

## BPL: Local retentions and direct signings confirmed

SPORTS REPORTER

The governing council of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) received the list of retained and directly signed local players from all seven participating franchises yesterday, ahead of the players' draft for the 11th edition, which is scheduled to take place on Monday at a city hotel.

According to BPL and franchise officials, defending champions Fortune Barishal retained Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim and roped in Towhid Hridoy as their direct signing, while Chittagong Kings signed Shakib Al Hasan and Shoriful Islam.

Dhaka Capitals have Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Mustafizur Rahman on board, while Durbar Rajshahi - another new franchise - named Anamul Haque Bijoy and uncapped Jishan Alam as direct signings.

In a surprising move, Sylhet Strikers preferred to retain Zakir Hasan and Tanzim Hasan Sakib instead of going for Mashrafe bin Mortaza, intending to include him from the draft event, while naming wicketkeeper-batter Jaker Ali Anik as direct signing.

Elsewhere, Rangpur Riders retained Nurul Hasan Sohan and Mahedi Hasan and directly signed Mohammad Saifuddin. And lastly, Khulna Tigers retained Afif Hossain and Nasum Ahmed, and directly signed Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

## NCL rescheduled to start on October 19

SPORTS REPORTER

The 26th edition of the National Cricket League 2024-25 has been deferred by five days to October 19 from October 14.

"The tournament has been rescheduled due to the current rainy weather. Now it will get underway on October 19," a Bangladesh Cricket Board official, who is aware of the development, told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the matches of the eight-team first-class tournament will take place at eight different venues across the country.

Earlier, it was announced that the NCL format would change this year, adopting a single round-robin format. Previously, the competition featured a two-tier system, with the top four teams in tier-1 and the bottom four in tier-2, playing a double-league format.

The upcoming edition faces another title sponsor blank, with organisers struggling to secure a sponsor for the third consecutive year - this time due to economic turmoil, according to a long time sponsor official.



### ANNIHILATION IN HYDERABAD

India's 297 for six against Bangladesh in the third and final T20I in Hyderabad yesterday is the highest-ever total by a Test-playing nation in T20Is, overtaking Afghanistan's 278 for three against Ireland in Dehradun in 2019.

Sanju Samson hit a 47-ball 111, reaching his ton in just 40 deliveries -- the second-fastest century by an Indian after Rohit Sharma's 35-ball ton against Sri Lanka in Indore in 2017.

India's 82 for one in the Powerplay is their joint-highest score in the first six overs. However, India had lost a wicket more the last time they got this exact score in a T20 World Cup game against Scotland in Dubai in 2021.

Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib's 66 for three in four overs is the costliest figure by a Bangladeshi in the shortest format.

India hit 22 sixes in the game -- the joint-highest for a Test-playing nation, along with West Indies and Afghanistan, in a T20I innings.

With 22 sixes and 25 fours, India broke the record for most runs (232) scored from boundaries in a T20I innings.



India captain Suryakumar Yadav hugs Sanju Samson after the latter was dismissed following a 47-ball 111 in the third T20I against Bangladesh at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday. (Inset) Bangladesh veteran Mahmudullah Riyad receives a crest from skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto prior to his last international match in this format. PHOTO: AFP/BCB

## Surprises in BFF nomination collection

SPORTS REPORTER

The last day of nomination paper collection for the Bangladesh Football Federation elections threw a few surprises, none more so than that of Tarafder Ruhul Amin collecting paper for senior vice-president's post instead of the president's post.

The owner of the now defunct Saif Sporting Club had announced his intention of running for presidency, a day after long-serving president Kazi Salahuddin had said he would not run for a fifth term. Amin, who had done quite a bit of footballing investment and promotion prior to the last election, had quit the race midway through and had since detached himself from football.

His declaration last month had indicated that former vice-president Tabith Awal may have a strong competitor for the top post in the October 26 elections.

A staff of his office, who bought the nomination paper on Amin's behalf, disclosed that it was for the senior vice-president's post without giving any reasons for the U-turn.

There were a few other surprises, though. Mymensingh District Football Association's president and former BCB director Abdullah Al Fuad Redwan, a key ally of Amin, bought nomination papers for both president and vice-president posts. Speaking to media, he said the scope for a consensus panel was always open.

The two other individuals, apart from Tabith, who bought nomination papers for the top post are AFM Mizanur Rahman, a grassroots coach from Dinajpur, and Shahadat Hossain Jubayer, a councillor of Brahmanbaria FC.

Only three nomination papers were sold for the senior vice-president's post, with incumbent VP Imrul Hasan, Tarafder Ruhul Amin and Mohammad Monir Hossain buying those papers.

Twelve nomination papers were sold against four vice-presidents posts while 43 papers were sold against 15 posts for members.

The aspiring candidates will get two days to submit the nomination papers, on October 14 and 15, before the election commission scrutinises the nomination papers the next day.

The withdrawal of candidature will take place on October 19 and 20 and the final list of candidates will be published on October 20.

## Siraj's humble beginnings continue to inspire locals

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Hyderabad

On Friday, on a visit to the First Lancer Cricket Ground in Hyderabad's Syed Nagar area, the hub for cricket in the locality, this reporter came across Jayed Khan, a young fast bowler with dreams of making it big as a cricketer.

Jayed was using a roller on the pitch, preparing it for the tennis-ball tournament with 64 teams set to begin the following day at the venue.

One of the organisers pointed at Jayed and a friend of his, predicting that they would play for India one day.

