

Tigers to train in Chittagong too

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to arrange a training camp for the Tigers in Chittagong from August 4 as the second Test against Australia will take place at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium from September 4.

The Bangladesh cricketers have already been through a strenuous fitness camp in Dhaka, the venue for the first Test, and chairman of the BCB cricket operations committee Akram Khan informed that the camp in Chittagong would ensure that the cricketers properly acclimatise to the conditions and pitches in the port city.

The Tigers are also going to play a practice match in Chittagong.

"The cricketers are performing well in the conditioning camp in Dhaka. They are doing net practice there. They will start their conditioning camp in Chittagong by playing a practice match. We have a scheduled Test match in Chittagong against Australia, so our main target will be to cope with the wickets and conditions soon," Khan told reporters in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Although the first Test scheduled to start at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from August 27, the tour is hanging in the balance as it finds itself in the middle

of a heated pay dispute between Cricket Australia and its players.

Khan however provided good news as he informed that there was a high chance of Zimbabwe A coming to Bangladesh to play a series, while discussions were ongoing with Afghanistan about a possible visit here as well.

The former national captain also hoped that the dispute in Australia would be resolved in time for the series.

"It's Cricket Australia's internal problem, but we are taking preparations for the series as per schedule. We are thinking positively about the series. This series is very important for us as we have South Africa series after it."

He also informed that the Bangladesh Cricket Board had not renewed batting coach Thilan Samaraweera's contract after Champions Trophy, and added that a new batting coach would arrive soon.

"We are negotiating with a batting coach and he will probably arrive within a few days. He will work particularly with lower order batsmen. We are hiring him for the short term but if it is a good fit then we will extend the deal. I cannot name him as per the code of conduct, but I can say that he is an Australian," concluded Khan. It was learnt that former Australian first-class cricketer and coach Mark O'Neill may get that job.

NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL Semi lineups confirmed

SPORTS REPORTER

The lineup of both semifinals in the men's and women's sections of the Shahjalal Islami Bank National Volleyball Championship completed yesterday at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

In men's section, Power Development Board emerged group champions after beating Khulna in 3-0 sets to set up a semifinal clash against Bangladesh Navy, who defeated Pabna 3-0. Titan Gas set up their semifinal clash against Bangladesh Army after beating Chittagong University 3-0. While Army beat Bholia by the same margin.

In women's section, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation notched up a 3-0 sets win over Bangladesh Police and they will meet Rajshahi in one of the semifinals.

Bangladesh Ansar beat Chittagong University 3-0 to claim their semifinal spot against Chittagong district, who defeated Pabna 3-1.

All four semifinals will take place today at the same venue.

Siddikur strikes it hot in Hamburg

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman swung his way to second position in the Porsche European Open in Hamburg, Germany on Friday.

The two-time Asian Tour winner, who is participating in the 2-million-euro event courtesy of a finish within the top twenty of last year's Asian Tour Order of Merit, moved 31 places up from the first round.

The 32-year-old golfer had started the event with two-under-par (70) on Thursday and was in 33rd position, having exchanged five birdies for three bogeys. However, the ace golfer turned on his A Game yesterday as he hit eight birdies against two bogeys on a rain-affected day at the Green Eagle Golf Courses.

With an aggregate score of eight-under-par (136), Siddikur was trailing the leader, England's Stephen Chesters, by a single shot.

Mentionable here is that the ace Bangladeshi golfer had finished second in the Mauritius Open – a tri-sanctioned event – last year, despite leading by three shots till the 16th hole on the fourth and final day. That second-place finish, however, earned him a few invitations from the European Tour, regarded as the second best tour in the world after the US PGA Tour.



All four semifinals will take place today at the same venue.



Abahani striker Emeka Darlington (airborne) heads in the opening goal of the tenth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League in the opening match against Saif Sporting Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The defending champions won the match 3-2.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Abahani edge Saif in opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani got off to a winning start in the Bangladesh Premier League with a hard-fought 3-2 win over newcomers Saif Sporting Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Striker-turned-defender Nasir Chowdhury struck the winning goal six minutes from time after the five-time champions had surrendered a two-goal lead in the opening contest of the league's tenth edition. The encounter's pace was sluggish as a number of players from both sides suffered muscle strains.

