

Veeru happy that Roy is not coming

CRICINFO, undated

Virender Sehwag says India are relieved Andrew Symonds will not be involved in next month's Test series due to his explosive batting power. Symonds was not included in the squad after being sent home before the one-day series against Bangladesh, and his absence has been welcomed by Sehwag.

"We are happy he is not coming because he can change the course of a match any time," Sehwag told Reuters. "He bats at No. 5 and can bowl too, so it will be to our advantage. He is a very good player and you need such players to lift the competition. It is a loss for cricket, but we're happy."

Symonds was a central figure in the race row that surrounded Harbhajan Singh when the teams met in Australia in January and he was also a victim of crowd abuse during the previous one-day tour of India. Sehwag did not believe there would be lingering tensions because of the history between the sides.

"Whatever happened last time ended there," Sehwag said. "We will try to play tough cricket, not through words but with the ball." The opening match of the four-Test series starts in Bangalore on October 9.

SHARE YOUR VIEWS

The mass resignation of the national cricketers on Sunday created a stir in the country's sporting fraternity. We believe the readers of The Daily Star have their own way of looking into the stunning episode. We are inviting our valued readers to comment on it by emailing us at sports@thedailystar.net. Your comments will be published.

-- Sports Editor



Did U Know?

The Paralympic Games have always been held in the same year as the Olympic Games. Since the Seoul 1988 Paralympic Games and the Albertville 1992 Winter Paralympic Games they have also taken place at the same venues as the Olympics.



Virender Sehwag

(India's star opening batsman) "Boycott can say what he wants. He once batted the whole day and hit just one four."

Taking recourse to history to hit back after Geoff Boycott referred to him as "talented but brainless".



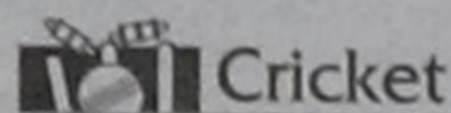
ESPN

Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
English Premiership
Tottenham v Aston Villa
Live from 12:54 am (Tuesday)



Citycell B. League
Mukjodha v Khairat Abahani
Time: 3:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

ICL hits Bangladesh hard



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket was rocked by seismic jolts yesterday with the news that six contracted players had announced their retirement from the game. This latest shocking episode only served to deepen the fissures within the country's game after the national team's continued failures at the international stage.

Former national skipper Habibul Bashar along with opener Shahriar Nafees, middle-order batsman Aftab Ahmed, wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh, left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain and all-rounder Forhad Reza came to the board's office at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday to submit their respective letters of their resignation.

The six now seem all set to join the highly lucrative Indian Cricket League (ICL) alongside other prominent players like Alok Kapali, Nazimuddin and Mohammad Rafique.

The players confirmed that they had all got offers from the ICL authorities but had yet to put pen to paper on the deal.

"Yes, we have got an offer from ICL but we are yet to sign the contract," detailed Bashar, the most successful Tigers skipper who has been in the wilderness after being axed from the national side.

Monetary benefit is believed to be the main motivation behind the decision to join the Indian rebel league as the competition is not recognized by the ICC. Players appearing in tournaments under the ICL banner are liable to be banned from all top-class cricket.

"We know that many would consider money as the only reason behind taking such a difficult decision but for me there were some other strong reasons to take

this hard decision," explained Bashar.

High ranking officials of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) met immediately to discuss the issue. They later gave off the impression of not wanting to lose so many front-line players at one

time - something that would create a vacuum in a pipeline where quality players are already slimpickings.

However, the BCB confirmed that there will be no shirking of punishment that is set to be imposed on the players for follow-

ing such a personal agenda and setting aside national goals.

"It was stated by the players that they intend to retire from all forms of international and domestic cricket for a certain period of time but the reasons for their intention to retire were not stated in their

respective letters," said Gazi Ashraf Hossain, chairman of the cricket operations committee, after the meeting.

"The board attaches great importance to the matter and expresses its concern at the abrupt decision by so many players to retire from the game and that's why we tried to talk to them over telephone but nobody responded. We then messaged them to attend a meeting on Tuesday," he added.

