

SPORT



Mohammedan SC skipper Mushfiqur Rahim got his Dhaka Premier League campaign off to a flying start, scoring an 80-ball 72 against Brothers Union on Friday, and he will be hoping to continue that when his side take on Victoria SC today. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Australia may tour Bangladesh in 2017

Tri-series in Ireland also on the cards

SPORTS REPORTER



Talk of Australia touring Bangladesh arose again yesterday when Cricket Australia's chief executive James Sutherland revealed that Australia's Test tour to Bangladesh may take place next year after the planned series last October was postponed due to security concerns.

Cricket Australia Chief Executive James Sutherland has confirmed that CA has recently held "off-line" discussions with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and that the series has been pencilled into the international schedule for the 2017 southern hemisphere winter subject to security clearances, reports cricket.com.au.

BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, when contacted, revealed that the BCB had discussions on the matter with the CA on the sidelines of the International Cricket Council (ICC) board meeting in Dubai.

"We were close to finalising the FTP [Future Tours Programme] commitments with Australia till 2023 [when the current cycle will conclude]," Nizamuddin said. "We had also almost come to an agreement about Australia's pending tour of Bangladesh, which may take place in 2017."

The CEO was not ready to commit to a specific date for the tour, but it was learned that it may happen in September 2017.

Australia were scheduled to play two Tests and a tour match in Dhaka and Chittagong last

October. But 48 hours before the squad was due to fly out, CA announced that departure had been delayed "due to concerns about the safety and security of the Australian team" based on advice received from the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

A week later, Sutherland announced that the tour had been postponed following information gleaned from DFAT, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and CA's internal head of security.

The CA had also decided against sending its under-19 team to the World Cup that took place in Bangladesh earlier this year. While their cricket teams did not come, their football team played a qualifying game in Dhaka last year.

On a separate note, it was also revealed that Bangladesh are expected to play a tri-series in Ireland involving New Zealand in May next year. The series is being organised in order to help Bangladesh and New Zealand acclimatise to English conditions ahead of the Champions Trophy which is set to take place in June next year.

"This series is almost confirmed. We have been talking about this ever since the T20 World Cup. It will help our players get set ahead of the Champions Trophy," said BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan.

Ireland have met Bangladesh seven times in ODIs, including matches at the 2007 and 2011 World Cups. They last met in Ireland in 2010, when a William Porterfield century helped Ireland to a one-all drawn series.

Two more bowlers reported

SPORTS REPORTER

Two more bowlers have been reported by umpires for suspect actions, taking the total number of reported bowlers in the ongoing Dhaka Premier League (DPL) to at least six.

Four bowlers -- left-arm spinner Amit Kumar of Abahani, left-arm spinner Rejaul Karim of Prime Doleshwar Sporting Limited and left-arm spinner Moinul Islam and off-spinner Mustafizur Rahman of Gazi Group Cricketers -- were reported across three matches after the first day of the DPL. A Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) source yesterday revealed that two more bowlers have since been reported.

The bowlers are Asif Ahmed Ratul, who plays for Legends of Rugganj and Mohammad Saifuddin, who plays for

Cricket Coaching School.

Pace bowler Saifuddin was reported by umpires for some of his deliveries after Cricket Coaching School's game against Prime Bank Cricket Club on Tuesday, during which Saifuddin scalped two wickets. Asif, on the other hand, was reported on April 24 when the Legends of Rugganj tied the game against Victoria Sporting Club in spectacular fashion. Both teams scored 314 runs each.

Asif just bowled two overs in that game. According to sources, this is not the first time that umpires have reported Asif for his bowling action in the domestic circuit.

Improper bowling actions have been a big issue ever since Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny were banned from bowling in international cricket midway through the World Twenty20.

The BCB are in the process of forming a committee that will observe bowlers and take action against those with illegal bowling actions.

Going by the statements made by Nazmul Hassan Papon and a number of match referees, it is understood that the bowlers who are being reported for suspect actions are likely to be allowed to play through the entire Dhaka Premier League. These bowlers will be observed in the other domestic leagues as well.

