

Crisis deepens

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The crisis surrounding the National Cricket League (NCL) has deepened as the players turned deaf ears to the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) appeal.

Nobody turned up for reporting despite the board issuing a statement on Tuesday by saying that 'under the current circumstances Bangladesh Cricket Board requests every selected player to report to their respective divisional venues by December 30. However any player not abiding by the instruction will be regarded as a hindrance to the development of Bangladesh cricket.'

So, there is a slim chance to see the league starting from tomorrow as per schedule if any dramatic decisions do not come from today's emergency board meeting, which was called to discuss the crisis. But it was learnt that the

board is determined to start the league from tomorrow and are going to take a tough stance against the movement.

"Nobody turned up today for reporting despite the board's ultimatum. Only three four players like Mehrab Hossain and Mahbul Alam expressed their desire to join the camp but most of the players confirmed that they follow the instruction of CWAB (Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh)," said Ali Hossain, manager of the Dhaka Division team.

"CWAB is a guardian of the players, so there is no other choice than follow their instruction. What's wrong if the board officials sit with the players to solve the problem? There is no other choice than sit with the CWAB officials to put an end to the crisis," said former national skipper and Rajshahi Division player Khaled Mashud.

"I think there is some ego problem but we should think about the greater interest of the game. The players didn't make any illogical demands to the board," he added.

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Mashrafe unlikely

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There is a very slim chance for Mashrafe Bin Mortaza to make it to the final squad when Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announces the team for the tri-nation tournament today.

The Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel will pick the final squad from the 18-member squad which has shortened on Tuesday from the 26-member preliminary list excluding Zunaed Siddiqui, Enamul Haque, Mehrab Hossain, Dollar Mahmud and Mahbul Alam.

Mashrafe returned to action on Saturday after a six month break and passed the first fitness test in the practice game at Mirpur. The pace spearhead bowled comfortably in the net yesterday but it was learnt that he is not still fit to play the competitive match.

"I feel much better today and improved lot. Let see what decision is finally taken," said Mashrafe when asked about his chance to play the tri-nation series also involving India and Sri Lanka.

The sources said that the team management don't want to take any risk by fielding the leading paceman in the tri-nation one-day tournament rather they are focusing on the two-match Test series against India which will be played in Chittagong and Dhaka after the tri-nation series.

In terms of medical reports Mashrafe might have passed the fitness but there was a still a doubt over his cricketing fitness but it is not unlikely to see the pace spearhead playing one match in the tri-nation tournament if the player himself feels confident to play.

So, for another occasion all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is going to lead the team as a stand-in skipper. There is however a bright chance for the two ICL-returnees, opener Shahriar Nafees and middle order batsman Aftab Ahmed--to remain in the final team.

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PHOTO: STAR

Aftab Ahmed (2nd from L) and Shahriar Nafees (2nd from R) are likely to win the race for a recall to the national team when the selectors announce the final squad today for next week's tri-series followed by two Tests against India. Here the two ICL returnees, along with other regular members, sprint during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

No Sanath, no Mahela

Sri Lanka announce squad for Dhaka tri-series

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Poor form and player injuries have prompted Sri Lanka's selectors to make sweeping changes to the squad for the tri-nation tournament in Bangladesh next month, also featuring India. Those dropped include batsmen Sanath Jayasuriya and Chamara Kapugedera, fast bowler Lasith Malinga and spinner Ajantha Mendis, all of whom had disappointing performances on the recent tour of India.

Sri Lanka lost the three-Test series 0-2, split the two Twenty20s and lost the five-match ODI series 1-3. Injuries to key

players through the tour made the assignment in India all the more tough.

In fact, batsman Mahela Jayawardene, all-rounder Angelo Mathews and bowlers Muttiah Muralidaran and Dilhara Fernando were not considered for the 15-man squad to Bangladesh, having picked up injuries in India.

