SPORTS REPORTER

India will host the upcoming SAFF Championship in June, it was announced yesterday after the executive committee of the South Asian Football Federation signed over the marketing and commercial rights to Dubai-based marketing company Sports Partner International for the next four editions of the regional football extravaganza.

"We have approved the tender from Sports Partner International for four editions up to 2029. Although Nepal launched a bid to host the next SAFF Championship, the first tournament during will

be held in India in line with the marketing company's conditions," SAFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal told The Daily Star after a virtual meeting.

Helal also informed that All Indian Football Federation (AIFF) would apprise them of venues and dates by March 10.

The last edition of SAFF Championship was held in the Maldives in 2021 after India played host in 2015.

The marketing company has also proposed holding the 2025 SAFF Championship on a home and away basis, which will see each team play three home matches and three away matches in a one-month period.

"India has objected to the home-and-away format because it will take a long time, but the marketing company believes there is still room for discussion," Helal added. "If we don't reach a consensus in the coming days, the SAFF Championship will be held in a centralised venue like this time."

The SAFF general secretary also informed that the marketing company will provide SAFF with 1 million dollars for the 2023 SAFF Championship and 1.5 million dollars from 2025 edition, subject to the approval of the new format.

Helal also informed that the SAFF Congress would take place on May 6 April 29 in Dhaka.



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