

BCB calls back rebel Mahbubul

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will send replacements for Mahbubul Karim and Rubel Hossain in the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy team now touring Sri Lanka.

Mahbubul, still determined to play in the banned ICL, will be called back by the board to be replaced by his fellow Abahani opening batsman Jahurul Islam. Injured Rubel will be replaced by pacesman Shafiqul Islam. The duo will fly for the Sri Lankan capital today and will be part of the three limited-overs matches on conclusion of the four-day series.

The academy, meanwhile, will

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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 number of athletes participating in Summer Paralympic Games has increased from 400 athletes from 23 countries in Rome in 1960 to 3806 athletes from 136 countries in Athens in 2004.



Michael Vaughan

(Former England cricket captain)
"The central contract is a huge bonus, if I am honest I think I am lucky. I haven't got the runs properly to justify that position. I think it has shown a hell of a lot of faith. But over the last year and a half I have had some excellent innings. I have had some good times with the bat not too long ago. I think they have just repaid the fact that I get back into form. I think I can still play a huge part in the England cricket team." After the England and Wales Cricket Board gave him a central contract even after he stepped down as skipper.



ESPN

Sportscentre India

Sports News

Live at 8:30pm

TEN Sports

UEFA Champions League

Marseille v Liverpool

Live from 12:00 am (Wednesday)

Barcelona v Sporting

Delayed from 2:45 am (Wednesday)



Citycell B. League

Shahid Russel v Farashganj

Time: 3:30pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



DON'T WORRY, WE'RE HERE: (L-R) Mehrib Hossain, Shahadat Hossain and Shakib Al Hasan walk down the corridors of cricket's home at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur to meet the board officials yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Aussies' tour on track

Cricket

AGENCIES, undated

Australia's Test squad still plans to depart for India on Sunday despite increased fears over security following deadly bomb attacks in New Delhi on Saturday.

A day after deciding to review its high-profile cricket tour to India following the serial blasts, Cricket Australia on Monday made it clear that the tour will go ahead as per schedule.

Cricket Australia's general manager of public affairs Peter Young said CA would listen to the Australian government's advice but said the team under Ricky Ponting would depart on September 21, as originally scheduled.

"Our position is that the tour is going ahead unless we are otherwise persuaded," Young said.

"Our advice is there are some concerns and to exercise caution, but currently they do not compromise the tour. Our plan is to depart on September 21, subject to our advice," he added.

The Australian government, meanwhile, made it clear that they would only pass on security advice but the final decision would rest with the cricket board itself.

"We will do what we do with Cricket Australia whenever they are looking at a difficult tour... We will provide them with all our up-to-date travel assessments and advice briefs," Foreign Minister Stephen Smith told 'Sky Sports'.

"And they are also, as I understand it, getting their own independent security advice. In the end it's for Cricket Australia to make a decision, which is how we have dealt with the proposed Pakistan Test tour and the proposed Champions Trophy," the minister said.

Cricket Australia officials were due to meet with representatives from the Australian government's department of foreign affairs on Monday afternoon to receive an update on the safety situation in India.

Michael Brown, CA's general manager of cricket, will also receive a report on Tuesday from Reg Dickason, the team's security advisor, but a spokesman said there had been no change to the schedule for the four-Test series.

"Our position is that the tour is going ahead unless we are otherwise persuaded," Peter Young, Cricket Australia's general manager of public affairs, told Cricinfo. "Our advice is there are some concerns and to exercise caution, but currently they do not compromise the tour. Our

plan is to depart on September 21 subject to our advice."

Australia have scheduled warm-up games in Jaipur and Hyderabad, where bombs have gone off over the past year, before heading to Bangalore, where one person was killed in attacks in July, for the opening Test on October 9. While Cricket Australia will continue to discuss the issue with their security advisers, the government and the Indian board, more information on the situation in the country is available from members of the Australia A squad.

The outfit is currently in Hyderabad, 1500km south of New Delhi, for a one-day tri-series and the first match will be against New Zealand A on Monday. Young said the team wanted to stay and play.

"In consultation with the BCCI, we have upgraded security in and around the dressing rooms and they will have an escort to the ground," Young said. "They have also been told not to leave the hotel without good reason. It's just a matter of prudence." The squad is travelling with a security advisor who is part of Dickason's team.

