

TOUR OF ENGLAND

A team up for it

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Inspired by the main team's Natwest tri-series performance recently, the Bangladesh A side promised to put on a spirited show during their month-long tour of England.

A 15-member A squad with as many as nine Test caps left Dhaka on Friday evening for London to play five three-dayers and four one-day matches against different English counties. Before leaving, coach Shaun Williams and captain Shahriar Nafees Ahmed expressed their optimism that the side was capable of creating an impression.

"We will try to build on the results of the national team especially their performance in the one-day games. But it will not be an easy task for my boys because we are going to face some strong opponents," said Williams at a press conference yesterday afternoon.

"This is a very exciting squad.

There are some talented players who have the potential to dominate the game in future. Our main objective will be to perform at a certain level and gain valuable experience."

The Australian said it will be a challenge also for the A team players who had only returned from

ITINERARY

July 18: one-dayer v British Universities (The Parks, Oxford).
July 20-22: 3-dayer v Gloucestershire (Bristol).
July 24: one-dayer v Hampshire (Rose Bowl, Southampton).
July 26-28: 3-dayer v Glamorgan (Abergavenny).
Aug 1: one-dayer v Lancashire (Liverpool).
Aug 3-5: 3-dayer v Yorkshire (Headingley).
Aug 7: one-dayer v Durham (Riverside, Durham).
Aug 10-12: 3-dayer v Surrey (The Brit Oval).
Aug 16-18: 3-dayer v Kent (Canterbury).

England a couple of weeks ago having been a part of the senior side.

"Most of these players are very young so fatigue is not unlikely although they have international experience. But they have to cope with the hectic international schedule and that is another off the field challenge for them."

Bangladesh fared poorly in the two Tests against England going down inside three days in both and William believed that the A team's true test of mettle therefore should come in the five three-day games.

"I have watched all the matches of the senior team. I think the conditions were not suitable for our players to perform as per their potential. But now the conditions are almost similar to what we have here. That's why I believe this side will fare better."

Williams felt the tour could be crucial for someone like Alok Kapali to regain his place in the national side.

"Kapali is a brilliant cricketer. He is still very young and I can tell you

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Whatmore returns

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's coach Dav Whatmore returned to Dhaka on Friday from Australia.

The Tigers coach had to leave for his homeland midway into the team's tour of England to be by the bedside of his ailing father who later passed away.

Whatmore is due to sit with the national selectors within the next couple of days to pick the team for their next assignment: a tour of Sri Lanka in September.

A squad of 18 is likely to be announced for a three-match one day international series and two Tests against the islanders. This will be Bangladesh's first full tour to Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud also returned home yesterday after enjoying a break in the United States. Two other senior members of the side captain Habibul Bashar and opener Javed Omar, who also passed their holidays in the USA and Europe, were due to arrive back on July 22.

Sri Lanka fixes Tigers' tour dates

AFF, Colombo

Bangladesh will play two Tests and three one-day internationals in Sri Lanka in September, Sri Lanka Cricket said in a statement here on Friday.

Bangladesh, the newest Test-playing nation, will begin the 25-day tour with three one-day internationals in Dambulla on alternate days starting on September 1.

The two Tests will be played in Kandy from September 13-17 and in Colombo from September 21-25.

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Sept 1: First one-dayer, Dambulla.
Sept 3: Second one-dayer, Dambulla.
Sept 5: Third one-dayer, Dambulla.
Sept 13-17: First Test, Kandy.
Sept 21-25: Second Test, Colombo.

Shabbir down but not out

AFF, Lahore

Pakistan fast bowler Shabbir Ahmed vowed Friday to stage an international comeback after being suspended for having a suspect bowling action.

Ahmed, 29, who was reported for a third time in the West Indies in May this year, will not be allowed to feature in Pakistan's home series against England starting in October unless he is cleared within the next three months.

"The report is highly unexpected for me. I am badly hurt but I have the confidence that I can improve my bowling action," Ahmed said.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said Thursday that a biomechanics expert appointed by the International Cricket Council had adjudged that Ahmed's action was still suspect.

"The tests Ahmed underwent prove that his bowling action is beyond the tolerance limits of 15 degrees allowed at international level," Board director Salim Altaf said, adding that Pakistan would seek a second opinion.

