

SPORT

One-month recovery for Fizz

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman will take around one month to recover from the hamstring and ankle injuries which he sustained during his Indian Premier League (IPL) campaign with the Sunrisers Hyderabad, Bangladesh's strength and conditioning coach Mario Villavarayan informed yesterday.

"Ideal would be one month [to retain fitness]," Villavarayan said. "But we will see how he does this week and take it from there. As of today, there's marginal improvement. It was a long season for him, so we are working on him. We assessed him yesterday [Wednesday] and he has improved, and we will assess him again next week and take it from there. He has responded well."

Mustafizur had spoken of suffering from fatigue after his maiden IPL tournament last month and had sought some time from his county side Sussex before joining their squad. He has already missed much of the season and is not expected to be fit before the second phases of the Royal One-Day London Cup and the NatWest T20 Blast.

Siddikur out of Queen's Cup

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Siddikur Rahman failed to tee off at the Queen's Cup yesterday after his recurring back problems came back to haunt him.

During practice before the event teed off on Wednesday, Bangladesh's premier golfer was jolted by pain yet again and he decided to sit out the event completely as he did not want to risk injuring himself further, especially with the Rio Olympics approaching fast.

The 31-year-old golfer complained of pain in his back before leaving for the US\$ 3,00,000 event in Thailand last week, but was confident that he would recover in time for the event.

He is consulting with the doctors on the Asian Tour circuit but he is keen on travelling to take part in the upcoming event in Japan next week.

Meanwhile at the Santiburi Samui Country Club in Koh Samui, Thaworn Wiratchant and Samuel Chien were tied for first place at the end of the opening round of the Queen's Cup with both golfers carding par-under-five scores.

Bowden shown the crooked finger

AP, Wellington

Flamboyant New Zealand umpire Billy Bowden may have stood in his last international match after being dropped from New Zealand Cricket's international panel.

The 53-year-old Bowden, who officiated in 84 Tests and 200 one-day internationals over 21 years, amused cricket fans with his eccentric signals, especially the crooked finger with which he indicated dismissals. Bowden insisted he couldn't extend the finger because of arthritis.

He was dropped from the International Cricket Council's elite panel in 2013, returned in 2014 but was omitted again after umpiring the Test between the West Indies and England in Barbados in May, 2015.

Bowden umpired his 200th one-day international when New Zealand played Australia in Wellington in February.

Checks & balances key to success

BISHWAJIT ROY

If everything goes according to plan, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will extend the tenure of the national team's head coach Chandika Hathurusingha till the 2019 ICC World Cup to be held in England. Without any doubt it would be the right decision for cricket's apex body in the country to confirm the Sri Lankan for another three years in its all-important board meeting on Sunday.

Since he joined the Tigers in June 2014 on a two-year contract, Bangladesh cricket has gone from strength to strength in the international arena. Even a critic of the Sri Lankan would not hesitate to praise his attention to detail, his ability to think about the finer points and the sincerity towards his job.

But it seems that the Tigers' recent success has created a misconception among the administrators. If the general perception among cricket fans is that whatever Bangladesh achieved it is because of their beloved and charismatic captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, then apparently the perception among the influential administrators is that it all happened because of the coach.

The scenario is such that many in cricketing circles say that the Sri Lankan is now the most powerful man in Bangladesh cricket after BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon.

One cannot blame Chandika if he wants to take full control. So far it seems that he has good intentions and will try to achieve his goals in his own way.



CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA

But it is the board's duty to ensure checks and balances in the power structure to yield the best results for Bangladesh cricket.

Nothing can happen overnight and Bangladesh have not reached their current status in a two-year burst of brilliance.

After some sporadic wins, Bangladesh first gave notice of their potential in 50-over cricket when they stunned India and reached the second round to beat South Africa in the 2007 ICC World Cup. They then started to prove their prowess on home soil. One cannot forget their success against New Zealand at home in 2010 and 2013 and their 2012 Asia Cup heroics.

In late 2014, Mashrafe took over the reins of a team that had a core group of players who came through a good development programme, like Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiquir Rahim, Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad and the selectors blooded some high-quality youngsters. It was then that good planning from Chandika resulted in a good limited-overs unit.

So a team can get success if the necessary constituents get well. It would be unwise to think that one man can play all the roles; rather, the administrators must ensure that everyone performs their role to make a successful unit.

The above recollections are necessitated by the BCB's controversial move to revamp the selection panel as many suspect that it is this coach-centric perception that has led to BCB's ridiculous proposals for the selection panel, especially the inclusion of the team manager in the selection process.

