

SPORT

'Fatullah as good as Mirpur'

SPORTS REPORTER



Test cricket is set to return to the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah after a gap of nine years next month and in order to ensure that the lone Test between India and Bangladesh takes place smoothly an inspection team from the Bangladesh Cricket Board visited the stadium yesterday.

The only Test which took place here, back in 2006, saw the Tigers give Australia a run for their money. It took a brilliant 144 from Adam Gilchrist to prevent Australia from following on. The visitors eventually edged to a three-wicket win.

The last time Fatullah hosted an international match was when Bangladesh hosted the Asia Cup last year. Even apart from that the venue has been regularly hosting domestic matches and as a result there wasn't much of a concern. However, the BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury pointed out that there were certain issues regarding the teams' dressing room and the media facilities that needed to be addressed.

The one major factor that the stadium in Fatullah is almost definitely likely to battle against is rain. As per the weather forecast, rain is expected to affect the Test, which begins on June 10.

And according to BCB officials, the upgraded drainage facility at Fatullah will be up to the task. The Fatullah stadium, which was an alternative venue for the ICC World Twenty20, saw its' drainage system revamped before the mega event in 2014.

The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur has traditionally boasted the best drainage system in the country. Officials however, believe that the Fatullah stadium can dry up as quickly as the home of cricket.

"We worked on the drainage system here not too long ago and this aspect won't be an issue during the Test match. We just need good weather. I personally think that the drainage system here is as good as the one in Mirpur," said Abdul Baten, manager of the BCB grounds committee.

A couple of matches in domestic cricket which took place in Fatullah recently were interrupted due to the morning showers. However, the delay in the start of the day's play, according to players, was a lot less than expected.

"In the last Bangladesh Cricket League match earlier this month, it rained quite heavily for nearly one and a half hours. But we got on the field at 11 am for a match that was supposed to start at nine. It dried up quite quickly," said top-order batsman Marshall Ayub.

Slow left-arter Mosharrif Hossain had a similar opinion to share: "The drainage system at the stadium in Fatullah has actually worked really well. I didn't find any difference between Fatullah and Mirpur," said Mosharrif.



Sheikh Russel's Bosnian centre-back Bojan Petric celebrates his goal with fellow defender Sohail Rana during their Bangladesh Premier League match against Farashganj at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Petric inspires Sk Russel

SPORTS REPORTERS



Bosnian centre-back Bojan Petric celebrated his return to the Sheikh Russel KC starting eleven with a goal to drive the former champions to a 2-0 win over Chittagong Abahani in their Manyavar Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

After a first-half opener from Mithun Chowdhury, Petric netted the second goal bring back Sheikh Russel in the title race as they regained the second position with 19 points, four behind leaders Sheikh Jamal DC, with a game in hand in the first leg.

Petric, who missed five previous matches due to injury, not only scored a goal but also marshalled his defence as Chittagong Abahani failed to muster a single shot on target.

"It was a great job that the boys secured full points, which was possible due to the presence of Bojan. His

presence helped the others play comfortably which was not the case in the last five matches," said Sheikh Russel coach Dragan Djukanovic at the post-match briefing.

"There is also the comfort of being very close to the leaders (Sheikh Jamal) and we want to reduce the gap more by winning the crucial match against Rahmatganj MFS," hoped

Djukanovic.

Despite the absence of suspended winger Zahid Hossain, the former treble-winners had the same bite with Mithun, playing in Zahid's position, opening the account in the 21st minute.

The former national team striker headed in a well-judged free kick from Tapu Barman for the opening goal before wasting at least three

golden opportunities on either side of the break.

Mithun's missed opportunities did not hurt the title-challengers as Petric first goal of the league -- a simple tap-in in the 39th minute -- meant the former champions had the breathing space.

BJMC'S MAIDEN WIN

Team BJMC tasted their maiden victory in the league with an emphatic 4-0 win over Farashganj SC. The win helped the Old Dhaka outfit off the foot of the table and up to ninth position.

BJMC dominated the show from the outset and took a deserved lead in the 21st minute with Mehdi Hasan Tapu heading in a cross from Nabib Newaj. Senegalese striker Doudou Sanko doubled the lead with a solo effort seven minutes into the second half before Zakir Hossain Ziko made it 3-0 in the 57th minute. Sanko scored his second of the night deep into stoppage time.