The Australian Cricketers' Association does not believe the danger in India is as bad as in neighbouring Pakistan, but Paul Marsh, the chief executive, said he

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BCB in no-man's land

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

It is apparent that Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) desire to meet with the ICL-bound cricketers in an effort to stop them from playing in the banned competition would not be fruitful.

And in the turmoil after the mass resignation on Sunday the only respite for incumbent cricket officials was the assurances they got from other contracted players who met with them at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"We feel proud to represent the national team," was the common sentiment of the young brigade that included Shakib Al Hasan, Shahadat Hossain, Mehrib Hossain, Abdur Razzak, Mushfiqur Rahim, Syed Rasel, Mahmudullah Riyad and Zunaed Siddiqui.

The BCB asked the rebel cricketers to appear at the board office

today but former Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar and wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh reportedly have left the country for India and there was hardly any indication that the other rebel cricketers have changed their minds to attend the meeting.

There was however strong rumour in the cricket arena that more cricketers including few current national players were set to join the bandwagon and it seemed that the board had been concentrating more on how to prevent further exodus other than brining back the six contracted players, who submitted their retirement letters on Sunday.

BCB's cricket operations committee met with the other contracted players to let them know about the consequences of participating in the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) as well as the next three years' international programmes for them. The committee also tried to understand their sentiment.

There was whispering that dash-

ing batsman Tamim Iqbal, who many believe got a handsome offer from the ICL authority, could also follow suit. And his absence in the meeting added fuel to the speculation, but committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain informed that the left-hander was on a leisure trip to Kuakata. On the other hand it's all but confirmed that his Chittagonian teammate Nazimuddin is all set to join the ICL.

"What we learnt is that Tamim is on a holiday trip while Nazim is indeed a suspect. On the other hand Mashrafe (Bin Mortaza) could not attend because he has lost his grand parent," Ashraf said.

The board has however had almost no communication with the rebel cricketers although they sent SMS on mobile phones and letters through courier. "Let's see what happens tomorrow [Tuesday] and we still hope they will come to meet us," said Ashraf.

But Shahriar Nafees, one of the cricketers who resigned from all sorts of cricket citing personal

reasons, said that he didn't get any official instruction from the board.

"SMS is not a proper way to communicate with somebody. Any board official is yet to give me a call and only a board employee rang me yesterday [Sunday]. I will only think about attending the meeting if the invitation comes in a proper way," said Nafees.

"I had conversations with Aftab Ahmed and few other players and everybody were asking about the situation and what was going on," he informed.

Ashraf however claimed that they invited the cricketers in proper way as the board already sent letters to their respective addresses.

Meanwhile the board's effort to restrain Mahbubul Karim, who is now touring Sri Lanka with the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy team, went in vain as the opener was desperate to stick to his decision and that's why the BCB's development committee has

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Narshingdi home of Farashganj

SPORTS REPORTER

Narshingdi, a town on the outskirts of capital Dhaka, will host its first professional football match on Friday when Farashganj entertain defending champions Abahani in a second round game of the Citycell B. League.

Farashganj had appealed to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to have the Narshingdi Stadium as their home venue and the federation yesterday approved the plea.

The BFF had given some guidelines to the old Dhaka club and the governing body of football ensured they would be fulfilled by the weekend.

The venue had only one usable dressing room without massage tables and adequate toilet facilities, no sitting arrangements inside the ground or a medical zone and the ground was bare of grass in the centre circle.

Nothing much could have been done about pitch condition but the home team, guided by the district sports association, has been taking care of the rest.

The visiting sides will have

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Basabo bag full points

SPORTS REPORTER

Goals by Biplab and Kabir either side of the break helped Basabo Torun Sangha earn full points in yesterday's Second Division Football league with a 2-1 win over Prantik Krira Chakra.

Biplab put Basabo ahead after 20 minutes at the Shaheed Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur but Sabuj cancelled the lead in the 64th minute. Basabo hit back immediately, Kabir scoring the winners just two minutes later.

In the day's other match at the Banani Army Stadium, T&T Club blanked Sadharan Bima 2-0 with Arman nabtting both the goals.

