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Mominul set to lead in Rawalpindi

Selectors expected to name Test squad today

SPORTS REPORTER



Mominul Haque is set to be retained as captain of the Bangladesh Test side when the selectors announce the squad for the first Test of a two-match series against Pakistan, which is expected to happen today.

Chief selector Minhajul Abedin has already submitted the Test team to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and it was learned that there will be a few changes from the previous Test side that played in India in November last year, when Bangladesh lost the series 2-0.

According to Minhajul, the upcoming series will be a tough challenge for Bangladesh as he expects the conditions in Pakistan to be difficult.

"We have already submitted a Test team to the board and it is expected to be announced tomorrow [Saturday]. The BCB decides about the captain but as far as we know Mominul will lead the side for the first Test against Pakistan. We have some injury concerns as Shadman Islam is suffering from a wrist injury while Mehedi Hasan Miraz is also suffering from a finger injury," Minhajul told The Daily Star yesterday.

It was learned that another left-handed opener Nazmul Hossain Shanto, who played his last Test against Zimbabwe two

years ago, is likely to replace Shadman while off-spinner Nayeem Hasan is expected to be Mehedi's replacement.

With the first Test in Rawalpindi from February 7 less than two weeks away, the BCB hurriedly started preparations to host the Bangladesh Cricket League, a franchise-based first-class competition that kicked off yesterday.

That raised questions over whether it would be sufficient preparation for the Tigers to put up a fight against the home side, but Minhajul said the BCL games would be the best preparations keeping the short preparation time in mind.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo had a meeting with Tigers' ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza alongside chief selector Minhajul at the home of cricket in Mirpur during the BCL game yesterday.

According to Minhajul, Domingo and Mashrafe had a courtesy meeting as they had not spoken to each other in a long time.

Bangladesh are scheduled to travel to Pakistan on February 4. It will be the second phase of their tour, having played three T20Is in Lahore in January.

Bangladesh will travel to Pakistan for the third and final phase to take part in a solitary ODI on April 3 in Karachi, which will be followed by the second Test from April 7 at the same venue.



East Zone spinner Taijul Islam's five-wicket haul restricted Central Zone to 213 on the first day of their Bangladesh Cricket League encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Pak beat Afg to reach semi

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan Under-19s romped to the semifinal of the ongoing ICC Under-19 World Cup after beating their Afghan counterparts by six wickets during their Super League quarterfinal match at Willowmoore Park in Benoni yesterday.

Electing to bat, Afghanistan managed to score 189 in 49.1 overs before being bundled out. Afghanistan did not have any big partnerships going as skipper Farhan Zakhil's 55-ball 40 at the top and another 41-ball 30 from Abdul Rahman at the death helped Afghanistan reach the sub-par total. For Pakistan, right-arm pacer Mohammad Amir Khan shone the brightest with the ball, scalping three for 58.

After the exchange, riding on a 76-ball 64 from opener Mohammad Hurraira, Pakistan got over the line with 53 balls to spare. Pakistan will face India in the semifinal in Potchefstroom on February 4.

India win another Super Over thriller

AFP, Wellington



India snatched the fourth Twenty20 against New Zealand on Friday yet another Super Over was needed to separate the two sides after the scores were tied following the regulation 20 overs.

New Zealand, batting first in the decider, made 13 with Tim Seifert dropped twice before he was eventually dismissed. In reply, Indian captain Virat Kohli hit the winning runs with a ball to spare.

The third match also ended in a super over with Rohit Sharma hitting sixes off the last two balls to get India home.

"What's happened in the last two games is unbelievable," Kohli said. "It feels good when you are out of the game and then somehow find a way to come back and that shows the character of the team."

The win puts India 4-0 up in the five match series with New Zealand stand-in captain Tim Southee not happy that his side could not wrap the game up in the 20 overs.

New Zealand, chasing India's 165 for eight, went into their last over only needing seven runs to win and with seven wickets in hand.

However, they were restricted to six runs and lost four wickets to finish 165 for seven and set up the Super Over.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 165 for 8 in 20 overs (Rahul 39, Pandey 50 not out, Thakur 20; Bennett 2-41, Sodhi 3-26)

NEW ZEALAND: 165 for 7 in 20 overs (Munro 64, Seifert 57, Taylor 24; Thakur 2-33)

Result: Match tied, India won Super Over decider and lead the 5-match series 4-0.

Player-of-the-match: Shardul Thakur.

SPORTS REPORTER



The opening day of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) saw pacers run the show in Chattogram, where South Zone pacer Shafiu Islam picked four of his five wickets in the first over against fellow Bangladesh Cricket Board-run team North Zone at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

In an incredible first over, Liton Das became Shafiu's first victim, trapped in front in the first



SHAFIU... 5 for 30

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH ZONE: 262 all out in 67.4 overs (Fazle 125, Mahmudullah 31; Sumon 3-67, Ebadot 2-51)

NORTH ZONE: 46 for five in 12 overs (Rony 26 not out; Shafiu 5-30)

CENTRAL ZONE: 213 all out in 75.1 overs (Saif 58, Taibur 46; Taijul 5-58, Jayed 2-38)

EAST ZONE: 0 for no loss in 0.2 overs (Pinak 0 not out, Tamim 0 not out)

HIGHLIGHTS

● Pacers run riot in Chattogram with South Zone's Shafiu Islam taking four wickets in the very first over of the innings. Shafiu ended up taking his fourth fiver in first-class cricket.

