

Dhaka clubs' ultimatum to BCB over proposed constitution amendments

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka-based clubs have given Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) an ultimatum to revoke the proposed changes to the BCB constitution. The proposed changes being considered by a five-member committee, led by BCB director Najmul Abedeen Fahim, were leaked in the media recently.

When Dhaka-based clubs got wind of the changes, they came together in a meeting yesterday at a hotel in the capital to discuss the issue and formulate a stance on prospective changes. Under a forum of Dhaka Cricket Club Organisers' Association, the discussions were held with representatives from 67 clubs attending the meeting. The nine other clubs not present at the meeting have also voiced their support behind this movement.

There was a furor regarding the steps that the five-member constitution amendment committee is considering. Organisers spoke out against the nature in which Dhaka-based clubs and the organisers' contribution to Bangladesh cricket are being undermined.

The clubs altogether threatened to boycott cricket leagues if BCB approves of



the proposed amendments.

They agreed to an ultimatum till January 17 to revoke the amendments being considered and also announced that on January 18, they would go to the board and sit down with BCB president Faruque Ahmed to see where the BCB stands on this matter. They also demanded the resignation of Fahim from the board.

Furor ensued when it came to light that the five-member committee was set to propose the dissolution of Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM). The other areas of concern were the reduction of councilors from category 2

in the number of directors representing Dhaka clubs in the board has been proposed to be reduced from 12 to four, according to the proposed changes. The organisers, instead, demanded that the number of directors representing Dhaka clubs be increased from 12 to 15.

"What has been done is an insult to all our clubs; that is number one. Another thing is, this is a settled issue. At times it may be that under a system of directorship, there will be a president, vice president, and secretary, and these things can be there. But the number of people, especially the contribution of our clubs in the Dhaka League, the clubs'

contribution to cricket development and player production, from the time of independence until now, has been insulted in this proposed constitution. The number of board directors has been reduced from 12 to four, and the number of councilors from 76 to 30. This is unacceptable. If they do not provide a valid answer to this, our clubs will refrain from playing until this is overturned," veteran cricket organiser Rafiqul Islam Babu, who arranged the movement under the banner of Dhaka Cricket Club Organisers Association, told reporters following the discussion.

The Dhaka Premier League, alongside the first division, the second and the third division leagues, have historically been the lifeblood of cricket in the country.

Lutfur Rahman, who runs a Dhaka Premier League club, reminded they were ready to boycott leagues if the BCB went with the proposed amendment.

"We gave them three days. The time hasn't passed yet. There's a process for amending the constitution. If this process stops, then our movement will be withdrawn. But as long as this is not done, we will continue our movement," said Badal.

BPL batting boom too good to be true?

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

The just-concluded Sylhet phase of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 has delivered some thrilling cricket, overshadowing the relatively subdued fixtures in Dhaka. Yet, questions linger over whether compromises were made to boost the tournament's appeal.

The tournament's 11th instalment, however, has witnessed high-scoring matches from the outset. During eight games in the Dhaka phase, the average score was 165.5, which rose to 173.09 in Sylhet. The Sylhet matches also offered nail-biting finishes, creating a lively atmosphere for fans who flocked in droves to the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium across six match days.

The tournament's only unbeaten team, Rangpur Riders, who won seven matches on the trot, must be given significant credit for providing some cliffhangers, especially in the Sylhet phase. Whenever they found their backs against the wall, they knew how to get out of those situations and finish on the winning side.



BPL 2025 TILL END OF SYLHET PHASE

MO STRUNS

PLAYER	MATCH	RUNS	HS	AVG	SR
Zakir Hasan (SYS)	6	251	75	50.2	149.4
Usman Khan (Kings)	4	249	123	62.25	171.72
Tanzid Hasan (DKA)	7	246	108	35.14	138.2
Liton Das (DKA)	6	240	125*	48	164.38
Saif Hassan (RAR)	7	228	80	38	126.66

MOST WICKETS

PLAYER	MATCH	WKTS	BBI	ECON
Taskin Ahmed (RAJ)	6	14	7/19	6.72
Abu Hider (KT)	5	11	4/44	9.87
Tanzim Sakib (SYS)	6	11	2/23	9.1
Khushdil Shah (RAR)	7	9	3/18	6
Mahedi Hasan (RAR)	7	9	4/27	8



In one of those contests, Rangpur skipper Nurul Hasan Sohan smashed 30 runs in the last two overs when his side required 26 against defending champions Fortune Barishal to clinch a highly unlikely victory. Meanwhile, in the last Sylhet phase game, Rangpur went on to win against Khulna Tigers by eight runs despite the opposition needing only 22 runs in three overs with seven wickets in hand.

Apart from Rangpur, Dhaka Capitals, Chittagong Kings, and Sylhet Strikers also provided some closely fought contests. Meanwhile, compared to the

Dhaka phase -- where Chittagong's Usman Khan and Dhaka's Thisara Perera scored hundreds -- the centurion tally increased to three in Sylhet, with Rangpur's Alex Hales and Dhaka's Liton Das and Tanzid Hasan Tamim registering three digits.

Both Liton and Tamim scored tons in the same innings, forming a record-breaking 241-run opening stand, helping Dhaka become the first BPL franchise to post a 250-run total.