The coach can be welcomed into the selection panel but in no way can the board compromise with the independence of the selection committee because, once again, checks and balances are very important. If the cricket operations committee plays its role properly and the CEO keeps his eye on all the issues, then there is no need to change the current selection system which has been working nicely.

We want to believe that when the board members meet on Sunday, when there will be a number of former captains present, to decide on many important current issues involving the selection panel they will act with wisdom before destroying a proven system.

Arambagh, Sk Jamal to kick off qtrs

SPORTS REPORTER



The business end of the Walton Federation Cup begins today with eight quarterfinalists fighting it out at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Defending champions Sheikh Jamal DC will take on Arambagh KS in the first quarterfinal while Sheikh Russel KC vs Rahmatganj MFS [Saturday], Brothers Union vs Abahani [Sunday] and Team BJMC vs Muktiyoddha Sangsad [Monday] will decide the other three semifinal berths over the next three days.

Before the start of the 12-team Federation Cup, it was predicted that the giants might face an early exit from the group stage with the rise of a couple of promising teams who gave their superior sides a run for their money in the season's curtain-raising Independence Cup. The elimination of Independence Cup champions Chittagong Abahani and 10-time Federation Cup champions Mohammedan SC from the group stage proved that prediction true to an extent.

Arambagh are looking to repeat their defeat of Abahani in the group stage when they take on back-to-back Federation Cup champions Sheikh Jamal DC, who this time are not as formidable as they were last season.

QUARTERFINALS LINE-UP

Sheikh Jamal vs Arambagh
 Sk Russel vs Rahmatganj
 Brothers Union vs Abahani
 Team BJMC vs Muktiyoddha

Sheikh Jamal are still a force to reckon with as they possess a foreign trio -- Wedson Anselme, Emeka Darlington and Landing Darboe -- who were the major architects behind their success in the last two seasons.

"Sheikh Jamal are a very dangerous side on the break with the combination of three foreign players and our target is not to concede any goals from counter-attacks," said Arambagh coach Saiful Bari Titu. "We will be trying to play with compact defence like we did against Abahani and it is possible to beat Sheikh Jamal, but we need a bit of luck."

Despite a 1-2 defeat at the hands of Brothers Union in the last group match, Sheikh Jamal coach Shafiqul Islam Manik said they would be playing for a win.

"I believe the defeat in the last group match will act as a tonic because our intention was to win the match against Brothers. In the quarterfinals, I hope the boys will learn from their mistakes and look forward positively. We will take the field to win the match," said Manik.

With big names like Chittagong Abahani and Mohammedan already out of the tournament, lesser-fancied teams like Arambagh KS, Rahmatganj MFS and Team BJMC have hogged the spotlight as they prepare to make it to the last four.

"There is little difference between the giants and the minnows as the difference depends on individual technique than rather than game tactic. The coaching has been improving here and the coaches know the opponents' weak and strong points and they are adapting their strategies accordingly. The only difference is the foreign players, who make the difference each match," evaluated Bangladesh national team's assistant coach Titu.



Sonali Bank finished the Dhaka Premier Division Hockey League in seventh position after handing Ajax SC a 4-3 defeat at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Sonali Bank end on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

Sonali Bank ended their Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League campaign on a winning note as they posted a 4-3 win over Ajax SC at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With the top six teams -- Usha KC, Abahani, Mariner Youngs Club, Mohammedan SC, Dhaka Wanderers Club and Bangladesh SC -- already confirming their berths in the Super League, Sonali Bank had nothing to play for. However they confirmed a seventh-place finish with four wins from eleven matches.

Rabbi Salehin struck twice and Toseef Ahmed and Ajit Kumar scored one goal each for Sonali Bank, while Rahat Sarwar scored twice and Shahed Hossain scored once for Ajax SC, who finished eighth with eight points from 11 matches.

PHOTO: STAR

BPL to start in Chittagong

SPORTS REPORTER

In a historic first for the country's professional football league, the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) will get underway outside the capital as the professional football league committee yesterday decided to start the 9th iteration of the league in Chittagong from July 24.

With an aim of bringing professionalism among the clubs as per the Asian Football Confederation's prescription, the game's governing body had introduced the home-and-away based football league in 2007 and since then the league has been traveling to seven different districts -- Khulna, Chittagong, Feni, Sylhet, Narayanganj, Tangail and Gopalganj so far. This time however, there will be no home venues; rather each of participating 12 teams will be traveling to all six venues more than twice to play their respective 22 league matches.

