

SPORT

Action shifts to thrill-a-minute cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

With the historic England tour done with, focus now shifts to the shortest format of cricket with the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) starting on November 4. Over the next two days The Daily Star Sports will be reviewing the seven participating teams. The reviews begin with last year's champions.

COMILLA VICTORIANS

The franchise will be led by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza for the second consecutive season. Last season, none of the analysts or pundits had given the Victorians much of a chance of making it through to the knock-out stages, let alone winning the competition. However, under the inspiring leadership of Mashrafe a number of players hit form last season and that was the key behind their success. Imrul Kayes's aggressive approach at the top and pacer Abu Hider's sudden bursts took many teams by surprise.

The Victorians have preferred to use a similar strategy this time and are counting on their heroes from the last season. In terms of brand value, their players may not be right at the top, but their picks were efficient last time and they hope for similar results this time as well.

Their lead local players are Mashrafe, Imrul and Liton Das. They also have Mohammad Al-Amin, who had a good run in Bangladesh's domestic circuit last season. They have banked on a number of talented under-19 players as well with Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Mohammad Saifuddin and Mohammad Jashimuddin in the mix. The grey areas in their squad will be filled up by a bunch of clever foreign buys.



Players of reigning champions Comilla Victorians gather around captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (2nd from R) and the team's coach Mizanur Rahman (R) as the pair speak to the squad about their plans and aspirations. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

They have got Marlon Samuels, Nuwan Kulasekara and Ashara Zaidi, all of whom did well for them in the last season. Zaidi, in fact, was the player of the tournament. They also have added Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan to their attack. Bangladesh's national players found it difficult to negotiate him in the recent series and he is expected to be quite a handful. They will be coached by Bangladesh under-19 coach Mizanur Rahman.

CHITTAGONG VIKINGS

Despite forming quite a strong team in

the last season, the Vikings failed to make their mark last time. It was especially unfortunate since the players had received ample support from the Vikings administration. They were one of the first ones to clear the complete payments of the players and according to skipper Tamim Iqbal, at no point did the owners interfere with the team planning.

As a result, the Vikings have gone up a gear and decided to form an even more formidable team. That they were really serious about the league was reflected in

them signing up their coach, Mohammad Salahuddin, months before the start of the league.

Judging by their list of foreign players, you can tell that they didn't really want to leave any gaps this time. West Indian powerhouse Chris Gayle is expected to join the Vikings in the last week of November. The rest of the players, the likes of Dwayne Smith, Shoib Malik, Mohammad Nabi, Jeevan Mendis and Chaturanga De Silva are expected to join prior to the start of the tournament on November 4. Apart from

the players who played for Chittagong last year—Tamim, Taskin Ahmed and Anamul Haque—they have also included the likes of Abdur Razzak, Shubashis Roy and Jubair Hossain Likhon.

They recently played a game against a BKSP team which they ended up winning. Jubair, the leg-spinner who recently lost his place in the national team, scalped five wickets in that game. With Taskin, Shubashis, Jubair and Razzak in the team, their bowling department looks solid. As for their batsmen, the combination of Tamim, Gayle, Smith and Malik is bound to make any opposing team nervous.

DHAKA DYNAMITES

In terms of local players, it will not be an understatement to say that Dhaka Dynamites are right there on top. They boast some of the best performing Bangladeshi cricketers in the team. Apart from Shakib Al Hasan, the young Mosaddek Hossain and Nasir Hossain they have also got a host of other cricketers who have been doing well in domestic cricket.

The likes of Irfan Sukkur and Tanvir Haider could be quite a handful. Alauddin Babu, the pace-bowling all-rounder, was recently included in the national pool and has been doing well in the high performance programme. The key for the Dynamites is that they have a number of all-rounders in the side.

Shakib, Mosaddek, Nasir and Alauddin are the Bangladeshi all-rounders. Then there are the foreigners like Andre Russel, Dwayne Bravo and Wayne Parnell who are expected to join the team. They are also expected to get batsmen Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene and Ravi Bopara. The list, however, may change a bit considering that the BPL has frequently witnessed last-minute changes with regards to the foreign players list.