However, as the batters made merry on the field, the question automatically arose:

should they take all the credit for that, or are there other factors -- apart from good wickets, which also had an outside impact on their sudden rise -- given that they have hardly showcased similar performances in both international and domestic matches?

One such factor is the dimension of the playing field. The boundary lengths in the ongoing BPL have been under scrutiny since the beginning of the tournament. As in Dhaka, Sylhet also featured smaller boundaries, making it easier for batters to clear them, even when some shots were mistimed.

Moreover, the quality of bowlers -- both local and foreign -- in many franchises is so below par that even in the recently concluded National Cricket League T20 or the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League -- a 50-over domestic club-based tournament -- the batters came across superior bowling attacks.

For instance, in a high-scoring game featuring swashbuckling centuries from Liton and Tanzid, Durbar Rajshahi's bowling attack included Shaiful Islam and Sohag Gazi, neither of whom had featured in the BPL since 2021-22. Apart from Taskin Ahmed, there have been few standout bowlers to truly challenge the batters.

With the BPL heading to the Chattogram phase from tomorrow, there is every possibility of a similar trend continuing in the port city. But concerns remain: are batters gaining a misleading sense of confidence that could prove detrimental in the long run?

Aged 38, Monfils 'crazy happy' after epic win

AFP, Melbourne

A "crazy happy" Gael Monfils said age was just a number Tuesday after the 38-year-old Frenchman toppled young countryman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard in a five-set thriller at the Australian Open.

The flamboyant Monfils became the oldest singles champion in ATP Tour history when he swept to victory at the Auckland Classic on Saturday.

He kept the momentum going against Mpetshi Perricard, raising his arms in celebration after a 7-6 (9/7), 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 victory over three hours and 46 minutes in the first round.

"Honestly, I never really think about it," he said of his age. "I know I'm aged a little bit, but I try my best."

"I know this week I can sometimes have double the age of the guy (he's playing). I have, I think, 21 years of career, and he's 21 years old, Giovanni."



"Of course numbers are there, but I'm fighting, so I try not to put any number in my head."

Monfils won the first two sets and should have wrapped it up in the third, when he had two match points against a player with one of the game's most lethal serves.

But Mpetshi Perricard, who has risen from 205 in the world at the start of 2024 to his current 30, fought back.

Ultimately, Monfils' experience paid off, keeping his cool to reach the second round in Melbourne for a 17th time where he will meet Germany's Daniel Altmaier.

"I have a lot of experience in those matches, also my condition, I feel I was good physically," said the veteran.

"I won this match. I'm crazy happy. I have another chance to come out and play in a packed stadium."

"Everything is a win now, so, you know, no pressure on me."



Captains of the sixteen participating teams, including Bangladesh Under-19 skipper Sumaiya Akter, took part in the Captains' Day photoshoot at the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur yesterday ahead of the U19 Women's T20 World Cup, starting from January 18.

KHO KHO WC

Bangladesh off to winning start

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a winning start for Bangladesh in the inaugural edition of the Kho Kho World Cup as country's men's and the women's teams won their respective fixtures in New Delhi yesterday.

The men's team registered a comfortable 56-24 win over Sri Lanka at the Indira Gandhi Gymnasium. Sri Lanka's Idil Pramanik became the player of the match, while Rabiu Islam of Bangladesh was adjudged the best defender, the Bangladesh Kho Kho Federation confirmed. In their second match later in the day, the men's team handed a 83-26 thrashing to the USA to brighten their quarterfinal hopes.

The women's team followed suit by thumping Sri Lanka by a 79-24 margin. Ritu Rani Saha was the best player of the match, while Surovi Khatun was named the best attacker after securing 24 points in the one-sided contest. They will face off against Germany, while the men's team will play their third match against South Korea today.



FEDERATION CUP

Brothers, Police keep hopes alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union and Bangladesh Police FC kept alive their hopes of moving into second round of the Federation Cup after winning their respective penultimate matches of the group stage yesterday.

Surviving a string of scares in the second half, Brothers Union notched a hard-fought 1-0 win over Fortis FC at the Shaheed Flight Lt. Matiur Rahman Stadium in Mymensingh while Bangladesh Police came from behind to hand a 2-1 defeat to Dhaka Wanderers Club at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

Mannaf Rabbi and Esanur Rahman scored one goal apiece in the 84th and 86th minutes for Police after Mohammad Emon had given Wanderers a 42nd-minute lead from the spot.

Despite tasting the first defeat in their fourth and last match, Fortis stay top of the five-team group with seven points but still risk being eliminated as top two teams will advance to second round.

Having played three matches, both Bashundhara Kings and Brothers Union have secured six points with one match left for each, against Wanderers and Police, who too have chance to advance.

In Mymensingh, Fortis needed just one point to ensure their second round berth but they did everything except for scoring a goal, leaving themselves in a vulnerable position.

Even though Fortis dominated the match, it was Brothers who took the lead with Kawsar Ali Rabbi firing home from inside the box following a square pass from Sazzad Hossain from the right flank after Fortis midfielder Mazharul Islam lost the ball outside the box.

Former national team goalkeeper Ashraful Islam Rana stood tall under the Brothers goal, frustrating Omar Saar, Jasur Jumaev, Valerii Gryshyn time and again while Saar also rattled the crossbar in the stoppage time of the second half.