If their performance does not improve then they will have to bowl in front of the committee, which is yet to be formed. If that committee finds the bowler guilty, then they can take action against the bowler. The fact that Bangladesh does not have an ICC-accredited centre for checking the bowling actions have made things slightly more complex.

Taskin, who is supposed to be using this league to get used to the changes in his action, as suggested by Heath Streak, on Tuesday raised a few eyebrows in the stadium with some of his bouncers. But it is understood there were no reports filed against the pacer.

Habul propels Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Former national striker Maksudul Alam Habul struck three goals to guide Abahani to an emphatic 5-0 win over Bangladesh Sporting Club in the Marcel Club Cup hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Having shrugged off their 2-2 draw against Sonali Bank, two-time champions Abahani came hard on Bangladesh SC and took the lead in the very sixth minute, with Habul hitting the board with a reverse-hit before the striker doubled the lead three minutes later by capitalising on a long-ball from Moshirur Rahman Biplob.

The Sky Blues went on to a comfortable 3-0 lead after national defender Khorsheedur Rahman converted a penalty corner three minutes before the break.

Bangladesh SC, who had given

Mohammedan a run for the money in their 4-2 defeat two days earlier, could not produce the same spirit as Abahani added two more goals in the second half.

It was again Habul who cashed in on a fumble from a Bangladesh SC defender to make the scoreline 4-0 while Khorsheedur converted another penalty corner in the 47th minute to seal the victory for Abahani, who now have raised their tally to four points from two outings.

In the day's other match, Mohammedan SC posted their second successive win with a 4-1 victory over Wari Club. Deen Islam, Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, Mostafizur Rahman Lal and Rana scored one goal apiece. Nazmul Hasan struck a consolation goal for Wari.

One minute's silence was observed before each of the matches in memory of Bangladesh Hockey Federation's former president Alamgir Mohammad Adel, who passed away at a hospital in the capital yesterday at the age of 84.

BD girls eye semis berth

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-14 women's team will be looking to secure a semifinal berth in the AFC Girls' Regional Championship when they take on last edition's runners-up Nepal in Dushanbe, Tajikistan today.

A draw against Nepal will not only put Bangladesh in the semifinals but will also see them emerge as Group B champions as India routed Nepal 9-0 yesterday after having suffered a 3-1 defeat to Bangladesh in the group opener.

Bangladesh had beaten Nepal 1-0 in the final of the last edition in Kathmandu.

'Fizz has the same skills Wasim had'

SPORTS REPORTER

Fearsome South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn has joined the Mustafizur Rahman fan club, paying the Bangladeshi left-arm pacer perhaps the

highest compliment that can be paid to left-handed pace bowlers. His latest Indian Premier League outing on Tuesday for Sunrisers Hyderabad against Rising Pune Supergiants saw a rare blip as he was taken for 21 runs from his two overs, but he should be buoyed by arguably the greatest fast bowler of this generation comparing him to one of the greatest that ever played the game: Pakistan swing king Wasim Akram.

"Mustafizur has got the skill set, X-factor Wasim Akram had. I wouldn't say Mustafizur is swinging as much as Akram did but it is fantastic to see him bowl," Steyn said in an exclusive interview with the India Today website yesterday. Steyn is playing for the Gujarat Lions in the 2016 IPL, the competition where Mustafizur has most recently come into the spotlight by taking wickets and mesmerising opposition batsmen.

Mustafizur has taken the cricketing world by storm since his international debut in the T20I against Pakistan in April last year. Since then, he has taken 52 wickets in 24 international matches and his three five-wicket hauls in ODIs

have been instrumental in Bangladesh's rousing series wins over India and South Africa in 2015. But his supreme control and nearly indecipherable changes of pace, as much as his brilliant international statistics, have made him an irresistible prospect for Twenty20 cricket. It was therefore no surprise that he became only the sixth Bangladeshi to be picked by an IPL side.

