

SPORT

South Zone strongest

SPORTS REPORTER



Prime Bank South Zone, a team expected to be led by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will begin the Bangladesh Cricket League's one-day

tournament as favourites as they seem to have the most balanced side of the competition so far.

The one-day tournament, which will begin on April 5 will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur and the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium at Fatullah.

Apart from Mashrafe, South Zone will include the likes of Abdur Razzak, Soumya Sarkar, Rubel Hossain, Imrul Kayes and Al-Amin Hossain. Apart from Razzak their spin department also includes Shohag Gazi and Enamul Haque. The team also includes Mohammad Mithun, Ziaur Rahman and youngster Mosaddek Hossain and talented wicketkeeper-batsman Kazi Nurul Hasan.

Mushfiqur Rahim is expected to lead BCB North Zone, while Mahmudullah and Tamim Iqbal are expected to lead Walton Central Zone and Islami Bank East Zone respectively.

The competition will be an opportunity to witness national players in action yet again following their short break after the World Cup. There will also be a number of youngsters who will want to prove their point ahead of the series against Pakistan, which is expected to begin on April 17.

Leg-spinner, Jubair Hossain, who missed out on the World Cup squad, will be one such player who will want to make the most of this competition. There were talks about how he just missed out on a World Cup berth two months ago and he will want to make amends.

There are a number of batsmen who did well in the National Cricket League and will want to continue their good run. Liton Kumar, who scored over a 1000 runs in the NCL and Rony Talukdar who had scored three consecutive centuries, including two double hundreds, are a couple of batsmen to watch.

TEAMS

PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE: Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Abdur Razzak, Imrul Kayes, Soumya Sarkar, Md. Mithun, Tushar Imran, Mosaddek Hossain, Kazi Nurul Hasan, Ziaur Rahman, Shahriar Nafees, Shohag Gazi, Enamul Haque Rubel Hossain, Al-Amin Hossain.

BCB NORTH ZONE: Mushfiqur Rahim, Naeem Islam, Junaed Siddique, Nasir Hossain, Sabbir Rahman, Mahmudul Hassan, Myshukur Rahman, Taijul Islam, Muktar Ali, Farhad Reza, Delwar Hossain, Ariful Haque, Sanjamul Islam, Jahurul Islam.

WALTON CENTRAL ZONE: Shamsur Rahman, Abdul Majid, Mahmudullah, Rony Talukdar, Mehrob Hossain, Mosharraf Hossain, Elias Sunny, Md Shohid, Mohammad Sharif, Shuvagata Hom, Dhiman Ghosh, Taskin Ahmed, Marshall Ayub, Nadif Chowdhury.

ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE: Tamim Iqbal Khan, Mehedi Hassan Maruf, Mominul Haque, Sadman Islam, Alok Kopali, Nabil Samad, Asif Ahmed, Arafat Sunny, Abul Hasan, Shafiul Islam, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Liton Kumar Das, Jubair Hossain, Tasamul Haq



Inspirational Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) shares a light moment with young pacer Taskin Ahmed at the indoor facilities of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

IN A NUTSHELL

Coaching role for Vettori

CANBERRA TIMES

Daniel Vettori has signed a three-year deal to coach the Big Bash League's Brisbane Heat.

A foundation player with the Twenty20 side, the 36-year-old Vettori will become the first stand-alone coach of the Heat since the inception of the BBL in 2011.

Vettori, who also coaches Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League, will take up his role with the Heat after the IPL, which gets underway next week.

"It is a big job but one that I am excited about tackling," said New Zealand's Vettori in a Heat statement.

Lehmann defends aggression

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia cricket coach Darren Lehmann has defended wicketkeeper Brad Haddin and the



team's vocal aggression during their World Cup final win over New Zealand.

Haddin and his teammates have come under fire for their send-offs of New Zealand's batsmen at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday, though no action was taken by the match referee and 'Black Caps' skipper Brendon McCullum played it down in his post-match media conference.

Haddin compounded anger in New Zealand by saying they had got what they deserved after being "too nice" during their pool phase clash in Auckland, which Australia lost.

"He's copped a bit (of criticism), hasn't he?" Lehmann told Adelaide radio station 5AA.

"We like to play our game, no one got reported out of the game, so we must have played it fair.

