

SPORTS



Skipper Shakib Al Hasan's all-round show powered Dhaka Dynamites to a 43-run victory against Rangpur Riders in a BPL match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Decision on coach in final stages

SPORTS REPORTER



The process of naming a new coach for the Bangladesh cricket team is in full flow as former coach Richard Pybus outlined his plans for the team in a presentation to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday. The BCB is all set to finalise the new head coach of the Tigers in the upcoming board meeting on December 10 and yesterday president Nazmul Hassan hinted at a candidate who is yet to be named.

Hassan spoke to the media after the meeting with Pybus and informed that former West Indies cricketer and coach Phil Simmons will also arrive for an interview, while keeping everyone in the dark about a third possible candidate.

"Phil Simmons will arrive on December 9 and before him there is another coach who will come for the interview but I am not able to disclose his name at the moment as it's not finalised yet and we are also in talks with a few others. They have to arrive by this time as we want to finalise the issue in the upcoming board meeting on December 10," Nazmul told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur.

According to sources former Australian cricketer and coach Geoff Marsh is likely to arrive before Simmons and the BCB is very interested in him, but there is very little chance for Marsh to eventually become the Tigers' head coach. However it was also learned that the senior cricketers have shown interest in Simmons but the board seems less keen on the West Indian.

Hassan said that the 53-year old Pybus who left the Bangladesh job in October 2012 citing interference of the then AHM Mustafa Kamal-led board after serving only four months, initiated the process of coming back into the Bangladesh coaching picture.

"He is still saying those things but I don't want to talk about the previous board. I have asked him why you want to join Bangladesh again and he gave the answer but I don't think I should disclose what he said. Obviously we do have that incident in our mind and we did ask a lot of questions regarding that issue," he said.

Meanwhile Pybus, who arrived on Tuesday with an interest in becoming the Tigers' head coach, gave a presentation which mainly focused on long-term planning such as regional cricket development, including the institution of a centre of excellence that is not focused on Dhaka.

"Obviously his presentation was good -- he mainly focused on long term planning but what we have to make sure it is both long and short term as we have the World Cup in 2019, so it's also important for us. However, whatever he wants, we may not give those instantly but at the end his plan will definitely help Bangladesh cricket," Hassan added.

He also informed that the board will have a meeting regarding the issue with assistant coach Richard Halsall, team manager Khaled Mahmud, other coaching staff and players on December 9.

After the presentation, the media were eagerly waiting for Pybus who was expected to leave last night. "It was a wonderful day and the meeting was fantastic," was all Pybus would say about the meeting.

It was a wonderful day and the meeting was fantastic.

Shakib fires Dhaka to second

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan's all-round performance guided defending champion Dhaka Dynamites to a comfortable 43-run win over Rangpur Riders and confirmed the defending champions' second-placed finish at the end of the group stage of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The Dynamites successfully managed to defend the small target of 138 as Rangpur eventually ended the chase on 97 for seven.

Both Dhaka and Khulna Titans have seven wins in 12 games but with a better net run rate Dhaka have ensured that they will get two chances to qualify for the final of the fifth edition.

Dhaka will take on table-toppers Comilla Victorians in the first qualifier on Friday, with the winner going through to the final and the losing team playing the second qualifier against the winner of the eliminator between Rangpur Riders and Khulna Titans.

Rangpur rested their regular skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Brendon McCullum led the side which featured seven changes while Dhaka

WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT **458** | TOTAL 4s HIT **922**

Most 6s hit by a player: **23, Evin Lewis, Dhaka Dynamites**

Most 4s hit by a player: **36, Tamim Iqbal, Comilla Victorians**

Mehedi however departed after scoring 33 off 23 balls with three fours and a six but Shakib remained unbeaten on 47 off 33 balls which included a couple of sixes and as many fours as Dhaka added 52 runs in the last five overs to post 137 for seven.

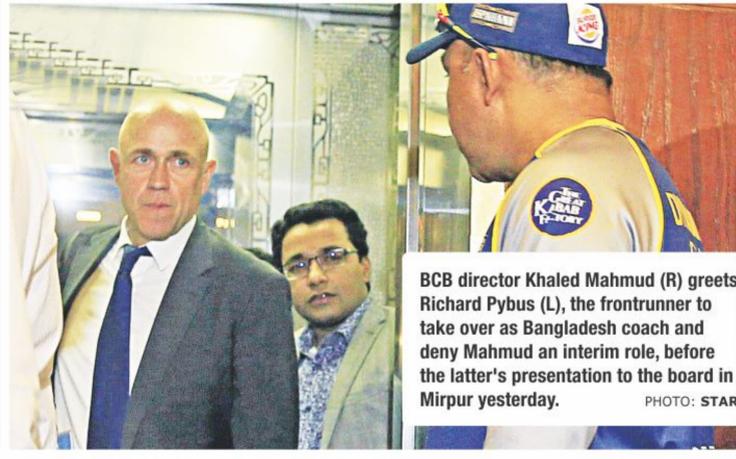
Fast bowler Ebadat Hossain picked up two wickets on BPL debut but was expensive, conceding 37 runs, and Rubel Hossain also took two wickets for the bowling side.

