

SPORT



County still excites Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal will fly to England today to play for English county side Essex Eagles in the NatWest T20 Blast.

"I played county cricket before but it's always an opportunity for a player to play county cricket. Every experience counts and I believe the stint with Essex will also give me some experience, which will help my batting," said Tamim yesterday. "I am still excited as I am going to play county cricket. My main aim would be to play good cricket there and fulfil my team's desire," added Tamim, who got his first taste of county cricket after signing for Nottinghamshire as a short-term replacement for David Hussey in June 2011.

If everything goes according to plan and Australia arrive in Dhaka as scheduled on August 18 then the southpaw opener will return home on August 1, otherwise his stint with Essex will be extended.

Australia is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka next month to play two Tests against the Tigers in Dhaka and Chittagong but the pay dispute in Australia cricket has cast doubts about the tour.

Tamim had received the offer from Essex after the Tigers' first two games in the ICC Champions Trophy against hosts England and Australia where the left-hander scored 128 and 95 to maintain a rare consistency in his batting.

Dutchman Ryan ten Doeschate is the captain of the Eagles and Tamim will have former England player Ravi Bopara and Ashar Zaidi -- both of whom have played in the Dhaka Premier League and Bangladesh Premier League -- as teammates.



Admiring his trusty willow which has been serving him so well recently, Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal will be hoping to continue his form with the bat as he heads to Essex today to take part in the NatWest T20 Blast. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

C'WEALTH CHESS C'SHIP Zia extends winning run

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman extended his winning streak in the Commonwealth Chess Championship to three games when he beat Indian Thanki Hemal Karsanji in the fourth round in New Delhi yesterday.

Out of the four Bangladeshi Grand Masters, only Zia overcame the fourth-round hurdle. GM Abdullah Al Rakib drew and GM Niaz Murshed and GM Enamul Hossain Razib lost to their respective rivals and slipped.

With three straight wins, Zia has secured three points from four matches, equaling compatriot GM Rakib, who drew with Indian Erigaisi Arjun.

Meanwhile, WFM Shirin Sultana beat Sri Lankan GPY Wijesuriya.

GM Niaz lost to defending champion Abhijit Gupta, GM Razib lost to Indian WCM Mrudul Dehankar, FM Taibur Rahman lost to Indian Pranavananda V, WIM Shamima Akter Liza lost to IM Praveen Kumar and WIM Rani Hamid lost to Kevansky Aron of South Africa.

The fifth-round matches were scheduled to take place on Thursday evening while it was a rest day for age-group players.

HP make it two in two

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazmul Hasan slammed a hundred as the BCB High Performance team secured a 70-run victory over Northern Territory Invitational XI in their second one-day match at the Marrara Cricket Ground (MCG) 1 in Darwin yesterday.

Nazmul hit 101 off 102 balls with eight boundaries as the touring side, which managed a hard-fought one-wicket victory in the first game against the same opponents, piled up 313 for seven in 50 overs.

Irfan Shukkur's 60 and Anamul Haque's 58 were the other notable scores in the H's innings.

Daniel McKell claimed four wickets.

In reply, the local side could manage only 243 before being bowled out despite Jacob Dickman's 105.

Mohammad Saifuddin was the highest wicket-taker for the touring side by taking four wickets for 36 runs in eight overs.

The two teams will meet today in the third one-day match at the same venue.

FIFA fines BFF 10,000 francs

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation has been fined 10,000 Swiss francs (approximately 8.5 lakh taka) by FIFA for failing to clear former assistant coach Rene Koster's unpaid wages.

Football's world governing body instructed the BFF on May 7 to clear any dues owed to the Dutchman after he had lodged a complaint claiming he was owed 80,000 euros in accordance with his two-year contract.

Koster was sacked in October 2014, a year and three months into his appointment.

