

Mashrafe retained as captain

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

There has been uncertainty over the fitness of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza but the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has still retained the pace spearhead as captain for the upcoming tri-nation one-day series involving India, Sri Lanka and hosts Bangladesh.

Shakib Al Hasan has been named his deputy but once again the number one all-rounder in one-day rankings will lead the team if Mashrafe fails to pass the fitness test.

The decision has been taken at the BCB's board of directors meeting chaired by president AHM Mustafiz Kamal at the headquarters in Mirpur.

"Subject to fitness, Mashrafe will appear in a practice match on December 26 and then we can only understand his position. Actually everything will depend on the report of the national team physio and whether the player himself feels comfortable to play the series. If he passes the fitness test then definitely he will lead the team otherwise Shakib will do the duty as usual," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus after the meeting.

A selection from the 26-member squad

of the preliminary national team camp will play a practice day-night one-day match against Dhaka Premier Division League champions Mohammedan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on December 26.

And after the match it is expected that the final team will be announced for the tri-nation tournament, which will kick off with the match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka on January 4 next year at Mirpur.

Following are some other notable decisions from the adjourned meeting:

CONTRACTS OF NATIONAL PLAYERS RENEWED

Left-arm spinner Enamul Haque has been included to the payroll and the contracts of thirteen players have been renewed up to November 30 next year. The A-plus category players are Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan and Mohammad Ashraful while Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahim and Tamim Iqbal has been drafted in grade A and Syed Rassel, Zunaed Siddiqui, Mehrab Hossain, Rokibul Hassan, Mahmudullah Riyad and Enamul Haque in grade B.

The contract of five players--Nazmul Hossain, Nayeem Islam, Imrul Kayes, Mahbubul Alam and Rubel Hossain will

expire on March 31 next year. The fresh contract will be effective from December 1.

Meanwhile, the players withdrew their salary in the last eight months without signing the contract papers.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS TO VISIT BANGLADESH IN FEBRUARY

Indian Premier League (IPL) club Kolkata Knight Riders will visit Bangladesh in February next year to play three exhibition T20 matches against a BCB selection.

"They will play the matches between 01 to 05 February. BCB will be financially benefited by arranging the matches, as the ticket rights will be reserved for us while we are also negotiating with the other commercial benefits. They (KKR) will help to install a giant screen for the matches," informed Yunus.

NEW SELECTOR SOON

BCB will appoint a new selector soon in place of Naimur Rahman who was reluctant to continue the job after the board delayed over the offering of new terms and condition.

Former national skipper Habibul Bashar and Zahid Razaq Masum are the likely candidates to join Rafiqul Alam and Akram Khan.

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Michael Phelps

(US swimming megastar)

"What I'm looking forward to is being the best I can for 2012. I want to see who can keep themselves in shape and who can work the hardest. It will be more of a sport and not just putting on a suit."

Whose eyes are firmly fixed on the Olympics after suffering yet another embarrassing defeat at the short-course 'Duel in the Pool' in Manchester on Saturday.

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh League
Rahmatgany v Brothers Union
Venue: Kamalapur Stadium
Time: 3:45pm

What to WATCH

STAR Sports
Score Tonight
Live at 8:30pm
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 9:30pm

V-Day T20

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Manikganj

Dashara Palli Mangal Samity clinched the title of the Victory Day Twenty20 cricket tournament with a four-wicket win over Provat Sangha in the final at the Shahid Miraz-Tapan stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

Sakib blazed a 38-ball 65 not out as the winners raced to 134 for six with two balls to spare after Provat Sangha made a moderate total of 133 for six, thanks to a 59-run knock from Mithun Chowdhury.

Later Sakib was adjudged man of the match for his match-winning knock.

Former Manikganj Municipality mayor and Victory Fair Sports Sub-Committee's Convener Sudev Saha handed over prize money to the best player Sakib. District Sports Affairs officer Syed Nazmul Hasan Lovon was present on the occasion.

BCB, Nimbus at loggerheads

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

With the tri-nation series involving India and Sri Lanka knocking on the door, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has been facing a problem with Nimbus Sports International Ltd, which holds the worldwide marketing agency rights.

