

Security trumps cricket

BCB postpone Pak tour

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricket in the sub-continent suffered another blow as the Bangladesh-Pakistan limited-overs series was postponed for an indefinite period.

The Pakistan cricket team were due to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow to play two Twenty20 internationals and five one-day internationals in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The BCB was all set to announce the name of the series title sponsor, the secu-

rity measures and different home squads for the T20s and ODIs yesterday but those present at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur were in for a surprise.

"Our preparations for Pakistan's tour to Bangladesh were in the final stages and the Pakistan cricket team were also ready to tour," said BCB media and communications committee chairman Mohammed Jalal Yunus at a press briefing.

"However, the concerned

authority of the Bangladesh government advised us today to postpone the series for the time being. Accordingly the BCB has deferred the series.

"A suitable new itinerary will be announced as early as possible," added Jalal.

"The ICC has also requested us to prepare a revised security plan for Pakistan's tour of Bangladesh and the BCB is working on it."

The media committee chief also said that the BCB was in talks with the Pakistani

authority on preparing a fresh schedule.

It was learnt that the Pakistan Cricket Board had also wanted to know about their security plans and which force would be in charge.

Pakistan's cricket is the long-lasting sufferer due to terrorist attacks in the country as foreign teams have opted not to tour there, followed by ICC's decision to pull out the ICC Champions Trophy.

Dhaka was the scene of a bloody mutiny last week by Bangladesh Rifles soldiers that left 74 people, including 56 army officers, dead.

The postponement was announced two days after gunmen attacked the Sri Lankan cricket team in the Pakistani city of Lahore in which seven Sri Lankan players and the team's assistant coach were injured and eight were killed.

Sri Lanka were on their second leg of a tour to Pakistan to play two Tests, believing that sportsmen would not be under terrorist attacks but that hope has now vanished too.

Meanwhile, PCB official Saleem Altaf told AFP yesterday that Bangladesh have conveyed their decision to them without giving any reason.

But he added: "We are told they are revising the tour itinerary and the series will be held after some delay."

The PCB chairman Ijaz Butt later told a news conference that Bangladesh will submit a revised plan later.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR
Bangladesh Cricket Board's media and communications committee chairman Jalal Yunus (2nd from L) informs the press about the postponement of Pakistan's upcoming Bangladesh tour at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.



Did U Know?

West Indies star Shivnarine Chanderpaul has the distinction of 1000-plus minutes batting between dismissals twice.



Talk Turkey



Geoffrey Boycott

(England cricket legend)
"England have got people like Matt Prior, who has gone home because his wife has had a baby -- as if people have never been having babies all their life."



What to Watch

NEO Cricket
New Zealand v India
Second ODI
Live from 7:00am

TEN Sports
South Africa v Australia
Second Test, Day One
Live from at 2:00pm

West Indies v England
Fifth Test, Day One
Live from at 8:00pm



Day's Event
Premier Div Cricket League
Old DOHS v Gazi Tank
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Victoria v Young Pegasus
Venue: BKSP-2

Unfortunate, not unexpected

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Yesterday's postponement of the Bangladesh-Pakistan limited-overs series was not unexpected, hot on the heels of two tragic incidents - the brutal killing at Dhaka's BDR headquarters last week and the terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team bus in Lahore a couple of days ago.

But the sad decision after two unsavory episodes has deprived Bangladesh the much-needed exposure against a quality team ahead of the Twenty20 World Cup in England next June.

"It is unfortunate that the series is postponed. I understand that there are few things like security affairs which a cricketer or cricket organisation can't control," said Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful after the BCB called off the series following instructions of

the Home Ministry.

"I want to believe that decision of postponement is for the time being and we want to get to the field for international assignments at home sooner rather than later," said the Bangladesh captain, adding that he was deeply hurt at the terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore on Tuesday.

"It is alarming for sport and I'm deeply hurt at what happened in Lahore," said Ashraful.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons considered the postponement of the series as a missed opportunity.

