

SPORT

At least 2-week wait for Sussex

SPORTS REPORTER

Mustafizur Rahman returned to his workplace at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday with a broad smile that hinted that the time spent at his beloved Tetulia home wiped away the mental fatigue he had been suffering due to the long absence from home while playing the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The magical left-arm pacer's rehabilitation began yesterday and will extend for two weeks. Mustafizur is likely to be assessed again after eight days.

Surrounding Mustafizur, the latest question is whether the pacer will be available for Sussex, the county side which is desperate to welcome the new pace sensation in England.

A decision in this regard however is likely to be taken after two weeks, once the bowler completes rehabilitation in Dhaka for his right hamstring and ankle injuries suffered during his debut IPL season.

"We are working on his hamstring and ankle injuries. He has recovered from the problem with his shoulder and side strains. We are planning to assess him every week and we will take a decision on him when we see his improvement," Bangladesh national cricket team's physio Bayjidul Islam said yesterday.

"For the first week I don't see any possibility of him taking the field," he said adding that he was happy with the current measurements of his weight which he lost after IPL.

In March, Sussex had announced that Mustafizur would be their second overseas player and participate in the NatWest T20 Blast and the Royal London One-Day Cup. He was originally supposed to join the county after his IPL stint but the bowler was advised rest to nurse some minor injuries.

It has been learnt that even if he becomes fit and does make the trip, it will only be after the Eid celebrations.



Bangladesh pace sensation Mustafizur Rahman (L) enjoys a light moment with veteran speedster Rubel Hossain, currently plying his trade for Prime Bank in the Dhaka Premier League, in the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium gymnasium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Jimmy shatters scoring record

SPORTS REPORTER

National striker Rasel Mahmud Jimmy scored 11 goals -- the most by a single player in a Premier League match -- to power Mohammedan SC to a massive 19-0 win over newcomers Bangladesh Railway SC in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan toyed with Railway, who had conceded 61 goals in their previous seven matches.

With the feat, Jimmy eclipsed Rafiqul Islam Kamal's record seven goals in a Dhaka Premier League match against Wari Club in 1996 and set his individual highest, surpassing his double hat-trick in 2012.

"A team as weak as Railway should not be playing in the top-tier of the hockey league. I think if the [Railway] officials concentrated more, they could have put together a much better side," said Jimmy.

Apart from Jimmy, Pakistani Tasvar Lalon and Rubel shared eight goals. In the day's other match, Azad SC held Bangladesh SC to a 3-3 draw.

Youngsters shine amid trickery

SPORTS REPORTER

One reported ploy was successful but another one was marred by young off-spinner Al-Amin's five-wicket haul after Abdul Mazid's blitzkrieg hundred as Victoria Sporting Club dashed Gazi Group Cricketers hopes of reaching the Super League of the Dhaka Premier League yesterday. The outcome in the rain-curtailed match at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah however delighted Prime Bank Sporting Club, who qualified on the basis of a better head-to-head record against Kalabagan Krira Chakra, most as Gazi's defeat made them the last of the 12-team table to qualify for the six-team Super League.

It was the story of two young players in Al-Amin and Mazid, whose second consecutive hundred helped Victoria finish on top in the points table on the last day of the first phase but the unedifying machinations behind the scenes drew attention away from the cricket.

The match between Brothers Union and Legends of Rupganj at BKSP was washed out following rain, ensuring that the former get a valuable point that relieves them of relegation worries while spoiling Rupganj's chance to top the table as they finished fourth. But the question remains about why the wicket was wet on Wednesday, the day the game was originally supposed to take place, to force the umpires to shift the date.

At Fatullah, despite rain in the morning the match took place after being reduced to 33 overs a side after a three-hour-and-15-

minute delay. This of course begs the question of why the organisers were not willing to play the previous day -- when the match was originally scheduled -- which started with sunshine. Many believe that the schedule was changed so that Gazi could bring in their foreign player.

Puneet Bisht, the 29-year old right-handed batsman from Delhi, arrived on Wednesday and made an immediate impact, but his 79-ball 86 that contained 12 boundaries was not good enough for Gazi Group to overtake Victoria's 219 runs.

