

SPORT



Chattogram Challengers skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, who had missed the whole Sylhet phase as the all-rounder stayed back in Dhaka to undergo an intensive rehab programme with the BCB medical team for his recurring hamstring injury, was seen getting some action with a football at his feet at the Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Gayle in for Chattogram at the business end

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) will enter the business end as the T20 cricket carnival moves back to Dhaka for its third phase in the capital today.

The top two teams in the seven-team table, Chattogram Challengers and Rajshahi Royals will lock horns under lights at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today. Before that in the day game, bottom-placed and already eliminated Sylhet Thunder will square off against Cumilla Warriors at the same venue.

And even though both Chattogram and Rajshahi have already made it to the play-offs, this particular fixture might see fans flocking to the ground as star T20 batsman Chris Gayle is expected to play his first match for Chattogram today.

Gayle, who had earlier stirred confusion regarding his participation by claiming that he wasn't aware of being included in the BPL draft, arrived yesterday morning in Dhaka to play in the latter part of the tournament, as was previously promised by the Chattogram team management.

Even though the fixture will not see the teams fighting for their survival, the Chattogram troops will surely be boosted by Gayle's presence as each team look to

enter the play-offs in top space and have two chances to qualify for the final on January 17.

"He [Gayle] has a very good record in the BPL. He has a great influence on the team and also on the opposition whenever he plays. It is a very good sign that he is here. It is very important to keep the momentum going in a T20 match.

"We will definitely look to win our two remaining matches as that would help us later [in the play-offs] and to keep the momentum," said Chattogram wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan after yesterday's practice session at the Academy ground in Mirpur.

Chattogram may also see the returns of their regular captain Mahmudullah Riyad. Mahmudullah, who had missed the whole Sylhet phase as the all-rounder stayed back in Dhaka to undergo an intensive rehab programme with the BCB medical team for a recurring hamstring injury, is expected to play the fourth game for his side today.

Meanwhile, in the day game, Cumilla, who have accumulated eight points from nine games will be desperate to register their fifth win in order to remain in contention for the play-offs while their opponents, Sylhet, will hope to at least end what has been a dismal tournament for the side with a win.

Lyon's 10 seals clean sweep

AFP, Sydney

Nathan Lyon captured five for 50 and 10 match wickets as Australia crushed New Zealand by 279 runs on Monday, capping a golden domestic summer as they swept the three-Test series.

The off-spinner led the powerful Australian bowling attack to dismiss the Kiwis for 136 and seal another heavy win over the Black Caps after similar victories in Perth and Melbourne.

Australia declared their second innings at 217 for two with David Warner scoring an unbeaten century, leaving the Black Caps with a revised 416-run target in the fourth innings on a wearing Sydney Cricket Ground pitch.

But the Kiwis buckled under the pressure of Australia's superior bowling attack with Mitchell Starc taking three for 25 to support the wiles of spinner Lyon.

Ross Taylor became the leading all-time Kiwi batsman, going past Stephen Fleming (7,172) before he was bowled by Pat Cummins for 22

to take his Test aggregate to 7,174. 'INDIA WILL FIND A STIFFER OPPOSITION' Australia have developed a ruthless streak in their home series sweeps

against Pakistan and New Zealand and will present much stiffer opposition when India tour next year, captain Tim Paine said on Monday.

Paine's side have been unbeatable this season, winning all five Tests at home -- two against Pakistan and three against New Zealand -- after retaining the Ashes by drawing the series 2-2 in England.

"I came into this summer expecting to win all five Tests," Paine told reporters.

"I think now we've got a team together that is really consistent, we've got a number of match-winners with both bat and ball and our lesser players have improved a hell of a lot over the last 12 months."

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 454 and second innings 217 for 2 decl (Warner 111 not out, Burns 40, Labuschagne 59; Astle 1-41)

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 256 and second innings 136 for 9 (Taylor 22, Watling 19, De Grandhomme 52; Starc 3-25, Lyon 5-50)

Result: Australia won by 279 runs and clinched 3-match series 3-0

Player-of-the-match: Marnus Labuschagne.

Player-of-the-series: Marnus Labuschagne.



The Australian team poses with the Trans-Tasman trophy after winning the three-match series on the fourth day of the third Test against New Zealand in Sydney yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Gibson to be Tigers' next bowling coach?

Current Cumilla Warriors coach Otis Gibson has confirmed that talks are ongoing between him and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) about taking up the bowling coach's role of the Bangladesh national team. "Yes, talks are ongoing. I cannot deny that talks are ongoing but it is a long process. I love cricket and want to coach bowling. I will take the opportunity if I can groom young pacers," Gibson told media.