Although the tournament in question is an amateur one, it does not stop the players taking part and its organisers from dreaming big. And why should it, as First Lancer is the place where India's current speedster Mohammed Siraj first learned his trade -- no coaches, no rules, just playing cricket as he wanted.

It was later learnt that Siraj himself

had been at the area on Thursday to hang out with friends and stayed till midnight. He has not forgotten his roots and was expected to come to the field again later in the day.

"He [Siraj] always gives us tips and says it's the length that matters not the pace," Jayed said.

Siraj, who is not part of the India squad for the T20I series against Bangladesh, still takes part in the matches at the First Lancer Ground whenever he can, though he only plays as a batter.

"He just bats in these tournaments. If the New Zealand series was not coming up, he would be playing tomorrow [Saturday]," said Mohammad Ali, another of the young pacers.

One can come across his humble beginnings at the Khaja Nagar Banjara Hill Road where he used to live in a rented apartment on a three-storied building with his family. His father, the late Mohammad Ghaus, earned his living as an auto driver in the city.

"His father was a really nice person and

always asked for prayers saying, 'My son would become a cricketer one day'. His father's support for Siraj was tremendous. Siraj was always popular here, even then he would bring home trophies and win tournaments with prize money of around 50,000 Rupees," said Mohammed Rafeeq, the landlord of the place.

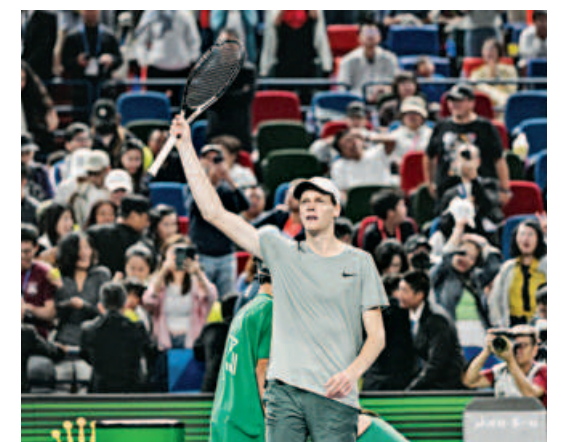
"When he got the IPL contract, for two to three months guys from the media were flooding this street. We still have the same kind of relationship with his family. He was here for my child's marriage too."

The youngsters informed that Siraj never played for a club on a professional basis. "He just played here and then went to a tournament and grabbed six wickets. He went to a Ranji trial and got his debut and then went straight to IPL for Hyderabad," one of the youngsters said.

Siraj's friend, locally known as 'Maddy bhai', shared more of how Siraj is like with the youngsters.

"He struggled a lot and worked really hard. He is still the same with us. He jokes around a lot but also encourages kids here to work hard and on what to do and what not to do," Maddy said.

Siraj never had an idol nor formal coaching, which shows that passion is just as important as nurture. With Siraj as a role model, more kids like Jayed and Rafeeq can now dream of becoming an India icon.



Jannik Sinner beat Tomas Machac 6-4, 7-5 to reach the Shanghai Masters final on Saturday and ensure he finishes the year as world number one. The Italian will face Novak Djokovic -- a four-time Shanghai champion -- in the final on Sunday. The 23-year-old has been in top spot since June and after his ruthless semi-final victory will stay there until at least the end of the season, the first Italian to do so. PHOTO: AFP

## Sri Lanka look to 'bring fire to T20s' too

AFP, Dambulla

After celebrating victories in Test and ODIs, Sri Lanka hope to extend their run of success to T20Is, with their first showdown in a three-match series against the West Indies set to begin Sunday in Dambulla.

Sri Lanka ended a 27-year dry spell by winning an ODI series against India, celebrated a Test victory in England after a decade, and notched their first series win over New Zealand since 2009.

The West Indies are third in the global T20 rankings, while Sri Lanka languish at a modest eighth. But a series win could shake things up.

"We've turned the tide in Test and ODI cricket, and now it's high time to bring that same

fire to T20s," skipper Charith Asalanka told reporters.

"If you look at our recent series, we've been playing below par. We've tweaked a few strategies and are rebuilding the squad with an eye on the next World Cup in two years."

Sri Lanka confirmed the return of hard-hitting middle-order batter Bhanuka Rajapaksa, marking his comeback since January 2022.

They face a depleted West

Indies, who are missing key batters like Nicholas Pooran, Shimron Hetmyer, all-rounder Andre Russell, and spin ace Akeal Hosein.

West Indies captain Rovman Powell, however, radiated confidence. "We're a solid T20 team," he said.

"We've got two T20 World Cups under our belt, and we're always aiming higher," he added.

"Our strength lies in our power hitters, and we're banking on them." With Sri Lanka set to co-host the next T20 World Cup alongside India, Powell said it was key to learn the conditions.

"This series is a golden opportunity to acclimatise. Sri Lanka is no pushover; they play fierce cricket. It'll give us a good gauge of where we stand and what to expect."



While Germany were boosted by a first-half brace from Deniz Undav in their 2-1 win against Bosnia and Herzegovina in Zenica on Friday, the Netherlands were pegged back by the sending off of skipper Virgil van Dijk (L) during their 1-1 draw in the Nations League. Florian Wirtz laid on a backheel for Undav's opener in the 30th minute before the Stuttgart forward made it two just six minutes later. The Netherlands will next go to Germany, who now remain one win away from the Nations League quarters, without their captain in a game that could see the Dutch rise to the top of the pool, or conversely, be cut five points adrift with two games to play. PHOTO: AFP/INSTAGRAM

