

SPORT

BD U-17 win 2-1

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh under 17 team completed a 2-1 series win over Cricket Association of Bengal under 16 yesterday at Kalyani. While the third day of the third and final three-day encounter ended as a draw, Bangladesh U17 were declared winners on the basis of the first innings lead as mentioned in the by-laws.

On the final day, the CAB U16 were restricted to 167 for 5. Bangladesh Quazi Anik Islam and Yeasin Arafat took two wickets each and were the chief wicket-takers.

Bangladesh U17 will play a one-day match at Kolkata today, after which they'll return home on Monday.

21 Indian lifters tested positive

PTI, New Delhi

In what could be termed as one of the biggest doping scandals in recent years, as many as 21 weightlifters have been provisionally suspended by the Indian Weightlifting Federation after testing positive for banned substances.

The lifters tested positive across different championships -- both out-of-competition and in-competition. But the maximum numbers of offenders were caught at the National Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships, which was held in Yamunanagar in January. "Yes, 21 lifters have tested positive and have been provisionally suspended, pending the result of their 'B' sample tests. Their 'B' sample tests are awaited," Indian Weightlifting Federation secretary general Sahdev Yadav said.



Pacer Rubel Hossain (C) will lead the attack of South Zone, the team to beat in the Bangladesh Cricket League's one-day competition that kicks off at two different venues today.

PHOTO: STAR

BCB waits on PCB

SPORTS REPORTER



The last few days have witnessed plenty of hue and cry with regards to the itinerary of the Pakistan series. While a proposed itinerary has been revealed, the Bangladesh Cricket Board haven't yet been able to agree upon a Memorandum of Understanding, which is a general requirement prior to a series. While the formalities have been completed from the BCB's side, they are now waiting for the PCB to sign the MoU.

According to BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, the final itinerary will be released in a day or two.

"In principal both the boards have agreed to the tour. The Pakistan Cricket Board has already named their squad, so everything is going as per schedule. However, there are a few details which the PCB is working on. Say for instance their flight and traveling details. Once we get the go from them, we will release the confirmed itinerary," Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

While Chowdhury has blamed the delay on procedural issues, BCB sources claim that the delay is taking place as the two boards haven't yet negotiated on the amount of money that the BCB would pay the PCB. BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon earlier told the media that the BCB had agreed to pay the PCB a certain amount of compensation, for not having toured Pakistan back in 2012. When asked if this was indeed the reason behind the tour's delay, Chowdhury replied in the negative. However, when asked as to whether the two boards had come to a conclusion with regards to the amount of money to be paid, he said, "It's almost finalised."

BCL brings new thrill

The intensity of the first edition of the Bangladesh Cricket League's one-day version shouldn't be any less when compared to that of the Dhaka Premier League. You have got the top 56 players of the country competing here and to make things more competitive, the selectors have actually divided the team in a way that almost every side has something to show. It will be a challenge for the national players as well as, oddly enough, they will need to home conditions after spending close to three months in Australia and New Zealand. This is one factor which could give the others -- who have been playing the National Cricket League in the last few months -- an advantage. All these factors promise a thrilling Bangladesh Cricket League.

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Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who will be leading Prime Bank South Zone, has to have the most balanced side of the tournament. They have got the best bowling department in the business and to add to that they also have a number of batsmen in the side who have been in good form recently. Rubel Hossain, who had a sensational time at the World Cup, will look to continue his good run here and he will be ably supported by Al-Amin Hossain. Along with the pacers they have a brilliant spin attack. They have got the senior

Abdur Razzak, his understudy Enamel Haque and also have Shohag Gazi in the outfit.

The batting department seems complete as well. The young Soumya Sarkar and the talented Mohammad Mithun will be expected to play leading roles at the top.

