

BCB to name squad today

Mashrafe assures fitness

SPORTS REPORTER

A doctor's report will decide whether Mohammad Rafique will play the Twenty20 World Championships, it was understood yesterday.

Having complained of pain on his ribcage and with no BCB physiotherapists present, a local doctor whom Rafique visited last night, will deliver the medical report. The selectors will make their decision on the veteran left-arm spinner before they sit to decide on the final fourteen.

Vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, another injury worry, is now in India on a personal visit but before leaving, he informed the selectors that he was feeling fine. Another good news was that seamer Tapash Baisya was also fit.

Meanwhile, today's ad-hoc committee meeting of the Bangladesh Cricket Board will only focus on the approval of the Twenty20 team that is picked by the Faruque Ahmed-led selection committee, with some discussions expected on other pending issues.



Footballers, preparing for this month's Merdeka Cup and Nehru Cup international competitions, exercise at the national camp in BKSP.

Hard task for Nayeem

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has decided to send two balanced teams for this month's international tournaments in India and Malaysia.

Although the BFF had initially decided to send the best and the second best teams to the meets, it has instructed national coach Syed Nayeemuddin to form two teams of similar strength, confirmed BFF's acting general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu.

Malu, who is also the chairman of the National Team Management Committee, informed yesterday that both the teams would be submitted to the federation by Saturday.

Bangladesh, who play one of the two opening day's matches of the Merdeka Cup against hosts Malaysia on August 20, will also be pitted against African side Lesotho and neighbouring Myanmar in Group A on August 22 and 24 respectively.

Singapore, Zimbabwe, Uganda

and Indonesia comprise Group-B.

"We will send both the teams under the national team's banner. I know the strength of the two sides can't be the same but we will try to do our best," said Malu.

The BFF had called the first set of players -- mostly the up and coming players -- for the Nehru Cup to be held in Delhi from August 16-29. However, after receiving the invitation from Malaysia, they chose another set featuring the ex-national stars and those who represented the last national team and wished to retire from international football.

Former Indian international and coach Nayeemuddin, who has been training the total 47 players with help of Hasanuzzaman Babloo -- who will be in charge of one team -- and assistant coaches Golam Jilani and Ujjal Chakrabarty Shibu, now faces the difficult task to divide his boys.

After a week of physical and power training, Nayeemuddin allowed the players to have their first game at the residential camp in Group A on August 22 and 24 respectively.

Assistant coach Jilani informed that the fitness of the players was

satisfactory but they were not given heavy load due to the long league that had ended just before the camp started on August 1.

"We have at least another week to train. They are resting properly and enjoying the food and stay here," told Jilani from BKSP.

"I hope they will not be tired when the tournaments start. We are trying to build two best possible teams but everything depends on the head coach," he added.

Among the 47, Abahani fullback Mintu was unable to train fully as he has been suffering from chest injury.

Mintu picked up a chest injury during their last match against Muktiiddha. He looks doubtful to be included in the team.

First-choice leftback Wali Faizal, meanwhile, recovered from pain that kept him in the sidelines in Abahani's last two games in the B. League. He also played yesterday.

The only other player missing was Sheikh Russel's centre-back Mahmudul Hassan, who is expected to join the camp today after attending family affairs following the death of his mother.

'Play ICL, forget BCCI'

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

monetary benefits from the BCCI.

"Such players should not have any expectations from us," BCCI spokesman Rajiv Shukla told reporters after the meeting at board president Sharad Pawar's residence.

Shukla, asked if it was an ultimatum to current players wanting to align with the ICL, said: "Anyone is free to pursue his interest, but the statement is very clear."

The ICL, which is bankrolled by the country's largest listed media house, Zee Telefilms, plans to hold Twenty20 matches between six city teams in October and November.

Each team is supposed to comprise four international players, two Indian stars and eight upcoming cricketers, according to an ICL announcement in May.