Mahbub Alam initiated the early collapse in Gazi's innings but it was the 22-year-old Al-Amin who was the chief destroyer, taking five wickets in four overs including the one of Bisht.

Opener Shamsur Rahman was another notable scorer and also added 95 runs with

Bisht for the third wicket after the dismissals of Anamul Haque and Mahedi Hasan. The partnership was broken when Shamsur was dismissed by left-arm spinner Suhrawadi Shuvo in the 20th over for a 52-ball 42 to pave the way for wickets at regular intervals.

Earlier, Victoria lost opener Fazle Mahmud in the third over after the match was reduced to 33 overs a side.

But Mazid and Mominul Haque added 122 runs for the second wicket. Mominul struck 10 fours in his 66-ball 73 before he was caught behind off Shamsur Rahman in the 22nd over.

Mazid accelerated through eight fours and two sixes and reached his century from 91 balls in the penultimate over. Mohammad Sharif claimed three wickets while Delwar Hossain took two.

SCORES IN BRIEF

VICTORIA SC: 219 for 7 in 33 overs (Mazid 100, Mominul 73, Al-Amin 24; Delwar 2-36, Sharif 3-19)
GAZI GROUP: 191 all out in 30.1 overs (Shamsur 42, Bisht 86; Mahbub 3-37, Al-Amin 5-27)
Result: Victoria Sporting Club won by 28 runs.

DPL SUPER LEAGUE TEAMS

Teams	Mat	W	L	T	Pts
Victoria SC	11	7	3	1	15
Mohammedan	11	7	4	0	14
Prime Dolshwar	11	7	4	0	14
Abahani	11	7	4	0	14
Rupganj	11	6	3	1	14
Prime Bank	11	6	5	0	12

(Cricket Coaching School and Kalabagan Cricket Academy relegated in the twelve-team competition)



Young Victoria SC off-spinner Al-Amin (2nd from L) celebrates with his teammates during his five-wicket burst after Abdul Mazid's (R) century set up a crucial win that eliminated Gazi Group Cricketers from the Super League at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



TIGERS' TOUR OF INDIA Venue set, no date in sight

SPORTS REPORTER

When it was announced that Bangladesh were scheduled to play their maiden Test on Indian soil, the country's cricketing fraternity, fans et al, had only one burning question on their minds: when would the Test take place?

As the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) in India yesterday announced their schedule for the 2016-17 home season, that question was left unanswered.

Since gaining their full-member status in 2000, Bangladesh have yet to visit their neighbours for a Test tour -- despite touring every other Test nation -- and the prospect of doing so has left many frothing at the mouth; especially as Bangladesh have come leaps and bounds over the past two years, giving rise to hopes of a good showing.

However, the BCCI and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) shrouding the tour date in mystery has led to agitation from many quarters, especially since -- despite not providing a date -- the BCCI named Hyderabad as the venue for the one-off Test.

India will be hosting 13 Tests this season, equalling their record for the most Tests in a season. And while all the other prospective series against New Zealand, Australia and England were accompanied by a tentative timeline, the Test against Bangladesh was inexplicably ignored in the press release on the BCCI website.

Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that they are yet to receive the formal statement, but BCCI is working behind the scenes to come up with a workable schedule for future India-Bangladesh matches.

"The Indian Cricket Board has yet to finalise the date, but we know for sure that the Test match will take place during the current cricketing season," the BCB CEO added.

The BCCI also announced that Rajkot, Visakhapatnam, Pune, Dharamsala, Ranchi and Indore would debut as Test venues for the season.

Domestic football returns with Fed Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

The Walton Federation Cup will usher in the return of domestic football after a one-month break following the national team's engagement in the Asian Cup Qualifier play-offs.

On the opening day, Mohammedan SC will take on Rahmatganj MFS at 4:00pm while Abahani will play Arambagh KS at 7:30pm under floodlights. Both matches will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The Federation Cup, which is generally the season's curtain-raising tournament, has been pushed to the second tournament of season this time after the KFC Independence was held in April.

During the KFC Independence Cup, the participating teams got little time to prepare and teams like Mohammedan, Muktiyodha Sangsad and Brothers Union failed to make it to the last four following the emergence of new powerhouse and Independence Cup champions Chittagong Abahani and the recognised powerhouse Abahani, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel.

