

SPORT

Home, sweet home for the Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

For seven months they toiled hard under the team management's firm instructions. They have surpassed expectations not just once but on numerous occasions this year. The success of course, didn't come easy. The training, ever since the arrival of the Chandika Hathurusingha and company, has been intense and the results are evident.

And so, as soon as the South Africa series ended and the players were given their first long break this year, almost everyone decided to use it to the fullest.

Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim has vowed to spend as much time as possible with his family in the break. "We are on a break till August 22 and then we have to attend fitness and skill camps. So it is best that we enjoy all the accolades that we have achieved during this break.

"I personally think that all our families have sacrificed a lot for us. We haven't been able to spend time with them at all. Even during Eid, most of us were in Chittagong because of the series. We were away for a long time. I will try my best to spend time with my father, mother, brother and sister. I hope that after this break we can successfully face the next challenge," said the 28-year-old during a signing ceremony with daraz.com.bd at a hotel in the city.

Mushfiqur, who was presented with a Galaxy S6 edge during the ceremony, will surely be looking forward to enjoy a phone that belongs to a brand he represents.

His colleague Shakib Al Hasan is a bit busier. His restaurant in Banani is due for a grand opening and according to sources he has been running around quite a bit for the start of his new venture.

Of all the players, Nasir Hossain seems to be enjoying his break the most. He went to Sylhet



HOLIDAY TIME: All-rounder Nasir Hossain (L) shows off his catch after spending an enjoyable time fishing in Sylhet while his younger colleague Liton Das decided to celebrate his first year as an international cricketer with his family in Cox's Bazar.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

as soon as the series ended and had quite a bit of fun fishing there and judging by his photos on facebook, he had caught quite a handful.

"Sylhet was fun. But now I am getting ready to go back home to Rangpur. It's family time now," Nasir told The Daily Star yesterday.

Rubel Hossain and Mahmudullah Riyad have followed Nasir's footsteps. "I can't find a better way to spend this break than staying here in Bagerhat. I couldn't spend Eid with my family

and I just want to have some fun with them. I don't have plans of going anywhere else," said Rubel, adding that he would be crunching those weights back at home in order to stay fit.

Riyad, on the other hand, has plans of travelling to Singapore. The player, who is currently in his home town in Mymensingh, hopes to celebrate his epic performance in the World Cup with some good family moments abroad.

Unlike Riyad though, newbie Liton Das has

decided to stay within the country. That said, he is currently enjoying himself at the shores of Cox's Bazar with his family.

While most of the players have formed their plans, the youngest members of the group, Mustafizur Rahman and Soumya Sarkar, though are still in the city. They have been bound by various projects from their sponsors. Life, they would probably realise, is a bit more complex with the new-found fame.

BCB sending security team

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will send a two-member security team to Pakistan in order to assess the conditions there, as they are in discussions with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) regarding sending the Bangladesh women's team on a tour.

"In principle we agreed to send our women's team and accordingly PCB sent us a proposal. Now our own security team will visit Pakistan within the next few weeks to assess the situation. The board will discuss on their report later. And we have to go through many other processes before making the decision," said BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday.

"The players had expressed their interest long ago, but the board will definitely talk with them once we complete the initial formalities. If we get the green signal, then the women's team may tour Pakistan in October," he added.

A BCB security team earlier visited Pakistan in 2012, but two proposed tours by Bangladesh to Pakistan in 2012 were called off for security reasons, which led to the PCB withdrawing Pakistani cricketers for the second Bangladesh Premier League in 2013. After that, the players were also not allowed to play in the Dhaka Premier League, where Pakistani players have been regulars since the 1980s.

However, PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan's visit to Bangladesh in October last year revived their relationship with the BCB and the Pakistan team visited Bangladesh in April-May this year, playing three ODIs, one T20I and two Tests against the Tigers.



Thankfully, legendary Pakistan pace bowler Wasim Akram escaped unhurt in a Karachi shooting, understandably not from a terrorist attack. The sultan of swing was on his way to impart training to some young fast bowlers at the National Stadium in Karachi on Wednesday when he became a victim of road rage. "A car crashed into my vehicle [the Mercedes in the inset] and when I asked him [the driver] to pull over, a person stepped out from the back seat holding a gun and pointing it towards me. The traffic had stopped and someone from the crowd recognised me. After that the person fired at the tyre of my vehicle and left the scene in haste," is how the champion pace bowler narrated the incident at the Karachi National Stadium.

PHOTOS: AFP



England eye Ashes glory

Fourth Test against Australia starts today

AFP, Nottingham

England head into the fourth Test against Australia at Trent Bridge starting on Thursday knowing they are just one win away from recapturing the Ashes yet being equally aware they've yet to string back-to-back victories together in Tests in 2015.

Since drawing their series opener against the West Indies at Antigua in April, England's next seven Tests have seen them alternate between winning and losing.

Indeed their eight-wicket win in the third Test at Edgbaston, which put England 2-1 up in the five-match Ashes series followed a defeat by the huge margin of 405 runs in the second Test at Lord's.

England will also be without all-time leading wicket-taker James Anderson, who took an Ashes-best six for 47 at Edgbaston but was subsequently ruled out of the fourth Test with a side strain.

