

Tri-series to break cricket's 7-month exile

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is set to resume competitive cricket in the country after a gap of nearly seven months through a three-team 50-over competition from October 11.

The three teams -- comprising cricketers from the national team, the High Performance Squad and players from the 2019 Under-19 World Cup-winning team -- will be led by Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad and Najmul Hossain Shanto. The final, which will be telecast live, will take place on October 23. All matches will be day-night affairs and take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

According to BCB President Nazmul Hassan the upcoming tournament is part of the continuing initiatives by the board aimed at a gradual resumption of normal cricketing activities which have been halted since March due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"As we are planning to resume cricket and cricketers have already played practice matches among themselves and we are going to start the tournament from October 11 with three teams. We would want to include the maximum number of players. We have also given the condition that each player should get a chance to play at least two games as we have finalised the three teams today. We are also thinking of telecasting the final along with live streaming for the other games through various platforms.

"We will observe this tournament as a test case. I couldn't go to the ground today, and I wanted to meet the



Pacer Mustafizur Rahman looks on as Tamim Iqbal and Shadman Islam run between the wickets during a 107-run opening stand on the second and final day of the practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

players but I was told that I am not allowed to go inside the bio-secure bubble, and I was happy to hear that. We are actually trying to adapt to these things and if we can implement such things among our players, it will give them courage and increase our chances of hosting foreign sides in future," Hassan told reporters yesterday.

The BCB boss added that the board is also planning to arrange a T20 tournament after this fifty-over competition in mid-November comprising five teams

involving 75 players.

However, he said the main challenge for the BCB is to arrange the Dhaka Premier League, which has been halted after the first round since March.

"There could be a problem in resuming the league [Dhaka Premier League], although we are also willing to resume that but we wanted to know two things from the clubs. We want to know if they are interested to play as it is the clubs who will have to manage their players. If the clubs are not interested or unable to

do that, we wanted to know what should be the alternative course of action.

"The second thing is even if players are under our responsibility or under the clubs', what are the measures they can take to make ensure the safety of cricketers -- whether the players will go to their home or stay with the club. If the clubs can give me a security plan, I have no objection to resuming the league. They are yet to inform me about that issue and there is no decision made in this regard," he said.

'Why do you wear boys' clothes?'

While male cricketers have returned to training with some form of cricket scheduled for the coming days, the same cannot be said about women cricketers as the Bangladesh Cricket Board is yet to schedule a series for the Tigresses in the pandemic era. Since the halt in cricketing activities, The Daily Star has been talking to women cricketers to learn stories of their early days. In today's instalment, we talk to Murshida Khatun, a left-handed batter who made her debut against South Africa in 2018.

MOSTAFA SHABUI

It is usually tough for women in our country to take up cricket -- or any other sport for that matter -- as a profession. For Murshida Khatun, a 21-year-old left-handed batter, it was even tougher.

Growing up in a low-income religious-minded family of 13 -- five sisters and six brothers -- the roadmap to success for Murshida was a very bumpy one. No one in her family or in her neighbourhood could imagine that she would ever continue playing cricket let alone play for the national side one day.

"When I was 13-14 years old, I had to face a wide range of criticism for wearing boys' clothes and playing cricket with them. There was a talim ghar (a place where the women of the village are given religious education and guidance) in our locality and my mother was a member of that talim ghar. There the local women started criticising me and my mother had to face and endure all these criticisms. They started raising questions as to why I wore boys' clothes and played with them despite being a girl," Murshida explained the situation that she and her family had to go through.

Not only from outsiders, Murshida also had to face questions from members within her family regarding her way of living.

"My elder sisters also used to ask me how would they be able to marry her off if she keeps on wearing boys' clothes and play with them. 'Who will marry you?' they used to ask," said Murshida.

Murshida, who used to bunk school to play cricket in her early days, also had to cope with the financial constraints that limited her playing time.