SQUAD

Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Tillakaratne Dilshan, Upul Tharanga, Thilan Samaraweera, Thilina Kandamby, Chamara Silva, Lahiru Thirimanne, Thissara Perera, Muthumudalige Pushpakumara, Malinga Bandara, Suraj Randiv, Thilan Thushara, Suranga Lakmal, Nuwan Kulasekara and Chanaka Welagedera.

Middle-order batsman Thilan Samaraweera was spared the axe, due more to Jayawardene's injury, and selection committee sources said the 33-year-old right-hander would add experience to the batting line-up and help ease the pressure on captain Kumar Sangakkara, Tillakaratne Dilshan and Upul Tharanga.

Among the new inclusions are Chamara Silva, Lahiru Thirimanne, leg-spinner Malinga Bandara and fast bowler Thilan Thushara.

Silva, 30, finished as the top run-scorer in the domestic Premier League Tier A tournament, with 900 runs from 11 matches at 56.25 for Bloomfield, scoring three hundreds and four fifties during the campaign. Most impressive was his strike

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PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan forward Abdul Baten (L) takes his eyes off the ball to avoid a lunging tackle from Rahmatganj's Ugandan defender Dudumba Michael during their Bangladesh League match at the Kamalapur Stadium yesterday.



Shane Watson

(Star Australia all-rounder)
"It was nice to see the ball drop out of [Abdur] Rauf's hands, and then I scampered through for the one. I actually didn't get much of a chance to think about it because I hit it really well, before I knew it, it was straight at him. I hit the ground, I didn't have much of a chance to see it. Lucky enough he dropped it for me."
Upon completing his maiden Test century after the Pakistani fielder dropped a catch while on 99.

Mohammedan winning

SPORTS REPORTER



Playmaker Mamunul Islam struck his first goal of the season as title contenders Mohammedan Sporting Club maintained their winning streak with a lone-goal win over Rahmatganj MFS in their Bangladesh League match at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Their sixth win in as many matches meant the Black and Whites joined leaders Abahani with 18 points, five points ahead of second-placed Sheikh Russel, who, however, played a match less. Rahmatganj, on the other hand, were still glued to one point from five matches.

Mohammedan took to the field remembering their defeat to Rahmatganj last season and the Old Dhaka outfit, Rahmatganj, stunned the Black and Whites to take a lead in the very 10th minute, but referee Tayeb Hasan ruled out the goal citing 'the vision obstacle' of Mohammedan's goalkeeper Aminul Haque and the ruling was the centre of all discussions as the Bangladesh League witnessed such

incident for the second time after Muktiyoddha's goal against Abahani was cancelled. In that match, Muktiyoddha went 1-0 down to defending champions Abahani.

Defender Anisur Alam drove a Pushbon Mollah corner-kick home from outside the box to give Rahmatganj a 'lead', but assistant referee Mahbubur Rahman raised his flag to rule out the goal because Rahmatganj striker Onyokoro Flix disturbed Mohammedan goalkeeper Aminul from seeing the ball clearly.

"We are a victim of poor refereeing," said Rahmatganj general secretary Tipu Sultan after the match. "How could the referee cancel the goal after making a whistle for centre? We are preparing to lodge a complaint with the league committee," said Sultan.

Mohammedan coach Maruful Haque made two changes to his starting eleven from the game against Chittagong Mohammedan, bringing in defender Hasan Al Mamun and medio Mamunul Islam in place of Nasir and suspended Emeka Christian and they more or less made up for the absence of the two key players.

Mohammedan, however, were lucky

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India, SL due on Saturday

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Both India and Sri Lanka will arrive in Dhaka on Saturday for the tri-nation series starting on January 4. Sri Lanka were earlier scheduled to come on Friday, a day before India.

However, it has been confirmed that they will arrive here on Saturday night while India will arrive on Saturday afternoon as per previous schedule.

Both teams will have their first practice sessions the following day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

In the tournament, all three teams will face each other twice before the top two meet in the final on January 13. All the matches will be day-nighters at Sher-e-Bangla.