Muktijoddha too go down

SPORTS REPORTER



Heavyweights kept tumbling in the Citycell B. League with Muktijoddha Sangsardh crashing to a 3-1 loss

to Khulna Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

After holders Abahani's 2-1 loss to Rahmatganj and Mohammedan's last minute equaliser in a 1-1 draw with Chittagong Abahani, struggling giants Muktijoddha failed to make most of a first half lead as the visitors came from behind to seal three valuable away points in the first league show without any foreign players.

Mehdi Hasan Pashbon struck a brace for the Khulna outfit on his pro league debut and also set the other for substitute Kazi Manjurul,

who confirmed the third upset of the league in as many days.

After dull half an hour, the boys from Khulna got a great opportunity to go ahead when Faisal was tripped by Reds defender Bipul inside the box. But captain Khaled Nizafullah fired the spot-kick wide of Nazim Majumder's goal.

Sentu was inspirational in the midfield for Muktijoddha, whose preparation has been seriously damaged due to shortage of fund and lack of commitment from the upper echelon of the organisation. After just five days of camp between the Federation Cup and B. League, they just did not show the fitness needed for this level.

It was Sentu who created the first real chance for Asgar Ali Nasir's side soon with a long ball. But Kanchan, who kept his effort on target, saw Khulna defender Sekander making a goalline save.

Kanchan finally put the local side

ahead in the 41st minute when he picked up another long pass from Sentu at the left and shrugged off his marker to drill an angular shot home.

Nasir, who was Khulna Abahani coach last year, had to replace injured skipper Titu and the Mukti's inexperienced backline showed the nerves after Mehdi equalised eight minutes after resumption.

Nizam choked on Ashikul's powerful shot that had an awkward bounce and a lurking Mehdi made no mistake to grab the 53rd-minute chance with a simple touch.

It was all Khulna Abahani afterwards as the rival defence crumbled under pressure but the Muktijoddha hearts were broken in the 76th minute. Milon nodded home a cross by Kanchan but the apparently clean goal was ruled out for offside.

Two minutes later, Yusuf picked up Mehdi who dodged past the last

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PHOTO: STAR

Muktijoddha goalkeeper Nizam (L) tries in vain as Khulna Abahani substitute Manjurul (2nd from left) nods home the final goal during their 3-1 win in the B. League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

VOX POP: Readers speak out on player exodus

I wholeheartedly support the cricketers' decisions. They have every right to earn the best living they can find. If the BCB cannot match the offer of the ICL, then they should go back to the holes they are in with their tails between their legs. Irrespective of whether these guys sign for the ICL or not, the board should in no way try to place barriers to them plying their trade. I think it is a matter of pride that some of our cricketers are worth \$200k in the eyes of the ICL authorities. Why doesn't our board grow a spine and stand up to the bully Lalit Modi (who is essentially dictating things to the ICC), and tell him that they will not ban these cricketers --- how about that?

Instead of attacking our cricketers, we need to go after the inept BCB officials (read Siddons, Lipu and the selectors) who have brought about the total breakdown of morale within the national set-up. As anyone who has worked in any kind of a professional organization knows, when an employee has no job security or satisfaction, it becomes only a matter of time before he/she goes to another company. It is entirely up to the employer to cultivate an environment where an employee feels valued and can produce his best. Has the BCB done that? Let's ask those tough questions first before going after these boys.

-Shahriyar Zahed

I always think there is two sides to every story. From the players perspective, they are definitely going for the money. In fact to be more precise they are going for the money that they can make by working for a few weeks only as opposed to rigorous touring, losing matches after matches, staying away from the family and of course not the same amount of money or even thereabouts. They are trying to look after themselves and their families. They are professional cricketers and they have all rights to do that.

On the other hand, we have our BCB and us - the hopes, dreams and expectations of the general public. It is a well known fact that our pay is not as high as what some of the international boards pay their players. But then you'd have to say - they win more matches, more sponsors, more enthralling matches equals more money for the board which equals better salary for the players.

BCB has provided a very good training facility for our boys, it may not be state-of-the-art BUT the facilities provided are really good. Show me another sport in Bangladesh that gets as much support as cricket does from a financial perspective, corporate sponsors, fringe benefits and exclusive venues in a small country like ours.