The 20-year-old, nicknamed the Fizz, has already provided some of the most exciting moments of the IPL this year. His in-swinging yorker that cleaned up

Andre Russell was a spectacle. And on Saturday, he bowled 16 dot balls in his four-over spell and finished with figures of 4-1-9-2.

"Every year somebody comes up, somebody steps up. At the World Cup, last year, we had Trent Boult and Mitchell Starc who came out and did something different. They both were bowling yorkers and swinging the white ball extremely well. While Starc was hitting 100 mph mark, Boult was swinging it upfront. Now we have got Mustafizur from Bangladesh. I hope he goes from strength to strength. I hope we have a few more guys like Mustafizur next season," Steyn said.

"We are so used to right arm bowlers who bowl quick and also bowl off-cutters to surprise batsmen. Now this guy is a left-arter and his cutters and pace changes are things that nobody has

Morris blitz in vain

STAR SPORT DESK

Chris Morris smashed an unbeaten 32-ball 82, yet ended up on the losing side as Delhi Daredevils lost against Gujarat Lions by one run in a thrilling IPL encounter at the Feroze Shah Kotla Stadium last night. The South Africa all-rounder hit four fours and eight massive sixes, but got very little support from his teammates as the Gujarat Lions stole the victory to go top of the IPL table. While Morris hit the fastest half-century of this season, coming in 17 balls, the next best came from his compatriot JP Duminy (43-ball 48).

Earlier, Brendon McCullum and Dwayne Smith smashed quick-fire half-centuries as Gujarat Lions posted 172 for six.

SCORES IN BRIEF
GUJARAT LIONS: 172 for 6 (McCullum 60, Smith 53; Tahir 3-24)
DELHI DAREDEVILS: 171 for 5 (Morris 82 not out, Duminy 48; Kulkarni 3-19)
Result: Delhi Daredevils won by 1 run.

School handball from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Two school (U-10) handball tournaments, sponsored by Pran-RFL Group, will get underway tomorrow at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali National Stadium.

14 boys schools, split into four groups, will play in round-robin league format in the boys' tournament. On the opening day, eight matches will take place. Ten schools will contest in the girls' tournament.



Abahani striker Maksudul Alam Habul (C) is ecstatic with his three goals against Bangladesh SC in their Marcel Club Cup match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

PCB's U-turn on Younis

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's star batsman Younis Khan has been permitted to play in a domestic tournament, cricket authorities said Wednesday, after he apologised for his behaviour following a row with umpires last week.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday decided to ban the 38-year-old from playing in the Pakistan Cup and issued him a show cause notice, with chairman Shahryar Khan saying "no one is bigger than the game".

But in a surprise move Wednesday the PCB turned on its decision, with the chairman remarking on the player's "shining reputation". "Younis has served Pakistan cricket for a number of years and he has developed a

shining reputation in Pakistan and abroad," a PCB statement quoted him as saying.

"While this incident is unfortunate, I am glad to note that Younis has admitted his mistake."

Younis is Pakistan's highest Test run-getter with 9116 in 104 matches.

The former national captain had questioned umpiring decisions during his team Khyber Pukhtunkhwa's (KPK's) one-day matches in the Pakistan Cup tournament, currently held in Faisalabad.

On Saturday match referee Aziz-ur Rehman fined Younis 50 percent of his match fee and summoned him for a disciplinary hearing, but Younis failed to attend and withdrew from the tournament in anger.

On Monday Younis called the PCB chairman and apologised for his behaviour, agreeing to play the remaining matches.

ASIAN WEIGHTLIFTING Mabilia finishes in 13th place

SPORTS REPORTER

South Asian Games gold-medallist Mabilia Akhter Simanta finished 13th among 15 weightlifters in 63kg category of the Asian Weightlifting Championship, which is being held in Tajikistan.

Mabilia however improved on her performance as she yesterday lifted 14 kilos more than what she had lifted during the SA Games.

Mabilia lifted 70kgs in snatch and 93kgs in clean and jerk in yesterday's event