In reply, Rangpur never looked comfortable as Adam Lyth (3), McCullum (1) and Shahrar Nafees (7) failed early while opener Johnson Charles, who looked compact before being dealt a controversial leg-before decision off a Shakib delivery that hit the inside edge on its way to the pad, fell for a 30-ball 26.

Another controversial decision came against right hander Mohammad Mithun when he was given out leg-before after coming down the track to Shakib.

Ravi Bopara remained unbeaten on 28 at the end but could not take Rangpur anywhere close to the modest target.

Player-of-the-match Shakib bagged two wickets for just 13 runs from his four overs while pacer Abu Hider also took a couple for Dhaka.



BCB director Khaled Mahmud (R) greets Richard Pybus (L), the frontrunner to take over as Bangladesh coach and deny Mahmud an interim role, before the latter's presentation to the board in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

WHAT THEY SAID



A very poor wicket

"I thought it was a very poor wicket. I think there is a lot of world-class players in this tournament. People want to turn up and be able to watch some of the best players in the world which allows them to play exciting cricket. But I personally don't think that was exciting cricket. I think the tournament can benefit from better surfaces than the one we've just seen today."

-Rangpur Riders' batsman **Brendon McCullum** also joined the chorus of criticism of the Mirpur wicket.



There is no pressure now

"Obviously it's a relief to win the game as we started the tournament pretty well but since losing a few matches in the middle this win was very much needed for us. There is also the advantage of being in the top two in the points table where you get two matches to reach the final. And if we were in third or fourth position there would obviously have been some extra pressure but now we are pressure-less."

-Dhaka Dynamites batsman **Mehedi Maruf** after confirming their qualifier by beating Rangpur Riders.

Lanka force a draw India win ninth series in a row

AFP, New Delhi



India won a record ninth Test series in succession Wednesday after drawing the pollution-tainted third and final Test with Sri Lanka in New Delhi.

Top-ranked India won the series 1-0 to equal Australia's record of nine successive Test series victories, between 2005-2008.

The first Test between India and Sri Lanka in Kolkata had ended in a draw and the hosts won the second game by an innings and 239 runs.

But Sri Lanka salvaged some pride in the final match thanks to Dhananjaya de Silva and Roshen Silva, who defied the odds and held out for a draw.

The Test at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground was marred by severe pollution, with fast bowlers from both sides vomiting Tuesday amid thick smog.

"It was a tough time. The thing is, in Sri Lanka we are not used that, so that's why we struggled (on) the first two days," said Sri Lankan captain Dinesh Chandimal.

"But after that we needed to continue the game. We told the boys we have to forget about that and we need to play the game."

"Today is a fantastic day. It feels like Sri Lanka," quipped the captain, referring to the less smoggy weather Wednesday.

Dhananjaya, who retired hurt on 119 due to muscle stiffness, and Roshen (74 not out) held Sri Lanka steady over three sessions of play on the final day, after the visitors were set a huge 410 victory target late on day four.

Indian skipper Virat Kohli praised the Sri Lankan batsman for digging their heels in on a wearing pitch.

"Always when you're not able to finish the game off in the second innings, especially when you had them three down yesterday, feels a bit of (a) disappointment, but I wouldn't say it's a very bad feeling," he said.

"They played well, firstly, credit to them. They really stuck it out. Their batsmen really applied themselves, showed composure and confidence and didn't give our bowlers anything throughout the day."

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 536 for 7 decl
SRI LANKA: First innings 373
INDIA: Second innings 246 for 5 decl
SRI LANKA: Second innings 299 for 5 (De Silva 119 rtd hurt, Chandimal 36, R Silva 74 not out, Dickwella 44 not out; Jadeja 3-81)
Result: Match drawn and India won the three-match series 1-0.
Player-of-the-match: Virat Kohli.
Player-of-the-series: Virat Kohli.



