

# SPORT

## BPL III in December?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to stage the third edition of troubled Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in December with an eye on next year's Asia Cup Twenty20 and ICC World Twenty20; this time with franchises and, most importantly, a realistic financial structure, apart from the non-payment issues which are yet to be fixed.

BPL's governing body arranged a press conference yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur only to reiterate their desire to stage the tournament; as a quality T20 domestic competition is the need of the hour.

The 'new-look' BPL will take place in December only if there are no international engagements as there are plans of hosting a four-nation tournament. "December will be a suitable month if it doesn't clash with our international calendar," said governing council chairman Afzalur Rahman Sinha.

The so-called money-spinning tournament was designed akin to the Indian Premier League (IPL) but BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus said: "Our primary target is to establish a viable, sustainable financial structure for the tournament to avoid such situations, a bit like how Big Bash in Australia and CPL in the Caribbean run. These tournaments might not



BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus speaks at a press briefing at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

be as highlighted and financed like the IPL, but it is always a positive thing to have a competitive T20 tournament in the calendar."

The tournament, which was successful as far as on-field affairs went, was put on hold after the completion of the second edition in February 2013, as it was weighed down by all kinds of off-field controversies ranging from non-payment of players to spot-fixing scandal.

Regarding franchises, Sinha

said: "None of the franchises had kept their commitment to us. So legally they have failed to meet the requirements. They have not even approached for settlement and have not replied to any of our letters to communicate; it seems at the moment these franchises won't be there for the next edition. But if they pay all the dues, and appeal to be part of the next edition, the board will decide on whether to keep them or not."

"You all know very well why the BPL was not held last year. There were a few irregularities which were addressed by the anti-corruption committee. That problem is solved now. We felt that that structure is not a sustainable one. It does not complement the economic structure of our country. For example, the event management group that took the rights for BPL was supposed to pay the BCB Taka 400 crore over 6 years, excluding the production and other costs. So it was a very non-sustainable deal. So we will make changes to the financial structure," informed BPL governing council member secretary IH Mallick.

Regarding the non-payment issue, he said: "We [BCB] have taken responsibility and already cleared all the dues of the players from the last tournament. There are just a few claims left and we have decided to clear all the valid claims within 2-3 weeks. We have entrusted Naimur Rahman, chairman of cricket operations, with dealing with claims of the local players. As for the foreign players, we are cross-checking their claims and will clear the valid ones as soon as possible. As far as we have checked, 90 per cent of the players' payments have been cleared."

Mallick said that BCB was not a loser financially at all from the last two tournaments though they didn't receive the dues from the franchises and hoped that they would receive Tk 6 crore more from event management company, Game On, which might win the media

## Pace no worry against India

SPORTS REPORTER



The lack of available pacers for the Test series against Pakistan was, no doubt, a huge problem for the selectors. Injuries to Rubel Hossain and Shahadat Hossain almost left the pace department handicapped in the last two Tests.

However, with the India Test due next month, the team management is hopeful that they can put in a better pace-bowling combination.

"There were a couple of players who were injured and they are likely to be fit for the series against India. Shafiqul Islam who had injured his hand prior to the series is expected to be fit and so is Rubel," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

The lack of pace options compelled the selection committee to include Abul Hasan in the squad for the second Test in place of Rubel. It was a move which raised quite a few eyebrows since Abul hasn't been in good touch lately.

However, the selectors defended themselves by stating there wasn't anybody else they could turn to.

Robiul Islam, who previously led Bangladesh's pace attack, has been suffering from fitness issues. Young pacer Al-Amin Hossain was another option, but the bowler hasn't seemed to hit the deck like before, ever since he changed his bowling action.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board also hasn't provided any clear information as to whether the player can be considered for selection, after having enforced the disciplinary punishment on him.

And a key reason behind that is that the selectors haven't been impressed with his form. He has picked up six wickets in his last four first-class matches, one of which included a four-wicket haul.

