

SPORT



Mustafizur Rahman, who was at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday afternoon to go through a fitness test, was the most sought-after individual at Mirpur as the media, the team management and the players caught up with him after months.

Mustafizur's weight loss worries BCB

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is mulling over providing Mustafizur Rahman, who left for Sathkira last night, with a long leave in order to help him recover from home sickness.

According to BCB sources, the plan, as of now, is to let the youngster spend as much time as possible with his family. Meanwhile, the BCB is also planning on formulating a rehab strategy for the bowler who has apparently lost plenty of weight.

Sources state that the rehab is set to begin after the break. If this plan does get confirmed then it could further delay Mustafizur's stint with Sussex for whom he was supposed to begin playing from the second week of June.

The plans of providing him a break and making a rehab strategy were made following a fitness test and some medical examinations that Mustafizur took yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and the Apollo hospital respectively.

The reports suggested that he lost a decent amount of weight and this was a factor that concerned the medical team. The loss of weight, according to sources

close to Mustafizur, was because of his home sickness.

However, the good news for Mustafizur is that the hamstring injury that he suffered in India was termed as 'not serious' by the concerned authorities.

Earlier Mustafizur spent yesterday afternoon at Mirpur doing a bunch of exercises under the supervision of BCB physio Bayjedul Islam.

The pacer, who sustained an injury in India is yet to regain full fitness. The BCB medical team and Mustafizur were not ready to speak to the media yesterday. However, BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told reporters that Mustafizur's immediate future would depend on the fitness tests.

When asked if Mustafizur would be given permission to go play for Sussex, he said: "It won't be right to say anything before we get the fitness report. It will take a couple of days to know Mustafizur's situation. After we get the report, we will know how to progress."

"At the moment, what matters is how much his body can take rather than what he wants," he added.

Aside from the fitness tests, Mustafizur also took the opportunity to meet with his national colleagues like Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Soumya Sarkar.

PHOTO: STAR

Zim sack Dav, Masakadza

CRICINFO

Zimbabwe have sacked captain Hamilton Masakadza and head coach Dav Whatmore, following the board's review of the team's performance at the World T20 in March. ZC has given Graeme Cremer and Makhaya Ntini the interim roles of captain and head coach, respectively, while appointing Lance Klusener as batting coach on a two-year contract.

The board has also restructured the selection panel, which will now consist of a convener, the head coach, and the assistant coach. Tatenda Taibu, the former Zimbabwe captain, has been appointed convener, and, according to a ZC release, "will have additional responsibilities in development and high performance, and will also assist ZC in bringing former Zimbabwe players back into local cricket."

From secretary to media manager

SPORTS REPORTER



In a breach of standard practice, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) sent Ahmed Sayed Al Fatah, its head of marketing and personal secretary to the president, to Tajikistan accompanying the football team, designating him as the media manager of the team for this tour. The booters are in Dushanbe for a crucial Asian Cup qualifying playoff against Tajikistan on June 2.

The football's governing body usually sends its media department personnel on tours and they do a fairly commendable job, no matter how questionable their communication skills are. Thanks to their effort, the local news media get up-to-date news, pictures and videos of the team from those foreign tours in good time.

However, this time it has become harder to get information from

Dushanbe as the designated media manager feels his duty is confined only to sending a few camera snaps and video footage, that too at such late hours that it is close to impossible to get those stories to the subscribers.

Over the last two days, there was hardly any information regarding the players' fitness, the coaching staff's ideas and the preparation for the match.

However, this should not come as a surprise as the designated media manager's usual designation at the BFF is not anything related to media, rather he is appointed as a personal secretary to the president and the head of the marketing department.

All of this begs the question of why a personal secretary is taking up the spot of an actual media person on tour and if it was indeed necessary to send Fatah, are the BFF so cash-strapped that they actually have to swap him in place of a media manager?

Anderson tops Test rankings

REUTERS, London

England fast bowler James Anderson has jumped above compatriot Stuart Broad at the top of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test bowling rankings after his fine display in the ongoing Test series against Sri Lanka.