I reckon players have to realize that nothing happens overnight, it takes time to build a solid and

genuine foundation for any event or system. If BCB was telling the truth regarding IPL and ensuring at least 3 players are part of the next tournament. If Bangladesh actually has a chance of being a part of the 20-20 Champions trophy, I really think the "rebel" players should re-think what they are doing. Especially players like Nafees and Aftab.

.....BUT WE CARE

The players, like any other normal human being, have all the rights to decide on their own future. For few of them though, in the long run, whether it would be the right decision or not, is another issue altogether. But US\$200,000/-, no doubt, would be a fantastic amount for a young Bangladeshi to earn by playing his trade for only six months, that too spread over three years.

Having said all the above, the players should now refrain themselves from getting involved in the blame game and also from making any lame excuses for their decision of joining the ICL; because it is absolutely obvious that the reason behind their decision is nothing else but monetary, pure & simple.

BCB, on the other hand, should quickly swallow the sour pill, if it may be termed as such, and reprimand the involved players by the book and then go about and do a

Yet again, if I may say so, these are "professional" players and they have all rights to look after themselves by looking for a better job and BCB must show them that there are other opportunities available without having to resign from the national team!

-Rafi Mustafa
Sydney, Australia

Congratulations! At last, it's great news for Bangladesh cricket that our cricketers are going to join ICL. Now the question arises, why these cricketers rebel with the BCB?

Firstly, for economic security - they will be highly paid which they could not ignore. Secondly, continuous process to change the squad - so many experiment for a squad makes one in for one match & out

Development squad and even the 'A' Team to some extent. BCB has recently made an effort to improve this situation by selecting a panel of three ex-national players as age group level selectors. In my opinion, none of these three are experienced enough to be National Selectors and one of them is even supposed to be in the ICL group of players (!!!). So, BCB's effort, or lack of it, in this regard is quite questionable.

Last but not the least, the current crop of BCB Administrators could be well advised to try to leave a good legacy behind rather than putting all their efforts in trying to cement their positions by riding on the 'Councilors Bus' towards the 'Election or joint/mutual panel highway'.

-Wasiq Rafiq
Ex-Cricketer and
Ex-Owner President of Sonargaon Cricketers

for next match. Under these circumstances no one can be consistent and serious with his goal.

Thirdly, the attitude of the Board towards the out of form cricketers - as if these cricketers did not do anything for the betterment of our cricket. This current situation will help to reform some rules & regulation of the board.

If these cricketers want to join ICL, let them.

We should not tie them because they will play as Bangladeshis.

-Bazlur
Dhaka

It seems like a great disaster has hit the cricket fraternity of Bangladesh. Even after some disastrous tours, optimistic supporters like myself were hoping the team would rebound after they get the key players back.

But the recent reassignments of several of the current team players as well as some future prospects has dented that hope.

But can we term their decisions to quit playing for Bangladesh for a large amount of money as wrong? It is their personal wish and we should respect them. And if certain measures are not taken, we will see more players giving up on their national duties. I think the BCB should not ban them from playing.

Earning money is their right. Why should we pay for the internal problems of a mere cricket board?

We should accept them otherwise many players will be tempted to join ICL and vanquish their hopes for playing for the country. Why should we fear BCCI who don't care about the welfare of cricket of our country?

-Jawad
Student, Notre Dame College

Like every other day, I went up to the main door to get the newspaper. As I glanced at the front page, the news report titled 'Rebellion in the Tiger camp' drew my attention. I was literally devastated after I went through the report since I was an avid cricket lover. What more can Bangladesh cricket take?

We are already having a horrid time trying to keep ourselves afloat in the international arena but now further loss of some players with international exposure will only assist to take our cricket down the drain.

Shahriar Nafees, Aftab Ahmed, Habibul Bashar who are among those who submitted their resignation are vital players for the national team and there aren't anybody skilled enough to take their places at the moment. We are yet to know the details for their resignation but I would like to urge the authorities concerned to look for an appropriate and immediate solution and bail Bangladesh cricket out of further crisis.

-S.M Raihan
Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212

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