



Shakib looking good for return

New temporary coach for Nidahas Trophy?

SPORTS REPORTER



from March 6. Hosts Sri Lanka and India are the two other teams in the triangular T20I tournament.

Cricket Board's (BCB's) physician, expressed his optimism about the inspirational all-rounder's return for the upcoming Sri Lanka tour.

"We don't think there is any uncertainty about his return for the Sri Lanka tour. I hope he will be fully fit within this month. He started fitness training today and he will not have a problem with bowling practice, but it may take two or three days for him to start batting," said Chowdhury yesterday.

"He already overcame the danger period, so if he wants to play the ongoing Dhaka Premier League there is no bar from our side," he added.

Shakib had sustained an injury to his left little finger during the ODI tri-series final in Mirpur on January 27 and missed the Test and T20I series against Sri Lanka, both of which the home side lost badly. Shakib's loss seemed to severely dent the confidence

of the team and interestingly, even ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza admitted that in a recent conversation with the media in which he hoped that Shakib's return will change the dipping fortunes of the side.

Meanwhile, the BCB was yet to decide about who will take the role of head coach for the Sri Lanka trip as Khaled Mahmud already told the media that he was not interested to continue as a technical director. According to sources, the board is also thinking about temporarily giving the Debashish Chowdhury, Bangladesh responsibility to one of the existing foreign coaching staff as they are still searching for a suitable head coach after the departure of Chandika Hathurusingha last November.

> However there will be a short training camp with the final squad, most likely a three-day camp, before the team leaves for Sri Lanka on March 4 as the players have been playing the ongoing Dhaka League.

> The selectors in the meantime called up fourteen pace bowlers and five batsmen to take part in a nine-day special practice camp under Bangladesh bowling coach Courtney Walsh at the BCB National Cricket Academy from today.

> The selected players are Taskin Ahmed, Rubel Hossain, Imrul Kayes, Abu Jayed, Ebadat Hossain, Soumya Sarkar, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Ariful Haque, Abul Hasan, Mohammad Robiul, Zakir Hasan, Abu Hider, Khaled Ahmed, Sabbir Ahmed, Mohammad Saifuddin, Qazi Onik, Kamrul Islam Rabbi and Hossain Ali.



Bangladesh T20I and Test captain Shakib Al Hasan looks set to return from a finger injury to resume his duties of lifting a beleaguered team as he started fitness training at the BCB gymnasium in Mirpur yesterday.

FIROZ AHMED

5-star Mash delivers Abahani's fifth



Abahani captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza put on a commanding display of pace bowling to pick up his fourth List A five-for in the Dhaka Premier League match against Sheikh Jamal at the BKSP in Savar yesterday. РНОТО: ВСВ

SPORTS REPORTER



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza bowled Abahani to their fifth straight win in the Dhaka Premier League when the experienced pace bowler took five wickets

for 29 runs in a 47-run win over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the BKSP in Savar yester-

The inspirational Bangladesh ODI captain took two wickets with the new ball and then returned to mop up the Sheikh Jamal tail as Abahani defended a competitive 270 for seven. But it was left-arm spinner Sunzamul Islam who took the vital wicket of wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan, the right-hander who threw caution to the wind with a power-packed 83 off 61 balls. The tall batsman smashed 10 savage hits over the ropes. Once he was dismissed in the 42nd over, leaving his side at 205 for seven, Sheikh Jamal's hopes of a spectacular turnaround were effectively dashed. They were bowled out for 223 in 45.3 overs.

Earlier, the Abahani total was built around a fine century from opener Anamul Haque, who struck 116 off 122 balls. The right-hander hit a dozen fours and four sixes in his polished knock. Mosaddek Hossain scored a patient 49 but Abahani reached a respectable total mainly due to a fighting 48-run stand for the unbroken eighth wicket between Mehedi Hasan Miraz (34) and Sunzamul (24).

Brothers Union's Indian recruit Debabrata Das scored the other century of the day, also at the BKSP. But his unbeaten 112 was not enough to avoid a two-wicket defeat against holders Gazi Group.