"We had financial hardship. I would even not be able to manage the money required to buy a tennis ball. So I used to help my mom in household chores. I used to sweep the terrace and clean the

dishes for which my mother used to give me money by selling eggs from her poultry farm," explained Murshida.

Overcoming all these hardships, Murshida was finally able to make it to the waiting list in a BKSP trial in 2012. She was called to the squad after a player got injured. However, it was still not easy for Murshida to get into BKSP as it required around 20-25 thousand taka to get admitted which her family could not afford. So she had to seek her relatives' help.

Coming from a village to a highly disciplined environment such as the BKSP, the first few months for Murshida were very hard. The 21-year-old, however, remained adamant of doing well and after doing well in domestic tournaments, she was rewarded in 2018 with an opportunity to make her debut for the national side. And although Murshida has been dropped and picked several times and played only five ODIs and 10 T20Is till now, she hopes to play for Bangladesh for a long time and leave her mark at the international stage.



The international break could not have come at a worst moment for Germany, who face Turkey in a friendly in Cologne on Wednesday. They are currently dealing with growing infection figures around Cologne, which means the match will be held without fans. PHOTO: REUTERS

Partey stuns Atletico while MU panic again

A rumour that was denied one second turned into a completed deal only moments later and left Diego Simeone and Atletico Madrid fuming as the transfer window hit deadline day on Monday. All in all, Premier League clubs spent £1.218bn on signings. Some teams have elevated themselves with astute dealings while others are now in even more of a crisis after failing to land targets. But of all the day moves, nothing showed just how unpredictable the business is as Thomas Partey's move from Atletico Madrid to Arsenal. When reports emerged that the Gunners would pay the Ghanaian's buyout clause, Atletico remained steadfast in their refusal. It was clear how important he was, having started two of Atletico's three games this past week. Simeone, caught off guard by reports that Partey was a plane to London and that his clause had been paid, was 'very angry' according to reports. But having added Luis Suarez and Alvaro Morata to the attack, their window has still been better than most. Manchester United were again shambolic, failing to land long-term target Jadon Sancho and instead bringing in Edinson Cavani, who has not played football in eight months, a promising left-back in Alex Telles and two 18-year-olds in usual panicked fashion.



THEO WALCOTT

Everton to Southampton (Loan)

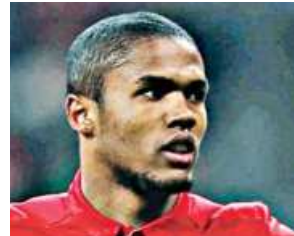
English forward Walcott, who became Southampton's youngest first-team player, has moved back home in an emotional move. "I had a few opportunities but as soon as Southampton came in, it's part of me and has made me into the player I am," Walcott said. "It's in my heart. I will probably cry, I bet, when I first play, and it means so much."



FEDERICO CHIESA

Fiorentina to Juventus (Loan)

Chiesa joined Juventus on a two-year loan deal at a total cost of 10 million euros and can become a permanent member for an additional 40 million euros if certain conditions are met. The versatile Italian, capped 19 times, is a right-winger but has played on the opposite flank, as a second striker and even as a wing-back in his short professional career.



DOUGLAS COSTA

Juventus to Bayern Munich (Loan)

30-year-old Diego Costa has rejoined Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich on a season-long loan deal, expressing a desire to win titles with the Bavarians again. The Brazilian winger previously played for the German side from 2015 to 2017 and won back-to-back league titles. The Brazilian will add depth to their wings, and has proven a capable deputy before.



ALEX TELLES

Porto to Man United (15m euros)

Manchester United were hoping to strike gold in Portugal again, this time prizing away one of Porto's best players. The 27-year-old left-back completed a move for a fee that could rise up to 17 million euro. When he makes his United debut, he will become the eighth Brazilian to appear for the Red Devils and United will hope he can plug some holes in defence.