"Definitely we will miss some good cricket. But the bright side is that they (national cricketers) are still playing the League (on-going Premier League)," said Siddons.

The Australian said that Bangladesh might have to leave for England early for the T20 World Cup if the one-day home series against Pakistan is eventually cancelled.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Football ready to thrill

AL MUSABBIR SADI



Who wants to be a multi-millionaire? Join the Citycell Super Cup and you have the chance to be one.

No questions to answer like the famous US TV show 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' or its Indian version 'Kaun Banega Crorepati', it would be sheer physical and mental competition among the country's best eight clubs this month to lift the title that would be worth Tk one crore.

And motto of the Tk 2-crore tournament is 'Wake up Bangladesh in the tide of football', an attempt to give the game a facelift.

A lot has been said about the March 11-27 event but the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday held an official launching ceremony, a tidy and decent programme organised by the federation's appointed event

management firm Masthead PR at a local hotel.

"We are here to prove that football is back in Bangladesh," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin at a crowded press conference thanking title sponsor and BFF's partner in progress Citycell, which has helped the 'troubled' game to take off in the last ten months.

"This is only the beginning. We want to make the Super Cup a permanent event in our calendar till 2012 and I promise to make it an international tournament in 2011 where six foreign clubs will join two local teams," added the BFF chief.

Nitol Group (Nitol and Tata) and SS Steel have been roped in as co-sponsors to provide half of the total Tk 2-crore budget.

Salahuddin also said that Citycell's contribution would come from its yearly sponsorship deal with the cellular phone operating giants.

Apart from financial help, Nitol Group will provide a car for the spectators through lottery and SS Steel will also give a car to the most

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR
BFF president Kazi Salahuddin (M) addressing a press conference at the launching ceremony of Super Cup at Hotel Sheraton yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR
Mohammedan's Shamsur Rahman Shuvo follows the path of the ball after playing it on the offside during his fine knock of 59 against BKSP in the Premier Division Cricket League at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

Div-I Cricket

Indira ride on Isam

SPORTS REPORTER

Young left-arm spinner Mohammad Isam foxed opponents Brothers Union to guide Indira Road KC to a seven-wicket victory in the First Division Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Isam finished with figures of 10-4-20-3 as Indira bowled out Brothers for 151 in 43 overs. In reply, the winners reached their target in the 36th over losing only three wickets.

In other matches, Eskaton SS (231-9) earned a 145-run win over Dhaka Wanderers Club (86) at the Dhaka University ground and Rupali Bank (299-6) outplayed Dhanmondi Club (218-10) by 81 runs at the City Club ground.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police blanked Fire Service 30 in the National Bank Premier Volleyball League at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium yesterday. The winners took the sets 25-13, 25-15 and 25-19.

PDB also thrashed East End 25-18, 25-11 and 25-13.

DIV 3 SOCCER

Second half goals by Saddam and Atiqur helped BKSP beat Jirabo SC 2-0 in the Citycell 3rd Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

HANDBALL

South Breeze set a clash against Scholastica in tomorrow's final of the KFC Pizza Hut 5th Girls Mini Handball Tournament.

South Breeze edged Sunnydale 3-2 in the first semi-final while Scholastica defeated Dhanmondi Tutorial 2-0 in the other semi at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

No stopping of Shirin

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharmin Sultana Shirin closed in on her maiden National Women's Chess Championship title when she defeated Masuda Begum at the federation hall-room yesterday.

Shirin, who takes on Amena Khatun in the 11th and final round today, need to win to the game to secure the crown of the 30th Parachute National Women's Chess Championship.

However, there would be close watch on the day's game between second-placed Shamima Akter Liza and third-placed defending champion IWM Rani Hamid.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Biman crash to Torun

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Surjo Torun demolished Biman by 144 runs at BKSP yesterday to join the vanquished and reigning champions Abahani atop the Premier Cricket League table.

National opener Zunaid Siddique returned to form with a sparkling 83 including seven boundaries before being caught at deep mid-wicket by substitute fielder Alamgir but Surjo Torun reached 235 before being bundled out. Valuable contributions came from Shafiqul Islam (30), Sanjamul Islam (25) and Hannan Sarker (22).