"The meeting wanted the Bangladesh Premier League to start with the good turnover of spectators and that's why it [the committee] decided to start the league in Chittagong instead of Dhaka," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

After the completion of six matches in Chittagong, the league matches will be taking place in Sylhet, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Barisal and Mymensingh/Gopalganj respectively. Each of the participating teams will be given Tk 30 lakh for their participation, transport, accommodation and refreshments, although club representatives demanded more from the game's governing body at the meeting.

Of 132 matches of the league, only 24 matches will be held in Dhaka, which hosted nearly all of league matches for the past two seasons.

Easy win for SL

AFP, Malahide

Sri Lanka beat Ireland by 76 runs, under the Duckworth/Lewis method for rain-affected matches, to win the first one-day international in Malahide on Thursday.

Ireland, chasing a revised target of 293 in 47 overs, were dismissed for 216, with Sri Lanka ODI debutant Dasun Shanaka taking five wickets.

Sri Lanka, after losing the toss, made 303 for seven with Dinesh Chandimal scoring exactly 100 not out of 107 balls with seven boundaries. He got good support in partnerships of 82 with Kusal Mendis, 89 with captain Angelo Mathews (49) before rain interrupted Ireland's chase.

Victory saw Sri Lanka go 1-0 up in the two-match series ahead of the 2nd ODI, also in Malahide, on Saturday.

Windies caught in Tahir's web

AFP, Saint Kitts & Nevis



Imran Tahir wrote his name in the record books as South Africa completed a comprehensive 139-run victory over the West Indies in the sixth match of the Tri-Nation One-Day International series at Warner Park in St Kitts on Wednesday.

Defending a formidable total of 343 for four, the leg-spinner feasted on an inept Caribbean batting effort with outstanding figures of seven for 45 off nine overs, the best-ever returns by a South African bowler in the history of ODI cricket.

Along the way, Tahir, in his 58th

match, surpassed the record of Morne Morkel as the fastest South African to 100 ODI wickets in terms of matches played.

"I'm really grateful for how things worked out for me today," said a delighted Tahir. "It was a fantastic effort by the entire team and I'm just delighted to have played a part."

Earlier, Hashim Amla's 23rd ODI hundred highlighted a domineering batting effort from the Proteas after they were put in by home captain Jason Holder.

Tahir and Tabraiz Shami (two for 41) then extinguished the West Indian reply after a bright opening start, Tahir's record harvest including three in one over as the hosts were dismissed for 204 off 38 overs.

Tahir and Shamsi, in just his

second match, effected the breakthrough after the rousing start of 69 in less than 10 overs by openers Johnson Charles (49) and Andre Fletcher (21).

Only 24 from Marlon Samuels among the accomplished batsmen represented any form of resistance to the spinners.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 343 for 4 in 50 overs (Amla 110, De Kock 71, Morris 40, Du Plessis 73 not out, De Villiers 27; Pollard 2-64)
WEST INDIES: 204 all out in 38 overs (Fletcher 21, Charles 49, Samuels 24, Pollard 20, Holder 19, Narine 18 not out; Tahir 7-45, Shamsi 2-41)
Result: South Africa won by 139 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Imran Tahir.

Sachin to help pick India coach

AFP, New Delhi

Sachin Tendulkar will tune in from abroad by video link to help choose India's new coach after he was handed the task alongside fellow batting greats Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman.

Tendulkar, Ganguly and Laxman, dubbed the "holy trinity" by Indian media, together with senior official Sanjay Jagdale, will get to work after the flood of 57 applications was whittled down to 21, a statement said on Thursday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) release added that Tendulkar, who is out of the country, "has confirmed his availability as and when required through video conference facilities".

Iftar Mahfil shifted to Monday

SPORTS REPORTER

Due to unavoidable circumstance, the date of Iftar Mahfil, organized by Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA), Bangladesh Sports Press Association (BSPA) and Bangladesh Sports Journalists Community (BSJC), has been shifted from June 18 (Saturday) to June 20 (Monday), said a joint press release from the three associations yesterday.

The venue remains unchanged, with the Shaheed Captain (rt) Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium set to host the event.

BEST BOWLING FIGURES BY SOUTH AFRICANS (ODIS)				
Player	Figures	Opposition	Venue	Date
Imran Tahir	7-45	West Indies	Basseterre	June 2016
Kagiso Rabada	6-16	Bangladesh	Dhaka	July 2015
Makhaya Ntini	6-22	Australia	Cape Town	March 2006
Alan Donald	6-23	Kenya	Nairobi	October 1996
Shaun Pollock	6-35	West Indies	East London	January 1995



Spinner Imran Tahir decimated the West Indies batting line-up at Warner Park yesterday, recording the best ODI bowling figures by a South African as he finished with figures of 7 for 45 in his nine overs.

PHOTO: AFP