AFC fines BFF US\$20,000

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has been fined 20,000 US dollars for withdrawing the national team from the inaugural Solidarity Cup, which is set to get underway today in Malaysia.

The BFF has also been instructed to settle the fine within 30 days from the date of the decision, which was taken on October 28 at the AFC Disciplinary Committee, even though the decision was made public at the official website of the Asian game's governing body yesterday.

"BFF is ordered to pay a fine of USD20,000 for violating Article 6.3.2 of the AFC Solidarity Cup 2016 Regulations," the website stated. "BFF is informed that a repeat violation of this provision will be met with more severe punishment."

The AFC Solidarity Cup is being participated by seven nations, who failed to qualify for the final leg of the Asian Cup Qualifiers. Bangladesh had sent entry for the tournament before playing against Bhutan in Play-Off Qualifiers, but later BFF president Kazi Salahuddin decided not to send the team citing the ongoing professional league in which the players are engaged with their respective clubs.

Mehedi engulfed by adulation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Mehedi Hasan Miraz returned to Khulna to a hero's welcome as fans from his locality and extended areas flocked to his home to greet the teenager.

Mehedi's 19-wicket haul in the two Tests against England, which saw him etch his name in the record books and also helped Bangladesh to their first win against England in the second Test, has seen the 19-year-old become a household name and the next budding superstar in the Tigers' ranks.

People from the adjacent districts of Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Gopalgang, Jessore and Narail came to congratulate Mehedi. While some came to take a quick snap, others looked on in awe at the youngster who had conquered one

of cricket's giants.

One of his fans, 53-year-old Salauddin Sheikh, travelled three hours by bus from Bakerganj in the Barisal district to Mehedi's home. Not satisfied with catching a glimpse of the all-rounder, Sheikh waited half-an-hour more and finally got the chance to embrace the champion.

Miraz was astonished to hear about his journey and reminisced about his early years in Barisal, his paternal home.

As the crowd grew in size, some local youths led by Mehedi's youth-level coach Al Mehedi attempted to form a cordon around the all-rounder, but Mehedi himself broke that barrier several times as he met with his beloved fans.

Firaz, Mehedi's teammate at the Kashipur Cricket Academy, came with his mother to meet his friend and upon being spotted, was called by Miraz who held the boy in a long embrace.

"I am very happy with the love I am getting from everyone. It has surpassed all my expectations. The love from the people here has led to my triumph and I will respect their expectations going forward," said Mehedi while speaking to The Daily Star.

"Today my local organisation -- including Kashipur Cricket Academy and the Club Association of Khulna -- will give me a reception," Mehedi beamed.

Mehedi's father, Mohammad Jalal Hossain, meanwhile said he was satisfied with what his son had achieved and did not want anything more from him.

"I have already gotten everything I had imagined. I do not want anything more. I am proud of Mehedi and I am proud to be his father."



Mehedi Hasan arrived to a fervent crowd near his Kalshipur home yesterday, but he did not shy away, instead taking the chance to meet with his fans and signing as many autographs as he could. PHOTO: STAR

Afridi to join Rangpur Riders today

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi is set to arrive in Dhaka today to take part in the fourth season of the Bangladesh Premier League, the country's premier T20 competition. Afridi will be playing for the Rangpur Riders in the BPL this season and he is also expected to captain the team.

The 36-year-old, who was recently discarded from Pakistan's central contracts will hope for a change of fortunes when he arrives in Dhaka.

Aside from Afridi, Rangpur are also expected to bring Nasir Jamshed, Mohammad Shahzad, Sharjeel Khan and a host of other cricketers from Pakistan.

Among the local players, Rangpur will feature Soumya Sarkar, Arafat Sunny, Mohammad Mithun, Rubel Hossain, Shohag Gazi and Ziaur Rahman.

The BPL is set to begin on November 4 in Dhaka.

Brathwaite gives WI edge

AFP, Sharjah



Kraigg Brathwaite became the fifth West Indian batsman to carry his bat with an unbeaten hundred before Jason Holder took 3-10 to

leave Pakistan under pressure in the third Test in Sharjah on Tuesday. Brathwaite held West Indies' first innings of 337 with a resolute 142 not out before Holder jolted Pakistan with three wickets in 17 balls to give his team a strong position at the end of the third day.