"Ahmed is an asset for us and we will fight his case. The two options available to us are that we can have a second opinion on his action or we can go to the bowling action review group to contest his case," he said.

SLC awards 11 central contracts

REUTERS/AFF, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket board has awarded central contracts to 11 players, including fast bowler Lasith Malinga and spinner Rangana Herath for the first time.

Several injury-prone pace bowlers including Nuwan Zoysa, Dilhara Fernando and Nuwan Kulasekera have missed out although the board has suggested it will shortly increase the number of contracts handed out.

The players signed the one-year deals on the morning of the first Test between West Indies after several weeks of negotiations with the cricket board.

The previous year's contract expired at the end of February and renewal was delayed by four months due to the instability within the administration and player concerns over clauses relating to personal

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PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan striker Manju scores his first goal on way to a hat-trick during their Premier Bank Premier Football League match against Dhaka Wanderers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan stay ahead Wanderers let in six

SPORTS REPORTER

Premier Bank
Service First
Senior Division Football League

Sporting Club ensured staying on top of the table midway through the Premier Football League with a massive 6-1 defeat of Wanderers Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Skipper Alfaz, Asad and substitute Zahid added one goal each in the ninth and last round clash of the first leg as the Black and Whites registered their seventh win on a pitch only comparable to a paddy field in monsoon.

Run ragged by their mighty opponents, bottom-table Wanderers pulled one goal back through Milon who converted a 50th minute penalty.

Mohammedan, who finished

fifth last season, ended their impressive first leg campaign on 23 points which gives them an unassailable lead over defending champions Brothers Union. Second placed Brothers have a four-point deficit and even a win against Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra tomorrow will not improve their position. Wanderers have four points from four draws.

Despite recording their biggest victory of the season, Mohammedan were lucky to take a 2-0 first half lead, thanks to gaffes by rival goalkeeper Indrajit.

Given a first team place ahead of number one keeper Sohel, the young custodian handed the first goal to Manju seven minutes after start when he decided to receive a harmless pass by Mohammedan wingback Mintu just inside the penalty area. A lurking Manju snatched the ball from Indrajit and effortlessly ran through to tap the

ball into an open net.

Wanderers pressed hard for an equaliser but Milon shot straight to Mohammedan custodian Biplab three minutes later from just ten yards before their foreign recruit Henry's spectacular bicycle kick from the top of the box hit the side netting on the half hour.

Alfaz then doubled the lead with a feeble left-footed shot through the hands of Indrajit in the 38th minute after the Mohammedan captain was picked up by midfielder Matuir Munna at the left side of the box.

Biplab made two fine saves either side of the break to deny close range efforts Henry and Milon, inspiring a counter-attack that helped the Black and Whites increase the margin in the 49th minute. Alfaz dashed down the left before releasing a perfect centre for Manju who nodded the ball into the far post.

In the very next minute,

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BKSP CUP SOCCER Hosts clinch title

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP won the BKSP Cup Under-16 football tournament title when the hosts edged Dhaka Division 3-2 in the tiebreaker after yesterday's final ended in a goalless draw at the BKSP ground.

In the third-place play-off, Chittagong also won on penalties after their match against visiting Chandigarh Football Association of India ended 1-1 in regulation time.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman distributed trophies as chief guest.

Marsh backs Pietersen selection

CRICINFO, London

Rod Marsh believes that Kevin Pietersen is the right choice for England for the first Test. Pietersen, 25, has been included ahead of Graham Thorpe, ten years his senior, in what the chairman of selectors, David Graveney, described as "a very close call." Marsh, England's academy director, believes Pietersen poses more of a threat to Australia than Thorpe.

"Pietersen is a hell of a good player," Marsh told BBC Sport, "and the Australians will fear him. They have already seen his ability and particularly his hitting power and he adds a new dimension to the team. I think Australia would rather have Thorpe in the side than Pietersen, that's for sure."

Allan Border believes that Pietersen's inclusion is correct, but that ultimately Australia will have the edge. "England has made a statement of intent by plumping for attacking, youthful exuberance, which is exciting," said Border, a former captain of Australia.

