

Saikat to get \$2k per BPL match

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi umpire Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid Saikat is the only ICC elite panel umpire in the country and this time he would be conducting quite a few matches in the BPL, unlike in previous years.

To honour the only ICC elite panel umpire, Saikat would be given 2000 dollars per match, umpires' committee chairman Iftekhar Ahmed Mithu informed yesterday.

Saikat, who began this BPL with the Chittagong Kings vs Khulna Tigers match on Thursday, will conduct six games overall. He would not, however, be able to conduct the final or playoffs as he is likely to conduct matches in the India-England series.

The per-match salary has been improved across the board for umpires. Local umpires were being paid Tk 35,000 TK per match previously and it has been bumped up to Tk 50,000 this tournament. For international umpires, salary has been increased from 500 dollars per game to 600 dollars.



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-19 women's team skipper Sumaiya Akter insists they aren't taking Nepal lightly, mentioning that they will try to give their best during the ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled to get underway in Malaysia today.

Bangladesh had beaten their Nepali counterparts by nine wickets in a Super Four game in the inaugural U-19 Women's T20 Asia Cup, in which Bangladesh emerged runners-up.

"Nepal are an up-and-coming team. They are always a challenging opponent. We are not taking them lightly. They will definitely try to give their best. We will also try to give our best," Sumaiya said in a video message yesterday.

Bangladesh will also face Australia and Scotland in their remaining Group D

WOMEN'S U-19 T20 WC

Bangladesh not taking Nepal lightly



matches on January 20 and 22, respectively, and Sumaiya sounded confident about overcoming those hurdles.

"Both Australia and Scotland are strong opponents. It's always challenging to play against them. But we also have a strong team. We always try to give our best on the field and will try to do the same in order to qualify for the next round.

We are also very confident about it," Sumaiya said.

The top three teams from each of the four groups will progress to the two groups of Super Six, the top two teams from which will then play in the semis. The final of the second edition of the global meet will be held on February 2.

Apart from having a few

camps and the U-19 Asia Cup campaign last December, the women's U-19 team also recently toured Sri Lanka where they finished the four-match T20 series 2-2. Meanwhile, players like Sumaiya, Habiba Islam Pinky and Nishita Akter Nishi already have experience representing the senior side.

"We had a very good preparation. We worked so hard and we worked on our fitness, technique, and mental aspects. Our coaching staff also guided us in the right direction," the skipper said.

"Many of our players have experience in international cricket. I think it will be helpful for us. They can help the team with their experience. They can teach how to play good cricket under pressure," added Sumaiya, claiming their primary target is to become champions in the event.

Amorim cautious with Diallo praise

REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim insisted he must be careful not to lavish Amad Diallo with too much praise after the Ivorian forward's late hat-trick earned his struggling team a 3-1 victory over Southampton on Thursday.

United were largely second best against bottom of the table Southampton, falling behind in the first half to a Manuel Ugarte own goal as the hosts looked to be heading for a fourth successive home league loss.

Diallo, however, single-handedly dragged his side to a much-needed success, becoming the second youngest United player to score a Premier League hat-trick after Wayne Rooney, with three goals in the final 10 minutes to earn his side victory.

"The important thing is to win and he helped us and then he is doing a very good season," Amorim said of Diallo. "But you have to be careful with the young kids. Congratulations to him, enjoy tonight and he needs to appreciate these moments."

"I will tell him tomorrow he has to rest, eat good food because Sunday we need him again. He did a great job, a good moment for a young kid to score a hat-trick for a club like this."



Mohammedan on a roll

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Mohammedan consolidated their sole lead in the Bangladesh Premier League with an all-win record after handing a 1-0 defeat to Brothers Union in Mymensingh yesterday.

Nigerian forward Emmanuel Sunday continued his superb run, scoring in his fifth consecutive match with a placing shot in the 12th minute as Mohammedan moved to 24 points, eight ahead of Abahani, who have a game in hand.

Brothers Union, meanwhile, remained in fourth position with 14 points from eight matches.

From the outset, the charges of Alfaz Ahmed controlled the game before breaking the deadlock with Sunday beating Brothers goalkeeper Ashraf Islam Rana with a diagonal shot.

Brothers came close to levelling the margin twice but Mohammedan goalkeeper Sujan Hossain frustrated Gambian forward Zakaria Darboe and defender Sushanta Tripura while Sunday and Jewel squandered two sitters in the stoppage time of the first half.

After resumption, Brothers goalkeeper Rana denied Mohammedan from extending the lead by thwarting two shots from Emmanuel Tony and Muzaffar Muzaffarjon while Brothers' Cheikh Sene drove miles off target on his second attempt after Sujan denied him from a one-on-one situation in the last minute of the match.

In the day's other match in Mymensingh, Chittagong Abahani bagged their first points of the season with a 1-0 win against Bangladesh Police while Fakirerpool Young Men's Club thrashed Dhaka Wanderers Club 4-1 in Gazipur.