Anderson has so far picked up 18 wickets in the three-match series, including a 10-wicket haul in the opening Test at Leeds, as he guided England to an unassailable 2-0 lead over the tourists at Chester-le-Street on Monday.

The 33-year-old became the fourth England bowler to top the Test bowling rankings after Ian Botham, Steve Harmison and Broad, cricket's governing body said on its website (www.icc-cricket.com).

Despite picking up 10 wickets in the Sri Lanka series, Broad dropped down to third, one place below Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who retained second.

Australia's Steve Smith tops the Test batsman rankings, while Joe Root maintained his second place after scoring a half-century in England's second Test win against Sri Lanka.

Pathan boost for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Indian all-rounder Yusuf Pathan arrived in the capital last night to bolster Abahani ahead of today's crucial Dhaka Premier League encounter against Prime Bank Cricket Club at BKSP.

ACE all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan already joined Abahani to make an immediate impact as his all-round performance helped his side to win the match against Prime Bank in the previous round, and now the inclusion of his Kolkata Knight Riders teammate gives Abahani coach Khaled Mahmud great hope for the rest of the season.

"Actually we have a problem with our bowling, for which we lost at least three matches, so a bowling all-rounder can make life easy for us, but still Pathan's experience will help us a lot. Besides batting I hope he can also contribute with his bowling," said Mahmud. The 33-year old cricketer from Gujarat has so far played 57 ODIs and 22 T20Is and has considerable experience of playing the Indian Premier League, scoring 361 runs at an average of 72.2 in the recently concluded edition.

Abahani is standing at sixth position with 10 points from nine matches and their main target is now to confirm the Super League birth. "Our immediate goal is to qualify for the Super League but our main target is to become champions. You see eight teams now have 12 to 10 points, so everybody has a chance," he added.

Prime Bank has also ten points. In the day's other matches, Prime Bank will take on Gazi Group at Mirpur and Kalabagan Cricket Academy meet Cricket Coaching School at Fatullah.

Brothers roping in Maharjan

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union are set to rope in Nepalese coach Bal Gopal Maharjan with a hope of achieving good results in the upcoming Federation Cup and the Bangladesh Premier League.

Maharjan, who once played for Brothers Union in the now defunct Dhaka Premier League, is scheduled to arrive here today ahead of the Federation Cup, which starts from June 10.

"The reasons behind appointing Maharjan are: he is a former player of Brothers Union, Nepalese football teams have improved a lot under his coaching and, he can speak Bengali which will help communication with the players," said the club's director-in-charge Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi yesterday.

Maharjan, a former striker of Nepal national team, coached the country's Olympic team to success in the 2016 Bangabandhu Gold Cup in Dhaka after having guided the Nepal U-19 team to triumph in the inaugural SAFF U-19 Championship in 2015.

Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin guided Brothers Union in the last two seasons.

Eranga's action reported

AFP, Chester-le-Street

Sri Lanka fast bowler Shaminda Eranga has been reported for a suspect bowling action, the ICC said Tuesday, adding to their woes after they lost the Test series to England.

Concerns about the 29-year-old's action emerged during the second Test at the Riverside.

'Cook can put SRT in the shade'

AFP, Chester-le-Street

England coach Trevor Bayliss believes Alastair Cook has it in him to surpass India great Sachin Tendulkar as Test cricket's all-time leading run-scorer.

Cook became just the 12th player in history to score 10,000 Test runs during the course of his unbeaten 47 as England beat Sri Lanka by nine wickets in the second Test at the Riverside in Chester-le-Street on Monday.

The England captain was also the first Englishman to achieve the feat and, at 31 years and 157 days, the youngest to get to the landmark, breaking Tendulkar's record by more than five months.

Cook is unlikely ever to play white ball international cricket again having been dropped from the one-day side prior to last year's 50-over World Cup.