● A total of 15 wickets were scalped in Chattogram yesterday and only one was taken by a leg-spinner, North Zone's Tanbir Hayder.

● South Zone's Fazle Mahmud was the only centurion of the day.

● East Zone's Taijul Islam completed his 22nd first-class five-wicket haul.

ball as a length delivery swung in and undid the right-hander. Junaid Siddique, the next batsman in, was able to sneak a double but he too fell prey to Shafiu's swing, this time the ball rattling the stumps.

Shafiu did create a hat-trick opportunity when he dispatched Mizanur Rahman in the same manner in the next ball. Although Naeem Islam was able to take a double in the next delivery to deny Shafiu a hat-trick, he too saw his stumps take flight in the final delivery of an emphatic over.

Rony Talukdar, who was a mere spectator to Shafiu's carnage at the non-striker's end, remained unbeaten for a 42-ball 26. Shafiu completed his fiver in his final over of the day and ended with figures of five for 30 in six overs as North Zone managed 46 for five after 12 overs before stumps.

Earlier, South Zone posted 262 before being bundled out in 67.4 overs. On a day when pacers ran riot, it was South Zone batsman

Fazle Mahmud who saved his team from embarrassment. South Zone would not have been able to post a decent score if not for Fazle's 164-ball 125, laced with 17 fours and three maximums. The four North Zone pacers -- Taskin Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain, Sumon Khan and Ariful Haque -- shared nine of the 10 South Zone wickets.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, East Zone spinner Taijul Islam bagged a fiver to help bowl out Central Zone for a modest 213 in 75.1 overs. Taijul gave away just 58 runs in 22 overs, of which eight were maidens. For Central Zone, opener Saif Hassan played a patient 214-ball 58 while it was a 60-ball 46 from Taibur Rahman in the middle that helped their cause. Both Saif and Taibur eventually fell prey to Taijul's wiles.

After the exchange, East Zone played just two deliveries and were still to open their scoring when the umpires called stumps because of bad light.

Ngidi, Shamsi fit for ODIs against Eng

ICC

South Africa seamer Lungi Ngidi, spinner Tabraiz Shamsi and all-rounder Jon-Jon Smuts are back in contention for the one-day international series against England, which begins on February 4.

All three players have passed their fitness tests at CSA's strength and conditioning camp. Sisanda Magala, who was also at the camp and named in the ODI squad, has not yet met the fitness requirements and will continue to work with fitness trainer Tumi Masekela, targeting the three-match Twenty20 International series that takes place after the ODIs.

"I'm proud of the work that's been achieved by the four players who have been in our high-performance camp for the last three weeks," said Graeme Smith, the Cricket South Africa interim Director of Cricket.

"I'm pleased that Lungi, Tabraiz and Jon-Jon have been declared fully fit to join the ODI squad and I'm confident that Sisanda will be in that circle soon enough."

Mendis helps SL to take series

AFP, Harare



Kusal Mendis struck an unbeaten century as Sri Lanka batted out the fifth day of the second and final Test against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club on Friday to claim a draw and a 1-0 series win.

Zimbabwe had declared overnight on 247 for seven to set Sri Lanka an improbable target of 361 in 98 overs, and at 107 for one in the 39th over, the tourists may have felt in with a chance of victory. But when that became 140 for three, they gave up the chase and instead batted for the draw, reaching 204 for three at the close.

Mendis was superb for his 116 from 233 balls, a seventh Test century,

first as an aggressor in the chase for runs, and then for his stoic defence when it became apparent that a draw was the best result possible for Sri Lanka. The two matches are not for Test Championship points as Zimbabwe, briefly suspended from international cricket last year for government interference, are not part of the competition.

Zimbabwe made an early breakthrough at the start of the Sri Lanka second innings when Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne (12) edged seamer Carl Mumba to wicketkeeper Regis Chakabva.

But Mendis and opener Oshada Fernando (47) put on 81 in 24.3 overs as Sri Lanka sensed there were still runs in the pitch, before the latter was trapped leg before wicket

by off-spinner Sikandar Raza, who finished with career-best match figures of 8-176.

When the dangerous Angelo Mathews (13) was caught at mid-on by Craig Ervine off seamer Victor Nyauchi, the tables turned in the favour of the hosts.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: First innings 406 and second innings 247 for 7 declared (Taylor 67, Williams 53 not out, Masvaure 35, Raza 34; Fernando 2-43, Embuldeniya 2-81)

SRI LANKA: First innings 293 and second innings 204 for 3 (Mendis 116 not out, Fernando 47; Mumba 1-13)

Result: Match drawn and Sri Lanka won the two-Test series 1-0.

Player-of-the-match: Sikandar Raza.



India captain Virat Kohli (L) celebrates after hitting the winning boundary after a second successive T20I against New Zealand went to the Super Over in Wellington yesterday. India lead the five-match series 4-0.

PHOTO: BCCI



Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Mendis's unbeaten 116 on the final day guided the visitors to a draw in the second Test against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club in Harare yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP