



Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal along with other team members returned home yesterday after the tour of Sri Lanka. The players will go through home quarantine before joining the other players of the preliminary squad for training ahead of three ODIs against Sri Lanka later this month.

PHOTO: STAR

SL ODIs another chance to 'bounce back'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh returned home yesterday after yet another disappointing performance, this time in Sri Lanka, where the Tigers lost the two-match Test series after a crushing 209-run defeat in the second Test.

The focus, however, is already shifting to the 50-over format, with Sri Lanka all set to arrive in Bangladesh to take part in a three-match ODI series later this month. Selectors have already announced a 23-member preliminary squad and those who were not part of the Sri Lanka tour have already started training at the home of cricket in Mirpur.

The two-match Test series in Sri Lanka also saw the Tigers complete their World Test Championship stint, during which time they have bagged just 20 points -- for the drawn first Test in Pallekele.

Head coach Russell Domingo, who returned with the team, expressed disappointment about the World Test Championship performance. However, the South African was keen to grab

the points in the upcoming ODI series against Sri Lanka, which will be part of the ICC ODI Super League.

"Players will have three days of practice before the Eid vacation. It will be good to have



Shakib [Al Hasan] and Mustafizur [Rahman] back when they do arrive. The next series will be important as qualification points are up for grabs. We need to bounce back after a tough

series in New Zealand," said Domingo.

Meanwhile, there were rumours that the board would closely observe the performances of the team in Sri Lanka and that it would have an impact on Domingo's future as Tigers' head coach. After the series defeat in the island nation, it was learned that the Bangladesh Cricket Board is not satisfied with Bangladesh's performance under Domingo's coaching.

There are even whispers that the board has started looking for alternatives to Domingo, so the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka can be an acid test for the 47-year-old. However, the board is also willing to give Domingo more time before making a final decision.

"Not really [concerned about future as Bangladesh head coach]. I'm enjoying working with the players. I'm enjoying the set-up. There's of course work to be done. I think it's important to try and look at the state of domestic cricket and the facilities the cricketers enjoy when we're not here as well. Of course, there have been tough results. But I have started to connect with the team well and I am confident going forward," he added.

IPL SUSPENDED

Foreign players fret over return

REUTERS, New Delhi

The Indian Premier League (IPL) was suspended indefinitely on Tuesday due to the Covid-19 crisis in the country, leaving many international players with major concerns over how they will return home.

The organising Indian cricket board (BCCI) and the league's governing council members convened an emergency meeting at which they decided to suspend the tournament with immediate effect.

The BCCI had forged ahead with the league despite fierce criticism for staging it in a country where coronavirus infections surged past 20 million on Tuesday.

"These are difficult times, especially in India, and while we have tried to

support staff.

IPL chairman Brijesh Patel told Reuters it was too early to say when the league, originally scheduled to culminate in a May 30 final in Ahmedabad, could resume.

"We are looking for another window," Patel said by telephone. "Right now we can't say when we can reschedule it."

A suspension looked almost inevitable after Monday's game in Ahmedabad had to be postponed after two Kolkata Knight Riders players tested positive for Covid-19.

Two non-playing members of Chennai Super Kings also contracted the virus in Delhi, prompting questions about the robustness of the league's bio-bubble arrangements.

The abrupt suspension left foreign players, including England's World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan and Australia's Steve Smith and David Warner, with a major headache.



14-day quarantine for Shakib, Mustafizur?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is working on bringing back Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahman following the suspension of the Indian Premier League (IPL) indefinitely.

"We are in close contact with Shakib and Mustafizur to bring them back to the country. We will facilitate the process and aid the authorities here in bringing them back. The two cricketers will abide by the guidelines that the health ministry will provide before joining the training camp ahead of the ODI home series against Sri Lanka," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told the Daily Star yesterday.

Prof Dr. Abul Bashir Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, confirmed yesterday that both players will have to complete a mandatory 14-day institutional quarantine. The government has made quarantine mandatory for all passengers from abroad considering global situation and upon advice from public health experts.

bring in some positivity and cheer, however, it is imperative that the tournament is now suspended and everyone goes back to their families and loved ones in these trying times," the league said in a statement.

"The BCCI will do everything in its powers to arrange for the secure and safe passage of all the participants in IPL 2021."

The eight-team IPL, with an estimated brand value of \$6.8 billion, is the richest Twenty20 league and attracts many of the best players from around the world to cricket-crazy India.

As many as 57 foreign players, including 14 Australians, are currently stuck in India along with dozens of



Chelsea host Real with slight advantage

AGENCIES

Chelsea welcome Real Madrid to Stamford Bridge tonight still with much to do to reach the Champions League final after failing to land the killer blow when the 13-time European champions were on the ropes in last week's first leg.

A 1-1 draw in the Spanish capital still gives the Blues the upper hand thanks to their away goal, but Thomas Tuchel's men could have had a much more convincing advantage but for a tale of two strikers.

Tuchel's men are looking to reach the biggest game in European club football for the third time, and hoping to replicate their 2012 success, when a mid-season change of manager proved a catalyst for European glory.

