

BCB boss hopes for fresh dates

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB President Nazmul Hassan Papon yesterday reaffirmed the board's commitment to the safety and security of the Australian national team. "We have left no stone unturned in providing assurance regarding security for the Australian team," Papon said in a fresh statement released by the BCB. "The Bangladesh government has committed additional security on top of the substantial and elaborate arrangements in the BCB's standard security plan for international cricket. For the team [Australia] the level has been confirmed as WVIP which is equivalent to security accorded to heads of states and is unprecedented for any international side.

"We are still hopeful that a fresh date for arrival of its team will be declared by Cricket Australia (CA) and we will see some exciting cricket on the ground soon. The cricketers, fans and everyone associated with cricket deserve that. "Risks of untoward occurrences and threats are an unfortunate reality in today's world and can happen anywhere. That is why we have placed utmost importance on preventive methods and actions. We firmly believe that there is no reason for this tour to not go ahead after the extensive effort that has gone into the security arrangements," he added. "BCB's full statement has been published on The Daily



CRICKET'S LITTLE IRONY: While the Bangladesh women's team, braving security concerns, had a field day in Karachi during the first T20 International against their Pakistan counterparts yesterday, the men's team's series against Australia on the otherwise safe home turf appears in serious jeopardy due to 'security concerns'.

PHOTO: AFP

'We share a historic bond'

SPORTS REPORTER

The home of cricket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur was supposed to be vibrant with the pre-series activities for Australia's tour to Bangladesh keeping everyone busy. Unfortunately, the uncertainty of the series has painted a rather gloomy atmosphere at the venue. The cricket fraternity was eagerly waiting this series in order to see how their beloved Tigers could take the challenge to the Aussies, at a time when they have been going through a brilliant run in international cricket. However, they were left shell-shocked by Cricket Australia's (CA's) decision to delay the departure of their team during the Eid holidays. The national cricketers continued training in Mirpur yesterday as CA is yet to make an official announcement, but the lack of excitement depicted a bleak picture. There have been plenty of questions among the fans regarding the sudden change of events and the players and officials in the board were just as bewildered. Everybody tried to formulate answers in their mind by linking one episode to another, but the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), until yesterday, was in no position to say anything about the fate of the series or the future plans of the players. Like the general public, all that the board could do was wait for CA's final decision. The news of the Australian Test players being asked to join their respective state teams further added to the negativity. BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury though, described the move as CA's normal practice. "The media and the public may see this negatively, but it's a normal practice for them to send their players to their state teams so that they can stay match fit. Besides, they haven't said anything yet which itself is positive. Isn't it?" questioned Chowdhury in Mirpur yesterday. He also said that the national cricketers would most likely play the second round of the National Cricket League which begins on Saturday. Chowdhury informed that the BCB is in touch with its Australian counterpart and is hopeful of getting a final decision today. "We believe that Cricket Australia will take a decision which will be beneficial to both boards. We have a good and historic relationship with them. Before the World Cup they helped us prepare well for the competition by providing their practice facilities and two additional practice games and we all saw the benefits of it later," concluded Chowdhury.

Bangladesh women lose first T20I

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's women's cricket team made a losing start to their tour of Pakistan as they crashed to a 29-run defeat in the first T20I played at the Southend Club Cricket Stadium in Karachi yesterday. Batting first, an unbeaten 65 from Bismah Maroof helped the hosts finish on 124 for 5 at the end of 20 overs. In reply, Bangladesh were restricted to 95 for 7. The visitors made a good start

after Pakistan opener Marina Iqbal was run-out in the first over. However, Javeria Khan and Bismah ensured that there were no further hiccups for the hosts and stitched a cautious but important 87-run stand. Javeria smacked 44 off 43 deliveries and complimented Bismah's knock. While Javeria hit six fours, Bismah smashed five. Nahida Akter and Jahanara Alam were the pick of the Bangladesh bowlers. Jahanara gave away just ten runs in her four overs and scalped a wicket, while Nahida finished with figures of 2 for 17.