The BCCI's tough stance has already made it difficult for the rival series to recruit current cricketers from both within and outside the country.

So far, most of the players linked to the Twenty20 series -- regarded as a

young man's game -- are retired, semi-retired, or those who can't hold their place in the national side.

Retired West Indian captain Brian Lara, Test cricket's highest run-getter, is the only marquee player to have confirmed his participation in the competition, which carries a winner's purse of one million dollars.

Ex-Australian stars Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath have dismissed claims by the ICL that they had already signed up, but the duo continue to be linked to the series.

Warne's manager James Erskine was quoted by the daily Australian newspaper as saying on Wednesday that there was only a "reasonably slim" chance of the record-breaking leg-spinner joining the ICL.

"It's flying in the face of officialdom and I know he doesn't want to be part of anything that's not officially sanctioned," Erskine said.

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Halal bids BFF bye

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday bade farewell to its general secretary Anwarul Hug Halal whose resignation letter has been accepted by president S.A. Sultan.

Deputy general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu will be the acting general secretary according to the statutes.

Halal, who was present in his last meeting, exited in tears with the bouquet he received from his former colleagues after serving as chief executive since 2003.

However, the BFF boss's claim to discuss the issue in yesterday's emergency meeting was not supported by other members.

Sultan told the press after the meeting at the BFF office that like the past, when Kazi Salahuddin and

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Mercury rises at The Oval

Cricket

AFP, London

India wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni is confident there will be no repeat of the unsporting behaviour which overshadowed the second Test when his side face England in the series finale starting at The Oval here on Thursday.

Some of the shine of India's seven-wicket win at Trent Bridge, which put them 1-0 up in the three-match series, was taken off by a series of ill-tempered episodes.

In addition to England's jellybean stunt, India's Shanthakumaran Sreesanth twice found himself involved in unsavoury incidents.

The fast bowler overstepped by several feet when letting loose a no-ball bouncer at Paul Collingwood and also delivered an illegal beamer at

third Test series win in England, following their successes in 1971 and 1986, and the hosts looking to maintain their six-year unbeaten record in home Test campaigns.

"Both teams will play good, aggressive cricket."

And England opening batsman Andrew Strauss added: "The fact there's been such a strong reaction suggests we need to make sure we're not overstepping any marks."

Since the turn of the century India have won more Tests on their travels (16) than anyone bar world number ones in Australia (26).

But they have struggled to put away wins together in the one series and earlier this year, in South Africa, blew a 1-0 lead to lose the Test campaign 2-1.

Dhoni said it was vital India did not get ahead of themselves. It's

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PCB shifts grounds

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

was concerned about security levels at the two venues.

Peshawar has been a security concern for foreigners with its close proximity to the violence-plagued tribal regions of the Pakistani-Afghan border.

A spate of suicide bomb attacks has targeted security forces in the northwest since the government raided a radical mosque in Islamabad last month.

More than 230 people, mostly policemen and soldiers, have died in violence across Pakistan since the mosque raid.

South Africa is due to start the Pakistan tour from September 27 and play two Test matches in Karachi and Lahore.

They will also play five one-day internationals with two matches now scheduled for Lahore and one each in Faisalabad, Multan and Karachi.

Khan said the stadium in Peshawar lacked international-level facilities.

"A PCB official has ascertained facilities in Peshawar which were

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not as per the international standards and that's why we shifted the match from Peshawar to Lahore," said Khan.

"As far as the Rawalpindi match was concerned the stadium there too needs some refurbishment and we hope to get it ready for next year's Champions Trophy to be held in Pakistan," he said.

Pakistan became a perceived danger zone for international teams in the wake of 9/11 attacks in the United States. The West Indies and Australia refused to tour Pakistan and played their series at neutral venues.

New Zealand's team were also forced to cut short a tour after a bomb blast near their hotel in Karachi killed 14 people, including 11 French naval staff, in May 2002.

South Africa also refused to play a Test in Karachi and a one-dayer in Peshawar on their 2003 tour due to security fears.