While the pace conundrum may not affect the team as much during the India series, selectors however are a bit concerned regarding the future. And that is why they are planning to include a special pace bowling programme in the upcoming High Performance Programme due to begin next month.

"We are still discussing how to exactly apply the plan. But

## Zim name squad for Pak tour

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe on Tuesday announced a 16-man squad to tour Pakistan for three one-day and two T20 internationals.

The tour beginning on March 22 is the first by a Test-playing nation since terror attacks on the Sri Lankan team bus in March 2009 in which six Pakistani policemen and two civilians were killed and six members of the Sri Lanka team injured.

Zimbabwe is going on the tour despite security warnings by the Federation of International Cricket Associations.

Last week a delegation from Zimbabwe Cricket visited Lahore to assess security arrangements.

### SQUAD

Elton Chigumbura (captain), Sikandar Raza Butt, Chamunorwa Chibhabha, Charles Coventry, Graeme Cremer, Craig Ervine, Roy Kaia, Hamilton Masakadza, Christopher Mpofu, Tawanda Mupariwa, Richmond Mutumbami, Tinashe Panyangara, Vusumuzi Sibanda, Prosper Utseya, Brian Vitori, Sean Williams.

## Lot of emphasis put on U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER



With an aim to put up their best possible performance in the Under-19 World Cup next year, the Bangladesh Cricket Board has planned a series of tours for the junior Tigers to prepare them for the mega event.

Bangladesh will be hosting both the Under-19 World Cup and the Asia Cup and the management is hoping that they can bag quite a few accolades in both these events.

"Our best performance in an Under-19 World Cup was back in 2006 when we finished fifth. This time, since it is happening in our country, we can hope to better that performance," said BCB's national manager of Game Development Nazmul Abedin Fahim.

The junior outfit already defeated their South African counterparts, who also happen to be the reigning World Cup holders, 6-1 in the recently concluded youth ODI series. They will now head to South Africa at the end of June to play a seven-match series.

In October Zimbabwe Under-19s are scheduled to arrive and the BCB is likely to host a tri-nation tournament with either Sri Lanka or Pakistan that month. This third team will face Bangladesh later in December.

Apart from that, teams are expected to arrive in Bangladesh weeks before the Under-19 World Cup, scheduled to take place in January 2016.

"The main thing here is to keep the youngsters ready. They will be going through a series of camps before and after every tour. A two-month long camp from July to August has already been planned for them," informed Nazmul.

Even apart from the tours, the BCB is working on recruiting coaches and support staff for the BCB Academy, and the design of the programme will be made as such that the youngsters can take full advantage.

## Modi hopes series breeds harmony

DAWN.COM

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated his resolve to break ice with the neighbouring country through "cricket diplomacy" despite the apprehensions raised by some Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lawmakers about a proposed India-Pakistan cricket series, Indian Express reported on Tuesday.

"We have taken the decision to start a cricket series between both countries to improve our relations," said Modi during a BJP parliamentary party meeting on Tuesday.

Soon after a resolution was adopted appreciating initiatives taken by the Modi government during its first year in office, Modi said some of the members have expressed concern against the series and that is why he was "clearing the air," said the source. Party lawmaker RK Singh, a former union home secretary, had raised apprehension over the issue in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

## KP not in despite 300

AGENCIES, London



Andrew Strauss has said that Kevin Pietersen won't be a part of England's plans this summer due to an erosion of trust between the highest run-scorer for his country and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"The first thing to say is that now is the time for open honest conversation. He's been a phenomenal player," Strauss said. "Over months and years the trust between himself and the ECB has eroded... because of that we've decided it's not in the best short-term interests of the side for him to be in that team."

"We can't have a situation where the ECB and Kevin Pietersen don't trust each other. If there's a way to build trust let's look at it. But at the moment we're quite estranged."

"He's not barred from playing for England. He's not part of our plans this summer, I can't make any guarantees to him, or any player, beyond that."

"The trust isn't there at the moment. I wish it wasn't the case, but it is the case."