Riding on Debabrata's 109-ball knock that run win against Prime Doleshwar.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ABAHANI V SHEIKH JAMAL DC

ABAHANI: 270 for 7 in 50 overs (Anamul 116, Mosaddek 49, Mehedi 34 not out, Sunzamul 24 not out; Robiul 3-47) SK JAMAL DC: 223 all out in 45.3 overs (Shykat 31, Saxena 43, Nurul 83, Al-Imran 24; Mashrafe 5-29, Mehedi 2-44)

Result: Abahani won by 47 runs. **BROTHERS UNION V GAZI GROUP**

BROTHERS UNION: 273 for 5 in 50 overs (Junaid 43, Das 112 not out, Kapali 41, Yasir 54, Ruhel 2-56, Nayeem 2-29) Gazi Group Cricketers: 276 for 8 in 49.1 overs (Imrul 65, Mominul 57, Gurkeerat 71 not out; Khaled 2-57, Mahedi 2-

49, Nihaduzzaman 2-43 Result: Gazi Group won by 2 wickets.

LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ V PRIME DOLESHWAR

LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ: 272 for 7 in 50 overs (Mazid 59, Naim 27, Naeem 78, Mushfigur 65, Nazmul 21; Reza 2-75,

PRIME DOLESHWAR SC: 217 all out in 47.5 overs (Imtiaz 35, Mahmud 20, Reza 25, Zohaib 24, Sharifullah 41, Sunny 28 not out; Mosharraf 4-40, Asif 3-46)

Result: Legends of Rupganj won by 55 runs.

featured seven fours and six sixes and was well supported by Alok Kapali's 41 and Yasir Ali's 32-ball 54, Brothers posted a fighting 273 for five in 50 overs.

But after Imrul Kayes (65) and Mominul Haque (57) gave Gazi a solid start, the holders never looked back with Indian recruit Gurkeerat Singh providing the finishing touches with an unbeaten 77. Singh hit five fours and a couple of sixes in his 88-ball undefeated knock as Gazi reached 276 for eight in 49.1 overs.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Legends of Rupganj recorded a 55-

for teams batting first, Legends of Rupgani thrived on three fifties to post 272 for seven. Opener Abdul Mazid scored 59 and skipper Naeem Islam struck 75. Mushfigur Rahim,

On a day where 270 was the lowest score

playing his first game in the Dhaka Premier League this year, scored a 67-ball 65, studded with eight fours. Arafat Sunny took three wickets for 40 runs. Forhad Reza took two wickets but the right-arm medium pacer conceded 75 runs in his 10 overs.

Prime Doleshwar, in their chase, were bundled out for 217 runs in 47.5 overs against the twin spin attack of Asif Hasan (3-46) and Mosharraf Hossain (4-40).

Imtiaz Hossain scored 35 while Sunny made an unbeaten 28.

After yesterday's fixtures Abahani opened up a four-point lead from their nearest challengers in the 12-team table. It was Sheikh Jamal's second defeat in five games. They are now sharing the crowded second spot with Legends of Rupganj and Prime Doleshwar. It



ANAMUL... 116

Kohli will rest if he wants to

PTI, New Delhi

Speedsters Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah's workload is expected to be a topic of discussion when the national selection committee headed by MSK Prasad meets this weekend to decide on the Indian squad for the tri-nation T20 series in Sri Lanka from March 6-18.

Virat Kohli has also played all the matches in South Africa but his case will be slightly different from others as a decision on resting him will depend on the skipper himself.

"If Virat wants rest, he will get it. In Virat's case, it's he who decides on whether he would like to opt out or not. But you never know he might just want to play the T20 series as this is the last tourney of the season. Once the tournament is over, he will get a fortnight off before the Indian Premier League," a top BCCI official told PTI

on condition of anonymity. When the chairman of selectors Prasad was asked by PTI on this matter, he refused to comment. But it is understood that fast bowling unit's composition will be a topic of discussion as and when the selection meeting is held.

in PSL opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal failed to fire in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) opener for holders Peshawar Zalmi against Multan Sultans at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The left-hander scored a run-a-ball 11 before being spectacularly caught at deep fine-leg while attempting a third successive boundary against left-arm quick Mohammad Irfan in the fourth over. Sent into bat, Zalmi posted 151-6 in their share of 20 overs with Mohammad Hafeez notching a 52-ball 59. The right-hander struck six fours and a six. West Indian Daren Sammy hammered an 11-ball 29 that contained three sixes and a couple of boundaries.

Both Tamim and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan played for Zalmi last season. But Shakib is not playing the PSL this time due to a finger injury he sustained during the triseries ODI final against Sri Lanka. Although Sabbir Rahman joined Zalmi as Shakib's cover, the right-hander was not included in the playing eleven for the opening game. Two more Bangladesh players Mahmudullah Riyad and Mustafiur Rahman will feature for Quetta Gladiators and Lahore Qalanders respectively.

Tamim misfires 'Not easy to score against India' forward," he added.