"We are hopeful that the interaction will give us a good solution. Still officially we don't know whether they have taken the decision for ICL but one thing is clear that there is a common guideline and we will implement it without any hesitation if any player takes part in this competition," Ashraf warned.

The former national captain said that they were shocked and the event was unexpected especially at a time when they were trying to arrange something for the players to make sure that they will earn more money as well as gain international exposure.

"It was shocking and unexpected. Interestingly we had a meeting with Indian board official Lalit Modi during the ICC award ceremony where he promised to confirm minimum three Bangladesh players' participation in the IPL during April-May next year."

"On the other hand we have a chance to participate in the T20 Champions League in 2010. And all this effort has been taken to make sure our players get more money and international exposure," he informed.

There had been a whispering about such planning taking place during the recently concluded tour of Australia and it was a surprise that there had been no pre-emptive measures by the board to stop such

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HABIBUL BASHAR

Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s
Tests 50	3026	113	30.87	3	24
ODIs 111	2168	78	21.68	0	14



SHAHRIAR NAFEEES

Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s
Tests 15	810	138	27.00	1	4
ODIs 60	1857	123	33.76	4	10
T20Is 1	25	25	25.00	0	0



AFTAB AHMED

Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s
Tests 14	514	82	21.41	1	1
ODIs 80	1874	92	25.32	14	14
T20Is 9	215	62	26.87	1	1



FORHAD REZA

Mat	Runs	HS	Wkts	BB
ODIs 32	390	50	22	5/42
T20Is 7	50	19	4	2/34



MOSHARRAF HOSSAIN

Mat	Runs	HS	Wkts	BB
ODIs 3	15	8	1	1/26



DHIMAN GHOSH

Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	Ct	St
ODIs 14	126	30	14.00	9	4

Chelsea outclass City

AFP, London



Luiz Felipe Scolari has warned Chelsea's title rivals that his side are not at full power yet despite their convincing 3-1 win at Manchester City.

Scolari has had to cope with injuries to key players like Michael Essien and Michael Ballack and the Blues boss knows his side will get much stronger when he can finally choose a settled team.

Despite those problems, Chelsea are already top of the table and six points ahead of reigning champions Manchester United who lost 2-1 at bitter rivals Liverpool.

Even when Robinho put City into the lead at a buoyant Eastlands on Saturday, Scolari's side never looked flustered.

They hit back to give big-spending City a reality check thanks to goals from Ricardo Carvalho, Frank Lampard and Nicolas Anelka.

"We have improved because we have had many problems from when we started until now," Scolari said.

"I have had to put player A, B or C in the team and they try to do their best. For the coach that is important. We will keep getting better."

Robinho, making his debut, took only 13 minutes to show why City paid 32.5 million pounds to persuade the Brazilian to snub Chelsea as he whipped a free-kick over the wall and past Petr Cech.

But City's lead was short-lived. Just three minutes later John Terry's header deflected to Carvalho and the Portugal defender smashed home.

Chelsea pushed City back after that and Lampard scored on 53 minutes when he finished an incisive move with a fine low strike.

Anelka's 69th minute goal put the result beyond doubt despite Terry's late red card for a professional foul on Jo.

Earlier, Liverpool finally got the better of Manchester United as Ryan Babel's late goal clinched a 2-1 win over the European champions.

The hangover from Kevin Keegan's departure took its toll on Newcastle as the managerless Magpies crashed to a 2-1 defeat against Hull at St James' Park.

Thousands of Newcastle fans protested against owner Mike Ashley and director of football Dennis Wise before the first match since Keegan's resignation and then saw their team produce a

woeful performance.

Marlon King struck from the penalty spot after Nicky Butt's 34th minute foul on Peter Halmosi. Newcastle conceded a second in the 55th minute when King drove home.

Xisco pulled one back on his debut, but it was too late to save Newcastle, who had Danny Guthrie sent off in the last minute.

Arsenal, inspired by Togo striker Emmanuel Adebayor's hat-trick, thrashed Blackburn 4-0 at Ewood Park.

Robin van Persie slotted him in the eighth minute and Adebayor put Arsenal in control on the stroke of half-time.