PHOTO: STAR

Warne to auction 'baggy green' for bushfire victims

AFP, Sydney

Spin legend Shane Warne Monday announced plans to auction the "beloved" baggy green cap he wore throughout his 145-Test cricket career to raise money for victims of bushfires raging in Australia.

The "baggy green" is awarded to Australian players when they make their debut and is worn as a badge of pride when they are on the field.

Given Warne's exploits on the field and his high profile off it, local media predicted it could fetch up to Aus\$500,000 (US\$345,000).

Warne, who took more than 700 Test wickets, said he wanted to help those who have suffered in the

catastrophic fires that have devastated parts of the country.

"The horrific bushfires in Australia have left us all in disbelief. The impact these devastating fires are having on so many people is unthinkable and has touched us all," he said on Instagram.

"Everyone is in this together



and we continue to find ways to contribute and help on a daily basis." He said that is why he decided to auction off his "beloved green cap". The devastating fires, which have so far claimed 24 lives and destroyed more than 1,800 homes, have sparked an outpouring of generosity from sports stars in Australia.

Fellow cricketers Chris Lynn, Glenn Maxwell and D'Arcy Short have pledged to donate Aus\$250 for every six they smash during the ongoing Big Bash League Twenty20 tournament.

Top tennis players have also got involved, with world number one Ashleigh Barty donating her winnings from this week's Brisbane International to the Red Cross.

Fellow Australian Nick Kyrgios, among others, have promised Aus\$200 for each ace they serve during the home summer of tennis.

We have access to real-time monitoring of air quality at all of Australian Open venues and are working closely with medical personnel and local experts onsite to ensure we have the best possible information available to make any decisions regarding whether play should be halted at any point.

CRAIG TILEY
TENNIS AUSTRALIA CHIEF

SHORT CORNER



Bangladeshi umpires to debut in ICC event

Two Bangladeshi umpires will officiate for the first time in an ICC event when the Under-19 World Cup gets underway in South Africa from January 17.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) international panel umpires Sharfuddowla Ibne Shahid Saikat and Masudur Rahman Mukul will leave for South Africa today to be part of the showpiece youth event, a BCB media release informed yesterday.

Sharfuddowla has been an international umpire since January 2010 and has stood in 41 ODIs and 30 T20Is. The 43-year-old has also officiated in T20I World Cup qualifier matches in the UAE. Masudur made his international umpiring debut in January 2018 and has officiated in six ODIs and as many T20Is.

--SPORTS REPORTER

4-day Tests to be discussed in March: Kumble

The ICC's cricket committee is set to discuss the four-day Test proposal in March despite growing criticism from the world's leading players including India skipper Virat Kohli.

Former India captain Anil Kumble, who heads the cricket committee of the sport's governing body, said the proposal will be discussed in the next round of the ICC meetings, to held in Dubai from March 27-31.

"Since I am part of the committee, I can't tell what I am thinking about it (proposal) at the moment. We will discuss it in the meeting and let you know," Kumble told PTI, adding that he is fine with past and current cricketers have expressed their views about four-day Tests.

-- AGENCIES

England leave huge task for Proteas

AFP, Cape Town

Ben Stokes launched an astonishing assault which enabled England to give themselves plenty of time to push for victory, but the tourists had to work hard to take two South African wickets before the close on the fourth day of the second Test at Newlands on Monday.

Set to make a world record 438 to win, South Africa were 126 for two at the close. They used up 56 overs yesterday but will need to bat out another 90 on the final day to prevent England from levelling the four-match series.

Opening batsman Pieter Malan, making his Test debut, scored 63 not out and shared half-century partnerships with Dean Elgar (34) and Zubayr Hamza, who was caught behind off James Anderson in the penultimate over of the day for 18.

Stokes slammed 72 off 47 balls to

overshadow a maiden Test century by Dominic Sibley, who continued his sedate progress as he took his overnight score of 85 to 133 not out. He reached his hundred off 269 balls and faced 311 deliveries in his innings.

England's batting yesterday was in dramatic contrast to their effort on Sunday when they ground their way to 218 for four off 79 overs. Sparked by Stokes they added another 157 runs off only 32 overs before declaring five overs after lunch on 391 for eight.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 269 and second innings 391 for dec in 111 overs (Sibley 133 not out, Root 61, Stokes 72; Rabada 2-69, Nortje 3-61, Maharaj 2-160)

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 223 and second innings 126 for two in 56 overs (Malan 63 not out, Elgar 34, Maharaj 2 not out; Anderson 1-18, Denly 1-26)



England opener Dom Sibley celebrates his century on the fourth day of the second Test against South Africa at the Newlands Stadium in Cape Town yesterday.

PHOTO: ICC