Following a reduction in the number of eligible foreign players, the focus had shifted to local players, especially the forwards. But it was Abahani's Nigerian forward Emeka Darlington, scorer of nine goals in the last edition, who stole the show initially with a brace in the first half. Later though, local players stepped up and scored three of the match's remaining goals.

Federation Cup champions Abahani were far from the standard they had set during the season's curtain raiser tournament and looked

pretty ordinary throughout the game as they failed to produce attacks from either flank, owing partly to the absence of right back-cum-captain Mamun Mia, who is suffering from Chikungunya.

The Sky Blues though, launched the first attack in the fourth minute, with Wali Faisal releasing a cross from the right for Emeka, who saw his flick drift away from the open net.

With both sides vying for control, Abahani took the lead in the 21st minute when unmarked Emeka

ABAHANI 3 - 2 SAIF SC
EMEKA 21, 29; NASIR 84
TAPU 45+3, JEWEL 49

headed a Wali cross home from inside the six-yard box. Eight minutes later, the Nigerian doubled Abahani's lead by converting a penalty kick after young forward Saad Uddin was brought down by Saif SC defender Rahmat Mia.

Abahani should have widened the margin in the 42nd minute when Wali passed the ball from a free-kick towards Sohel Rana, who drove an angular shot which was parried away for a corner by goalkeeper Anisur Rahman.

After that, Saif SC started to gain control of the match and posed a

heavy challenge in stoppage time of the first half. They created two scoring opportunities, with Colombian striker Valencia Olaya heading narrowly wide of the near post before defender Tapu Barman scored with a header.

Saif SC coach Ryan Northmore sent on Jewel Rana in place of Hemanta Vincent Biswas after restart and the winger levelled the scores in the 49th minute with a diving header on a low cross from Rahim Uddin.

Saif SC should have got ahead in the 66th minute, but Jewel frustrated his teammates by floating the ball over the crossbar from inside the danger zone.

As the match headed towards a draw, Abahani stole victory, thanks to Rahmat Mia's miscued clearance which kindly came towards unmarked Nasir, who headed the ball home from close range.

Two matches are scheduled for today. In the first match, to kick off at 5:00pm, Brothers Union will take on Team BJMC while three-time champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club will face off against Mohammedan Sporting Club at 7:15pm. Both matches will be held at the Big Bowl.

Sagar 82nd in 50m freestyle

SPORTS REPORTER

Swimmer Mahfizur Rahman Sagar became 82nd among 118 swimmers in the 50m freestyle event of the 17th FINA World Championships in Budapest, Hungary yesterday.

Sagar, who also failed to better his personal best in the 100m freestyle a couple of days ago, finished second among 10 swimmers in Heat No. 5 with a timing of 24.16 seconds.

The Bangladesh swimmer had taken 23.92 seconds to produce his personal best in this event during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Araf SC beat Mansur SC

SPORTS REPORTER

Araf Sporting Club came from behind to post a 3-1 win over Mansur Sporting Club in the Dhaka Metropolis Football Tournament at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Rony Hasan, Farhad and Naimuddin struck one goal apiece for the winning side after Pavel had put Mansur SC ahead in the 52nd minute.

SLC turns down PCB invitation

PTI, Karachi

The Sri Lankan cricket board has turned down an invitation from the Pakistan Cricket Board to send its team to Lahore to play two T20 matches at the start of its home series in October.

PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan confirmed that after the suicide bomb attack in Lahore earlier this week, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has refused to send their team for the T20 matches.

"I had spoken to my Sri Lankan cricket counterpart during the ICC meetings and I had invited him to send his team to Lahore to play the T20 matches and start the series against Pakistan with rest of matches to be played in the UAE," Khan said.

He said he had been given assurance by the Sri Lankan cricket head that he would speak to his government and get clearance for the matches.

"I am a bit surprised at Sri Lankan's refusal because terror attacks are happening everywhere in the world and sports events are still going on."

India extend lead to 498

AFP, Galle

A dominant India spared Sri Lanka the ignominy of a follow-on but Virat Kohli and Abhinav Mukund struck fluent half-centuries to tighten the touring side's grip on the first Test on Friday.

