



The incessant rain at Mirpur had rendered any play impossible, leaving the players with little to do other than wait as Bangladesh and Afghanistan were declared joint champions yesterday. (From L to R) The likes of Taijul Islam, Nazmul Hossain and Liton Das were seen having a light chat with skipper Shakib Al Hasan in the dressing room as rain spoiled the party.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Still have a lot to improve on: Riyad

MAZHAR UDDIN



The T20I tri-series featuring Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, came to a disappointing end at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Following incessant rain in Mirpur, the match was eventually called off and the finalists -- Bangladesh and Afghanistan -- were declared joint champions with Bangladesh all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad saying that he felt sorry for the young kids who came to watch some cricket in the pouring rain.

Both teams were disappointed at not having played any cricket on the day. Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan even expressed his hopes that a reserve day will be allocated at least for tournament finals in the future.

Although Bangladesh reached the tri-series final, they do so in disheartening fashion. Ahead of the series, the Tigers had lost the one-off Test against Afghanistan. Mahmudullah said that the team still have a lot to improve on and could use the upcoming National Cricket League to do just that ahead of the upcoming assignment in India in November.

"Obviously it was disappointing in the Test as I personally believe that we have the capability to deliver better and we talked a lot after that among ourselves. We were morally down after losing the first T20 against Afghanistan.

"I think we still have to do a lot and need

to work on our decision making and I think it is very crucial to improve in that area. As we have a series against India we have to bring our A game or else it will be difficult for us to beat them," Mahmudullah told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

On the other hand, Afghanistan took a lot of positives from their tour of Bangladesh, where they registered a comprehensive 224 run win in the solitary Test, which was just their third Test match against the Tigers, and also reached the tri-series final.

Having a new set of players for each format seems to be working well for Afghanistan. Both Afghan wicketkeeper-batsman and player-of-the-series Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Rashid felt that they are heading in the right direction.

"We already have different players in different formats the best thing is that we have too many players right now. Yes, we might not have the best facilities back home but the players are trying to use whatever facility we have and trying their best to play for the national team, which is pleasing for me as captain. For me it's good to have different players across formats as it helps me adjust with the particular format quickly," Rashid told reporters.

Afghanistan are not a part of the upcoming ICC Test Championship but Rashid informed that they would like to earn their place in the tournament by playing better cricket and beating big teams in the coming days.

Yadav replaces Bumrah for SA Test series

REUTERS, New Delhi



Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out of the home Test series against South Africa after suffering a stress fracture in his back and will be replaced by Umesh Yadav, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said on Tuesday.

Bumrah, 25, was India's leading bowler at the 50-over World Cup with 18 victims and he took 13 wickets in the recent two-Test series in West Indies at an exceptional average of 9.23.

"Jasprit Bumrah has sustained a minor stress fracture in his lower back and has been ruled out of the upcoming series for Gandhi-Mandela Trophy against South Africa," the BCCI said in a statement.

Bumrah's spell of 5-7 in the first Test made him the first Asian bowler to complete five-wicket hauls in Australia, England, South Africa and West Indies -- in only his 11th Test.

Yadav, who has taken 119 wickets in 41 Tests, last played for India in December in Australia.

Vishakhapatnam will host the first Test between India and South Africa from Oct. 2 followed by matches at Pune and Ranchi. The series is the first for South Africa in the new ICC Test Championship.

Squad: Virat Kohli (captain), Mayank Agarwal, Rohit Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wicketkeeper), Wriddhiman Saha (wicketkeeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Shubman Gill.

'There should have been a reserve day'

EKUSH TAPADER



A rained off match always leads to frustration, especially when you are a fan. And when it is a much awaited final, the pain is much worse. That was the case for the huge crowd that flocked to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, only to see the final of T20I tri-series between Bangladesh and Afghanistan abandoned due to rain and the two teams declared joint champions.

It was not a heavy rain, but a persistent one and it led to much frustration. Hundreds of fans were seen getting drenched at the West Gallery while waiting with the tiniest of hope that the match will get underway at some point.

Even the fans who found shelter under the shed of the Shaheed Jewel Stand could barely hide their disappointment. Frustration was justified as most of the crowd entered the ground at around 5:00 pm and even after waiting for hours, there was no sign of play.

Some bought the tickets after standing in a huge line for hours while some had to pay almost double the actual price to get the tickets from scalpers. A number of fans were also disappointed that there was no reserve day allocated for the final while some were left upset as there would not be any reimbursement from the BCB for the tickets.

"I skipped office and bought the tickets after standing in a very long queue yesterday



Bagging tickets for the final of the tri-series was a tough ask for fans who had flocked to nearby selling points on the day of the final yesterday. Those who were lucky enough to get into the stadium amidst the rain however could only lift their palms to their foreheads as no play was possible.

PHOTO: STAR

[Monday]. I also did not go to work today [yesterday] as I wanted to see the game. It will be very disappointing if the match does not take place. There should have been a reserve day," said Ahmed Manik, who came from Gazipur.

Sharmin Sultana, a Shyamoli resident, was however more disappointed to see Bangladesh named joint champions even without stepping onto the field. Sharmin,

who bought the 1000-taka ticket for TK 2,500 from a scalper, only wanted to see Shakib Al Hasan and co. play.