BPL falling back into OLD WAYS

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chattogram

The alarm bells were ringing once it was revealed that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has not taken any bank guarantees from the franchises ahead of the ongoing season of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

And now, the board's worst fears are getting realised with players from different franchises saying their dues have not been cleared.

The situation deteriorated to such an extent that Durbar Rajshahi had to cancel Wednesday's training as their players threatened to no show. There were also doubts over whether Rajshahi's scheduled match against Sylhet Strikers yesterday would take place but eventually the game went ahead and Rajshahi won by 65 runs and climbed to fourth position in the table.

One Rajshahi player confirmed yesterday that before the match he received 25 percent of his total payment but said there might be other players who were yet to be paid.

According to the payment schedule of the BPL governing council, franchises are supposed to pay all players 50 percent of their total fees before the tournament, 25 percent during the tournament, and the rest after the event.

But so far, none of the franchises have been able to follow this schedule. It was learnt that only Dhaka Capitals, Rangpur Riders and Fortune Barishal have been able to



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BPL governing council member secretary Najmul Abedeen Fahim

maintain regular player payments.

One Chittagong Kings player, wanting to stay anonymous, told this reporter yesterday that there is some discontent brewing in their camp as well and the players would raise the issue if they don't receive payments in two days' time.

However, no one is willing to take responsibility for letting the situation deteriorate to this extent with BCB director Najmul Abedeen Fahim, who is also the member secretary of the BPL governing council, saying he learnt about the

payment issue from the media.

"We came to know about it from the media. We have been able to make them [franchises] understand and they were able to start making payments," Fahim said yesterday in Chattogram.

"We are hoping they [Rajshahi and other franchises] will continue this way and be aware of their responsibilities and abide by the rules of payments."

Fahim also downplayed BCB's failure on keeping track on players' payments, an issue that has plagued the tournament historically, by saying, "When payments are not made, it would naturally reach our ears. What happened with Rajshahi, when we got to know about it, we got to work," Fahim said.

As the BCB is currently running without standing committees, it should not come as a surprise that the BPL too is being run in a callous fashion. It was also learnt yesterday that the tri-party agreements between franchise, players and the board, have not been sent to the BCB yet.

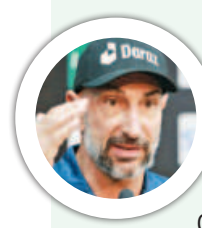
Fahim said they were embarrassed by the entire situation.

"We are embarrassed by these occurrences, the whole cricket fraternity is. It's a lesson hopefully for all of us. We will address these issues so that they do not occur in the future. We should have done many things which we perhaps didn't do but it's also true that this edition is being held in a unique circumstance, we were under pressure regarding many issues."

SHORT CORNER

'Women's BPL to increase standard of cricket'

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director Nazmul Abedeen Fahim said that the Women's Bangladesh Premier League will help to improve women's cricket in the country. "The board has been thinking for a while about a way to take women's cricket forward. Keeping that in mind, we were thinking about the possibility of having a BPL for the women. We have decided today that we will do it," Fahim told reporters in Mirpur on Friday.



Pothas quits Bangladesh job citing family reasons

Bangladesh men's team's fielding coach Nic Pothas has resigned from his role, citing family reasons, a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official confirmed the matter on Friday. "During the West Indies series, he resigned from his role due to family reasons. It has been effective from December 20, 2024," BCB's cricket operations in-charge Shahriar Nafees told The Daily Star.

Liverpool's Slot braced for tough Brentford test

Arne Slot says the second half of the season will be even tougher than the first as he targets a record-equalling 20th English top-flight title for Liverpool in his first campaign at Anfield. Four points clear of second-placed Arsenal in the Premier League with a game in hand, they face a testing match against mid-table Brentford on Saturday.

Belgium sack national team coach Tedesco

Belgium's football association on Friday announced the sacking of national team coach Domenico Tedesco after disappointing performances at Euro 2024 and in the Nations League. "Unfortunately, the Red Devils did not perform as we hoped at Euro 2024, just as they did in the next Nations League campaign," the football association (RBFA) said on their website.

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'Best I have played in the tournament'

A fired-up Novak Djokovic powered into the last 16 of the Australian Open on Friday in an ominous reminder of why he is a 10-time Melbourne champion. In his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam crown, Djokovic blew the 24-year-old Czech Tomas Machac off Rod Laver Arena 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 in 2hrs 22mins. "There's always something to improve, work on, but this is definitely the best match I've played in the tournament," Djokovic said.



➤ Carlos Alcaraz suffered a wobble in the third set against Portugal's unseeded Nuno Borges but regained his focus to ease through 6-2, 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2 into the last 16.

➤ Alcaraz and Djokovic are on a collision course for the quarterfinal.

➤ Germany's second seed Alexander Zverev also booked his place in the second week with a methodical 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 win over Britain's Jacob Fearnley.

➤ Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka shrugged off a shaky display to fight her way into the fourth round with a 7-6(5), 6-4 victory over Clara Tauson.

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