Real, meanwhile, are seeking a remarkable 14th title, which would mean they had won the trophy twice as many times as any other club in Europe, with AC Milan boasting seven wins. Real cannot rely on their resilient, albeit depleted defence to pave a way to the Champions League final, as they simply have to go for goals at Stamford Bridge in order to book their spot in the showpiece event.

Such a strategy could leave Zidane's

HIGHLIGHT

Chelsea made a thrilling start in the Spanish capital in the first leg and were in front inside 15 minutes through Christian Pulisic. Karim Benzema scored a brilliant equaliser – a milestone 71st UEFA Champions League goal for the Frenchman – before the half-hour, though, to keep the tie level heading into the return match.

men vulnerable to Chelsea's pace on the counter attack, and the Blues are not so bad at defending themselves, so there can envisage a narrow success for Tuchel's crop as they prepare to make the journey to Istanbul.

The visitors are set to be bolstered by the return of Sergio Ramos and Ferland Mendy, and Eden Hazard could also start after making an appearance off the bench in the first leg. Real Madrid unexpectedly lined up in a 3-5-2 formation for their home leg, but with his squad close to retaining full strength, Zinedine Zidane may be inclined to field their habitual 4-3-3 setup.

A familiar salve for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Six-time champions Abahani extended their unbeaten run against Brothers Union in the league to seven years when the Sky Blues handed an emphatic 5-3 defeat to the relegation-threatened All Oranges in a Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Following a 2-2 draw in their previous match against Bangladesh Police, which came shortly after they were ruled to be ineligible for the AFC Cup, Abahani sought some solace in routing Brothers Union, once powerhouses in domestic football. Abahani last lost to the Gopibagh-based outfit in 2014 and have since played out three draws while winning the other seven of their 10 league encounters.

The Sky Blues are now third in the 13-team table with 29 points.

Brothers, who are desperate to get out of the drop zone, held a tight line for the first 20 minutes before twice falling prey to long throw-ins as they usually do. Raihan

Hasan literally had a hand in the first two goals, with Sunday and Nasir Chowdhury heading home in the 22nd and 39th minutes respectively.

Brazil's Raphael Augusta almost struck in the 42nd minute with a powerful drive, only to be denied by keeper Jafar Sardar. However, he failed to thwart Jewel Rana two minutes later, the winger tapping home after a feeble clearance from

Jafar broke his way.

Sunday hit the far post three minutes into the second half before Belfort availed a through-ball from Sunday and darted into the box before placing the ball to Jafar's left in the 63rd minute.

Substitute Rubel Mia struck the fifth for Abahani in 79th minute, sandwiched between a brace from Nigeria's Awala Malagan, who struck in the 78th and 90th



Abahani's Kervens Belfort scrambles the ball across the Brothers goalline during a 5-2 victory in the Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

minutes to reduce the margin for Brothers Union, who are second from bottom with five points from 14 matches.

In the day's second match, Bashundhara Kings toiled hard under floodlights to manage a 2-0 win over spirited Bangladesh Police.

Although Kings had demolished Uttar Baridara Club 6-0 in their previous match, they faced a stiff challenge from Bangladesh Police, who held the league leaders for 58 minutes before Towhidul Alam Sabuj gave Kings a lead after BPL top-scorer Robson Da Silva squandered a penalty in the 16th minute.

Despite conceding, Packer Ali's charges showed unbreakable character and fought on even footing but the Sri Lankan coach was left lamenting a lack of cutting edge up front in the absence of Argentinian striker Raul Becerra.

Captain and centre back Tapu Barman made the result safe after glancing home a header from the 62nd minute to help the leaders raise their tally to 40 points from 14 outings, 11 more than Sheikh Jamal DC and Abahani.

Tk 1650 crore approved for 186 mini stadiums

SPORTS REPORTER

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) yesterday approved Tk 1650 crore for building Sheikh Russel Mini Stadium in 186 upazilas. "The youth and sports ministry has placed a proposal for constructing Sheikh Russel Mini Stadium in 186 upazilas and the proposal has been approved by the 24th Ecne meeting today (Tuesday)," state minister for youth and sports Zahid Ahsan Russel said, thanking Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who presided over the meeting from Gono Bhawan through a video conference. The government had earlier, under the youth and sports ministry, constructed mini stadiums in 125 upazilas.

Mourinho to take charge of Roma

REUTERS

AS Roma have appointed former Tottenham Hotspur manager Jose Mourinho as their new head coach on a three-year contract starting 2021-22 season, the Italian Serie A club announced on Tuesday.

The decision comes after the club announced coach Paulo Fonseca will leave his role at the end of the current campaign.

"We are thrilled and delighted to welcome Jose Mourinho into the AS Roma family," club president Dan Friedkin and vice-president Ryan Friedkin said. "A great champion who has won trophies at every level, Jose will provide tremendous leadership and experience to our ambitious project."

Mourinho, who has previously coached Porto, Chelsea, Inter Milan, Real Madrid and Manchester United, was sacked by Tottenham last month after 17 months in charge of the London club.

