

SPORT

SAFF DEBACLE

BFF to form fact-finding committee

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will form a 'fact finding committee' to look into the failure of the national football team in the recently concluded SAFF Championship in Nepal where Bangladesh were eliminated from the group stages without a single win.

The decision came yesterday after a meeting between the members of the National Teams Committee (NTC) and BFF president Kazi Salahuddin.

"In order to investigate the failure in the SAFF Championship and also to formulate better work-plan for the future, we will form a fact finding committee within a few days," said BFF vice president and NTC member Tabith M Awal after the meeting yesterday.

"To find out the right facts, the committee, which will be formed with BFF executive committee members, can interview everyone including coaches, players, team officials, BFF executive members, and even members of NTC, who worked closely with the national team in the last two months," said Tabith.

Coach Lodewijk de Kruif and manager Iqbal Hossain were supposed to submit separate reports to the NTC regarding the SAFF Championship yesterday but they will instead submit it to the fact finding committee.

Tabith however could not give a timeframe for the submission of the report but informed that they would finalise their next work-plan on the basis of the report of the fact finding committee.

Tabith informed that they have no plan to scrap the short-term contracts with goalkeeping coach Kees Kalk and trainer Mohammed Yamali, who will be working with the U-19 team for the qualifying round of the AFC U-19 Championship, before their contracts expire.

Replying to a query, the former footballer said, "Other nations in the SAFF have improved much compared to their previous standing but Bangladesh have improved little. We will have to improve the technical side of the players and find out players of good-build with a long-term plan."

"As a member of the NTC, we gave effort as much as we could before the SAFF championship and I haven't had much dissatisfaction regarding the result of the national team," said

Asked about the possibility of holding the Bangabandhu Gold Cup football tournament at home soil, Tabith said, "The BFF president (Kazi Salahuddin) is trying to get an appointment with the Prime Minister (Sheikh Hasina) this week and if he gets the appointment, the Bangabandhu Gold Cup will be held after Eid-ul-Azha where six nations will participate instead of eight."



BROTHERS UNION: Veteran Pakistan cricketer Azhar Mahmood (3rd from R) shares a light moment with skipper Tamim Iqbal (R) and another Brothers Union teammate, Tamim's elder brother Nafis, at the Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Round Two from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The second round of the Dhaka Premier League will begin today with the introduction of two new venues to the competition.

Nasir Hossain's Victoria Sporting Club will take on Faisal Hossain Dickens's Khelaghor Samaj Kallyan Samity at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium at Fatullah. Victoria will be looking forward to win their first game after having to share points in their first game, which had to be abandoned due to unplayable conditions.

Mahamudullah Riyad's Gazi Tank Cricketers will face Tamim Iqbal's Brothers Union at BKSP-3 in what promises to be an enthralling contest. At the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Enamul Haque Junior's Prime Bank Cricket Club will face Kalabagan Krira Chakra, led by their stand-in captain Naeem Islam.

A number of Sri Lankan players have arrived in the country and will be featuring in the matches today. Sri Lankan captain Angelo Mathews will play for Brothers Union while Jeevan Mendis will play for Prime Bank.

Shakib's no to politics

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, through his twitter account, stated yesterday that he had no intentions of joining Bangladeshi politics.

Shakib's presence alongside Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy in a programme at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on Friday had social media abuzz with rumours of the cricketer joining politics.

However, the 26-year-old on Friday night tweeted thrice in the space of 10 minutes stating: "Let me clear myself.... I am not joining politics and I don't have any intention to join politics in my life."

"I was requested by the board president to join the program on be half (sic) of the cricket team and I haven't said a single word about politics."

In his last tweet he asked the public not to trust the rumours spread across the media following the programme.

"So I would request you guys please not to trust our media," he tweeted.

The programme Shakib attended was broadcast live and was entitled, "Vision 2021, Achievements of Last Five Years and the Promises for Next Five Years."

Successful professionals from various fields were also invited to the programme.

Apart from the cricketer the programme included musician Maksudul Haque and economist Abul Barakat. Shakib, in his opening statement, said that Bangladesh was doing well in cricket and wanted the trend to continue.

The left-hander who is currently nursing a thumb injury is out of cricket till September 18 and will not be able to play the Dhaka Premier League till then.

Another 9-wkt loss for BD women

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team suffered another heavy defeat against South Africa as they were outclassed by nine wickets in the second T20I of the three-match series at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday.

The home team took the series as they also won the first game by same margin.

Like the first match, the visiting side failed to put up a fighting total on the board as they managed only 84 runs for six wickets in their share of 20 overs. Ayesha Rahman made 34 and Lata Mondal added 31 runs.

Marizanne Kapp claimed four wickets with a hat-trick for six runs in four overs.

In reply, South Africa reached the target in 11.3 overs by losing only one wicket. Rumana Ahmed took the lone wicket.

Sree vows to come back

CRICINFO, Kochi

A day after he was hit with a life ban by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Shanthakumaran Sreesanth has vowed to make a comeback. He called the ban the "biggest setback" of his life, and continued to maintain that he was innocent.

"The BCCI action is the biggest setback in my life and I am disappointed," he told reporters in Kochi. "I will try to overcome the crisis and make a strong comeback."

His brother Dipu Santh told ESPNcricinfo that Sreesanth's camp will wait on the court's verdict before deciding on a further course of action.

Shooters off target

SPORTS REPORTER

Country's top shooters failed to justify their names in the first trial at the National Shooting Complex yesterday ahead of the selection for the Asian Airgun Championship which will be held in Tehran in October.

