

Abahani want Tushar for Victoria tie

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani have requested the president of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to release Tushar Imran for Thursday's crucial Premier Cricket Super League match against Victoria.

Abahani, who are leading the table, sent a letter to BCB chief MA Aziz on Tuesday.

Tushar is in the squad for Bangladesh's second Test against India starting in Dhaka on Friday and Abahani want the middle-order batsman for the sake of their championship run as the depleted side have been playing in the Super League with just three specialist batsmen due to injury.

Apart from vice-captain Tushar, Abahani skipper Khaled Mashud and all-rounder Mashrafe Bin Mortaza are on national duty. Opener Jahurul Islam is in injury list while Abahani's other international Manzurul Islam Rana died in a road accident last March.

Abahani had to release their stand-in captain Tushar on May 14 with their opening Super League game against Old DOHS half-finished as he was called for the third and final one-day international between Bangladesh and India in Chittagong.

LOCAL SNIPS

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP maintained their undefeated run in the final round of the Western Union National Youth Football Championship with a 7-2 thrashing of Jhenaia at the Satkhira Stadium yesterday.

Towhid slammed a hattrick. Rana added a brace while Rabiu and Masud scored one goal each for the Savar sport institute who emerged group champions to book a semifinal berth.

Moshir scored both the goals for the losers.

In the day's other match, Raju struck an 82nd minute goal as Rajshahi recorded a 1-0 win over Noakhali.

WOMEN'S CHESS

Shamima Akter Liza won her fourth round tie against Nazrana Khan Eva to stay atop the Prime Bank 2nd Women's International Rating chess tournament table with maximum four points.

IWM Rani Hamid followed the

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Did U Know?

Sachin Tendulkar of India scored 101 runs from 169 balls in the first innings of the first Test against Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on May 19. It was his thirty sixth century, second against Bangladesh.



Shahadat Hossain

(Bangladesh bowler)
"I always love to stare at the batsman no matter whether it is Sachin or any other batsman in the world. It's not only at Sachin. I also stared at Australia captain Ricky Ponting in the last Test series at home."

What to WATCH

TEN Sports
UEFA Champions League Final
AC Milan v Liverpool
Live at 11:30 pm



Man-of-the-match Mashrafe Bin Mortaza walks away with the trophy and the cheque after the prize distribution ceremony on the fifth and final day of the first Test match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Weather settles match

Cricket

AFP, London

England and West Indies drew the first Test at Lord's on Monday as the weather had the final say in the opening encounter of a four-match series.

West Indies finished the fifth day on 89 without loss, 312 runs short of their victory target of 401, but having comfortably avoided any prospect of defeat during a last day where rain and bad light meant only 20 of the scheduled 98 overs were bowled.

"It was a shame on the last day the game didn't come to the conclusion it might have done," England coach Peter Moores said after his first Test in charge since replacing Duncan Fletcher.

The odds had been slightly more in favour of England taking 10 wickets in a day as opposed to West Indies scoring the runs they required.

However, openers Chris Gayle (47 not out) and Daren Ganga (31 not out) were largely untroubled by Durham new-ball duo Stephen Harmison and Liam Plunkett.

Now the teams travel north to Headingly where the second Test is set to start on Friday.

If England were to force an unlikely win they badly needed Harmison, playing his first international since a disappointing Ashes tour, to find his form after a wayward first innings return of one for 117.

But his first delivery after lunch, a no-ball, was cut by Ganga for a four that saw the batsman reach 2,000 runs in Test cricket.

Harmison ended the match with figures of one for 138 from 36 overs and Moores said: "He's been bowling really well in county cricket. He's put himself under a bit of a pressure."

"But I expect him to enjoy himself at Headingly," the former Sussex coach and keeper added.

"He wants to do well for England and bowl well for his country."

Andrew Strauss, England's captain in the absence of the injured Michael Vaughan, soon had just two slips in for Gayle despite having plenty of runs to play with.

It wasn't long before Strauss turned to left-arm spinner Monty Panesar, who'd starred in the first innings with six for 129.

Panesar, who'd been due to bowl Monday's ninth over when rain stopped play, came on in the 14th. But Ganga off-drove his third ball before four in front of a sparse crowd due to bad light halted proceedings.

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England, were a bowler light with Matthew Hoggard off the field since Saturday because of a thigh problem and were also missing all-rounder Andrew Flintoff, out of this match due to a recurrence of a left ankle injury.

That England set a stiff chase

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B.League resumes May 31

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday confirmed that the second leg of the B.League will commence on May 31.

Muktijoddha host Chittagong Mohammmedan in Dhaka in the opener while current leaders Mohammmedan will be put to the test also in the opening round when the Dhaka giants face second-placed Sheikh Russell on June 3.

Mohammedan, who slumped to as low as ninth midway through the first leg, won their last five matches in a row to overtake contenders Russell, Abahani and Muktijoddha with 20 points before the mid-season transfer window.

Meanwhile, the two-week transfer window has yet to see any new registration.

Abahani are desperately searching for foreign players after all their three Argentine booters left the camp. The sky-blues, who relieved Argentine coach Diego Cruciani, also released booters Mariano Sanchez and Hernan Parodi. They wanted to keep defender Mariano Caporale, who has also left for home to look after family affairs.

It was learned that Caporale has contacted Abahani and told the management that he will try his best to join before their first match on June 5.

Abahani have yet to confirm any other replacement.

The league is scheduled to end on July 23.

MCC urges shorter WC

PTI, London

The seven-week long World Cup in the West Indies courted sharp criticism from the Marylebone Cricket Club, which said that the quadrennial event should be played within a month's time.