BCB NORTH ZONE

The first big surprise with regards to the BCB North Zone team is that Mushfiqur Rahim will not be leading them. Bangladesh's Test captain, to everybody's surprise, stated that he actually wanted to take a break from captaincy. As a result, it will be Nasir Hossain who will be taking over the captain's armband. The side also includes the powerful Sabbir Rahman. Their bowling is slightly weaker when

compared to their batting. However, they do have a couple of young and fierce pacers in them. Muktar Ali and Delwar Hossain did well in the NCL and will be looking to continue their form. These players have been playing together for a while now, since most of them have grown up playing cricket in the same region and skipper Nasir believes that could prove to be an advantage.

WALTON CENTRAL ZONE

Walton Central Zone may have just two players in their side from the heroic World Cup squad and there may not be too many big names out there, however, they also have players who have hogged the headlines during the National Cricket League. They will be led by

Mahmudullah Riyad who was, in many ways, reborn in the World Cup. His confidence will be booming when he takes the field again; and so will Taskin Ahmed's. However, it's the other group of players that makes this team exciting. Rony Talukdar and Abdul Majid share a number of record partnerships for the opening wicket during the NCL. While their batting order remains young and energetic, their bowlers are extremely experienced. In Mosharrar Hossain and Elias Sunny they have the most experienced left-arm spinners in the domestic front.

ISLAMIC BANK EAST ZONE

Both Chittagong and Sylhet had a torrid time in the National Cricket League. They have quite a good batting line-up.

Liton Kumar Das for one is a player that the selectors will keep their eye on. The batsman hammered more than a 1000 runs in the National Cricket League and is hungry for more. With Anamul Haque out of form and Imrul Kayes struggling, a good performance from Liton in this competition might just help him cross that final hurdle. Also in the side is Mominul Haque, who will be leading the team in the absence of Tamim, who will return tonight from Saudi Arabia after having performed his Umrah. The batting order seems solid with the team having batsmen for almost every position in the side. The bowling outfit too seems good with Arafat Sunny, Shafiqul Islam and Abul Hasan in the team.

IN A NUTSHELL

Warner to tie the knot

INTERNET

Australian batsman David Warner and Candice Falzon are set to tie the knot on Saturday, and they couldn't wait to share the news on social media just one day before their surprise wedding. Warner and Falzon have retreated to a rural New South Wales town before the batsman marries his fiancée.



After sharing a photo taken at the local pub with his 'new father-in-law', the proud husband-to-be took to Instagram to share a shot of the couple, which he captioned, 'Last night before we are husband and wife, can't wait for the big day'.

The couple has been together 18 months.

Record-setting teenager retires

AGENCIES, London

Four years after becoming the youngest first-class cricketer in county history, Yorkshire's Barney Gibson has retired from the sport -- aged just 19. The Leeds-born wicketkeeper entered the record books in 2011 when he lined up against Durham University just 27 days after his 15th birthday.

Yorkshire's director of cricket development Ian Dews, said: "Everyone at the club wishes Barney well. It is very much his decision. We hope that the next chapter in his life is very successful."

This sudden decision begs the question -- to us and the readers -- why this talented young man has chosen to retire when his career has barely started.

Mathews banned for first game

AGENCIES, Delhi

Delhi Daredevils' IPL campaign will begin with a setback as they will miss Angelo Mathews against Chennai Super Kings on April 9.

The Sri Lanka skipper will warm the bench as Tamil Nadu state government has banned all Sri Lankan sports persons from competing in the events held in the state, owing to the escalating political tension over treatment of ethnic Tamils in their region.

Mashrafe wants sporting wickets

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza hoped that the Bangladesh Cricket League's maiden limited-over venture, which begins today, would be played on sporting wickets. Bangladesh's domestic tournaments have traditionally been played on wickets which have been termed by many players as 'dead'. The slow and low wickets have induced complaints from a number of pace bowlers over the years.

It was the reason why issues with regards to Bangladesh's ability to adjust to the conditions in Australia and New Zealand were raised prior to the World Cup.