It was one of the main issues on agenda of the BCB's board of directors' meeting at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as representatives from Nimbus, who are now in the city, are demanding a concession ahead of the series.

BCB struck a groundbreaking deal of 56.88 million dollars with Nimbus for a period of six years which was signed on November 21 in 2006.

Nimbus has raised the issue as they believed that BCB broke the 'material breach of contract' clause by arranging the tri-nation and England series ahead of their earlier schedules. They also cited the Indian board's initiatives of deducting the money as a reference.

But the BCB got surprised because they informed Nimbus about the tours three

months back and provided them with all the schedules and in the last three months they met Nimbus officials several times, but at that time they didn't raise this question.

"We can't understand why they raised the question now with just two weeks to go," a surprised BCB official said.

It was learnt that BCB officials have been in discomfort as the clause of 'material breach of contract' was not well defined in the long-term agreement which was signed long twenty months after the initial agreement.

"Nimbus wants to renegotiate with us as they raised their points to that particular clause. We are checking everything. What they told us is that the Indian board also renegotiated with them and reduced something. Let's check with the Indian board first to see what actually happened," informed BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus.

In this situation, the board desperately felt the absence of an efficient chief executive officer (CEO) to deal with all these things professionally. And that was the reason the board had decided to initiate a fresh process for recruiting a CEO. The post has been lying vacant for more than two and half a years now.

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Sachin sees India home

Cricket

AFP, Cuttack

Sachin Tendulkar hit a solid 96 not out to power India to an emphatic seven-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the third one-day international here on Monday.

The opener cracked 13

fours in his 104-ball knock to help India achieve a 240-run target with more than seven overs to spare in the day-night game for a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja played a crucial role in restricting Sri Lanka to a modest total, finishing with a career-best 4-32 off 10 tight overs. He was named man of the match.

Sri Lanka were on course for a big total when they reached 165-1 in the 23rd over before losing their last nine wickets for 74 in a dramatic collapse, sparked by Jadeja.

India made a brisk start, with stand-in captain Virender Sehwag smashing a 28-ball 44 with nine fours in a 55-run stand for the opening wicket with Tendulkar.

Sehwag led the team in the absence of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who was banned for two matches for a slow over-rate during his team's three-wicket defeat in the previous game in Nagpur.

India capitalised on the start as Tendulkar added 72 for the second wicket with Gautam Gambhir (32) and 73 for the unfinished fourth wicket with Dinesh Karthik (36 not out) to steer his team home.

Jadeja led India's fightback with a disciplined spell. He bowled well-set opener Upul Tharanga (73) before dismissing Chamara Kapugedera (15), Nuwan Kulasekara (10) and Ajantha Mendis (six).

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh was the other bowler to impress, conceding 29 off nine overs for one wicket.

In-form opener Tillakaratne Dilshan, who smashed brisk centuries in the last two matches, helped Sri Lanka get off to an explosive start with an 18-ball 41 as the visitors raced to 65 off just 6.2 overs.

Dilshan, who survived a run-out chance on 36, was caught by wicketkeeper Karthik off a mistimed pull off seamer Ashish Nehra after hitting 10 fours in his impressive cameo.

There was no respite for India as Tharanga and skipper Kumar Sangakkara (46) put on 100 for the second wicket to raise their team's hopes of posting a big total.

Tharanga cracked one six

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PHOTO: AFP

IN THEIR BEST BIB AND TUCKER: Argentina's Lionel Messi (R) and Brazil's Marta pose with their FIFA World Player of the Year awards during the World Player Gala in Zurich on Monday.

Messi voted the best

Football

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi, who earlier this month won the European Footballer of the Year, was on Monday named FIFA World Footballer of the Year 2009. Messi, who made history by becoming the first Argentine player to win the award, beat off the other finalists Kaka, Xavi, Andres Iniesta and last year's winner, Cristiano Ronaldo.

