



IMRANUR RETURNS with a point to prove

SPORTS REPORTER

Sprinter Imranur Rahman is set to return to domestic competition after more than a year as the 17th Summer Athletics Championships begin today at the National Stadium. Since representing Bangladesh at the Paris Olympics in 2024, the country's record holder in the 100m sprint (10.11s in England) has been absent from the domestic scene. Injury rehabilitation forced him to miss the 48th National Athletics

Championships last February, and he was later overlooked for the Asian Indoor Championships in China in March. Now recovered, Asia's 60m champion returns with a point to prove. Imranur, who will compete for Bangladesh Navy after previously running for Bangladesh Army, aims to reclaim his title from Mohammad Ismail and secure a spot in the national training camp. The Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) has made it clear

that only performances at national competitions will be considered for upcoming international meets. Both men's and women's 100m sprints are scheduled for this afternoon. Though Imranur has won all four domestic events he entered, he has yet to reproduce his record-breaking times on home soil. His best domestic timing remains 10.29s at the 2022 Summer Athletics Championships. While Imranur's return is the

main attraction, BAF is also focused on avoiding unwanted incidents that have been a feature of the past national meets. In 2024, clashes broke out between service teams after incidents of unsporting conduct, and judges' errors. This year's meet will feature 40 events -- 22 for men and 18 for women. Around 400 athletes from 35 organisations are expected to participate, slightly fewer than the 450 competitors from 41 organisations at last year's nationals.

India clarifies sports policy with Pakistan

AGENCIES

India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports yesterday issued new guidelines on sporting ties with Pakistan, confirming that while there will be no bilateral contests, athletes and teams from both nations can compete against each other in multilateral tournaments. The clarification comes ahead of India hosting the men's Asia Cup in the UAE in September and the women's ODI World Cup in India and Sri Lanka in September-November, with both tournaments featuring Pakistan. The statement comes amid calls for a boycott of all sporting ties with Pakistan following political tensions and past incidents. India and Pakistan, drawn in the same Asia Cup group, are set to meet in Dubai on September 14. The guidelines formalise India's longstanding position: no bilateral cricket with Pakistan since 2012, but regular meetings in ICC and ACC events such as World Cups, Champions Trophy, and the Asia Cup.

Kings question capabilities of Cabrera and Co

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings have raised doubts over the capabilities of national football team head coach Javier Cabrera and his backroom staff, questioning their insistence on two to three weeks of preparation before each FIFA international friendly. The club's concerns were outlined in a letter sent to Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag on August 20, after the federation requested the release of 10 Kings players for the ongoing national camp ahead of September's friendlies against Nepal. "If a national team head coach requires 15-20 days of training sessions before each FIFA international match calendar days, then this raises a serious concern on the capabilities of the coaching panel of the Bangladesh national team," read a three-page letter signed by Bashundhara Kings general secretary Biddut Kumar Bhowmik, which also argued that such demands "hamper the preparation of clubs and domestic competitions." For the two matches on September

6 and 9, Cabrera named a 24-member squad, but has so far been training with only 13 senior players. Kings declined to release their 10 players, citing pre-season preparations and injury risks. The club has previously delayed releasing players for camps but eventually complied under FIFA regulations. The matter is complicated by the dual role of Kings president Imrul Hasan, who



also serves as BFF senior vice-president and deputy chairman of the national teams committee. In an earlier interview with a Bengali daily, Imrul said that as chairman of the professional football league committee, he had approved the domestic calendar after consulting Cabrera, who at the time had indicated that the September FIFA window would not be used.

Cabrera, asked about this apparent contradiction, admitted the discussion but said he did not want to enter into conflict with Imrul, someone he "respect a lot". In their letter, Kings also criticised the BFF secretariat, accusing it of incompetence and poor communication. "The BFF secretariat representatives are not complying with FIFA regulations," the letter read. Ultimately, the five-time Bangladesh Premier League champions have stuck to their stance: they will not release players early but will do so in line with FIFA's rules. "We believe a national icon such as Hamza Chowdhury will only be available to the BFF national team on August 31, 2025, after the match between Leicester City FC and Birmingham City FC. Bashundhara Kings will also release their players on the same date, both maintaining FIFA regulations on the status and transfer of players, July 2025 edition."

Pace in the bloodline

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Cricket has long seen families pass the game down generations, with father-son pairs making their mark across the world. From India's Amarnaths (Lala, Surinder and Mohinder) and Gavaskars (Sunil and Rohan) to Australia's Marshes (Geoff, Shaun and Mitchell) and England's Broads (Chris and Stuart), many sons have followed in their fathers' footsteps, some surpassing their legacies while others fell short. In Bangladesh, such examples are rare.