Sri Lanka batsman **Dhananjaya De Silva** raises his bat after his century on the fifth day of third Test against India in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SCORES IN BRIEF

DHAKA V RANGPUR

DHAKA DYNAMITES: 137 for 7 in 20 overs (Lewis 14, Maruf 33, Shakib 47 not out; Rubel 2-32, Ebadat 2-37)
RANGPUR RIDERS: 94 for 7 in 20 overs (Charles 26, Bopara 28 not out, Nahidul 13; Shakib 2-13, Hider 2-23)
Result: Dhaka Dynamites won by 43 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Shakib Al Hasan.

COMILLA V SYLHET

COMILLA VICTORIANS: 170 for 4 in 20 overs (Liton 65, Samuels 55, Malik 28 not out; Nabil 1-33, Nasir 1-20)
SYLHET SIXERS: 145 for 7 in 20 overs (Fletcher 25, Babar 20, Sabbir 31; Mahedi 2-31, Hasan 2-35, Gremer 3-15)
Result: Comilla Victorians won by 25 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Liton Das.

Mitchell back in Aus fold

AFP, Adelaide

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh was added to Australia's 13-man squad Wednesday for next week's third Test in Perth as the home side bid to clinch the Ashes.

Marsh comes into the squad in place of paceman Chadd Sayers, who did not feature in Australia's two opening Test wins over England.

Steve Smith's Australians wrapped up a 120-run victory over the tourists in the second, day-night Adelaide Test, leaving them just one win away from retrieving the urn off England.

U-19s looking to sustain WC gains

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Under-19 cricket team will leave for New Zealand on December 26 with a target to maintain the position they had achieved in the last ICC Youth World Cup held in Bangladesh in 2016.

Hosts Bangladesh finished third, their best result in the competition, in the last event and while junior team selector Ehsanul Haque was wary of the different conditions in New Zealand, he remained optimistic of the team's ability to retain the hard-earned status when announcing the 15-member squad yesterday for the ICC Under-19 World Cup starting from January 13 next year.

The selectors brought only one change -- left-arm spinner Tipu Sultan replacing Shakhawat Hossain -- to the squad that played the Youth Asia Cup in Malaysia in November this year, where they beat Nepal, Malaysia and India in the group stage before losing the semifinal against Pakistan through the D/L method.

With the conditions in mind, the selectors included four pacers in Robiul Haque, Qazi Onik Islam, Roni Hossen and Hasan Mahmud while Nayeem Hasan and Tipu were the spinners in the squad.

The youth team had not gotten enough opportunities to tune up for the challenging conditions in New Zealand and so a 10-day residential camp will take place in Dunedin to get the players accustomed to the conditions. They will also play three practice matches against local teams.

Before taking the field against Namibia on January 13 in their first Group C match, the Bangladesh Under-19s will play two lead-up games against Pakistan and Afghanistan in Christchurch. The remaining two group matches against Canada and England will be held on January 15 and 18 respectively.

Coach Damien Wright was upbeat about his boys' success in the Asia Cup.

"I think it's a very well-balanced team to go to play in New Zealand and perform particularly well. So I am very confident and I think the boys are in a good space, and played particularly well in the last tournament but it's really important for the guys to continue that success from the last world cup that we hosted here and it's important to make sure that the Bangladesh Under-19 team perform well and make it to semifinals, that's what we're looking at and that's our goal," said Wright.

Comilla brush aside Sylhet

SPORTS REPORTER

Table-toppers Comilla Victorians completed the Bangladesh Premier League group stage on a high with their ninth win from 12 games by beating Sylhet Sixers by 25 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Despite winning the first three games at their home ground, Sylhet lost the way since then as they managed to win just another game in the tournament.

It was a matter of pride for the Sixers coming into their final game but they eventually ended the chase of Comilla's 170 for four on 145 for 7.

Sabbir Rahman was the highest scorer with 31 off 20 balls while Andre Fletcher's 25 was the other notable performance for the Sixers.

Victorians Zimbabwean leg-spinner Graeme Cremer picked up three wickets while off-spinner Mahedi Hasan took two for the bowling side.

Comilla's regular skipper Tamim Iqbal was rested as Pakistani Shoaib Malik led the side. Opener Liton Das finally found his touch and top-scored with 65 off 43 balls with three sixes and six fours after Sylhet won the toss.

West Indian Marlon Samuels scored a 43-ball 55 run knock, which included two sixes and five fours, while Malik remained not out on 28 off 18 balls at the end.

SQUAD

Saif Hassan (captain), Afif Hossain (vice-captain), Pinak Ghosh, Naim Sheikh, Towhid Ridoy, Aminul Islam, Mohammad Rakib, Mahidul Islam, Shakil Hossain, Robiul Haque, Nayeem Hasan, Qazi Onik Islam, Roni Hossen, Hasan Mahmud and Tipu Sultan.