

I'm happy to be playing again. I feel I'm improving. Obviously I'm not going to be 100% physically, it's only my fourth game but I'm getting better and better. I was anxious to score and wanted to dedicate this to the fans and my family.

Brazilian superstar Neymar, after scoring for Santos, his first professional goal since October, 2023.



## BCB to find new window for BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed held a meeting with former Bangladesh captains at the BCB premises yesterday to discuss how to develop the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) and to take their opinion on what could be the best possible window to hold the tournament.

The BPL currently clashes with franchise leagues such as SA20 and ILT20, which has led to many foreign stars choosing those tournaments over BPL.

BPL's current window, spanning from late December to early February, was mandated by the ICC in 2022 and is supposed to run till 2027.

However, after the meeting with former captains like Akram Khan, Habibul Bashar and Mohammad Ashraful and some current players like Mominul Haque, Liton Das and Taijul Islam, the BCB president in a video message shared online claimed they have found a new window for BPL, however, he did not disclose it.

"We have begun work on the next BPL and in this plan, we have found a window. We all know that there are many franchise tournaments in different countries that clash with us. So, we want to do it differently in order to get quality foreign players.

"We held a meeting today [Monday] with former captains and all of them gave their suggestions. We will take those into consideration so we can use them moving forward," Faruque said.

Former captain Rajin Saleh told reporters that the discussion was not only limited to BPL, as "how to develop the NCL T20 and improve first-class cricket, those things were also discussed."

Faruque also informed that the BCB will share a considerable portion of its revenue from ticket sales worth Tk 13.25 crore with the seven franchises that played in BPL II.

"Although revenue-sharing is done in all areas, we haven't been able to do it across the board. But we will surely try to distribute a sizable portion of the revenue earned from ticket sales among the seven franchises."

## Reality check for Tigers ahead of main contest

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh received a last-minute wake-up call ahead of the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy after their batting fell apart in their lone warm-up match against Pakistan Shaheens at the Dubai Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The Tigers lack in match practice in the 50-over format heading into the tournament as they have not played an ODI in the last two months and are coming straight from the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), which was followed by a few training sessions and some match scenario practice in Mirpur and Dubai.

The last time the Tigers played



Miraz finishing as the highest scorer with 44 off 53 balls raised some eyebrows, number nine Tanzim Hasan Sakib contributing 30 off 27 balls out of the team's total of 202 was proof of how dismal they were as a batting group against the Shaheens attack.

Among the recognised batters, only Soumya Sarkar had a notable contribution of 35 off 38 balls while Tanzid Hasan Tamim (six), Najmul Hossain Shanto (12), Towhid Hridoy (20), Mushfiqur Rahim (seven) and Jaker Ali Anik (four) could hardly make an impact which led to the Tigers getting folded within 38.2 overs after opting to bat first.

Many of the Bangladesh team batters had an underwhelming BPL and their performance in the warm-up game certainly will not boost their confidence.

Another worrying sign is that the team collapsed from 119-3 to 137-7 – a continuation of the batting collapse problem which

has been plaguing the team for some time.

Although Bangladesh had the option to test all of their batters in the match due to it being an unofficial contest, two of their recognised batters Mahmudullah and Parvez Hossain Emon did not bat.

Bangladeshi batters' vulnerability against leg-spin also got exposed in this contest as Pakistani leg spinner Usama Mir, who has represented his country in 12 ODIs and five T20Is, finished with four scalps which included the wickets of Miraz, Hridoy, Mushfiqur and Jaker while another wrist spinner Sufiyan Muqem also chipped in with one wicket.

The bowling also didn't fare much better as the Pakistan Shaheens chased down the target in just 34.5 overs and completed a comfortable seven-wicket victory.

Bangladesh tried out eight bowlers but only pacers Nahid Rana, Tanzim Sakib and off-spinner Miraz took one wicket each as the Bangladesh bowlers could hardly make a match out of defending the small target.

Mohammad Haris top scored with 76 off 62 balls before retiring hurt while Mubasir Khan remained unbeaten on 63.

The Bangladesh players will get just two days to analyse their mistakes before they face India, who possess the most potent spin attack in the tournament, in their first Group A match on February 20.

The Tigers will then travel to Rawalpindi for their remaining two Group A matches against New Zealand and Pakistan on February 24 and 27 respectively.

## Oman's unique ODI record

STAR SPORTS DESK

Oman completed an unprecedented feat on Sunday when they bundled out Namibia in their ICC World Cup League 2 match in Al Amerat without using a single over of fast bowling, becoming the first team in the history of ODI cricket to bowl out an opposition with only spinners.

Oman used five spinners in their 33.1-over innings and the spinners collectively claimed all 10 wickets to bundle out Namibia for 96.

Left-arm spinner Shakeel Ahmed did the bulk of the damage, picking up 4-25 while off-spinner Jay Odedra and left-arm orthodox Aamir Kaleem took a couple of wickets each.

Oman did have one medium pacer in their playing XI in Sufyan Mehmood but he was not used.

This is now also the longest spin-only innings in a decided ODI, and the fourth such instance across men's and women's cricket.

The match in Al Amerat, however, went down to the wire with Oman scraping a two-wicket win, reaching 100-8 in 22.4 overs.

## Nabi not mulling retirement yet

ICC

Mohammad Nabi is the only player left who was part of the first-ever Afghanistan One-Day International side, but he still has big international dreams left to achieve.

The 40-year-old is now back on Afghanistan duty, 16 years after he was part of the team that beat Scotland in Benoni in his country's first-ever ODI. And he has not yet decided whether the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 will be the last time he pulls on an international jersey.

He said: "I'm still thinking (about the future). These might not be my last ODIs, I will probably play less ODIs and give chances to the youngsters to build experience. I've discussed with the senior players and in the high-level games, maybe or maybe not, we'll see. It will depend on my fitness."

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