

Nakayama hangs up his boots

Former Japan striker Masashi Nakayama, who scored the country's first ever World Cup goal, said Tuesday he was retiring as he could no longer push his body to the limit at the age of 45.

"When I wish to play at certain levels, my body won't respond to it," he told a news conference in Sapporo, home to his J-League club Consadole Sapporo.

"With recurring pain, I cannot stand on the stage to fight," said Nakayama, who said he will not be playing next



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Masrafe Bin Mortaza (L) and Rubel Hossain hone their football skills during practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday evening. The duo is expected to spearhead the pace attack when Bangladesh take on West Indies in the third ODI today.

'Want more of the same'

BISHWAJIT ROY



Mushfiqur Rahim along with young batsman Mominul Haque came to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium two hours before the scheduled practice time yesterday evening. The Bangladesh captain had a quick look at the pitch on which the Tigers, 2-0 up in the five-match series, will take on a wounded West Indies in today's third ODI, which will start at 2.30pm.

The pitch might not have looked too different to the Tigers skipper compared to the ones in Khulna and most importantly they are very familiar with the Mirpur surface, but what amazed the little wicketkeeper-batsman was the amount of dew on the ground, which will definitely play a role in the crucial match where a win will give Bangladesh the series with two matches in hand.

So a different challenge awaits the home team who have got some talented young players in off-spinner Shohag Gazi, opener Anamul Haque, middle-order batsman Mominul Haque as the young brigade showed their nerve in the last two games to empower Bangladesh to tremendous success. They have to apply themselves in new conditions but the momentum is with Mushfiqur Rahim's men after they completely outplayed their mighty opponents in the first two games.

And the way Mushfiqur talked at the pre-match press conference at Mirpur yesterday made it clear how confident they are of winning the series against a team who have been below par in their performance in the series so far.

The Bangladesh skipper said that while they were concerned about the dew factor, the pressure is now on their opponents and it would be difficult for the West Indies to bounce back in the series if the home team can execute their plans the way they did in the first two games.

"Today I was amazed with the huge amount of dew on the ground. It's a concern but we chased a huge total down in the Asia Cup against India, the dew helped us a bit there," informed Mushfiqur, adding that it would be a slow track where the ball will skid in the second half of the match.

"The pressure is now on the West Indies team. We have the confidence because it's not only the win but the way we won the matches gave us huge confidence. Without any doubt we are playing much better cricket than them (West Indies)," he added when asked whether the expectations put any pressure on them.

The Bangladesh skipper was not willing to put too much emphasis on the outcome; instead he was delighted with the way his side played good cricket consistently in all three departments and wanted the same approach from his colleagues in the next three games.

"It's a big opportunity for us, especially for the young players who I believe try their best to grab opportunities. We have been playing good cricket for the last one-and-a-half years and our main concern before the start of the series was that we will be happy if we can be consistent in our performance in all three departments and I will be happy if we can do the same things we did in the first two

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Directors to elect BCB president

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president will be elected by the directors instead of the councillors. This was adopted and approved in the amended 2012 BCB constitution.

Earlier, a BCB president was nominated by the government. The previous board, the tenure of which expired on November 26, however adopted a resolution for an elected BCB president through councillors' vote which the National Sports Council (NSC) eventually did not endorse.

The NSC also approved an increase of councillorship of the top six Dhaka

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Gibson hopes for batting revival

SPORTS REPORTER



West Indies coach Ottis Gibson said he expected his side to step up their performance in the crucial third ODI against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today. West Indies trail 0-2 in the five-match series, and Gibson said hosts Bangladesh had things too easy in the first two matches.

"We gifted our wickets, but if we pay a little bit more attention and are a little bit more 'street-wise', especially against their spinners, and put a significant total on the board, I back our bowlers to defend it," he said in an interview with WICB Media yesterday.

"This has been a good venue for us. We won the Test match here and we won the ODIs last year when we played here but we still have to play good cricket to win the remaining matches," he added.

The coach further stated that while the visitors never expected the series to be a mere walk in the park, he however believed that the play-



ers hadn't performed as per expectations. "We have to start from this match and get back to producing what we did in our previous ODI series against New Zealand, which was outstanding."

Gibson said the major difference between the home series against New Zealand in July and now was the contribution from the top order. "This is pretty much the same team that played against New Zealand when we won that series 4-1 and the fact is that the top-order batting made massive contributions -- they got

the bulk of the runs and batted for most of the overs," he said.