But even without that burden, Tendulkar's aggregate tally of 15,921 Test runs is still some way off for left-handed opener Cook, who now has 10,042 to his credit.

However, given Cook has scored at a rate of around 1,000 runs a year for the past decade, only a career-ending injury or a sharp decline in form could deny him the chance to surpass Tendulkar's haul.

"It will be about how long he wants to keep doing it," said Bayliss.

"But certainly there is time on his side, so there is no reason he couldn't if his heart is still in it and his will to do it is still there," the Australian added.

Former Sri Lanka coach Bayliss is in no doubt of Cook's quality.

"He is right up there with any of the best international players. He has these powers of concentration," he said.

"He is not the biggest stroke-player of all time - (but) he knows his game very well, he is very patient and he sticks to it."

"To be able to do that over the period of time he has played and score as many runs as he has is a fantastic effort."

Victory at the Riverside, the headquarters of north-east county Durham, saw England take an unassailable 2-0 lead in their three-Test series with Sri Lanka.

England quickly announced an unchanged 12-man squad for next week's third Test at Lord's.

Abahani wallop Wanderers

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani returned to winning ways in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a massive 9-3 win over Dhaka Wanderers Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With four wins and two draws in six matches, Abahani are in second position with 14 points, one less than Usha KC, who however has played a match less.

Having come into the match on the back of draws against Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club and Mohammedan SC, the Sky Blues immediately imposed their authority on the match and took a 3-1 lead in the first half before adding six more in the second half.

Pakistani recruit Mohammad Irfan scored three goals while his compatriot Shakeel Abbasi scored two for Abahani. Rummon Sarker, Shafiqat Rasool, Toushique Arshad and Maksudul Alam Habul scored the other goals for the winners. Khalilur Rahman, Jaswinder Singh and Jagrik Singh struck one goal each for Dhaka Wanderers Club.



Abahani's Shafiqat Rasool (C) dodges past a Wanderers defender and the goalie during their Premier Division Hockey League fixture at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Hefty promises by new chess fed GS

SPORTS REPORTER

After being elected the new general secretary of Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF), Syed Shahabuddin Shamim has promised to do everything they need to do to produce new Grand Masters and International Masters in the next four years.

"Two players [Sagor and Shakil] are already in pipeline to become GMs. We will organise two GM tournaments to give them opportunities to earn their norms. Besides, we will also organise IM tournaments to give opportunities for FIDE masters and send them abroad to gain IM norms,"

said Shahabuddin after his panel won all posts - four vice presidents, two joint secretaries, a treasurer and 16 executive member in the one-sided election, which the opposition panel boycotted citing irregularities in voters' list.

Shamim was a vice-president of the BCF's last committee, which failed to organise any GM and IM tournament despite having delivered pledges. The committee also failed to revive the school tournament, which was considered a big failure of the previous committee.

"I admitted failure of the previous committee, but it was due to financial

constraints and due to some executive committee members hindering development work. But this time I promise that we will rectify our mistakes and take proper steps to take the game forward. This time there are a few sponsors who have been elected as members, so we will not face any financial problem," Shamim said, adding that his first job will be to arrange a training camp for the national men's and women's teams under a Super Grand Master as preparation for September's World Chess Olympiad.

The organiser from Chittagong said that they would also help dis-

tribut chess associations financially to organise district leagues regularly.

Other office bearers of BCF are: KM Shafiqullah, Tarafdar Mohammad Ruhul Amin, Gazi Shaiyful Tareq, Chowdhury Nafiz Sharafa (vice presidents), Moniruzzaman Palash and Masudur Rahman Mallik (joint secretaries), Mahir Ali Khan (treasurer) and Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan, Mehdi Hasan, Nizamul Islam, Liakat Ali, Jakerul Mawla, Bahar Uddin, Rashed Hossain, Belal Hossain, Debashish Dey, Anjuman Ara Aksir, Rafiqul Islam, Jakir Ahmed, Alauddin Sajju, Nazam Nakvi, Monirul Islam and Monirul Islam (members).