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U-19s cruise to series triumph

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19s clinched the one-day series against Malaysia Under-19s 3-1 after outplaying the hosts by eight wickets in the fourth and final match at Byaumas in Malaysia yesterday.

Batting first, the hosts were dismissed for a paltry 97 in the 40th over, after Rubel took four wickets for 19 runs and fast bowler Shuvashish Roy claimed three for 18.

In reply, Bangladesh easily chased 98 in 23 overs for the loss of two wickets.

Himel was unbeaten on 28 while Mahmudul Hasan was the other unbeaten batsman on 21.

Earlier, the visitors had a flying start to the series with a 10-wicket victory in the first one-dayer but the hosts bounced back as they won the second match by three wickets.

Then the tourists won the third one-dayer by eight wickets before their win yesterday

'Mind the language'

Cricket

AFP, London

stepping by several feet, at Paul Collingwood.

England coach Peter Moores even suggested the stump microphones ought to be turned down at The Oval but Vaughan made it clear he wanted to deal with issues of bad language at source.

"I've looked back at the last game and I do think there were a couple of areas where we got close to stepping over the line," Vaughan told reporters at The Oval on Wednesday.

"I don't want to see swearing on the pitch. I still want to see bowlers doing a little bit of gamesmanship, and chirping. But swearing, and an attack on a player, I think that's wrong."

"The two games have been played very well apart from one or two little incidents. You've known you've been in a Test match and that's what we want to see. I just don't want to see swearing on the pitch. None of us wants to see that."

Swearing is a natural reaction but you don't want to see it at a bowler or back at a batsman."

After the second Test, match referee Ranjan Madugalle said he would be speaking to both Vaughan and India counterpart Rahul Dravid to remind them of their responsibilities.

"He spoke to me this morning," said Vaughan. "He's a good match referee. He's not got any real big issues. There were just a couple of areas at Trent Bridge where he thought it got close and I totally agreed with him."

England haven't lost a home Test series under Vaughan and their unbeaten run on English soil extends back to 2001.

"It's a great challenge for the team," said Vaughan. "We're 1-0 down against a decent Indian side."

"How are we going to react to the pressure of being 1-0 down and get

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Swing to win: Thorpe

Cricket

AFP, London

Chris Tremlett would be an important player at the south London ground, where the Test starts on Thursday, although much would depend on the pitch.

"Tremlett's going to play a big part and the wicket will as well. They can produce two different sorts of wickets at The Oval: if they've rolled it hard it can have bounce in it, but it has tended over the last few years to be what I would call a tennis ball bounce.

"If they play the swinging ball well, then they've got a good chance," the 38-year-old left-hander, whose record of 6,744 Test runs at an average of nearly 45 with 16 hundreds made him arguably the best England batsman of his generation, added.

"Zaheer Khan and RP Singh have been a major thorn in England's side this series, the duo having taken 25 wickets between them in the two Tests so far.

Thorpe, whose 18-year first-class career was spent with Oval-based Surrey before he retired in 2005, said giant England quick

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SHOW US YOUR FACE, COACH: England coach Peter Moores (R) rubs his face while talking to star batsman Kevin Pietersen (L) and assistant coach Andy Flower during a training session at The Oval in London on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Surprise awaits Dhoni

PTI, Ranchi

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who has been appointed India's Twenty-20 captain, has a surprise gift coming his way if he powers the team to success in the coming World Championship in South Africa next month.

"I congratulate Dhoni on his elevation as captain of India Twenty-20 team. A surprise gift would be given to Dhoni if he returns triumphant," Chief Minister Madhu Koda said Wednesday.

"We will felicitate Dhoni on his elevation as captain. We are sure he will continue to scale new heights," Koda added.

Praising the Ranchi-born player, Koda wished him and the team all the best for the inaugural Twenty-20 World Cup to be held from September 11 to 24.

The state government has

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