"Yes, we got a letter from FIFA on the first day after Eid vacation and were asked to pay 10,000 Swiss francs as a fine within 30 days over the row regarding Koster's unpaid wages," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, adding that they had been seeking an amicable solution with Koster.

Preparations on despite dispute

Australia pay row causes cancellation of A team's South Africa tour

SPORTS REPORTER

There has been uneasiness in Bangladesh following the escalation of the pay dispute between Cricket Australia (CA) and the Australia Cricketers' Association (ACA). The latest development of Australia's players boycotting this month's Australia A tour to South Africa added more worry on Thursday, with a two-Test Australian tour of Bangladesh scheduled next month in Dhaka and Chittagong.

But the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has enough time on their hands before thinking anything negative about the two-match Test series. BCB chief executive Nizamuddin Chowdhury said yesterday that they were going ahead with their preparations for the tour. "As far as we are concerned, we have been preparing for the series, our players will join the camp as scheduled [July 10]. Australia are scheduled to arrive here in mid August, so it's not the time to comment [about the uncertainty]. The Australian inspection team will come here shortly. We are hopeful that they will come on schedule and there is no scope to think of any alternative," Nizamuddin told reporters at the

Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Meanwhile, the ACA said the players were unavailable to tour South Africa for the Australia A team without an agreed pay deal or new Memorandum of Understanding, escalating a bitter pay dispute which threatens to derail senior tours to Bangladesh and India as well as this year's home Ashes.

"It is with great frustration that with no progress towards resolving the current dispute, Australia A players confirm they will not tour South Africa," ACA said in a statement.

"This decision is made in support of more than 200 male and female players who are now unemployed."

Cricket Australia (CA) said it was disappointed with the players' decision not to go on the A team tour of South Africa.

"CA regrets that players have made this decision despite progress made in talks between CA and the ACA in meetings over the past week, including regular communication between CEOs," it said in a statement.

"While a new MOU has not yet been agreed, CA is of the view that these talks should have enabled the tour to proceed as planned."

CA said it has advised Cricket South Africa of the players' decision.

The tour was to include four-day matches and a limited overs tri-series, also involving India A.

Australia A's squad of 19 for both formats included Test players Glenn Maxwell and Jackson Bird as well as Khawaja.

"By making this call, the Australia A players have sacrificed their own ambitions for the collective -- an incredibly selfless act that shows their strength and overall commitment to the group," the ACA said.

There are fears now that the pay row could scupper next month's Test tour to Bangladesh, the one-day international series in India in September and even the Ashes against England, which are due to begin with the first of five Tests in Brisbane in late November.

CA and the players' union hit an impasse after the board attempted to scrap a 20-year-old arrangement giving cricketers a fixed share of revenues, in favour of dividing surpluses among elite players and offering a pay rise.

CA said it will continue to work towards a new MOU and called on the ACA to show "the flexibility clearly now needed to achieve that outcome."

Under-23 team face Abahani test today

SPORTS REPORTER

Australian coach Andrew Ord trimmed the U-23 national football team to 28 members yesterday with striker Mannaf Rabbi and midfielders Kaushik Barua, Mehbub Hossain Nayan and Abdul Malek being cut from the team.

After the first practice match against Dhaka Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today, the 37-year-old coach will declare a final 23-member squad on Saturday for the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers, which will be held in Palestine from July 19 to 23.

"Four players were released yesterday [Thursday] and five more players will be released after the practice match against Dhaka Abahani," said team manager Satyjit Das Rupu, adding that three players had already been released before the Eid-ul-fitr vacation.

The team will play three practice matches ahead of their Group E battle against Jordan, Tajikistan and hosts Palestine.

Following the match today, Ord's charges will fly to Kathmandu on July 9 for their second practice match against the Nepal U-23 team on July 11.

"We will leave Kathmandu on July 12 after playing the match and then the U-23 team is scheduled to play the third practice match against the Qatar U-23 team on July 23. The boys will stay there for three days and practice before heading to Palestine via Jordan on July 17," said Rupu.