Bangladesh opener Ayasha Rahman gave the visitors a good start by smacking three fours in the first two overs. Although the visitors lost Sharmin Akter for a duck, Farzana Haque and Ayasha took the score to 48 for 1 at the end of ten overs and had set up a good foundation for the middle order to build upon. However, Bangladesh's weakness in the batting line-up was evident once again as the players struggled to score runs after the top order faltered. Interestingly, captain Salma

Khatun batted at number seven and managed to score just five runs. She couldn't contribute much with the ball either, leaking 28 runs in three overs. The teams will face-off in the final T20I tomorrow before moving onto the ODI series.

| SCORES IN BRIEF | |
|--------------------|---|
| PAKISTAN: | 124 for 5 (Bismah 65 not out, Javeria 44; Nahida 2-17, Jahanara 1-10) |
| BANGLADESH: | 95 for 7 (Farzana 23, Ayasha 23; Anam 2-17, Nida 1-9) |
| Result: | Pakistan won by 29 runs |

Aussies join state teams

AGENCIES, Melbourne

Cricket Australia may not have provided a verdict regarding Australia's tour of Bangladesh yet, but its decision to ask the national players to join their state teams ahead of the Matador Cup suggests that the board might be planning to scrap the tour. Australia's Test cricketers have been instructed to re-join their state squads for training as deliberations on the proposed tour of Bangladesh continue. Meanwhile, Australia coach Darren Lehmann said yesterday that he would be disappointed if the Bangladesh tour did not go ahead. Lehmann admitted that as time goes on, the tour becomes less and less likely. "It's getting pretty tight now, to be honest," Lehmann told 5AA radio. "At the end of the day we have to wait and see what the boards and security come up with, but we have to make the right decision for player and staff safety. "We're still on hold. The security guys got back from Bangladesh today [Wednesday] so they're obviously speaking to board. Hopefully we come to some sort of answer in the next 24 hours or so," he added.

Lehmann also said that despite the disappointment, the safety of players came first. "This young side is exciting," he said. "It will be an exciting time if we get there and play, but if we don't we'll go to plan B. I can't say what plan B is. But they [the players] are back in their state squads at the moment. We've put them back into training with their state sides and we'll make a decision from there," he added. CA's three-man delegation returned from their mission on Tuesday night and a decision is expected to be made on Thursday. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, the team is split over the fate of the tour. Some players are keen to travel, others are worried. The likelihood of Australia's two-Test series against Bangladesh getting underway appeared remote after the Islamic State reportedly claimed responsibility for the slaying of an Italian aid worker in Dhaka on Wednesday. A DFAT spokesperson said it was aware of the Islamic State's claim but had been unable to verify it. "We are aware that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has claimed responsibility for this attack," a spokesperson for DFAT said "If confirmed, this further



The Tigers enjoy a game of football at Bangladesh's home of cricket in Mirpur on Wednesday, a day which could have been more fascinating with the presence of the Aussies had they availed their scheduled trip to Dhaka for the two-Test series.

Transfer window opens today

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The players' transfer window for the Bangladesh Championship League (BCL), the second-tier professional football league, opens today, some 15 months after the completion of the last edition of the league. Eight participating teams -- Uttar Baridhara Club, Agrani Bank, Wari Club, Arambagh Krira Shangha, Victoria Sporting Club, Youngmen's Fakirerpool Club, Motijheel T & T Club and Police AC -- will have 15 days to sign up a maximum of 35 players each for their respective sides as the third edition of the league is supposed to get underway from the last week of October. "The BCL was supposed to get underway simultaneously with the Bangladesh Premier League, but we could not hold it as an artificial turf was being laid at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium, which is the venue for the league," said Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) general secretary Abu Nayem Shohag, adding that the last phase of installation of the turf is supposed to be completed by the middle of October.