Lee shines for Aussies

BBC ONLINE, London

Brett Lee gave the Aussie selectors further evidence that he deserves a place in the Ashes team after taking 4-53 against Leicestershire on the opening day of their final three-day warm-up match at Grace Road on Friday.

Lee, with no Test caps for 18 months, also forced John Sadler to retire hurt after hitting him on the shoulder.

Leicestershire, electing to bat first, were bowled out for 217, with Australian batsman Chris Rogers hitting the only half-century (56).

Jason Gillespie, hoping to retain his place in the side, took 2-40. His performance just outshone Michael Kasprovicz, a probable rival for next week's Lord's Test, who took 1-43, with Stuart MacGill (2-64) the other wicket-taker.

Regulars Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne were both given the game off.

Lee struck with the first ball of the match, as Darren Robinson fell lbw, and then had John Maunders caught at gully, edging a defensive shot.

Ganguly's chances fade

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

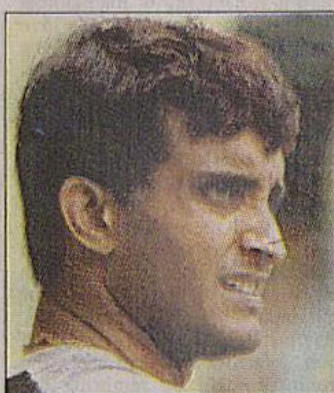
Sourav Ganguly's chances of returning for the one-day series in Sri Lanka receded with the ICC's Disputes Resolution Committee setting a July 22 date for final arguments in the BCCI dispute over the process adopted during the Indian captain's appeal against a six-match ODI ban.

Justice Albie Sachs, a South Africa Constitutional Court Judge, has given the ICC and the BCCI until July 20 to supply written submissions of their case and a further two days to file their replies. Sachs, an anti-apartheid hero, would then consider all the information and settle the dispute.

However, the Indian team to play in Sri Lanka, against the hosts and the West Indies, is to be picked on July 18. Sachs said that he was aware of the gravity of the situation but had

not yet fixed a date for his verdict. "I realise that, it's obvious. But I have not not committed to any date, all I can say is I am a fast worker," Sachs told reporters over the telephone.

Sachs said that the BCCI dispute



SOURAV GANGULY

was "a question of legality of the process" adopted to hear Ganguly's

appeal and as such it needed his "serious attention". In his directions to the two parties, Sachs has asked them to submit their points on the issues raised by the BCCI.

Two questions seemingly at the heart of the dispute were (i) how the ICC's code of conduct fixed the culpability of a captain and the factors by which the Level 2 and 3 offences were determined and (ii) if it was possible to reconcile the two approaches adopted by Tim Castle and Michael Beloff.

It may be recalled that Castle allowed Ganguly an oral hearing when he appealed against a one-match ban handed down by Clive Lloyd, the match referee, for India's slow over-rate in the Platinum Jubilee one-dayer against Pakistan in November 2004.

Beloff, also the chairman of the Code of Conduct Commission, referred only to arguments presented by text after the six-match ban imposed by Chris Broad in April.

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BCCI seeks to delay Bangladesh series

Cricket

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The Indian cricket board has sought postponement by a few weeks of Bangladesh's proposed Test series in India later this year because of International Cricket Council's high-profile Super Series in October.

Indian cricket board secretary SK Nair said: "We have written to the Bangladesh board that it would be difficult to stage the series because of the ICC Super Series."

"The Bangladesh team's tour is being postponed by a few weeks and we will work out new dates after having a look at the slots available during the year," he said from his

home state of Kerala.

The postponement, the second in six months, puts Bangladesh's tour of India into uncertainty of materializing at all this year given the packed schedule India already has this year.

Although only four Indian cricketers -- Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid and Anil Kumble -- are in the ICC team to take on Australia in the three one-day matches and a six-day Test in the Super Series, the world cricket's governing body has requested Test-playing countries not to stage any international matches during that period.

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar is likely to be in Kolkata in the next couple of days to

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What to WATCH

TEN Sports

West Indies vs Sri Lanka
First Test, Day Four
Live at 10:15 am

Premier Football League
Arambagh vs Dipali Sangha (5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium.