



Dominik Szoboszlai's stunning free-kick gave Liverpool first blood against Arsenal with a 1-0 win in Sunday's battle between the Premier League title favourites. A tense tussle at Anfield looked set to end in a stalemate until the Hungarian's 83rd-minute strike ensured the defending champions remain the only side with a perfect record from the opening three games.

PHOTO: REUTERS

BCB set to finalise election schedule today

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

For the past few months, the upcoming Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) election has been a central topic. Today, the BCB board of directors will convene in Sylhet to finalise the schedule for the much-anticipated election.

"The election roadmap and schedule are likely to be finalised during the meeting," a BCB director, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star on Sunday.

According to Article 15.1 of the BCB constitution, the term of the executive committee is four years from the date of its first meeting. The last BCB election was held on October 6, 2021, with the first meeting of the newly elected board taking place the following day. In line with the constitution, the current executive committee must conduct the next election by October 7, 2025.

As per the electoral process, the BCB's chief executive officer -- under the directive of the president -- must issue a notification 30 days prior to the election, inviting nominations of councillors in accordance with sections 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 of the constitution to form the next general assembly.

The board is also expected to approve the appointment of a sports marketing consultancy firm for managing events of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 tournament. It has been reported earlier that New York-based International Management Group (IMG) is likely to be confirmed for a multi-year deal to manage the franchise-based competition.

The board is also set to make several financial approvals and ratify budgets during today's meeting, which will begin at 2:00 PM at the Grand Sylhet Hotel and Resort.

Tigers seek to foster 'healthy competition'

Hosts eye series win today

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Bangladesh are enjoying a successful spell in the T20I format, having won five out of their last six matches, including the eight-wicket win over Netherlands in Sylhet on Saturday, and in every one of those victories a different player has emerged as the player of the match.

Taskin Ahmed, with figures of 4-28, won the prize against the Dutch in the first of three T20Is. Before him, Parvez Hossain Emon and Jaker Ali won it for their match-winning fifties against Pakistan at home while skipper Litton Das and all-rounder Mahedi Hasan won it in Sri Lanka for a blistering 76 and a four-wicket haul respectively.

Five different players emerging as match winners shows that the side is not dependent on one or two individuals. And in every game, these stellar performances were supplemented by others as well.

Against the Dutch, Saif Hassan put up one such all-round showing.

Saif, returning to the T20I side after nearly two years,

replaced Shamim Hossain in the XI, who hadn't fully recovered from a recent fever.

He grabbed his chance with both hands, taking two wickets with his part-time off-spin, and also scoring a blistering 36 not out off 19 balls, which included one four and three sixes.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Saif was included in the squad as a back-up opener, but against Netherlands he showcased his value as an all-rounder.

But even after performing so well, Saif's position in the team is far from secure in today's second T20I against

Netherlands because if Shamim regains his fitness, he could come back into the side.

Still, Saif coming off the bench and making an impact will benefit the side as it encourages "healthy competition" within the players, felt assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin.

"Whoever comes in, if he performs well, it creates healthy competition within the team. That will bring very good results for the side. The more performers we have sitting on the sidelines, the more impact it will have on the team," Salahuddin told the media yesterday.

"We are trying to move away from a mindset where one might secretly wish for a teammate not to perform well. When competition among the boys increases, their standards will rise," he added.

Salahuddin praised the 26-year-old's commitment but requested all to not go overboard in praising him.

"Don't put someone on a pedestal too quickly nor drag them down in a hurry. Him playing well in his comeback game is a testament to his strong mentality."

O'Dowd trades bat for mic

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Netherlands opener Max O'Dowd is known for his many hobbies off the field. The 31-year-old enjoys DJing, runs a YouTube channel featuring travel vlogs, and has been documenting his experiences from the ongoing Bangladesh tour.

On Sunday, he added another skill to his list -- sports journalism. During teammate Noah Croes' maiden press conference at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, ahead of the second T20I against Bangladesh, Max surprised everyone by walking in with a GoPro and sitting among the journalists.

Netherlands media manager Corey Rutgers had warned that Noah was nervous for his first media appearance, but Max's playful presence quickly eased the mood. He filmed the entire session and even asked cheeky questions, including the story behind Noah's nickname "Tonker" and his favourite Bangladeshi cricketer.

Noah, smiling, named Mustafizur Rahman. "It's a good one, Maxi. There are honourable mentions, but it's hard to go past Mustafizur. Facing him at the 2024 T20 World Cup was a really cool experience," he said.

Isak saga nears climax as D-Day approaches

STAR SPORTS DESK

The transfer window has entered its final, frantic stretch, with the clock ticking towards 12:00 am Tuesday (Bangladesh time) deadline. After a summer of record-breaking spending, dramatic twists, and last-minute hijackings, clubs across the continent are preparing for one final scramble before the shutters come down. And with that, the



longest transfer story of the summer looks to finally be heading to a conclusion after Newcastle United's top brass failed to convince star striker Alexander Isak to stay at St James' Park last Monday. The Swede staged a one-man rebellion to move to Liverpool and the path seems clear as Newcastle signed Stuttgart striker Nick Woltemade to fill the striker's void. Now it is up to the Reds to agree on a fee closer to Newcastle's £150m valuation which would smash the British transfer record.

Osaka, Gauff welcome US Open 'deja vu'

REUTERS, New York

Coco Gauff and Naomi Osaka's fourth-round US Open clash promises a nostalgic spectacle on Monday, six years after their memorable first meeting at Flushing Meadows.

Back in 2019, the then-15-year-old Gauff made her Arthur Ashe debut against defending champion and world number one Osaka, who won 6-3, 6-0 before comforting a tearful Gauff and



urging her to address the crowd. That moment of sportsmanship remains iconic.

"It was a hyped-up match, and I put way too much pressure on myself," said Gauff, who reached the round of 16 this year after beating Poland's Magdalena Frech 6-3, 6-1. "It would be a cool kind of deja vu, but hopefully a different result."

Osaka, seeded 23rd, echoed the sentiment: "I remember just knowing she was going to be a great player." Osaka went on to win the 2020 US Open and 2021 Australian Open but has struggled since.

Gauff, the third seed, lifted the 2023 US Open trophy in a final that drew 3.4 million viewers, surpassing Novak Djokovic's win a day later.

"Tennis needs this," said seven-time major winner Venus Williams, often cited as an inspiration for both players, of their rematch.

Kings players ready to embrace Cabrera's system

SPORTS REPORTER

Experienced defender Topu Barman believes that Bashundhara Kings players possess the merit, standard, and maturity required to adapt to Javier Cabrera's playing system in the upcoming five training sessions ahead of their FIFA friendlies against Nepal.

The Bangladesh team are scheduled to play two international friendlies against Nepal on September 6 and 9 as part of their preparation for the crucial Asian Cup Qualifiers against Hong Kong in October.

Ten players from Bashundhara Kings joined the national camp on Saturday evening after completing their club's pre-season training. The Kings management had earlier declined to release the players early, citing injury concerns and the need for pre-season preparations. As a result, Cabrera was left with only 13 senior players over the past 15 days of training.

The 40-year-old Spaniard will finally have his full squad available in today's session -- the first time the entire team will train together

before flying to Kathmandu on September 3.

"Everyone already has a clear idea of the system Cabrera wants to play," Topu told The Daily Star before checking into the team hotel. "There's no issue with adapting to it because we're all mature players and capable enough to grasp the



system in the next five training sessions."

Topu dismissed concerns about the Kings players missing the earlier part of the camp.

"Our standard and ability will

allow us to pick things up quickly. I believe the team's combination will also take shape within these five sessions," said Topu, who captained Bangladesh in June's Asian Cup Qualifiers match against Singapore.

Despite the absence of key players -- both local (Sheikh Morsalin, Shakil Ahad Topu, Mehedi Hasan

Sraban) and overseas-based (Hamza Choudhury, Shamit Shome, Fahamedul Islam -- Topu remains optimistic.

"Nepal will be tough, especially considering the high-altitude

conditions and their home advantage. But we are not overly concerned. We aim to win both matches with the quality we have," he added.

Topu also expressed confidence in the fitness levels of both groups of players, despite training separately for the past two weeks.

"These 15 days were crucial for Bashundhara Kings' pre-season. We trained as a unit, which helped build fitness, bonding, and team chemistry. Pre-season is vital for any club globally, and it was no different for us," said the 30-year-old defender.

"We had a 27-day training programme, including 12 days ahead of our AFC Challenge League match. We remained unbeaten in four games. Similarly, the national team also played three or four matches. So I believe both groups are in good rhythm, even if the training methods were different."

Meanwhile, Cabrera conducted training on Saturday with only 13 players after releasing eight members of the under-19 team who had been temporarily included in the camp.



PHOTO: BFF

Sauravi Akanda Prity celebrates one of her two goals as Bangladesh defeated arch-rivals India in a topsy-turvy match of the SAFF U-17 Women's Championship at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday. It was a consolation win for the girls in red and green, who had lost against India 2-0 in their first meeting and then were held by Bhutan 1-1 to let India confirm the title with a game in hand.