"It was a little bit disappointing, but people are entitled to their opinions and you're going to have good and bad times.

"You accept that and you move on.

"We're happy with the way we played, obviously. We knew we wanted to be really aggressive against them. And look, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't."

Raina to wed childhood sweetheart

PTI, Mumbai

The pre-wedding ceremonies of star India cricketer Suresh Raina were held in Delhi on Thursday, ahead of the 'big day' scheduled for Friday.

suresh-raina-india-cricketer Suresh Raina at his Engagement.

Reports say 28-year-old Raina will be tying the knot with his fiancée Priyanka Chowdhary at a posh hotel here. Middle-order batsman Raina returned to the country with his India teammates after the semifinal loss to Australia in the World Cup last week.

It is learnt that Priyanka and Raina's friendship dates back to their childhood days. Priyanka is presently working in The Netherlands.

'No point in overreacting'

SPORTS REPORTER



Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan said that Bangladesh should start as favourites against Pakistan in the upcoming three-match ODI series at home to break their jinx against Pakistan. The Tigers have failed to win a game against their South Asian neighbours since their famous 1999 World Cup victory in England.

Shakib exuded confidence while speaking to reporters at his residence yesterday. Soon after the press conference at his place he left for Kolkata to take part in the Indian Premier League, where he will be featuring for the Kolkata Knight Riders.

"What I personally believe is that we should start this series as favourites. And I believe we should win the ODI series against Pakistan and I think everybody in the team thinks likewise. I think it's the best opportunity for us to win a series against Pakistan," a confident Shakib said. He believed that the Tigers can use the momentum they gained from the impressive performance in the recently concluded World Cup in

Australia and New Zealand.

The allrounder also gave his opinion regarding the much-talked about issue of umpiring decisions against Bangladesh in the quarterfinal against India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on March 19. It was an event which led to a series of events and eventually witnessed the resignation AHM Mustafa Kamal from his post as ICC president.

"Actually it's better not to comment regarding this issue. The umpires take decisions on the field which are sometimes right and sometimes wrong. I think we are focusing too much because it was a World Cup match but the reality is that these kinds of things also happened against Bangladesh on many earlier occasions.

"We could have won many matches had we gotten the right decisions. So, I don't think there is any point in reacting too much regarding this issue, especially for the players. Just for example, we could not have done anything if the run-out decision against [Chris] Jordan hadn't gone in our favour. So some go in favour of you and some don't. Human beings can make mistakes, so

I don't think there is any point commenting on it," he responded.

Shakib, however, was more interested in the upcoming challenge awaiting his side rather than focusing on the current off the field controversies, as he wants to see his side win more ODI matches so that they



can grab the number eight position in the team rankings and avoid playing qualifiers for the 2019 World Cup to be held in England.

"We should try to improve our rankings as the top eight sides directly qualify for the next World

Cup. So we have to try and win as many matches as possible. It will be a huge achievement for our team if we can achieve the number eight ranking and sustain it for direct entry in the next World Cup. For a long time we have been between the number nine and ten positions and we only

once achieved the number eight position. And I am sure the 2019 World Cup will be in everybody's mind," said Shakib.

"We have a busy home schedule this year. We can win against any team in our home conditions as we proved it in the past two years. So I don't think anybody should have any doubts about it. If we play our best cricket then it's very much possible to beat any team whether they are world champions or runners-up. We played seven matches and won all of them against New Zealand. What I personally believe is that we will win a number of matches this year," hoped Shakib, who will return home on April 12.

SA U-19s in town

SPORTS REPORTER

The South Africa Under 19 team will arrive in Dhaka today morning. During a three-week tour the visitors will play seven youth ODIs against Bangladesh Under 19 in Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

The first two youth ODIs will take place at Mirpur on April 8 and 10 respectively. The players will then travel to Cox's Bazar to play the third and fourth youth ODIs on April 13 and 15. The last leg of the tour will take place in Chittagong where the players will play the last three youth ODIs.

BANGLADESH U-19: Md. Najmul Hossain Shanto [Captain], Md. Zakir Hasan [Vice-Captain], Pinak Ghosh, Shafiqul Hayat, Mohammad Saif Hassan, Md. Shaif Uddin, Mosabbek Hossain Sun, Md. Mehedi Hasan, Nahid Hasan, Mohammad Abdul Halim, Sanjit Saha, Saleh Ahmed, Shawon Gazi, Nihad Uz Zaman, Prosenjit Das.