It is the first time Anderson has missed a Test in three years and means he won't be able to add to his exceptional record at Nottinghamshire's headquarters which has seen him take 53 wickets in eight Tests, including 10 during England's thrilling 14-run win in the corresponding Ashes clash in Nottingham in 2013.

England would like to recall Durham quick Mark Wood, whose absence through injury paved the way for Middlesex fast bowler Steven Finn to take a Test-best six for 79 on his return to the side at Edgbaston.

However, they will have to decide if he Wood is over the ankle trouble that forced him out at Edgbaston, with Liam Plunkett and uncapped Derbyshire left-arm Mark Footitt standing by.

Australia left-arm quick Mitchell Johnson insisted Anderson's absence

would leave a huge hole in England's attack.

"It's a massive loss for them," he said. "Whoever they bring in will have big pressure on them."

Meanwhile England opener Adam Lyth is set to keep his place despite managing 72 runs in six innings at an average of 12 so far this series.

Stuart Broad, set to lead England's attack in the absence of longtime new-ball partner Anderson, is just one wicket away from joining Test cricket's '300 club' on his Nottinghamshire home ground.

But that is not his main concern.

"We are consistently the most inconsistent side," said Broad.

"There is no point ignoring and pretending it has not happened.

He added: "It is all about breaking it down into the simplest form as players, so focusing in on our individual jobs on Thursday morning and not thinking about the exterior things like

300 wickets."

It is Adam Voges, averaging 14.60 this series, however, who is in greatest danger of being replaced by reserve batsman Shaun Marsh.

Australia would dearly love more of the aggression from Johnson that saw him produce two rip snorting deliveries that yielded the wickets of Jonny Bairstow and Ben Stokes in the space of three balls during England's first innings at Edgbaston.

"I'm scratching my head a little bit about not continuing on from that (first over), and that's something I'll look at this game," said Johnson.

Meanwhile Nottinghamshire groundsman Steve Birks is under pressure too after last year's Test pitch at Trent Bridge was officially classed as "poor" after a run-glut draw between England and India proved heart-breaking for any bowler above medium-pace.



Australia captain Michael Clarke arrives for a practice session at Trent Bridge in Nottingham yesterday ahead of the fourth Ashes Test against England.

PHOTO: AFP

Tambe in for trouble

PTI, Mumbai

Veteran Rajasthan Royals leg-spinner Pravin Tambe has come under spotlight after it was learnt that he had played an unsanctioned T20 match in the United States alongside tainted Bangladeshi cricket Mohammed Ashraf, who is banned on charges of match-fixing.

According to a report published in the ESPN Cricinfo, the 43-year-old Mumbai bowler and former Bangladeshi captain Ashraf repre-

sented South Gujarat CC Juniors against Bulls on July 27 in the 'Lauren Hill Cricket tournament.

Tambe has in fact admitted that he did not take permission from the Mumbai Cricket Association to take part in an unsanctioned tournament.

Tambe is playing in the Liverpool league in England and from there, he travelled to the United States for a break between July 23-31.

"I had no idea it was an official tournament," Tambe was quoted as saying by ESPN Cricinfo. "I had just gone there to visit my friends in the US for a week of holidays and I was enjoying. I did not even have a kit with me."

Tambe reportedly said that he played a match for Holmdel CC on July 26 and his friends on the team said they were going to play a practice game the next day.

He went along to play on July 27 and said that only when entering the field did he take notice of Ashraf's presence.

"I was told it was a practice match. When I went to the ground I realised it was Twenty20 match," Tambe said.

"Till I went into the ground and stood at my fielding position I had no clue that [Ashraf] was also playing. Even my friends did not know.

They were told that some other friend had got him."

Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) joint secretary Dr PV Shetty said that they are aware about the incident and will discuss in the upcoming committee meeting.

"We haven't decided anything in this regard. But the issue will be raised at the committee meeting and I will be able to tell you something only after that," Shetty told PTI.

Bangladesh spinner Elias Sunny has also played in the tournament. Another Bangladesh player, who played with Ashraf is former seam bowler Tapash Baishya.

I won't quit: Clarke

AFP, Sydney

Defiant and angry Australian captain Michael Clarke Wednesday vowed to keep playing after the Ashes series with England, with those suggesting he was finished talking "a complete load of rubbish".

Pressure has been building on Clarke, who has a meagre Ashes series total of 94 runs in six innings at an average of under 19, with Australian media Tuesday saying he looked "lost" and knew the end was near.

But the 34-year-old, who has scored 28 Test centuries, said he was going nowhere, with the desire to play still burning strongly.

"The criticisms of my game at the moment are deserved and I wouldn't expect anything different, especially as the captain of the team," he said in a column for Sydney's Daily Telegraph.

"But I've heard there have been a few articles questioning me for not having that hunger inside me. I think somebody said they could 'see it in my eyes' that I was finished after this series.

"That's a complete load of rubbish."

The Sydney Morning Herald's chief sports writer Andrew Webster said on Tuesday Clarke's expression "with each cheap dismissal is undeniable: it is a blank expression of utter bewilderment. He isn't annoyed but lost".