

Shakib free for Big Bash

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan will be eligible to play the Twenty20 Big Bash League in Australia, which commences on December 18, with the ban on his participation in overseas tournaments set to be lifted.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon confirmed the all-rounder's participation in the league and said that he took special measures to lift the ban, which was set to last till December 31 next year, on the talismanic all-rounder.

Papon informed that it would not be possible for Shakib to play in the league if the decision came through a board meeting, and that is why all board members will personally sign a document regarding the issue by tomorrow which will then be made public on Thursday.

Shakib previously played in the league for Adelaide Strikers but he is yet to be drafted in by any team this year.

Jayawardene not playing 3rd ODI

INTERNET, Colombo

Key Sri Lanka batsman Mahela Jayawardene will miss the third one-day international against England in Hambantota on Wednesday for personal reasons.

A Sri Lanka Cricket team spokesman confirmed Jayawardene's absence, and the call-up of Ashan Priyanjan as his replacement.

"He asked to miss the match, for personal reasons, and permission was granted by the board," the spokesman said.

Veteran Jayawardene made an unbeaten half-century as Sri Lanka beat England by eight wickets in Colombo on Saturday to go 2-0 up in the seven-match series.

Funeral today

Pallbearer Clarke will lead Hughes tributes

AFP, Sydney



Australia skipper Michael Clarke will be one of the pallbearers and will lead tributes at the funeral of his close friend Phillip Hughes on Wednesday, Cricket Australia announced.

As the funeral details were revealed Tuesday, chief executive James Sutherland

said it was too early to say which players would be mentally ready to face the hastily rescheduled Tests against India.

The opening clash between the teams was due to start on Thursday at the Gabba in Brisbane but was put off following Hughes death last week, with many fellow players left emotionally shattered.

The funeral in Hughes's hometown of Macksville on Wednesday will be attended by the Australian Test squad as well as past and present luminaries of the game including Mark Taylor, Sir Richard Hadlee, Brian Lara, Virat Kohli, Ravi Shastri, Shane Warne, Mike Hussey, Ricky Ponting, Brett Lee, Adam Gilchrist and Glenn McGrath.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott is also due to attend the service at which Clarke, who was by Hughes's bedside as he lay stricken in a Sydney hospital, will speak in tribute and join family members and fellow Australia batsman Aaron Finch as a pallbearers.

Hughes died last Thursday from bleeding on the brain, two days after being knocked unconscious by a bouncer in Sydney, throwing the cricketing world into mourning.

Given the funeral on Wednesday, Cricket Australia late Monday amended the Test dates after lengthy talks with the Board of Control for Cricket in India and other stakeholders.

Instead of starting on Friday, December 12 -- as the second Adelaide Test was originally scheduled -- it will now begin on December 9 and be the opening match of the series.

"There is nothing perfect about what we have come up with here but we appreciate everyone's support and understanding in these tragic and extraordinary circumstances," Sutherland said.

The second Test will be played in Brisbane from December 17-21 with the traditional Boxing Day clash in Melbourne remaining unchanged, while the Sydney Test has been pushed back three days and will now start on January 6.



Jubilant Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club players and officials hold aloft the King's Cup trophy after a 1-0 win against Pune FC in an intense final at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Sheikh Jamal the Kings

SPORTS REPORTER



Yeasin Khan's brilliant diving header on a Wedson Anselme corner in the 24th minute of the King's Cup final against India's Pune FC in Thimphu, Bhutan yesterday has written a new glorious chapter in the history of Bangladesh's football. The single goal gave Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club the well-deserved title in the prestigious tournament, which is held to celebrate the birthday of the king of the Himalayan state.

The young centre-back, who is one of the most unheralded players in a star-studded outfit, spotted the opportunity like any good centre-back would, as Haitian forward Wedson curled in the corner. While the Pune defenders were busy marking the tall forwards of Sheikh Jamal, the lithe defender rushed in

RESULT

Sheikh Jamal DC 1 (Yeasin Khan 24) - Pune FC 0

and went airborne as he headed the ball at the corner of the net, giving Pune goalkeeper Armindar Singh little time to react.

The goal ushered in wild celebrations in the Sheikh Jamal dugout as they sensed a second overseas title, after having clinched Nepal's Safal Pokhara Gold Cup in 2011. They lost only in tie-breakers against Kolkata Mohammedan in the IFA Shield earlier this year.

"I am happy to contribute to this victory. The coach [Maruful Haque] had worked on set-piece situations, especially in the last two days and this is the result," said an elated Yeasin after the match.

But the goal had come a little too early for Sheikh Jamal, who had to dig in deep to thwart a wave

of attacks from Pune forwards. Sheikh Jamal had come into the final on the back of three wins and a draw while Pune FC had maintained hundred per cent record up to the final. And they proved to be more than a handful after conceding the lead. Seven minutes after the goal, Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Mazharul Islam's shot went straight to a Pune FC forward, but left-back Raihan Hasan rushed just in time to clear the danger.

Although few and far between, Sheikh Jamal had their chances too to extend the lead, but Wedson went for the glory, in the 41st minute, instead of looking to find his strike partners Emeka Darlington and Shakhawat Hossain Rony. The result was a wasted opportunity. Attacking midfielder Landing Darboe had an attempt on goal at the brink of the half time, but Armindar was equal to the task.

The second half was all about Pune FC attacking and Sheikh

Jamal defending deep, looking for any opportunity on the break. Pune found three scoring chances between the 52nd and 67th minutes but the Sheikh Jamal defence - comprising Nasir, Yeasin, Raihan and Yeamin Munna -- and Mazharul in goal stood firm to thwart the attacks.