SK RUSSEL 2 - 0 CTG ABAHANI
TEAM BJMC 4 - 0 FARASHGANJ

BANGLADESH-INDIA SERIES

Shafiul, Anamul in long list

SPORTS REPORTER



Opener Anamul Haque and pacer Shafiul Islam are the only players, who did not feature in the Pakistan series, to be included in the preliminary squad for the India series due to begin on June 7. The Bangladesh Cricket Board announced a 23-member squad yesterday which will have to report to the national team's strength and conditioning coach Mario Villavarayan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on May 20.

Both Anamul and Shafiul were injured and were therefore not picked for the Pakistan series. "We are still not sure about their fitness levels. They will have to prove themselves in the fitness camp," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

"We have decided not to make any drastic changes from the Pakistan series since we did well there," he added.

The squad also includes young left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman who played in the lone T20I against Pakistan.

PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Tamim Iqbal, Taijul Islam, Imrul Kayes, Arafat Sunny, Mominul Haque, Jubair Hossain, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, Taskin Ahmed, Mushfiqur Rahim, Rubel Hossain, Soumya Sarkar, Mustafizur Rahman, Shuvagata Hom, Abul Hasan, Litton Kumar Das, Mohammed Shahid, Nasir Hossain, Shafiul Islam, Anamul Haque, Rony Talukdar and Sabbir Rahman.

Happy against police report

COURT CORRESPONDENT



Film actress Naznin Akhtar Happy yesterday filed a no-confidence petition against the probe report submitted by police in a case filed by her bringing allegations of sexual abuse against national cricketer Rubel Hossain.

Happy filed the petition after Rubel secured fresh bail on Sunday from the Fifth Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression. The case was earlier shifted to the tribunal for its disposal.

Judge Tanjina Ismail of the tribunal fixed the date of hearing of the petition on May 20.

In yesterday's no-confidence petition, Happy told the court that the police did not interrogate the eight witnesses including her brother, mother and sister before preparing the probe report. So, she rejected the probe report and sought the tribunal's order for further investigation into the matter.

On April 6, police inspector Halima Khatun had submitted the final report on the case appealing to the court to relieve Rubel from the charge.

Rubel was sent to jail after his surrender before a Dhaka court. But later he secured bail from the higher court on January 11 on grounds of the 2015 World Cup.

PAK-ZIM SERIES

ICC will not send umpires

AGENCIES, Karachi

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The Pakistan Cricket Board in the meantime announced a panel of local match officials following the International Cricket Council's refusal. The PCB panel comprises Azhar Khan, Russell Tiffin, Aleem Dar, Ahsan Raza, Shozab Raza, Ahmad Shahab and Khalid Mahmood reports Dawn News.

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Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has said it received confirmation from Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) for the two to play two Twenty20 (May 22 and 24) and three one-day internationals (May 26, 29 and 31) -- all in Lahore.

The tourists are expected to arrive early Tuesday.

IN A NUTSHELL

Sarfraz wedding brought forward

INTERNET

Pakistan's wicketkeeper-batsman Sarfraz Ahmad is all set to get married on May 19 with Khushbakht Aftab, who is the daughter of a former umpire.

Sarfraz's mehndi ceremony was held yesterday while his valima will take place on May 25.

Sarfraz said that his wedding was initially going to take place in June, but now with the Zimbabwe tour being scheduled, May 19 has been finalised for the wedding event, the Tribune Express reported.

SRK's sour return

INTERNET

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Saturday watched an IPL game involving Kolkata Knight Riders, of which he's a co-owner, from inside a sta-



dium in Mumbai for the first time after 2012.

Shah Rukh was banned for five years by the Mumbai Cricket Association following a ruckus he created after a game between Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede.

He has not entered MI's home venue since that day in May 2012 to watch a game.

Watson's tribute to Dravid

INTERNET

Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Shane Watson, who scored a classic century Saturday to take his team to the IPL playoffs, has heaped praise on team mentor Rahul Dravid, saying the batting legend's humility is something which all young cricketers need to observe and learn from.

"Rahul is an incredible man. The humility that he shows is a great thing for all young cricketers to be able to see and learn from someone who has been in absolute peak of his game. Obviously being in a cricket loving country, and still able to hold oneself with such humility is a great example for every young cricketer to be able to learn," Watson said.

Karthik fined

AGENCIES, Bangalore

Royal Challengers Bangalore wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik was fined 20 per cent of his match fee for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's match against Sunrisers Hyderabad last Friday.

According to a media release issued by IPL, "Match referee Roshan Mahanama found Karthik guilty of the Level 1 offence [Article 2.1.8] of conduct that is contrary to the spirit of the game. For Level 1 breaches of the IPL Code of Conduct, the match referee's decision is final and binding."