"I expected Bangladesh to beat Afghanistan and win the trophy. But now it seems unlikely. What harm would it do if they arranged a reserve day?" said Sharmin.

Nayan, a fan who travelled from Chandpur would have been able to see his favourite heroes in action only if there was

a reserve day for the final.

"I came for the tickets after Fazr prayer yesterday [Monday] and I had to stand in line till 1:00 pm to get the tickets," said Nayan.

May be before arranging such a tournament, BCB should consider having a reserve day in future, especially during rainy seasons when the chances of matches being marred due to bad weather is high.

SHORT CORNER

SL arrive in Pakistan

Sri Lanka's depleted national cricket squad arrived in Pakistan Tuesday expressing confidence in security promises by the hosts despite reports that the team could be targeted by militants.

The Sri Lanka team were attacked in Lahore in 2009 and since then most international teams have refused to tour the South Asian country, leaving Pakistan to play nearly all their "home" games in the United Arab Emirates.

Ten senior players citing security concerns have opted out of the tour, comprising three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 matches, beginning on Friday.

But the rest arrived in Karachi later Tuesday and were whisked to their hotel under heavy security.



Sri Lankan players attend a prayer session in Colombo prior to their departure for Pakistan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

The captain of the Twenty20 squad, Dasun Shanaka, said he had no misgivings about returning to Pakistan after they played a Twenty20 international in Lahore in October 2017, their first since the 2009 attack.

"I have been there before," Shanaka told reporters just before the team left Colombo, where they were blessed by saffron-robed Buddhist monks." --Afp

Day two called off

The second day of the first four-day match between Bangladesh A and their Sri Lankan counterparts was called off due to heavy showers at the MCG in Katunayake yesterday. The match that was supposed to start on Monday, still did not commence as the Day one of the game was also washed out due to persistent rain.

--Sports Reporter

BCB receives five EOIs for BPL teams

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) have received five Expression of Interest (EOI) applications from parties which could sponsor the teams in the upcoming edition of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 tournament.

The names of two certain organisations, Akhtar Group and Tiger IT, have been making the rounds in the cricket community. Both parties submitted their EOIs after the BCB floated the notice on September 17 with the deadline for submission set for September 22.

However, it was learned that none of the six existing BPL franchises have submitted EOIs to participate in the tournament as team sponsors.

In the surprise move earlier this month, the BCB made the decision to not involve the franchises in the seventh edition of the BPL, which will mark the 100th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

This decision, declared by board president Nazmul Hassan, was rendered following the recent deterioration of the relationship between the BPL Governing Council and franchises.

'I never bowled to anyone as unorthodox as Smith'

ICC



In an elusive list featuring some of the greatest players of all time, former New Zealand all-rounder Sir Richard Hadlee called Australia's ace batsman Steve Smith the most unorthodox player he'd seen, and said he'd be "very annoying" to bowl to.

Speaking to Stuff on the toughest batsman to dismiss, the most dominant and most complete, Hadlee, New Zealand's highest wicket-taker in Tests, said: "But I never bowled to anyone as unorthodox as [Smith]. And I would find it very annoying bowling to him, like many others have, because of his batting routine and how fidgety he is when he faces up."

Smith proved next to impossible to dismiss during the Ashes series in England, where Australia retained the urn, on the back of the former captain's 774 runs in seven innings, at an average of 110.57. The million dollar question of how he could be dismissed was the running theme as Australia insured themselves against a Test series

defeat in England for the first time since 2001.

Weighing in on the topic, Hadlee said: "Stick to the basics of attacking that off stump, whether he plays at you or lets you go, so be it. You've got to try to get him out early with a nick or a ball coming back and hitting him on the pads. The way he comes right across in front of the stumps, if he misses he's



SIR RICHARD HADLEE

going to be dead most times, but he doesn't miss often."

Hadlee's observations are drawn from two of Smith's dismissals in the Ashes. At Lord's, after returning to bat from a blow to the head by Jofra Archer, Smith shouldered arms to a straight ball from Chris Woakes that would've crashed into middle stump.

Then, in the final Test at The

Oval, against the same bowler, Smith walked across his stumps to another straight ball and missed it, angled from around the off-stump line and thudding into middle and leg. "Bowlers will get frustrated and try and do too much," Hadlee said. "And get too straight, and he'll just ping you on the leg side, then you go wider and he'll smash you through the off side. There will be a time if you can't get him out, you've just got to be patient: 'there's my line, if you want to play at me you do it'."

"If it's six inches outside off stump or three inches outside off stump, you've just got to stay there, stay there until he makes a mistake. In the meantime, he'll collect runs, invariably hundreds, the way he's going."

Hadlee also said that the eccentricities of Smith's body language at the crease can put off bowlers. Calling it a mind game, Hadlee likened Smith's unusual demeanour to Javed Miandad's ability to demoralise attacks with the way he batted.

"It's something Javed Miandad did, he egged the bowlers on with the way he batted. Different technique, but it's a psychological approach and it can have a hugely negative effect."