After the tri-series, the Tigers will play two Tests against India, one each in Dhaka and Chittagong.

An Aussie final day

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Australians rounded out 2009 with their most clinical final day bowling performance of the year to seal a 170-run victory over Pakistan in the first Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

Nathan Hauritz, placed on notice by Australia's selectors prior to the series, claimed his first career five-wicket haul as Pakistan crumbled from 170 for 3 overnight to be all out for 251 shortly after lunch on the fifth day.

Hauritz's ability to exploit wearing pitches had been called into question of late, not least by Andrew Hilditch, and he proved himself worthy of the challenge on Wednesday. Unable to replicate the biting turn that accounted for Faisal Iqbal the previous day, Hauritz instead utilised flight and bounce to challenge Pakistan's lower and middle orders and was rewarded with four final-day scalps.

Australia began the day in emphatic fashion with Mitchell Johnson removing Umar Akmal and Misbahul Haq with consecutive deliveries in his first over. Hauritz then repeated the dose

with the back-to-back dismissals of Kamran Akmal and Mohammad Aamer shortly after the first drinks break to extinguish any hope of an improbable Pakistan fightback.

Mohammad Yousuf showed admirable determination to post 61, but support for the Pakistan captain was thin on the ground. With wickets falling in clusters, the Australians required only four overs after lunch to seal victory and claim a 1-0 series lead in the best-of-three series. The result took their Test record in 2009 to an encouraging seven wins, three defeats and three draws; a substantial improvement on their 5-5-4 record from the previous year.

The younger Akmal was the first victim of the final day, pushing at a fast, swinging delivery from Johnson that was claimed millimetres above the MCG turf by a tumbling Brad Haddin. Misbah fell to an identical mode of dismissal, albeit to a straighter ball, leaving the tourists' hopes of a fightback in tatters less than an over into the day. Kamran Akmal denied Johnson his hat-trick, but almost triggered one for Hauritz when, after an hour of stern resistance, he was stumped attempting a reckless charge to a slower, bouncing delivery. Hauritz then beat Aamer for bounce with his next ball, resulting

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Swann on song

Cricket

AFP, Durban

Graeme Swann took five for 54 as England wrapped up victory by an innings and 98 runs on the fifth day of the second Test against South Africa at Kingsmead on Wednesday.

The win gave England a 1-0 win in the four-match series.

It took England just 75 minutes and 18 overs to complete their win after South Africa resumed in a hopeless situation at 76 for six on Wednesday morning. They were bowled out for 133.

The third Test starts in Cape Town on Sunday.

Off-spinner Swann had match figures of nine for 164 and earned his second successive man-of-the-match award following a five-wicket haul and an innings of 85 in the drawn first Test in Centurion.

South Africa's faint hopes of extending the match beyond lunch evaporated when Morne Morkel was out to the 11th ball of the morning.

Morkel was dropped by Strauss off the previous delivery from Swann, which the left-hander edged low to the England captain's right hand, with the ball going on for four.

But Swann pushed the next ball through quicker and Morkel, stuck in his crease, was trapped leg before wicket.

Mark Boucher went on to make 29 before he gloved Stuart Broad down the leg side to fellow wicketkeeper Matt Prior.

He was given not out by umpire Amish Saheba but England asked for a review and replays showed clearly the ball had deviated off his glove so Boucher had to depart for the second time in the match after initially being given not out.

Paul Harris hit 36 before he scooped James Anderson off Broad at mid-on and Swann completed a comprehensive win when he had Dale Steyn leg before wicket.

It was England's first win by an innings against South Africa since December 1964 when they won by an innings and 104 runs at the same ground.

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia leg-spinner Nathan Hauritz bowls to a nine-man close-in field at Pakistan tail-enders on the fifth morning of the Melbourne Test on Wednesday. Hauritz took five wickets in the second innings to hand Australia a 170-run victory.



Bangladesh League
Farashganj v Sk Russel
Venue: Kamalapur Stadium
Time: 3:45pm



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