Joe Root could not think of a better way to mark his debut as Test captain. Here the sublime right-hander upper cuts on way a magnificent unbeaten 184 on the first day of the opening Test against South Africa at Lord's yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Eng firmly Root-ed

REUTERS, London

New England captain Joe Root rode his luck to make a battling unbeaten 184 and lift the hosts to a commanding 357 for five on the opening day of the first Test against South Africa at Lord's on Thursday.

Root, dropped twice, and Ben Stokes (56) shared a fifth-wicket partnership of 114 to dig England out of a deep hole after they had stumbled to 82 for four at lunch having won the toss in excellent batting conditions.

The skipper reached his 12th test century by sweeping spinner Keshav Maharaj for three, raising his bat to all

corners of a sun-kissed home of cricket as a packed crowd rose to applaud him.

Root emulated the feat of the last three England test captains, Alastair Cook, Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Strauss, in scoring a hundred in his first game in charge but his day had not started well.

South Africa fast bowler Vernon Philander dismissed openers Alastair Cook (three) and Keaton Jennings (eight), forcing Root to stride out to the middle with his team reeling at 17 for two.

The 26-year-old struggled to find his usual fluency against a disciplined South Africa pace attack and, on 16, he was dropped at gully off Kagiso Rabada shortly after offering a much

more difficult chance to fine leg.

Root and Stokes batted watchfully in the afternoon session, accumulating runs with careful placement.

After passing his century, Root lit up the ground with crisp punches through mid-wicket and square drives but he had another reprieve on 149 when he was stumped off a no-ball from Maharaj.

He struck 26 fours and one six, sharing an unbroken partnership of 167 with Moeen Ali, who finished on 61 not out.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 357-5 in 87 overs (Root 184 not out, Stokes 56, Moeen 61 not out; Philander 46-3, Morkel 64-1, Rabada 94-1)

Openers power SL home

AFP, Hambantota

Openers Niroshan Dickwella and Danushka Gunathilaka hit sublime centuries to help Sri Lanka humble Zimbabwe by eight wickets in the third one-day international in Hambantota on Thursday.

Chasing 311 for victory, the hosts rode on a 229-run opening stand between Dickwella (102) and Gunathilaka (116) to center home in 47.2 overs and earn a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

The left-handed batting duo got their maiden ODI hundreds to overshadow Zimbabwe opener Hamilton Masakadza's sparkling 111 in the visitors' 310-8 after being put into bat first.

While wicketkeeper-batsman Dickwella hit 14 boundaries during his stay, Gunathilaka smashed 15 fours and a six to flay the Zimbabwe attack at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium.

"It was a fantastic effort by the boys. After losing the first game, we had our

backs against the wall and we came back well," Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews said.

"The way Dickwella and Gunathilaka batted, we could have chased 350 on that wicket," he said of his team that hunted down a 300-plus run target for the first time on home soil.

Earlier Masakadza put on a crucial 127-run partnership for the second wicket with Tarisai Musakanda (48) before Sri Lankan bowlers struck back to check Zimbabwe's surge.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: 310 for 8 in 50 overs (Masakadza 111, Musakanda 48, Williams 43, Raza 25 not out, Moor 24; Hasaranga 2-44, Gunaratne 2-53)

SRI LANKA: 312 for 2 in 47.2 overs (Dickwella 102, Gunathilaka 116, Mendis 28 not out, Tharanga 44 not out; Williams 1-63, Waller 1-32)

Result: Sri Lanka won by eight wickets and lead the five-match series 2-1.

Player-of-the-match: Danushka Gunathilaka.



Sri Lanka openers Niroshan Dickwella (R) and Danushka Gunathilaka both scored fantastic centuries and put on a 229-run stand as the hosts defeated Zimbabwe by eight wickets in Hambantota yesterday. PHOTO: AFP