The world's top-ranked Test team shot out their depleted hosts for 291 to take a 309-run first innings lead and were 189-3 after third day's play at the Galle International Stadium.

Sri Lanka, already a batsman short after Asela Gunaratne fractured his thumb, received a new setback when Rangana Herath, leading the side in absence of ailing regular skipper Dinesh Chandimal, left the field with a hand injury.

India captain Kohli was unbeaten on 76 at stumps, after adding 133 runs with Mukund whose dismissal for 81 signalled the end of the day's play.

Earlier, Sri Lanka resumed on 154-5 and could have been in bigger trouble but for Dilruwan Perera's gutsy 92 not out.

Angelo Mathews held the key to Sri Lanka's survival and the former captain made 83 before Ravindra Jadeja (3-67) sent him back.

The spinner sent down a flighted delivery and Mathews moved towards leg and slapped it straight to Kohli at short cover. Mathews hit 11 boundaries and a six.

Perera enjoyed an eventful stay at the crease.

Two balls after an appeal for a catch



Abhinav Mukund scored 81 as India strengthened their stranglehold over Sri Lanka on the third day of the first Test at Galle yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

off his boot was turned down, Perera was adjudged lbw to Jadeja. The decision was overturned after replays suggested the ball would have sailed over the stumps.

Perera hit Ravichandran Ashwin for a six and took a single off the next ball to bring up his fifth test fifty.

Jadeja dismissed Herath for nine and debutant Hardik Pandya castled Nuwan Pradeep for 10 to claim his first Test wicket.

Perera was eight runs away from his maiden Test century when he ran out of partners. His belligerent knock included 10 fours and four sixes.

Perera then returned to dismiss

Shikhar Dhawan for 14 after India opted against enforcing the follow-on and Lahiru Kumara sent back Cheteshwar Pujara for 15.

Kohli and Mukund shared a century-plus partnership for the third wicket as India moved 498 runs ahead and in a commanding position to take a 1-0 lead in the three-Test series.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 600

SRI LANKA: First innings 291 (Tharanga 64, Mathews 83, Perera 92 not out; Shami 2-45, Jadeja 3-67)

INDIA: Second innings 189 for 3 (Mukund 81, Kohli 76 not out; Perera 1-42, Kumara 1-53, Gunathilaka 1-15)

Warner blasts CA's tactics

AAP, Sydney

As players start to feel the financial pinch, Test star David Warner has blasted Cricket Australia's tactics in the ongoing pay row. As crisis talks continued to try and end the pay impasse, Warner says players are suffering through CA's fault.

"We offered \$30 million of our money to grassroots as a peace plan. It was ignored," Warner said on an Instagram post. "We asked for mediation twice before and it was rejected."

"Now CA says there is a crisis. The players are unemployed and some are hurting financially but continue to train. Administrators all still being paid. How is it our fault that no deal is done?"

Warner and fringe Test paceman Jackson Bird said players were steadfast behind the Australian Cricketers' Association.

The players' union said it has been pushing for mediation all along, with about 230 cricketers effectively unemployed since the start of the month after the expiry of the last pay deal.

Warner, one of the richest cricketers in Australia, evoked the emotion of the baggy green cap to plead the players' case.

"This Baggy means the world to me.



Myself and all the other cricketers female and male want to get out there and play," he said.

Fast bowler Bird said players remained united.

"It's obviously not an ideal situation," Bird told Australian Cricket Podcast. "It's important that all the players stick together."

Bird has been training normally, hoping for a call up for Australia's two-Test tour of Bangladesh in late August -- should the pay dispute get sorted.

CA CEO James Sutherland has suggested short-term contracts could cover the Bangladesh tour, while arbitration settled the dispute.

"It obviously plays on your mind a little bit not having a deal done," Bird said.

"There's a lot of guys that (it's) playing on their minds a little bit more than the guys that are still on contract."

"Hopefully that will get sorted out pretty quickly."

Sutherland on Thursday said arbitration was a logical step if the stalemate continued early next week.

But he held some hope the warring factions could reach lasting peace without arbitration.

"Failing that, we're prepared to say that we put the issues to arbitration, we accept the umpire's decision and the game goes on," Sutherland said.