The West Indies opted out of their training session scheduled for Tuesday at the National Cricket Academy Ground in Mirpur due to the general strike imposed by Jamaat-e-Islami. "We did not have that opportunity, so we may arrive at the venue a little earlier [on Wednesday], so that the players can get into the nets and get some work done before the match," he said. "For the players that arrived for the limited-overs matches only, we hope that they have acclimatised and can get their heads around playing better than we have so far," added Gibson.

The coach believed that a turnaround in the series was still possible and that while the visitors did disappoint, it wasn't 'all gloom and doom' either. "Our batsmen have to be a little bit more determined than they have been to stay there, be a little bit more conscientious about the way they build their innings, and executing their roles for the team," he said.

The visitors had a series of gym sessions at the Pan pacific Sonargaon hotel yesterday.

Booters need to beat SL today

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Smarting from a lone-goal defeat against Pakistan, Bangladesh U-23 National Football team will be hoping to bounce back in the HE Mahinda Rajapakshe International Football Tournament when they take on hosts Sri Lanka at the Jayathalake Stadium in Nawalapitiya today.

The tie is a do-or-die affair for both the teams in a bid to staying alive in the four-nation tournament following defeats in their respective first matches. Hosts Sri Lanka will have the advantage of playing at their own ground, but Bangladesh have no alternative but to win against Sri Lanka.

"Even though this is Sri Lanka's home soil, I believe we have a good chance of winning the match. We lost to Pakistan due to the mistakes in defense but we don't want to look back. The players are fully focused on tomorrow's (Wednesday) match and we still believe we can produce good performance to ensure the final berth," said Bangladesh coach Saiful Bari Titu yesterday.

Despite a 3-0 drubbing at the hands of Maldives, Sri Lanka coach Sampat Perera believes his charges would bounce back against Bangladesh and will play in the final.

"We know Bangladesh are a technically strong side. But definitely our team will show their mettle to fight neck to neck."

Sampat believes his side went down against Maldives due to a significant error which would not be repeated against Bangladesh.

Khulna miss a chance

SPORTS REPORTER



Khulna slumped to a five-wicket loss against Dhaka at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi, a match which, had they won yesterday, would have given them the National Cricket League title.

They'll now have to defeat reigning champions Rajshahi in the last game of the tournament to ensure a league-win.

Rajshahi on the other hand, raced to a 10-wicket victory over Sylhet at the BKSP. The win took them to the third position. Chittagong made easy work of Barisal at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium as they cruised to an eight-wicket victory.

KHULNA v DHAKA
Dhaka kept their hopes of winning the title with a timely win over the leaders. Chasing a target of 216 on the last day, Dhaka rode on half-century by Nadif Chowdhury and a quick-fire 22 by Nazmul Milon as they chased down the target right after lunch.

SYLHET v RAJSHAH
Sylhet, who had an overnight score of 188 for 8, were bundled out for 202 in the morning session to set a target of 31 which was overtaken in a matter of just 5.4 overs as Rajshahi cruised to a 10-wicket victory.

BARISAL v CHITTAGONG
Barisal lost their last seven wickets for just 66 runs as they collapsed from 97 for 3 to

163 all out. Chittagong's Nur Hossain and Yasir Arafat shared eight wickets between them as they ran through the batting order.

In reply, the port city reached the target of 72 for the loss of two wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA: First innings 171 all out in 59 overs and second innings 268 all out in 103.3 overs

DHAKA: First innings 229 all out in 71.5 overs and second innings 216 for 5 in 40.2 overs (Rony 57, Nadif 53 not out; Robiul 4-73)

Result: Dhaka won by 5 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Mosharrar Hossain.

SYLHET: First innings 218 all out in 80.1 overs and 202 all out in 82.5 overs (Golam 61; Taijul 5-74, Saqlain 3-53)

RAJSHAH: First innings 390 all out in 116.1 overs and second innings 31 for no loss in 5.4 overs (Sabbir 25 not out, Myshukur 6 not out)

Result: Rajshahi won by 10 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Sabbir Rumman.

BARISAL: First innings 204 all out in 104.4 overs and second innings 163 all out in 71 overs (Fazle 50; Nur 5-29, Yasir 3-62)

CHITTAGONG: First innings 296 all out in 105.4 overs and second innings 72 for 2 in 22.2 overs (Irfan 36, Nazimuddin 13 not out; Faroque 2-24)



PHOTO: STAR

Second match's centurion Anamul Haque wears a broad grin as he walks down the lobby of the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday. The 19-year-old batsman will be the focus of attention as Bangladesh take on West Indies in the third ODI today.