It happened during the curtailed game against SRH, where Karthik argued with umpire Kumar Dharamsen protesting the decision to carry on with game despite a steady drizzle which was making the pitch wet.

KP debate goes on

AGENCIES, London/Sydney



England batsman Ian Bell says that England would be a stronger team with Kevin Pietersen in it, and that he should be given a chance to win back his place. Bell paid a glowing tribute to his former teammate. Nevertheless, he respected the decision of Andrew Strauss to prolong his international exile.

Speaking ahead of the forthcoming Test series against New Zealand, Bell claimed he had no knowledge of the "massive trust issue" that Strauss claimed still exists between Pietersen and the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Australia Test captain Michael Clarke on Sunday said that England would be a weaker team without Pietersen, but he still expected a tough Ashes battle in July.

Clarke was speaking before his departure for the Caribbean where Australia play two Tests against the West Indies en route to England for the five-Test Ashes series, starting in Cardiff on July 8. He said he had

mixed feelings about his long-time Ashes rival's exclusion.

"There's probably two sides for me," Clarke told reporters.

"There's the personal side where I feel for KP because I get on well with him and I'd love to see him back playing cricket for England.

"The other side [is] we go there soon to play against England. Any team without Kevin Pietersen in it I don't think is as strong. His statistics speak for themselves."

Meanwhile, Andrew Strauss, the newly-appointed director of England's cricket, has insisted that only those people will be considered for the post of head coach who has an alignment with 'his' stance towards former batsman Pietersen.

Strauss said that anyone, who comes in the England environment, would know the situation, asserting that if his philosophy matches with that of Strauss, he would be able to know why he made the call on Pietersen, the Guardian reported.

There are reports that Jason Gillespie and Justin Langer are the 'favourites' to be Peter Moores' successor.

Brad's bye to one-day game

AFP, Sydney

Australia wicketkeeper Brad Haddin has announced his retirement from one-day internationals, Cricket Australia said on Sunday.



Haddin made the announcement ahead of his departure for Australia's Test tours of the West Indies and the United Kingdom on Monday.

Haddin, 37, has played in 126 one-day internationals in a career that began against Zimbabwe at Hobart in January 2001 and ended in Australia's ICC Cricket World Cup final victory over New Zealand in Melbourne in March this year.

Throughout his one-day international career Haddin claimed 170 catches and 11 stumpings, leaving him with the third most dismissals for a wicketkeeper in Australia behind Adam Gilchrist and Ian Healy.

Haddin scored 3,122 runs at an average of 31.53 with a top score of 110.

"I have had a privileged one-day career and I have been fortunate enough to be involved in three Cricket World Cups and now is the right time to walk away," Haddin said.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said: "Australian cricket congratulates Brad on a fine one-day international career."

Mumbai surge to second

PTI, Mumbai



Mumbai Indians crushed Sunrisers Hyderabad by nine wickets in a must-win final league game to sail into playoffs of the Indian Premier League yesterday.

Asked to bowl, Mumbai first came up with an impressive effort to bowl out Sunrisers for just 113 and then chased down the target with consummate ease with nine wickets in hand and 37 balls to spare.

By virtue of this win, Mumbai jumped to the second spot in the standings with 16 points from 14 games and will now face table toppers Chennai Super Kings in the Qualifier 1 at Mumbai on Tuesday.

Third-placed Royal Challengers Bangalore will meet Rajasthan Royals in the eliminator at Pune on Wednesday.

POINTS TABLE

| Team | W | L | NR | Pts | NRR |
|-----------|---|----|----|-----|--------|
| Chennai | 9 | 5 | 0 | 18 | +0.709 |
| Mumbai | 8 | 6 | 0 | 16 | -0.043 |
| Bangalore | 7 | 5 | 2 | 16 | +1.037 |
| Rajasthan | 7 | 5 | 2 | 16 | +0.062 |
| Kolkata | 7 | 6 | 1 | 15 | +0.253 |
| Hyderabad | 7 | 7 | 0 | 14 | -0.239 |
| Delhi | 5 | 8 | 1 | 11 | -0.049 |
| Punjab | 3 | 11 | 0 | 6 | -1.436 |

Chasing the modest target, Mumbai finished at 114 for 1 in 13.5 overs with Parthiv Patel smashing an unbeaten 51 off 37 balls with the help of nine boundaries while Simmons was unlucky as he was dismissed just two short of his fifty.

But the credit for the victory should go to Mumbai's bowling attack which dished out a clinical display to bundle out Sunrisers Hyderabad for a modest 113.