The title race is expected to be contested by those giants again, but the teams like Arambagh, Team BJMC and Rahmatganj may pose a significant threat.

The Federation Cup is also set to be the comeback stage for eight footballers of three clubs who missed out on the Independence Cup following instructions from a High Court bench and the return of five national footballers will definitely strengthen Chittagong Abahani, while defending champions Sheikh Jamal will be weakened by the temporary departure of striker Emeka Darlington.

Abahani have strengthened with the appointment of Austrian coach George Kottan, while Sheikh Russel have been plagued by injuries as seven of their starting eleven are nursing injuries.

BPL sold for Tk 20 cr

Saif Powertec win the rights for 5 years

SPORTS REPORTER

Saif Powertec Ltd is all set to earn the commercial rights of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) for five years. This was disclosed by Salam Murshedy, the senior vice-president of the Bangladesh Football Federation, after an EC meeting of the game's governing body at the BFF House yesterday.

According to Murshedy, Saif Powertec, which has recently decided against launching a franchise-based Bangladesh Super League, will pay Tk 20 crore --four crore in each year --to have all the rights including a 75 per cent share of the gate receipts of the country's glamorous domestic league.

"The meeting has approved the Saif Powertec proposal that will run for five years starting from this season. We will put pen to paper on Saturday," Murshedy told reporters after emerging from the meeting.

"The sponsors will have all rights including branding, television and gate revenue while the BFF would provide the logistic support," said Murshedy, adding that unlike the previous editions the Bangladesh Premier League will be held in six different districts including Dhaka.

He said that it would be the prerogative of the sponsors to decide the six venues from a possible seven in Dhaka, Chittagong, Raishahi,

Mymensingh, Sylhet, Barisal and Gopalganj.

Of the 132 league matches, a total of 112 games will be held outside the capital with the 12 Bangladesh Premier League teams getting the opportunity of traveling from one venue to next.

Murshedy, however did not elaborate the massive expenditure that will be required for playing in six different venues across the country.

Last season, the BFF paid Tk 25 lakh to each of the 11 teams as participating money but this time the game's governing body might have to increase the participation money to Tk 30 lakh for each participating team for additional travel, accommodation and food expenses. Besides, the BFF will also have to disburse Tk 30 lakh as prize money for winners.

"We have not considered the expenditure, rather our target is to bring the spectators back to the stadiums and that's why we are taking the league outside the capital. We will negotiate with sponsors for a raise if we get positive response this year," said Murshedy.

However, BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag informed that they would need an additional Tk 2 crore that includes honorarium of the referees and match commissioner as well as the transport and accommodation costs of the BFF officials for successfully completing the league.

Baristow rescues Eng

AFP, London

Jonny Bairstow rode his luck to again rescue England from a top-order collapse with a century on the first day of the third Test against Sri Lanka at Lord's on Thursday.

At stumps, England were 279 for six, having been 84 for four when Bairstow (107 not out) came to the crease.

It had been a similar story when Bairstow revived England from the depths of 83 for five in the first Test with a superb 140 on his Headingley home ground in a match England eventually won by an innings and 88 runs.

Rather than scoring a maiden Test century at Lord's, Bairstow should have been out for 11 on Thursday when he clipped Nuwan Pradeep firmly off his pads straight to mid-wicket only for Shaminda Eranga to drop the catch.

The Yorkshireman had another break when Eranga reviewed a rejected lbw appeal when the batsman had made 56. Replays showed the ball hitting leg stump, but not enough, according to the Decision Review System, to overturn Indian umpire S Ravi's original not out decision.

Apart from Bairstow, only England captain Alastair Cook (85), who won the toss in sunny conditions ideal for batting, passed fifty on Thursday, with Chris Woakes 23 not out at stumps.

Sri Lanka performed admirably with the ball, albeit they were again sloppy in the field, on a good pitch where there was a touch of seam movement.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 279 for 6 at stumps (Cook 85, Bairstow 107 not out, Woakes 23 not out; Lakmal 2-66, Pradeep 2-79, Herath 2-45)