Shooters like Sharmin Akter Ratna, Sharmin Akter, Sadia Sultana, Abdullah Hel Baki failed to reach the mark they set just over a month ago, during the evaluation period after a two-month training camp at three different venues. The camp was suspended for a month before it resumed again on the first day of this month.

Ratna, 10m Air Rifles gold medallist in Dhaka SA Games, failed to get close to the score of 397 she set one month ago by scoring 391 in yesterday's trial while Sharmin Akter, gold medallist in Islamabad SA Games scored 390 points. Sadia scored 389.

Shooters in men's 10m Air Rifles also matched their female teammates by setting dismal scores as Abdullah Hel Baki scored 587, six points less than he did a month ago.

"We had been in rhythm after two months of training and scored well but our performance deteriorated due to the long gap in the training. We have just trained for nine days before today's trial but I believe we will do better after a few weeks," said Baki.

The shooting federation is scheduled to send entries of participants to the organising committee of Asian Airgun Championship after tomorrow's trial. The federation will take into consideration of performances in two trials before finalising the squad.



Zimbabwe cricketers celebrate their historic win against Pakistan in the second Test on the fifth day at the Harare Sports Club on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Zim shock Pakistan

AFP, Harare

Pakistan's batting woes returned to haunt them as Zimbabwe pulled off a dramatic 24-run win to level the series on the fifth day of the second Test at the Harare Sports Club on Saturday.

Inexperienced Zimbabwe fast bowler Tendai Chatara took five for 61 as Pakistan were bowled out for 239 despite an unbeaten 79 by captain Misbahul Haq.

"The batting is a bit of a worry," said Misbah, looking ahead to Pakistan's next Test series, against world champions South Africa in the United Arab Emirates next month.

Younis scored the only century of the series, an unbeaten 200 in the first Test, which Pakistan won by 221 runs at the same venue.

Misbah and opening batsman Khuram Manzoor both scored two half-centuries in the second Test, while Younis contributed 77 in the first innings. But the rest of the batting failed against the spirited Zimbabwean attack.

Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor praised his team. "It takes a lot of character to come back from a big loss. Beating a world-class team is a wonderful feeling."

It was only Zimbabwe's fifth win against a major Test nation -- their third against Pakistan -- and their most significant victory since they beat India in 2000-01.

Resuming at 158 for five, Pakistan suffered an early blow when Chatara trapped Adnan Akmal leg before wicket with only five runs added. Akmal, who made 20, went back to a ball which angled in towards his stumps.

Abdur Rehman scored 16 in a seventh wicket partnership of 34 with Misbah, who was content to continue to bat watchfully, as he had done on the fourth afternoon, before Rehman was caught behind off Tinashe Panyangara.

Chatara returned to the attack and immediately claimed the wicket of Saeed Ajmal in almost identical fashion to the way he dismissed Akmal, with the batsmen going back to a ball which cut back sharply and hit him on the pads.

Misbah faced 161 balls in reaching 58 at lunch. He stepped up the pace after the interval, keeping the strike with singles in the first two overs from Chatara and Brian Vitori, then taking 11 runs off an over from Chatara, including two boundaries. Two more fours came from Vitori's next over.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: First innings 294
PAKISTAN: First innings 230
ZIMBABWE: Second innings 199
PAKISTAN: Second innings 239 all out in 81 overs (Misbah 79 not out, Manzoor 54, Younis 29; Chatara 5-61, Utseya 2-62)
Result: Zimbabwe won by 24 runs and the 2-Test series drawn at 1-1.
Player-of-the-match: Tendai Chatara.
Player-of-the-series: Younis Khan.

No respite for Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

There was no turnaround for Siddikur Rahman as the 28-year old golfer settled for the joint 63rd position after the third round at the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship on Saturday. The one-time Asian tour winner carded two-over-par (74) to amass six-over-par (222) at the end of the third round at the 500,000 dollar Asian Tour event which is being staged at the Linkou International Golf and Country Club in Taipei.

The lead was grabbed at ten-under-par (206) by Korean-American rookie Chan Kim who carded a four-under-par (68) yesterday.

Taiwanese Yeh Wei-tze and reigning Order of Merit winner Thaworn Wiratchant of Thailand were at joint second position with nine-under-par (207).

Buttler makes it 1-1

STAR SPORT DESK

A rousing 79-run seventh-wicket stand in only 9.3 overs between Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes enabled England to level the three-ODI series against Australia with a three-wicket victory in the second ODI at Cardiff yesterday.

Australia pacer Clint McKay's hat-trick early in England's chase of 228 appeared to have delivered the knockout blow. McKay dispatched the cream of England's batting by dismissing Kevin Pietersen (leg before), Jonathan Trott (caught at second slip) and Joe Root (first slip) off successive deliveries in the third over to leave England at eight for three. But Eoin Morgan and Michael Carberry steadied the ship with a 104-run fourth-wicket stand before

another flurry of wickets had Stokes joining Buttler in the effort to score 84 runs from just over 11 overs. Although Stokes departed nine short of the target, Buttler sealed the deal with three balls to spare with a six and a four off the last over bowled by Mitchell Johnson.

Earlier, after England chose to field, George Bailey rescued Australia from 57 for four to 227 all out in 48.2 overs. The decider will be held at Southampton on Monday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 227 all out in 48.2 overs (Bailey 87, Wade 36, Voges 30; Tredwell 3-53, Rankin 2-31).
ENGLAND: 231 for 7 in 49.3 overs (Buttler 65 not out, Carberry 63, Morgan 53, Stokes 25; McKay 4-39).
Result: England won by three wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Jos Buttler.