"It's not about his ability as a player. It's about trust. You can't build that over a few days."

There are reports Strauss offered Pietersen an advisory role with the ODI team and this offer was rejected.

Pietersen underlined his Ashes ambitions by hitting his first triple century while batting for Surrey against Leicestershire at

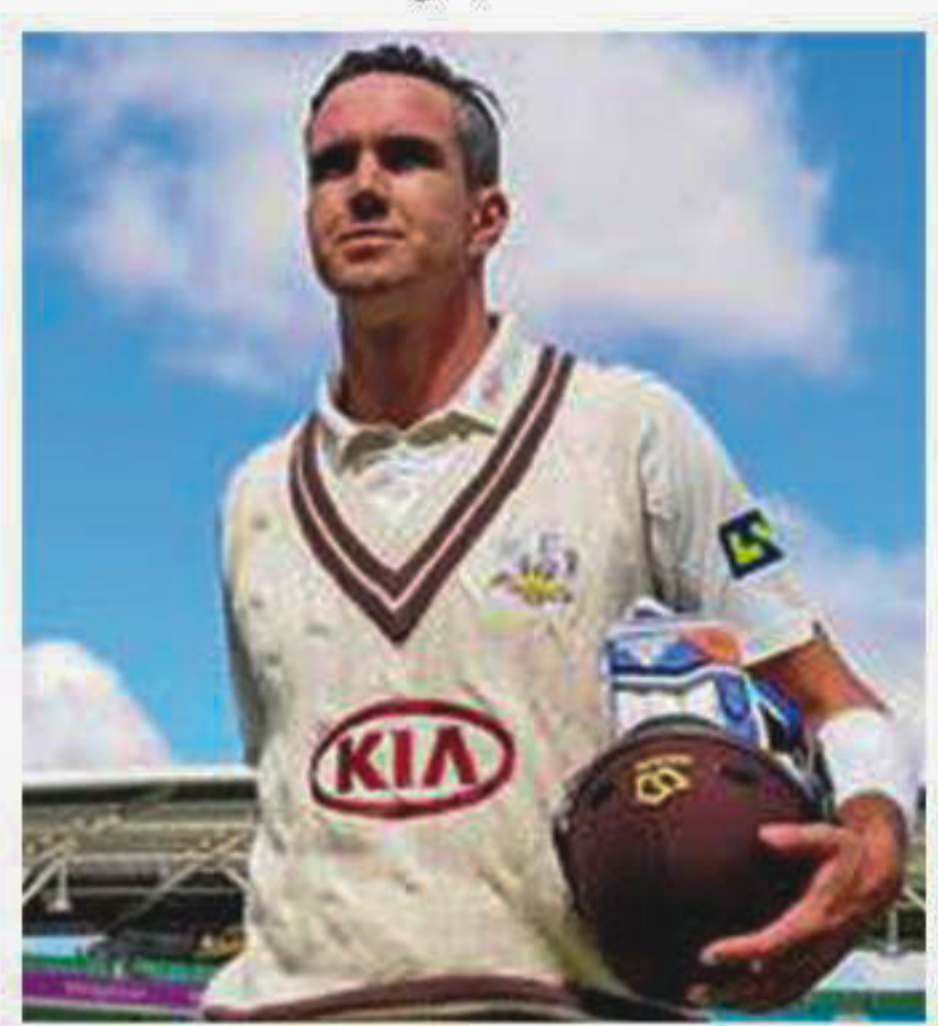
The Oval. He remained unbeaten on 355.

But reports soon emerged that Pietersen had been told by Strauss in a meeting not long after his triple ton that he wouldn't be picked for England again.

High-profile cricketers figures in Shane Warne, Michael Vaughan, Andrew Flintoff and David Lloyd then tweeted their disapproval of the rumoured decision.

"What more can I do? All I can do is score runs. I'm incredibly proud of how I played under pressure."