EDINSON CAVANI

Manchester United (Free)

In another case that has been labelled a panic-buy, United signed 33-year-old free agent Edinson Cavani. The has not played football in eight months. To make matters worse, they have handed the Uruguayan the Old Trafford's famous No. 7 kit. It is a signing that is reminiscent of when Falcao was brought in only a few seasons ago. A big name, but little hope.



THOMAS PARTEY

Atletico Madrid to Arsenal (50m euros)

Arsenal bought Thomas Partey to reinforce their midfield, the English club triggering his release clause just 32 minutes before the deadline. The Ghanaian, 27, was eager to join Arsenal and show more of the offensive side of his game. Although he will continue to operate deep in Mikel Arteta's midfield, he will have far more creative licence.

Focus shifts to international commitments

AGENCIES

As the summer transfer window and several weeks of dazzling club football came to an end, the focus will now shift to the international circuit for the next 14 days. Before the return of the UEFA Nations League next Saturday, the giants of Europe will look to make themselves prepared for the competition by playing friendly matches tonight. The most awaited fixture of the night will take place in Lisbon, as Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal will lock horns with Spain in an always enthralling encounter.

Kvitova's special memories of Philippe Chatrier

AGENCIES

The French Open holds special memories for Petra Kvitova, not because she has won the title but because it is where she resumed her career after a knife attack that almost ended it.

Kvitova held back tears when closing out for victory in the French Open on Monday as memories of her return to tennis in 2017 after a knife attack came to the fore.

Kvitova was sidelined for six months after an attack by a burglar at her home in the Czech Republic just before Christmas in 2016 that left her with severe damage to the nerves and tendons in her left hand.

She was 26 when the events - described as a burglary - happened in

Prostejov and during a struggle, she suffered severe lacerations to all four fingers on her left hand - her playing hand - and had surgery.

Her surgeon had even said the chances of a return to tennis were low.

As a prodigy, then a champion, she had lived with the weight of her talent but, six years after leaving Wimbledon with the first of her two singles titles there, and just five and a half months since surviving a horrific knife attack in her home in Prostejov, the 27-year-old Czech was basking in the Parisian sun in 2017 as if she was reborn.

And that's why she admitted her victory over China's Zhang Shuai on Monday to reach the quarterfinals for the first time in eight years was extra special.

"I got a bit emotional the last two points of my match," the 30-year-old



told reporters. "I really had to start thinking still about the match because in tennis we really never know when it's end. But my memories, happy memories, when I made my comeback here 2017, when I step on the Philippe Chatrier Court, I couldn't really imagine



me to be in the quarterfinals. "Everything just came back to me. It's been a long ride definitely. I did miss definitely the court, I did miss the fight. Now I can just enjoy everything, even the beautiful weather outside. I see different kind of things

than before," Kvitova had said after confirming her place in the draw of 2017 French Open.

Almost four years after that attack, Kvitova may never have a better opportunity to add a third Grand Slam to her tally even if she is not known as a natural claycourter. She is yet to drop a set in four rounds in Paris and faces unseeded German Laura Siegemund for a place in only her second French Open semi-final.

With so many of the top seeds having already departed, Kvitova is the biggest name left in the draw.

"I think it was a miracle for me to make the semi-final here in Roland Garros," she said. "After eight years to be in the quarter-final again, it's great. I'm really happy for that, that I'm still able to play on all surfaces," she added.

Collins ends Jabeur's historic run

REUTERS, PARIS

Unseeded Danielle Collins battled past Tunisian Ons Jabeur 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 on Tuesday to reach the French Open quarterfinals for the first time in her career.

Jabeur became the first Arab woman to reach the Roland Garros last 16 by beating eighth seed Aryna Sabalenka, but lost after dragging the match into a deciding set.

"I felt I was in the driver's seat until 6-4 3-0... she's tricky, served really well and hit some drop shots I wasn't expecting," Collins said.