

Cricket returns with 3rd round

SPORTS REPORTER

With all the drama that surrounded the players announcing on Monday that they would boycott all cricketing activities until an 11-point demand was met, there was doubt about when actual cricket would be played. The situation was brought under control on Wednesday when Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials met the players and agreed to nine of the 11 demands, with the two points later tacked on still up for discussion.

That set the stage for cricket to return today as the third round of the National Cricket League (NCL), which was originally scheduled to begin on October 24, will kick off in three different cities. The match between Dhaka Division and Khulna Division and the encounter between Rajshahi Division and Rangpur Division will be held in Cox's Bazar. Meanwhile, Barishal Division will face Dhaka Metropolis at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura and Chittagong Division will take on Sylhet Division in Rajshahi.

The BCB had actually decided to cancel the third round but the players insisted on playing during their meeting with the board members on Wednesday night.

With normalcy slowly returning to cricket, the third round will also be a final chance for the players to prove their mettle and make it to the Test squad for the upcoming tour in India in November, which was also put in jeopardy by the unprecedented boycott that took the country's cricket by storm.

Among many, right-arm pacer Taskin Ahmed, who had missed out on the first two rounds of the four-day tournament, had earlier confirmed that he will be playing the third round for Dhaka Metropolis. The 24-year old pacer, who played his last Test in October 2017, will be expected to impress the selectors and bring himself into contention for the Test squad.



After staging a dramatic boycott of cricketing activities for three days, the focus returned to cricket as the national players joined the training camp for next month's India tour at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. (Bottom) Bangladesh's new spin-bowling consultant Daniel Vettori (L) was in good spirits during his first day on the job.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Focus returns to cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a dramatic 72 hours, Bangladesh cricket finally returned to normalcy as the cricketers attended the first day of the national training camp at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of their upcoming tour of India.

All the coaching staff of the Tigers, including head coach Russell Domingo, spin bowling consultant Daniel Vettori and pace bowling coach Charl Langeveldt were present on the opening day.

Apart from skipper Shakib Al Hasan, all members of the team were present. The cricketers looked relaxed and after a light warm-up, went directly to the indoor premises for skills training.

Bangladesh opening batsman Tamim Iqbal, who is recovering from a rib-cage injury, was also present yesterday although he did not take part in the training session. Tamim did spend some time on the exercise, and the state of his injury will be clearer after and MRI scan today. Imrul Kayes was there too as the left-hander



is considered as a back-up option for Tamim, who may miss some part of the India series as his wife is expecting their second child at some point in November.

All eyes were on Vettori, who was appointed as the Tigers' new spin bowling consultant back in July this year. The former New Zealand skipper arrived in Bangladesh

yesterday and went straight to the ground ahead of his first assignment. The 40-year-old spoke to the cricketers and conducted a net session alongside Domingo.

Meanwhile, left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny, who was picked in Bangladesh's T20 side after three years, informed that he is looking forward to taking up the challenge on his comeback and also added that he would try to get most of the Bangladesh's new spin consultants, who was one of the best left-arm spinners to play the game, in the coming days.

"Obviously, it feels good as I played my last T20I in India after an issue with my bowling action, and now I am making a comeback through the India series. It's a challenge for me to prove my worth and I definitely have a plan, if I have to contain runs and bowl wicket to wicket, I am looking forward to implementing my plan if I get the opportunity.

"As a left-arm spinner, I always followed his [Vettori's] bowling as he was a great spinner. He has vast experience in international cricket and he is also working in the Indian Premier League, so I will try to learn from him in the coming days," Sunny told the media yesterday.

The Shakib confusion

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan's absence from the opening day of a four-day national training camp in Mirpur yesterday set a lot of tongues wagging.

Although Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo said after the training session that Shakib had told him that he would not attend because he had a cold and that the Test and T20I skipper was expected to join the camp today. Cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan however had no idea about Shakib's absence.

"I was informed. He [Shakib] is expected to join tomorrow," Domingo told a few members of the media.

Interestingly, when asked if he was informed, Akram told The Daily Star yesterday: "I was not informed. Even the coach had asked me about him."

When asked if he knows whether Shakib would join the camp today, he said: "I don't know, let's see."

The different versions from coach and cricket operations chairman raised the question of how well informed the latter is, given that a player usually informs the coach of his absence from training. On the other hand, if Domingo was indeed informed by Shakib, why would he call Akram for the same information? Perhaps he thought Akram had extra information, an assumption Domingo will probably not be making from now.

Tigresses take on Pak today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Women's team will play the first match of a three-match T20I series against Pakistan at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore today. The women's tour of Pakistan was confirmed only after assessing security arrangements in Pakistan by the concerned ministry and security agencies earlier this month.

The team travelled with local coaches as Indian head coach Anju Jain and other Indian coaching staff did not want to travel to Pakistan.

Bangladesh, led by Salma Khatun, will be looking to register their second win against Pakistan in the format.

Bangladesh suffered a 3-0 thumping in a four-match T20I series -- with one game being abandoned due to rain -- the last time Pakistan toured Bangladesh in October 2018.

Women's Emerging Cup to start today

SPORTS REPORTER

The ACC Women's Emerging Teams Cup was rescheduled after the first two matches were abandoned due to rain in Colombo.

Bangladesh will face their Pakistani counterparts today at the Navy Ground in Welisara.

Smith, Warner back in T20 fold

AFP, Adelaide



next year's Twenty20 World Cup at home.

The star batsmen were both banned for a year for their roles in a ball-tampering scandal but have rejoined their country's Test, one-day and now T20 sides.

The World Cup gets underway Down Under next October and selectors are banking on the same 14 picked to play Sri Lanka forming the bulk of their side.

"We have looked to put a squad together that we think can take us through to that tournament," said national selector Trevor Hohns.

"The squad we have selected is quite role specific and we believe it gives us the flexibility to thrive in all match

conditions."

Aaron Finch retains the captaincy, with Smith still barred from holding any leadership role until the end of March for his part on trying to alter the ball with sandpaper in South Africa last year.

Australia will be heavily relying on the widely acclaimed batsman after his incredible exploits on his return to the game in the recent Ashes series against England.

Warner flopped in those five Tests but is Australia's highest ever T20 run-scorer. He is set to open the innings with Finch, before Smith comes in at first drop.

Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc spearhead the bowling attack, backed up by Andrew Tye, Kane Richardson and Billy Stanlake.

They will have their work cut out against a Sri Lankan side full of confidence after a stunning three-match T20 series sweep against Pakistan, where they sent a second-string team, earlier this month.



Ganguly to push for D/N Tests

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

Newly elected Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Sourav Ganguly said last night that skipper Virat Kohli was open to the idea of playing day-night Tests and it could be a reality in the near future.

India will host Bangladesh for two Tests in November, but Ganguly did not say whether one of them would be a day-night affair.

A keen advocate of day-night Tests, Ganguly said he had a meeting with Kohli in Mumbai on Thursday where the idea was discussed.

"I must say that Virat Kohli is agreeable to it. There are reports that he does not want to play day-night Tests, which is not the fact. So, once the captain of India is agreeable to it, life becomes a lot easier. We will see how we can push it. The game needs to go forward," Ganguly told reporters on the sidelines of his felicitation by the Cricket Association of Bengal at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday evening.

"We all are thinking about this and we will do something about it. I don't know when that will happen. But till the time I am around, I will be pushing for it," Ganguly said.

SHORT CORNER

'We're moving on from Dhoni'

India's chief selector has strongly hinted that Mahendra Singh Dhoni's illustrious international career is over, saying Thursday they were "moving on" and giving opportunities to youngsters.

Ex-skipper and one-day stalwart Dhoni has not played for India since the World Cup in July, triggering speculation that the 38-year-old



warhorse might hang up his bat and gloves soon.

On Thursday he was left out of the national squad to take on Bangladesh in three Twenty20 internationals at home next month, and he played no part in South Africa's recent tour.

The same day, selection committee chairman M.S.K. Prasad said they were backing youngsters such as Rishabh Pant for the wicketkeeper-batsman's role.

"This is our clear thought process that post World Cup we are focusing on Rishabh Pant only," he was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India news agency, in response to a question on Dhoni's future.

"I made it very clear post the World Cup that we are moving on. We are giving opportunities to youngsters and

see that they establish themselves in the side." --AFP

Neymar to miss Brazil friendlies

Paris Saint-Germain injury-hit striker Neymar was left out of the Brazil squad announced Friday for friendlies next month against Argentina and South Korea.

Neymar was ruled out for four weeks in mid-October with a hamstring injury he suffered playing for his country in a 1-1 friendly draw against Nigeria.

A day after that October 13 outing in Singapore PSG reported that an MRI scan showed that their star player had suffered "a grade two lesion" in his left hamstring.

Brazil face Argentina on November 15 and South Korea four days later.

--AFP

U-16s fight back with the ball

Redowan Hossain Siyam's 114-ball 84 helped Bangladesh Under-16 post 204 before being bundled out in 63.5 overs by their Pakistani counterparts on the first day of the three-day match at KRL stadium in Rawalpindi on Friday.

Pakistan Under-16 stumbled to 40 for four in 19.2 overs before play ended early due to bad light with 6.4 overs remaining.

Ahmod Sharif and Mohammad Musfik Hasan took two wickets apiece for Bangladesh.

Earlier, after being asked to bat, Bangladesh opener Anik Chaki was dismissed for a duck in the very first over. A 75-run third-wicket stand between Nayeem Ahmed and Redowan helped give the total some respectability.

-- STAR SPORT DESK