PTI, Centurion



South Africa's newest swashbuckler Heinrich Klaasen has

credited JP Duminy for "taking the fear out" of his game, saying the skipper's presence was a key factor in his match-winning knock against India in the second Twenty20 International on Wednesday.

Klaasen smashed 69 off 30 balls as the Proteas won by six wickets last night to level the three-match series 1-1. The bighitting batsman said that Duminy, who put on 97 runs off 49 balls for the third wicket with

Klaasen, told him to go big. "Duminy was the key factor to my whole innings. Second over or the first over I faced, he told me this over needs to go for 10. He told me to just play my normal game and take the bowlers on. Luckily it worked out," said Klaasen.

"The way JP told me to go, this over needs to go for 20, it takes all the fear out of your game. Then it is very important to keep a calm head. There was a stage when I was swinging quite hard," he added.

"They (the Indians) are very skilful bowlers. So it is not easy to get a run a ball," he added.

It was the fastest half-century in T20I cricket by a South African batsman, not only against India but also at Centurion. The knock was made more special for Klaasen by the fact that he got it on his home ground.

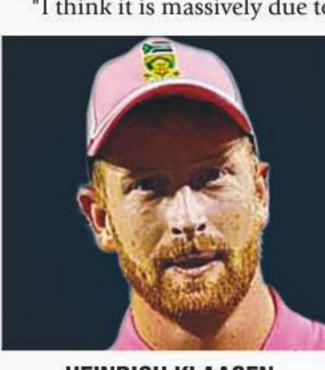
Klaasen said his innings was better than the Wanderers' cameo wherein rain and a truncated game also provided a T20like situation for him to chase the total down.

"This one definitely wins - my home ground. It's something you dream about as a young kid, to play for your country on your home ground, and to win a game for your country. This one takes the cherry on the cake," said Klaasen. "In the first five or six overs, we actually tried to keep up with Duckworth-Lewis. Luckily on the fifth or the sixth over, the drizzle stopped. I said to JP, we can now actually stay one boundary under the DL target, and it

worked out," he added. The constant drizzle helped

ease out conditions as the pitch had proven slow earlier on. Even so, it is a nature of day-night games at Supersport Park that the side batting second has an advan-

tage, as Klaasen pointed out. "I think it is massively due to



HEINRICH KLAASEN

the dew that falls at night that changes the wicket completely," he said.

"I think the way we actually batted tonight, it's a good way to chase a total. Keep up with the rate and keep up with Duckworth-Lewis. That just gave us small targets. When to go, when not to go, it is about setting small targets and it is maybe something to think about going

Talking about soaking the pressure, the keeper-batsman said, "That's great fun. But in that moment you don't usually think how fun it is. Next ball you think where it is going, so need to figure couple of plans and areas where to hit, try to figure out where he is

going to bowl to." Klaasen has progressed quickly in international cricket after he was called up to the ODI squad in Quinton de Kock's absence owing to injury. It has been down to two matchwinning knocks from him that South Africa have beaten India twice in eight matches during this limited-overs' leg of the tour.

However, Klaasen opined that de Kock doesn't have to look over his shoulder just yet.

The finale will be played at Newlands on Saturday, with the series pegged at 1-1.

"There is a massive gap between international cricket and our domestic cricket. I know on Saturday, India will come up with new plans and the education will be good as well, Klaasen signed off.

The fall of Kenya

STAR SPORTS DESK



Kenya were once Bangladesh's chief cricketing rival. Some decorated names of Kenyan cricket like Maurice Odumbe, Steve Tikolo and Thomas Odoyo are still fresh in the minds of Bangladesh cricket fans. They made the World Cup semifinal in 2003. It

was also the year Bangladesh fared worst in their cricking history, losing even to Canada in that forgettable campaign in South Africa.

15 years on, when Bangladesh have established themselves as a Test nation, Kenya have hit rock bottom. They returned home winless from the World Cricket League Division Two tournament in Namibia, and more importantly they were demoted to Division Three. Odoyo, who led the team as coach, made a very emotional statement to

the Daily Nation while stepping down. "The one week we spent in Namibia was a week of mental anguish. It was stressful and I would not wish anyone to go through what I went through. We broke record of poor performance. For Kenya to improve we must set up a high performance centre," said the pace bowler, who was part of the Kenyan team when they played in World Cups.

The Kenyan captain Rakep Patel and its president Janmohammed, the first woman to head a cricket board, also stood down after the dismal performance.

"One of the considerations that I took to account was the performance of the national team and somebody had to take responsibility for it," Janmohammed told BBC Focus, adding that Cricket Kenya would be conducting fresh elections to replace her in a month.