PHOTO: AFP

720 SECONDS FOR IMPACT: Manchester City star signing Robinho toasts his goal with the home crowd after curling in a free-kick just 12 minutes into his club debut during their crunch Premiership match against Chelsea at the City of Manchester Stadium on Saturday. The Brazilian who signed for City after protracted negotiations with Chelsea started brightly and left an impression on the full-house.

Some cricket for Pakistan at long last

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricket-starved side finally got some good news on Saturday when organisers confirmed a four-nation Twenty20 tournament to be played in Canada next month.

The tournament, scheduled to run from October 10-13, will feature Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and hosts Canada, giving Pakistan desperately needed matches after the eight-nation Champions Trophy was postponed over security fears.

"We have confirmation... for the tournament to be played at Maple Leaf ground, Toronto," Nauman Nabi, chairman of the event's organisers Sports International Marketing, told AFP.

Pakistan was facing no immediate matches after the postponement of the Champions Trophy -- scheduled between September 12-28 -- and after efforts to arrange replacement fixtures failed.

The tournament in Canada was originally scheduled for August, but was put off because a West Indies team was not available.

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Al Amin styles Police win

SPORTS REPORTER

A 73rd minute strike by Al Amin gave Police AC a solitary goal win over Karwan Bazar Progoti Sangha in yesterday's Second Division Football League at the Shaheed Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

The day's other match between East End and BG Press ended in a goalless draw at the same venue.

Manikganj in police soccer final

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Manikganj reached final of the Dhaka Range police football league when they ousted defending champions Tangail from the tournament with an 8-2 win at the Manikganj police lines ground yesterday.

Mahabub and Jahangir scored hat-tricks while Raju and Rafik added one goal each for the winners. Satyendra and Mahub reduced the arrears for Tangail.



PHOTO: STAR

Chittagong Abahani's Nepalese defender Lokobondhu (L) drags down Mohammedan striker Robin to concede an injury time penalty during their Citycell B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Stoppage time penalty rescues Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER



Federation Cup champions Mohammedan came close to tone with their city rivals Abahani's sufferings but a stoppage time penalty salvaged the Dhaka giants with a 1-1 draw against Chittagong Abahani in yesterday's Citycell B. League match.

After defending champions Abahani's shocking 2-1 loss to Rahmatganj in Saturday's opener, Mohammedan were staring at defeat when the visitors went ahead through Mithun Chowdhury's spectacular strike in the 81st minute.

With the clock reaching 90 minutes, the Black and Whites looked all set to join Abahani in the casualty list in the opening round but referee Azad Rahman gave them a lifeline in the first minute of injury time.

The referee was right to award a penalty to last year's runners-up Mohammedan when Chittagong

Abahani's Nepalese defender Lokobondhu pulled down rival striker Robin inside the box.

It was Alamu Bukola, Mohammedan's top scorer in the recently concluded Federation Cup, who stepped in to fire a low shot from the spot past Nepalese goalkeeper Kiran and relieve the team.

In absence of injured Arman Aziz, coach Maruf Ahmed appointed Nigerian Dami Emmanuel in the central midfield but the home side hardly translated their overall domination into attacks.

They had to wait midway through the first half to get behind the port city side's backline when Sharif's cross picked up Robin. However, the striker's weak header gave no trouble to Kiran.

Bukola should have done better than firing a first-time volley onto a defensive wall five minutes from halftime when the Nigerian forward met a right-side centre by wingback Nasir. He got another chance after the break but this time, after hard work at the left flank, Bukola was denied by

inspired defending from Nazir inside the box.

The visitors, who were busy defending in the first 45 minutes, came out of their defensive shell in the second half and Nepalese striker Santosh created an exciting chance when he chased a freekick and back-heeled the ball to Mithun.

The exuberant Mithun, however, ran over the ball to lose possession. The young striker finally got the reward for his incessant rushes to put Chittagong Abahani ahead.

It was Santosh again who played a through-ball into the Mohammedan area and rival skipper Jewel Rana took it to be a harmless one, not deciding to chase it. Mithun dashed from the left side and did not delay a moment to play an overhead shot into the far post, giving onrushing custodian Aminul no chance to make a saving effort.

Jewel was immediately dropped but Mohammedan needed the extra-time penalty to snatch a valuable point from last year's

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