Offering several recommendations for better conduct of the showpiece event, MCC World

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Draw pleases Bashar

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



Nobody expected anything other than a dull and drab draw from the Test match where only half of the overs were bowled over five days due to rain interruptions. But one fact could give an indication that there were no boring things at all in the first Test as all four innings took place at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

If stalwarts Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly's centuries were the highlights in Indian part then it was the story of two local new ball bowlers -- Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shahadat Hossain -- who showed some character, both with ball and bat, to ensure that their side will not go into the second Test in Dhaka empty-handed.

So, the excitement was not missing in the Test, for a brief period of times though.

One might say that it would have been difficult for Bangladesh to draw the game had they played the full five days but still there was something encouraging in the Tigers' performance on their return to the Test fold after a thirteen-month break.

It would also be unfair to compare this draw with their previous two rain-affected games against Zimbabwe. Bangladesh tasted

their two other Test draws -- one against the West Indies and other against Zimbabwe -- on their own credits.

After Mashrafe-Shahadat pair's valiant efforts in the first innings, the home team was happy about the way they batted in the second innings and that was the reason Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar said that they have got some psychological advantage before the second and final Test starting from Friday at Mirpur.

"Yes, there is a psychological advantage for us because we were eight down for 149 in the first innings but we still fought back well. And in the Indian second innings we did not let them play freely. Our bowlers did a good job as we took wickets regularly. These will help us in the second Test," explained the Tigers' skipper, praising his two strike bowlers, who tested the vaunted Indian batting line-up.

"We played Test match after a long time. That is why we faced difficulties at the beginning. Rain did not help us either because it was really hard to concentrate after so many breaks. But at the end we finished off the game on a really good note," he said pointing at their second innings score where they made 104-2 in 28 overs.

He said that they could only be blemished for their first innings batting (238) and everything else was okay.

"Our first inning batting was not good enough. Other than that everything was quite okay."

"I am not frustrated because we did not let them dominate. They piled up a massive score in the first innings (387-8 declared) but we were taking wickets when needed. We bowled splendidly in the second innings and our batsmen also batted solidly on the last day," he observed.

The 34-year-old Bangladesh captain also said that it was not possible to chase down a target of 250 off 43 overs.

"We knew that India would declare at some point to keep the interest in the Test. But it was a real tough job to chase that target for us. It was really difficult. So our first priority was not to lose many wickets. It's definitely going to help us in the second Test," he said.

"While I was batting with Javed (Omar), I thought it was a real possibility. If we needed 100 from the last 15 overs, then we would definitely try to chase that down. I tried to stay at the crease till the end. But as we had many wickets in hand, I was tempted to give it a go. That's probably the cause of my dismissal," he continued.

But at the end what relieved the under-pressure Bashar most was his return among the runs after a second-ball duck in the first innings.

"I went out for a duck in the first innings. That is why the first run of the second innings was important. However I did not try to change my natural batting style. I got some runs today and it is a good feeling," he said.

Praises heaped on Mashrafe

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Amongst all the big names at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium there stood one man tall above the rest to receive all the praises, not only from his own team but also from the opponent skipper. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, had lit up the first Test with his dazzling all-round performance.

It was not that the 23-year-old fearless cricketer was adjudged man-of-the-match for the first time in his 21st appearance but more for the way he had enhanced his reputation as an all-rounder. The 'Narail Express' bowled with heart to claim five wickets in the rain-hit match and also smashed a career-best 79 to save his side from a follow-on.

"Mashrafe is a terrific cricketer. I think Bangladesh is lucky to have a cricketer like him. He really bowls well and his contribution with the bat lower down the order has been terrific for Bangladesh over the years. In the World Cup and in this match especially his performance

was wonderful," was the praises from India captain Rahul Dravid.

"He is developing as a genuine all-rounder. There are not many of them in the world, especially a fast bowler all-rounder. This sort of cricketer is very valuable for the team. So I think his development is very important for Bangladesh," added the man nicknamed "The Wall."

"A pace bowling all-rounder is something that we have been trying to develop and trying to work

on. Any team would like to have a pace bowling all-rounder. You can see the effect of the lack of a pace bowling all-rounder in England. When Freddy (Andrew) Flintoff does not play for them, they are forced to go with four bowlers. Then it becomes really difficult for them. It is a critical component of any team and the team that has such a player, generally enjoys a big advantage," he explained.

On the other hand Bangladesh

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BANGLADESH-INDIA FIRST TEST SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the first Test between India and Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Tuesday:

INDIA: First innings 387-8 dec (Dinesh Karthik 56, Rahul Dravid 61, Sachin Tendulkar 101, Sourav Ganguly 100; Mashrafe Bin Mortaza 4-97, Shahadat Hossain 3-76)

BANGLADESH: First innings 238 (Rajin Saleh 41, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza 79, Shahadat Hossain 31; Rudra Pratap Singh 3-45, VRV Singh 3-48)

	R	B	4s	6s
Wasim Jaffer	0	3	0	0
Dinesh Karthik	22	43	2	0
Rahul Dravid	2	11	0	0
Sachin Tendulkar	31	50	2	0
Sourav Ganguly	13	15	1	0
Mahendra Dhoni	17	17	1	1
Ramesh Powar	6	6	1	0
Zaheer Khan	2	3	0	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-2, nb-4)		7		
Total: (For 6 wickets dec in 24 overs)		100		

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Bangladesh opener Javed Omar shares a light moment with Indian stalwart Sourav Ganguly at the end of the first Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

future series," said Khan.

A replacement will be announced soon, he said.

Akhtar has featured in only one Test this year. He managed to bowl just 12 overs in Pakistan's win at Port Elizabeth. South Africa during their three-match series in January before he broke down again.

The 32-year-old paceman injured his knee and ankle in January last year and had to undergo twin knee operations in Australia.

Akhtar and fellow paceman Mohammad Asif were involved in a doping scandal after both tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone in October last year.