Last year, during the National Cricket League T20, Jishan Alam, son of former keeper-batter Jahangir Alam, made headlines by smashing a century on debut. Jahangir played only three ODIs, but Jishan, now 20, has already made his way into the Bangladesh 'A' team. Now another father-son story is unfolding, this time with former pacer Alamgir Kabir and his son, Abdul Aziz. Alamgir played three Tests for Bangladesh and is credited with discovering talents like Shoriful Islam

and Nahid Rana. He now works as pace-bowling coach of the women's national team, while his son Aziz, a right-arm quick like him, is part of the national U-15 set-up. A class nine student at Rajshahi Cantonment Board School and College, Aziz was introduced to cricket at his father's academy in Chapainawabganj. "My father took me there when I was young. I started with tennis-ball cricket, then moved on to playing seniors and gradually made it from district to divisional level," he said. Alamgir had initially encouraged his son to be a leg-spinning all-rounder, wary of the injuries fast bowlers face. But Aziz soon switched to pace after watching Shoriful Islam at the academy. "He was a good leg-spinner, but after seeing Shoriful bowl fast, he just wanted to bowl pace," Alamgir said. "His main skill was batting, but he couldn't quite deliver at district level, so he's stuck to pace bowling. I only want him to enjoy the game without setting targets like the national team. If opportunities come, he should just try to make the most of them." The two recently faced each other in an unusual setting. During the ongoing Challenge Cup at BKSP in Savar, Aziz's U-15 side played against the women's Red Team, where Alamgir serves as coach. The boys, fielded as a third team in the competition due to training disruptions caused by weather, surprised many by defeating the women by 87 runs in their opening match. Aziz opened the bowling, taking 1 for 12 in four overs, though his father felt he could have done more.



BAYERN AGAIN THE TEAM TO BEAT

Champions Bayern Munich kick off the new Bundesliga season against visitors RB Leipzig on Friday, knowing they are the team to beat once more, even though they had a shortened pre-season following the Club World Cup in the United States. Bayern's prolific striker Harry Kane, who finished as the league's top scorer for the second time in a row last season, will have the added support of Luis Diaz this time around. Having won the league title 12 times in the last 13 years, the Bavarians have spent more than any other club in the close season to bring in Diaz from Liverpool for a reported 70 million euros -- their third highest transfer ever -- as well as Germany internationals Jonathan Tah and Tom Bischof to boost the quality of their squad.

PHOTO: BAYERN MUNICH

SAFF U-17 CHAMPIONSHIP

Girls face India in crucial tie

SPORTS REPORTER

Fresh from a 3-1 win over Bhutan in their tournament opener, Bangladesh will look to step up against a strong Indian side in their second match of the SAFF U-17 Women's Championship in Bhutan today. The match kicks off at 3:00pm (Bangladesh time) at Changlimithang Stadium, Thimphu. Both Bangladesh and India collected three points each in their opening matches. However, India sit ahead on goal difference following a dominant 7-0 win over Nepal. With the tournament being played in a double round-robin format, the outcome of today's clash -- and the second meeting between the two sides -- could prove decisive in the championship race. Head coach Mahbubur Rahman Litu's charges are expected to face a tough test against India, especially after their hard-fought win over Bhutan, which exposed areas for improvement. Assistant coach Abul Hossain said the team is working on correcting their

mistakes from the first game. "Though we made some mistakes in the match against Bhutan, we still came away with a victory," Abul said in a video message sent by the Bangladesh Football Federation. He added that the players had gone through a recovery session after the game. "We will take the field against India after rectifying our mistakes. We don't want to look back; our focus is on the India match," he said, adding that they would finalise game plan after analysing India's game against Nepal.



Tigresses set for Sylhet camp under lights

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team will complete a nine-day preparation camp in Sylhet early next month as part of their final build-up for the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup, running from September 30 in India and Sri Lanka. The Tigresses -- split into two sides -- are currently taking part in the Women's Challenge Cup at BKSP, where the men's U-15 team is also competing. The tournament will continue until August 28. Since all of Bangladesh's World Cup fixtures will be day-night matches, the team will also play three practice matches under floodlights at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. "After the tournament [Challenge Cup], the girls will rest for six days. Then the team will move to Sylhet," women's chief selector Sazzad Ahmed Shipon told The Daily Star yesterday. "We will then travel back to Dhaka and practice here under lights for three days. Then the team will travel to Colombo on September 23," he added, noting that the squad for the World Cup is yet to be finalised. The final squad is expected to be announced by September 5 or 6. Before starting their World Cup campaign against Pakistan on October 2, Bangladesh will play two official warm-up matches against Sri Lanka 'A' and Sri Lanka on September 25 and 27.