Sheikh Jamal were further cornered in the stoppage time when defensive midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan received marching orders for a second bookable offence, but the ten-man Sheikh Jamal withstood all adversity to bring a much-vaunted triumph for the country's football.

"They played with a very direct approach, sending long and diagonal passes which forced us to defend deep in our half. But we were determined to see it through and win the trophy for the people of the country," said an elated skipper Nasir in his post-match reaction.

'We control the sub-continent'

SPORTS REPORTER



King's Cup yesterday.

After enthraling the local spectators, Sheikh Jamal DC amused the overseas crowd in Bhutan with their dazzling display. They had earlier won over fans in Kolkata earlier this year and in Nepal in 2011.

Sheikh Jamal president Manzur Kader believes that winning the King's Cup is a great advert for Bangladesh football and that the club's performance proved that Bangladesh's football is on the right track. "Once upon a time, the sub-continent's football was controlled by Mohun Bagan, East Bengal and Kolkata Mohammedan. But that is no longer the case. We (Sheikh Jamal) are controlling it now. We have proved it after beating Mohun Bagan, East Bengal in the IFA Shield and winning the King's Cup," an ecstatic Kader told The Daily Star over the phone.

The Sheikh Jamal president and the players are still haunted by the failure of the final in the IFA Shield, where they lost to Kolkata Mohammedan 1-0 in the final. The King's Cup triumph, according to club officials and players, has helped 'heal the pain'.

"Although the King's Cup is a new competition compared to the IFA shield, it is equally prestigious. I am really happy that the boys brought a laurel for the club as well as the nation," said Kader. "The credit goes to the players as well as the coach, who really held the match for the last 15 minutes with his tactics."

Sheikh Jamal were under huge pressure after taking a 24-minute lead and survived scares in the second half to have the last laugh and leave the field with their heads held high.

"Landing (Darboe) and Emeka (Darlington) were not fully fit and that's why we were under pressure and instructed all the players to defend the lead. We successfully dealt with the situation as we played in such situations before," said coach Maruful Haque.

Captain Nasiruddin Chowdhury was happy to start the season with an overseas trophy and believes winning the King's Cup will inspire them to win all the domestic trophies.

"It is a really special day in my football career as Sheikh Jamal clinched the title under my captaincy," said Nasir. "We dedicate this win to the martyrs of the War of Independence in the month of victory."



Goalscorer Yeasin Khan (L) and striker Shakhawat Hossain Rony run towards the Sheikh Jamal DC dugout to celebrate the 24th minute strike against Pune FC in the final of the King's Cup yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

'A different dressing room'

From describing 19-year-old Jubair Hossain as a 'freak talent' and nicknaming Mominul Haque 'Mini' to meeting the Prime Minister and being acclaimed by tens of thousands of fans after a win, coach Chandika Hathurusingha is gradually settling in. He spoke to The Daily Star's Naimul Karim regarding the series win over Zimbabwe and the changes he wants to employ in the team, hours before he left for Sri Lanka yesterday evening.



TDS: How different was the dressing room in this series?

CH: It was huge. This is the biggest plus that I can take from this series: the dressing room's atmosphere. The way the boys handled the pressure situations, I could see a lot of maturity. I could see that everyone was very nervous in the first Test, when we had the opportunity to win. I felt that in the West Indies as well; because they had not been winning; they were little reluctant, so to speak. That first win was a huge turn around for us.

TDS: The young spinners played a huge role. How would you rate them?

CH: If you notice, the way the team was structured was not normal for Bangladesh. They used to have one fast bowler and many left-arm spinners. But now I think we broke that mould and that mentality. We had [Jubair Hossain] Likhon and his impact, for me was a big plus. He took very crucial wickets in the second Test; it could have been a draw but then he opened the gates. The fast bowlers got breakthroughs as well. So breaking that kind of mentality and mould is very crucial.

Coming to the spinners, I think Taijul [Islam] can be a world-class

bowler because he has got all the ingredients; nice loop, good bounce and pace off the wicket. And Likhon is just a freak talent. If he continues to grow and if we can look after him without getting too impatient he will win us many more matches. The control and courage that he has is amazing for his age. Variations a lot of people can have, but to bowl those things under pressure; that normally comes when you are a seasoned campaigner.

TDS: Three pacers in four out of the five ODIs; that was something different...

CH: We need to think about three pacers in the World Cup because it's in Australia and New Zealand. Whether it's a fast bowler or a spinner, we went with five specialist bowlers including Shakib [Al Hasan]. I like to go that way because I believe that if you can keep the opposition under pressure all the time you have a chance of winning. That way we also put a lot of pressure on our top order to score runs as well. We have continued to give that confidence to the batsmen and bowlers to win games.

TDS: The number three position seems to be up for grabs in the ODIs...

CH: Number three for me is a very crucial position at this stage. All good teams have good players at number three. Mini [Mominul] did really well in number three in Test cricket. But yes, the place is up for grabs and it's up to the selectors to find the best player there.

TDS: What does this win mean, keeping the World Cup in mind?

CH: We can't take anything from this series apart from the confidence that we can win matches in any situation if we get our roles right, that doesn't mean that I am very confident. We need to improve a lot in certain areas. The key is to find form when you go to the World Cup.

TDS: But it obviously would have been better had Bangladesh played more matches...

CH: You can't demand things considering what happened in the past for us. Top teams get to play wherever they want. Ideally we should have been playing against New Zealand or Australia in their conditions but our ranking does not give us that luxury. There is no point playing for the sake of playing. I would rather prepare for Brisbane. We are going there early to play against Australia A.