At close Pakistan were struggling at 87-4 with opener Azhar Ali 45 not out and Sarfraz Ahmed 19 not out, leading only by 31 runs with six wickets intact and two days to play.

Pakistan needed a big effort after conceding a 56-run lead but from 37-0 they lost four wickets in the space of 11 runs with Holder firing on all cylinders and their batsmen playing rash shots.

Holder forced Sami Aslam (17) to hook straight into the hands of deep fine-leg, then in his next over had Asad Shafiq caught in slip fending a short ball for nought, his second in the match.

An over later Holder had Younis Khan caught behind for zero and from the other end Misbahul Haq holed out off spinner Roston Chase for four.

West Indian paceman Shannon Gabriel held Ahmed caught in slip for nine only to see the umpire call no-ball, allowing the stand to reach 39 by close.



West Indies opener Kraigg Brathwaite scored an unbeaten 318-ball 142 to help his side post a 56-run lead on the third day of the third Test against Pakistan in Sharjah yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

If West Indies pull off a win it will be their first in 13 Tests since beating England at home in May last year while Pakistan will spoil a good chance of a 3-0 whitewash after winning the first two Tests in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

The highlight of the morning session was Brathwaite's knock. He held the innings with 11 boundaries and for the first time in the series lifted West Indies into a lead.

Brathwaite added an invaluable 60 runs for the eighth wicket with Devendra Bishoo who made a solid 27 to leave Pakistan spin-cum pace attack frustrated.

In the end it was left to the lively pace of Wahab Riaz to take the final three wickets for his second five-wicket haul in Tests, finishing with 5-88.

Riaz had Bishoo caught behind before dismissing Alzari Joseph and Shannon Gabriel to wrap up the innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 281
WEST INDIES: First innings 337 (Brathwaite 142 not out, Chase 50, Dowrich 47; Amir 3-71, Riaz 5-88)

PAKISTAN: Second innings 87 for 4 (Aslam 17, Azhar 45 not out, Sarfraz 19 not out; Holder 3-10)

England set to depart for Delhi

SPORTS REPORTER

The England national cricket team are scheduled to leave for Delhi today afternoon. Their departure will officially bring an end to their exciting tour of Bangladesh which saw them win the ODI series 2-1 and draw the Test series 1-1.

There was talk about an early departure after the second and final Test ended on Day Three. However, it was later confirmed that England would leave as per the original schedule.

England will now get set to tour India, which is expected to begin from November 9. From England's perspective, their tour of Bangladesh was important since they wanted to get ready for India. Judging by the exposure that they received on the turning tracks of Chittagong and Dhaka, it will not be a surprise if they manage to resist India's spinners in the heat.

'No quick fix to batting woes'

AFP, Dhaka



England coach Trevor Bayliss knows there is no quick fix to his side's batting problems against spin but hopes that their recent exposure to conditions in Bangladesh will help them in a five-Test series against India, starting next week.

After a narrow win in the opening Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong, England suffered an astonishing collapse on the third day of the second match at Dhaka, losing 10 wickets in a single session in their second innings to be all out for 164.

Next up for Alastair Cook's men is a testing series in India, starting on Nov. 9, on pitches similar to those in Bangladesh.

"I think, from a batting point of view, there's been some good signs during this series," Bayliss told Sky Sports. "We don't come across those types of wickets very often at all, or at all."

"The only thing you can do is experience it more often. There's no quick fix but, as we saw, there were batters in the two tests that were able to bat for a period of time and score runs."

"They've got it in them but it's just about doing it more often and more consistently and learning from those innings."

Gary Ballance mustered only 24 runs in total and his position at number four will be up for discussion.

"I'm sure that will be one of the things we discuss. It was one of the things we discussed before the series, the different options we have, so that we weren't surprised by anything."

Dhaka Community Medical College & Dental Unit
ঢাকা কমিউনিটি মেডিকেল কলেজ ও ডেন্টাল ইউনিট
১৯০/১, বড় মথাবাজার, গ্যারালেন কেম্পেইট, ঢাকা। ফোন: ৯০৫১১৯০-১, ৯০১৪৮৮৭
শিক্ষা ও চিকিৎসা সেবায় অগ্রদূত