Mashrafe urged the concerned authorities to change the scenario, for the betterment of the game. "Playing on sporting wickets is good because when we go outside; it helps. I have seen the wicket here [at Mirpur] and it has a bit of grass on it. I believe it will be sporting," said Mashrafe during the pre-tournament press conference at Mirpur yesterday.

"We can play well on sporting wickets and we proved that during the World Cup. We are in good form. I think in order to hold on to that form we should continue playing on sporting wickets," he added.

The 31-year-old believed that taking part in the BCL would be a good way to get re-acquainted to the home conditions.

"The last four to five months, we kept practicing with the Australian conditions in mind. But now this is a home series so I think this tournament will be good for us," he said.

When asked if the inclusion of an extra tournament made their schedule a lot more hectic, Mashrafe said, "Maybe if we had gotten a few more days off it would have been a good thing. After all we had to travel a lot in Australia and New Zealand. It was a hectic tour. But the Pakistan series is already knocking at the door and we need to get ready for that. And this tournament will help us do that."

"We have all been practicing the last few days, because we know it will be really difficult to just get on the field and start playing the tournament, so that's a good thing," said the skipper.



Shakib on KKR duty

INTERNET

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is just four days away and the Kolkata Knight Riders began their preparation camp yesterday. Sunil Narine was the noticeable absentee, opting out after his retest.

Shakib Al Hasan is going to play just the two games for KKR, as he will come back for Pakistan's tour of Bangladesh, but has been preparing well. As KKR launched their new jersey, Shakib was quick to go on social media with it, posing in the new jersey as someone snapped a picture. The KKR fans loved the new design and also trended 'Love The New KKR Jersey'.

Shakib missed most of IPL's last edition as the BCB suspended him from international cricket on disciplinary grounds.

'It was torturous'

APP, Karachi



Pakistani off-spinner Saeed Ajmal on Saturday said he was delighted his eight-month "torture" which saw him suspended for an illegal bowling action was finally over after being recalled to the national side.

The 37-year-old was named to the squad for all three formats of the game for Pakistan's upcoming tour of Bangladesh, eight months after his action was reported as suspect in Sri Lanka.

Ajmal was subsequently suspended from all international cricket after a biomechanical analysis showed his action transgressed beyond the 15-degree tolerance limit allowed by the International Cricket Council.

"It was torture living without cricket," Ajmal told AFP from his hometown Faisalabad via telephone.

"I have endured eight months of pain and it was the most difficult time of my life."

Ajmal underwent remedial work on his action with the help of former Pakistan great Saqlain Mushtaq before being cleared following a reassessment test in February.

He was unable, however, to join the national team for the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, where Pakistan made it to the quarterfinals before being ousted by eventual champions Australia.

"I watched the World Cup on television and for 45 days I wanted to enter the television and play alongside my teammates and do my part," he said.

"I felt they were missing me as I was always effective in the batting power-plays when I used to pick up wickets and that was missing from our game."

"I was in regular touch with skipper Misbah-ul-Haq and was always trying to pump him and the other players up through my good wishes, but it was tough to be away from the team," said Ajmal.

Ajmal credited his family and friends for helping him through the ordeal, and voiced hope he would return to the form that made him the linchpin of the Pakistani bowling attack.

"I did my rehab and remedial work with the support of my family, friends and the Pakistan Cricket Board and now I am quite hopeful that I will be able to bowl as effectively as I used to before the suspension," he said.

"I see no problems with my remodelled action as I have done enough work on it."

Before his suspension in August, Ajmal was ranked the number one bowler in the world in one-day cricket, and has 178 Test, 183 one-day and 85 Twenty20 wickets to his name.



Indian cricketer Suresh Raina (C) married his fiance in a glitzy ceremony in Delhi attended by his teammates MS Dhoni and Darren Bravo. (Inset) Raina's bride, Priyanka Chowdhary.