The award, which was presented at a ceremony in Zurich on Monday evening, crowned an exceptional season for the 22-year-old, during which he won the Champions League, as well as the Spanish double and on the weekend he added the world club cup to his list of titles.

In front of the who's who of international football, Messi thanked his teammates when accepting the award.

"What can I say. I would like to thank everybody. All of my colleagues, everybody who has been involved all over the last years.

"It is an award for us all to celebrate. For without all those around me it would

simply not be possible to win this award."

Messi picked up 1,073 points from managers and captains of the world's national teams, comfortably edging out Ronaldo, who had 353 points and Xavi, who had 196 points.

Brazilian Marta won the women's award for a record-breaking fourth time in a row, beating team-mate Cristiane, England's Kelly Smith as well as Germans Inka Grings and Birgit Prinz for the title.

Marta, who is back in Brazil playing for Santos on loan from American club Los Angeles Sol, said that she never expected to win the award for a fourth

time. "For me the greatest pleasure is to play football and I would like to thank everybody who has been involved with me - not forgetting my family."

"All these people have always been by my side. This award is as much for them as for me, for without them I would not be here and I owe them a great depth of gratitude."

She said that she considered it as very special to win four times in a row. "But I accept it for women's football in general," she said.

The FIFA Presidential award went to the Queen of Jordan, Rania Al-Abdullah, who spearheads the One Goal - Education For All programme.

FIFA President Joseph Blatter said that the work that she does proves that football can contribute towards a better world if they work together.

"You are this programme and I am proud that FIFA is a part of this wonderful work," Blatter said.

FIFA also made two new awards: the FIFA Puskas Award, which was named in honour of the Hungarian legend, was given for the most beautiful goal, while the FIFA/FIFPro World XI was for the 11

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PAST WINNERS

2009: Lionel Messi (ARG) Barcelona
2008: Cristiano Ronaldo (POR) Manchester United
2007: Kaka (BRA) AC Milan
2006: Fabio Cannavaro (ITA) Real Madrid
2005: Ronaldinho (BRA) Barcelona
2004: Ronaldinho (BRA) Barcelona
2003: Zinedine Zidane (FRA) Real Madrid
2002: Ronaldo (BRA) Real Madrid
2001: Luis Figo (POR) Real Madrid
2000: Zinedine Zidane (FRA) Juventus

Yuvraj out of Lanka ODIs

CRICINFO, undated

India batsman Yuvraj Singh has been ruled out of the ongoing one-day international series against Sri Lanka because of a finger injury. Yuvraj had picked up the injury while fielding during the second Twenty20 in Mohali and was subsequently unavailable for the first two ODIs.

He has been advised rest for the next two matches of the ODI series after aggravating the worrisome finger and his participation in the forthcoming tri-series in Bangladesh remains in doubt. Yuvraj returned to the starting XI for the third ODI in Cuttack yesterday and scored 23 from 40 balls as India took a 2-1 lead in the five-match contest.

This is the second serious injury he has sustained this year. In September, Yuvraj fractured a finger during a practice session in Johannesburg before India's Champions Trophy got underway. He recovered ahead of the six-week timeline doctors had estimated and played five of seven ODIs against Australia at home before Sri Lanka arrived.

Yuvraj could be replaced by batsman Rohit Sharma, who

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PHOTO: STAR

Barsha Islam makes a cross-court return during the opening day's play of the Victory Day Tennis Tournament at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

V-Day tennis underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The Victory Day Tennis Competition got underway yesterday with 96 participants including 16 women taking part in the five-day meet at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna.

The tournament features four events -- men's singles and doubles, women's singles and doubles.

Bangladesh Tennis Federation president Shahriar

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PCL surprise!

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistani all-rounder Abdul Razzak and paceman Navedul Hasan signed up for Noakhali Top Sports for the upcoming Port City League (PCL) Twenty20 cricket tournament to be held in Sharjah in March next year.

After the Premier Cricket League clash between two traditional rivals Mohammedan and Abahani in Mirpur on Monday, the officials of Top Sports confirmed the services of Razzak and Naved. According to the agreements, both Razzak and Naved will get 5,000 dollars

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