Mohammad Shahjada picked up four wickets for Biman but his team's bowling remained wayward as they conceded 25 extras.

In reply, Biman lost their Pakistani opener Zahid Niaz early in the innings with the scoreboard reading 1-1. After a second wicket stand of only 16 runs, the national airlines, who had won all their previous six matches, struggled for momentum and were bowled out for a paltry 91 in 26 overs.

With Shakib Al Hasan sitting out, Biman looked completely at sea in coping up with a testing target of 236. Left armer Saqlain Sajib

picked up four wickets for the winners giving away just seven runs in three overs including a maiden.

MOHAMMEDAN-BKSP

The spotlight was on Sanath Jayasuriya at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium where Mohammedan triumphed by 23 runs over BKSP. It was a much-needed victory for the Motijheel giants who were boosted by the presence of the Lankan luminary.

Winning the toss, the academy team opted to field first and spoiled Jayasuriya's party. The Lankan legend failed to entertain as he fell for nine runs hitting just one of his trademark boundaries.

Mohammedan scored 189-8 in 50 overs with No. 3 Shamsur Rahman contributing 59 off 99 balls, laced with five fours. Nadimuddin Mintu added an uneaten 21 off 28 deliveries.

BKSP struggled initially as Mohammedan left-arm pacer Emon Ahmed had opener Saikat Ali caught behind in the second over. Two-down Mominul Haque spent exactly 100 minutes at the crease making a calm 46 off 74 balls but failed to translate it into a match winning knock as leg spinner Marshal Ayub ran him out.

Emon, Marshal, Tareq Aziz and skipper Sohrawardy Shuvo picked up two wickets apiece.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Sanath wants to lift MSC

Cricket

AMEERUDDIN ZAIN

Sanath Jayasuriya's first match for Mohammedan proved to be a personal disappointment but with a vital win in the bag, the legendary Sri Lanka opener stressed the need to strike a winning run if the Black & Whites wanted to progress up the table.

"Mohammedan needs a

boost up in the league and I want to contribute to their cause in whichever manner possible, primarily with the bat but also with the ball and in the field."

Mohammedan currently stand sixth on the points table with three wins from seven matches and a draw.

Jayasuriya had an ordinary day on the field by his standards yesterday, against BKSP, scoring nine of 16 balls and chipping in with one scalp conceding 29 runs of 9 overs.

He was run out in the 7th over with the score on 28.

"We were 30 to 40 runs short of what would have been a good score, and we also bowled well but Mominul (Haque) looked like a cool customer and thankfully he got run out, otherwise the game could have gone otherwise," said Jayasuriya praising the BKSP young tyro's fighting 46.

In spite of the heavy security in Fatullah which reflected events elsewhere, the former Sri Lanka captain refused to be drawn into the current crisis in Lahore or the issue of the postponement of Pakistan's tour to Bangladesh.

But he admitted that it felt good to be back in Dhaka.

"It's always great to be in Bangladesh and play for Mohammedan, I played for them way back in 1997 and have played once after for a different team (Acme in the Corporate League). I feel completely at ease to play for Mohammedan as the officials are great and I always get along well with the boys."

Jayasuriya, who currently has more than 11,000 ODI runs and over 300 wickets in the same format, was however disappointed with the pitch considering it to be slow and low in bounce.

"Well I have been playing in South Africa recently and the pitches there were fast, seaming and bouncy which is quite a contrast to the wickets here, but as international cricketers we must adjust. Today's wicket behaved slowly and the ball was keeping low."

"When I came onto bowl, I expected some turn but with the sun shining brightly it made the wicket a perfect deck to bat on."

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN
LEARN IT FROM THE MASTER: Sri Lanka great Sanath Jayasuriya (C) imparts some tips to Rokibul Hasan after the latter's innings during Mohammedan's Premier Cricket League match against BKSP at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday. Jayasuriya, who is here to play for Rokibul's club, had earlier scored only nine.