Crowe's moving tribute to Vettori

NEW ZEALAND HERALD

Ailing cricket legend Martin Crowe gave a heart-wrenching speech at last night's NZ cricket awards that left retiring Black Caps spinner Daniel Vettori, and the crowd, teary-eyed.

"Before you send me on my way, I just want to say that on March the 29th at the MCG it was an incredible day, I was very exhausted but I stood on the edge of the boundary and saw Australia lift the Cup," Crowe said.

"And then I noticed the boys starting to walk in my direction - I didn't realise that the dressing room was right where I was.

"And I saw Dan Vettori ...and I just burst open with all the emotion that I had. He gave me a huge hug and I just said, what a career, what an inspiration.

"And I've got your seat warm Dan, in the Hall, right next to me buddy. You're going to have to shave though I'm afraid. They only allow moustaches, eh Paddles. And only the doctor, W. G. Grace, is allowed the full nasty."

'New Zealand need McCullum at helm'

REUTERS, Auckland



Brendon McCullum's inspirational captaincy has lifted New Zealand and the flamboyant batsman should continue leading the side in all three formats at least until next year's World Twenty20, former captain Stephen Fleming said.

Since last year, New Zealand at home have won Test series against India, West Indies and Sri Lanka and dazzled in 50-overs and breezed into their maiden World Cup final at Melbourne.

Great rivals Australia won the title but for six weeks, the Black Caps displayed an aggressive brand of cricket which earned them eight successive victories and the admiration of millions.

Former captain Daniel Vettori and seamer Kyle Mills have since retired but Fleming hoped that the 33-year-old McCullum will stick around to continue the "good work".

"I hope he opts to carry on in charge of the side across all formats for the foreseeable future," Fleming wrote in his column on the International Cricket Council's website on Thursday.

"He has lifted the Black Caps up by their bootstraps ... and he ended the World Cup with his position watertight.

"He is a positive leader who leads by example and although Kane Williamson is regarded as the next cab off the rank in terms of captaincy, it would be ideal if McCullum stayed on to continue the work he and coach Mike Hesson have begun, at least until the end of that ICC World Twenty20 at the earliest."



Stephen Fleming

Kamal's response to ICC handout

SPORTS REPORTER

An office bearer of former ICC President AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday issued a press release which said that the ICC handout distorted Kamal's resignation letter that was addressed to the ICC CEO Dave Richardson on April 1. We are carrying both Kamal's resignation letter and the ICC handout that was also released on April 1.



Kamal's resignation letter

Dear Sir,
On personal grounds I have decided to resign from the post of ICC's Presidency with immediate effect.

On this occasion I would like to thank all the ICC Executive Board Members and also the member boards of ICC's all affiliates and associates.

I would also like to thank all the officers and members of the staff of ICC.
My dear David,
For almost 6 years now I am with you people (ICC) in various capacities.

During this period if I had hurt anybody I would like to submit my apology to all of them.

From my side I have no complaints against anybody whatsoever. On the contrary, I owe so much to all of you.
All the very best to you, to ICC.

Let the game of cricket under the leadership of ICC touch the hearts and minds of every cricket lovers under the planet.

With best regards
Mustafa Kamal

ICC official handout

In his resignation letter to the ICC Chief Executive David Richardson, Mr Kamal said he was stepping down on personal grounds.

In his resignation letter to David Richardson, Mustafa Kamal offered his apologies to all associated with the ICC, while adding that he had no complaints to make against anyone.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) today confirmed that Mr Mustafa Kamal has tendered his resignation as the ICC President with immediate effect.

In his resignation letter to the ICC Chief Executive David Richardson, Mr Kamal said he was stepping down on personal grounds and offered his apologies to all associated with the ICC, while adding that he had no complaints to make against anyone.

"Let the game of cricket under the leadership of ICC touch the hearts and minds of every cricket lovers," he wrote in his letter.

The ICC Board will now consider the vacant position of the ICC President at its forthcoming meeting in Dubai on 15 and 16 April.