"People were saying on social media that this would be a career-defining innings for me and they were asking me if I was ready for it. I knew there was a lot of pressure on me and I was feeling it," said Pietersen.



KEVIN PIETERSEN ... 355 not out

## IN A NUTSHELL

### Aamer plays, takes 2 wkts

AGENCIES, Lahore

Banned Pakistan left-arm pacer Mohammad Aamer Tuesday played his first proper competitive match in five years when he appeared in the national T20 super eights tournament at Faisalabad.

Aamer, whose spot-fixing ban ends in September that will make him eligible to play for Pakistan again, picked up two wickets for 15 runs in 2.1 overs while playing for the Rawalpindi Rams against Abbotabad Falcons.

"It was a terrific feeling playing in a big tournament after so many years. The conditions were good for bowling but since I was coming back after a hamstring I didn't go all out," Aamer told reporters. The super eights tournament is televised live and the winner wins the right to represent Pakistan in the Champions League tournament.

### Srini didn't spy

AGENCIES, New Delhi

The controversy over alleged snooping involving incumbent ICC chairman and former BCCI president, N Srinivasan, took a new turn.

According to a report published on Tuesday in the Indian Express, a former BCCI official claimed that the Indian cricket board, headed by Srinivasan never spied on its members, but it was just a reaction to a curious case of hacking problem that had surfaced after Lalit Modi's ouster from the board.

In the meantime, the newly-elected BCCI board members are showing a lot of interest to solve the issue. An unidentified former BCCI official also rubbished claims of spending 900,000 dollars for hiring an England-based company to investigate the hacking.

### Steyn didn't mean that!

SPORTS REPORTER

Dale Steyn has been facing massive backlash after he had apparently disrespected Bangladesh ahead of South Africa's tour in July. Steyn had said that he



would be cutting the tour short so he could stay fit and focus on the 2019 World Cup, instead of 'wasting' his time bowling to the Tigers.

"At this stage of my career, I'd rather be saving myself to go and participate in the major tournaments, rather than wasting the few balls I have left in my career in a Bangladesh match," Steyn said in an interview with Wisden India.

However, after being faced with a lot of criticism on Twitter, Steyn tried to clear the air on the same social website. "I see some people have misunderstood what I said in a recent interview. Sorry if you feel offended, now go re-read and try to understand. Peace," tweeted Steyn.



Albie Morkel (C) of Delhi Daredevils celebrates dismissing Chennai Super Kings' Dwayne Smith (not in picture) during their Indian Premier League match in Raipur yesterday.

PHOTO: CRICINFO

## Consolation win for Daredevils

PTI, Raipur



Opener Shreyas Iyer struck an unbeaten 70 after veteran pacer Zaheer Khan led a brilliant bowling show as Delhi Daredevils notched up a comprehensive six-wicket win over table toppers Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match here on Tuesday.

Electing to bat, Chennai scored just 119 for 6 with Zaheer returning with superb figures of 2 for 9 from his four overs and Albie Morkel chipping in with two wickets as Delhi produced a disciplined bowling show at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium.

Chasing the small target of 120, Delhi, who are already out of contention for a play-off berth, lost two quick wickets to be reduced to 24 for two in the fifth over as opener Quinton de Kock (3) and captain Jean-Paul Duminy (6) were out cheaply.

But young Iyer and veteran Yuvraj Singh (32) repaired the Delhi innings with a 69-run stand for the third wicket and set up the easy victory with 3.2 overs to spare.

20-year-old Iyer, who was dropped on 32 in the ninth over, hit 10 fours and a six in his 49-ball unbeaten knock on a slowish track while Yuvraj, who was out in the 14th over, struck four boundaries and a six in his 28-ball innings.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI: 119 for 6 in 20 overs (Smith 18, Du Plessis 29, Dhoni 27; Zaheer 2-9, A Morkel 2-21)

DELHI: 120 for 4 in 16.4 overs (Iyer 70 not out, Yuvraj 32; Pandey 2-27, Negi 2-28)  
Result: Delhi won by 6 wickets.