Ruman released

SPORTS REPORTER

Striker Mohammad Ruman has been released from national team's camp as the Sheikh Russel KC forward has been suffering from fever for the last three days. With the release of Ruman and Zahid Hasan Emily's admission to hospital for removal of a tumour, the squad has been reduced to 27 players. Midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan returned from Denmark while goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Soheli recovered from his ankle injury to join the camp yesterday. Head coach Fabio Lopez is likely to announce his 23-member final squad for the October 13th World Cup qualifier against Kyrgyzstan on October 3 after a practice match this week, even though the opposition of the match is yet to be decided.

Tigers in 2017 Champs Trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

Amidst all the negativity surrounding Bangladesh's cricket fraternity at the moment, the one fact that seemed to have caught many unaware is that the Tigers had officially earned a spot in the Champions Trophy yesterday. According to the rules, the top eight ODI sides as of September 30 would play in the competition due to take place in England in 2017. Bangladesh have replaced the West Indies and will take part in the competition for the first time since 2006. This will be the fifth time that the Tigers will take part in the competition. Bangladesh have managed to qualify for the competition after brilliant performances against Pakistan, India and South Africa. There was however, plenty of drama surrounding the issue. Hopes were initially raised when the Tigers whitewashed Pakistan soon after the World Cup and a victory against India would have ideally sealed Bangladesh's spot in the competition. However, there was a bit of worry once talks regarding an extra series including Pakistan and the West Indies, the teams closest to Bangladesh in terms of rankings, floated in the air. Those worries were buried when the Tigers put in a superb effort to beat the Proteas 2-1 in a three-match ODI series at home. While qualifying for the league was a definite one of the targets that the team management had set, ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza saw it as just one of few landmarks on a long road ahead. That feeling was evident when Mortaza, while in a press conference during the South Africa series, requested fans not to blow the achievement out of proportion. Pakistan were ranked ninth earlier this year and faced the genuine prospect of missing the Champions Trophy, but were saved after winning series against

Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. The West Indies have not played a one-day match since the World Cup, and the lack of matches denied them a chance to rise up the rankings. The news is a further blow to West Indies, who suspended coach Phil Simmons for next month's tour of Sri Lanka earlier this week after he publicly questioned the make-up of the ODI squad. The 2017 Champions Trophy will be a 15-match tournament. Teams split into two groups of four, with the top two teams in each group advancing to the semifinals. The ICC also confirmed the cut-off date for direct qualification to the 2019 World Cup, also to be held in England. The top eight ranked sides in the ODI rankings on September 30, 2017, will automatically qualify for the World Cup. The rest of the teams,

| ODI RANKING | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------|
| Rank | Team | Points |
| 1 | Australia | 127 |
| 2 | India | 115 |
| 3 | South Africa | 110 |
| 4 | New Zealand | 109 |
| 5 | Sri Lanka | 103 |
| 6 | England | 100 |
| 7 | Bangladesh | 96 |
| 8 | Pakistan | 90 |
| 9 | West Indies | 88 |
| 10 | Ireland | 49 |
| 11 | Zimbabwe | 45 |
| 12 | Afghanistan | 41 |

MERCURIES TAIWAN MASTERS Siddikur needs a good outing

SPORTS REPORTER

Golfer Siddikur Rahman will be desperately looking to bounce back to form when he tees off for the Mercuries Taiwan Masters, beginning at the Taiwan Golf and Country Club today. The two-time Asian Tour winner, whose last win came in the Indian Open in November 2013, needs to have a win under his belt during the remainder of the season in order to keep his tour card for the next two seasons. If he fails to do so, he will have to go through either the qualifying school or use the country exemption to take part in tour events from next season. It is also of paramount importance for Siddikur, who has missed six cuts in nine appearances this season, to finish among the top in order to get back inside the 60-player cut-mark for the 2016 Rio Olympics. The 650,000-dollar event in Taiwan is not one that woos the best golfers of the circuit and beyond, but there will nevertheless be the presence of tour stalwarts like Thailand's Mardan Mamat, Thawarn Wiratchant and Chapchai Nirat alongside Australia's Cameron Smith, Philippine's Angelo Que and India's Rahil Gangjee. Siddikur will tee off at 12:10pm local time in the same flight with Gangjee and Hsieh Tung-hung of Taiwan.

Ruman released

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