

Chattogram is one of the high-scoring venues. The wicket here is true and fresh. Obviously it will be a batting-friendly wicket.

Khulna Tigers skipper
Mushliqur Rahim



Roach recalled for India ODIs

REUTERS

Kemar Roach was called up to the West Indies one-day squad for the first time in nearly two-and-a-half years on Wednesday with the fast bowler returning for next month's three-match series against India, Cricket West Indies said.

The 33-year-old from Barbados has been a regular in West Indies test squads but played the last of his 92 one-dayers against India at Port of Spain in August 2019.

"Kemar Roach is one of our leading fast bowlers and we believe we need bowlers upfront to get early wicket," newly-appointed chief selector Desmond Haynes said in a statement.

"...Kemar, with an economy rate of five, is certainly good enough to play."

West Indies also recalled opener Brandon King and middle-order batsman Nkrumah Bonner in their 15-member squad led by all-rounder Kieron Pollard.

Beginning on Feb. 6, West Indies will play three one-dayers in Ahmedabad to be followed by an equal number of Twenty20 Internationals in Kolkata.



In-form Chattogram Challengers had a lively practice session yesterday ahead of their clash against Khulna Tigers through which the second phase of the Bangladesh Premier League Kicks off today in Chattogram. Khulna, meanwhile, will be boosted by the inclusion of Soumya Sarkar [inset], who is expected to start today after recovering from Covid-19.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



'Fast bowling has a future in Bangladesh'

Former West Indian paceman Mervyn Dillon is in Bangladesh as coach of BPL's Sylhet Sunrisers in what is his first big coaching stint anywhere. Coming from a great pace bowling culture, he mentioned how Bangladesh can improve in that area and talked about working with Sylhet's Taskin Ahmed. Having worked under legends like Clive Lloyd and Malcolm Marshall, Dillon also gave a sneak peek into his minds while talking to The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdhi.

The Daily Star [DS]: Windies have a history of great fast bowlers. What can Bangladesh work on to build that culture?

Mervyn Dillon [MD]: I think a lot of it is belief. I think what happened in New Zealand is going to have a big impact. A lot of people outside are going to take note. I don't think I have ever won a Test in New Zealand (WI last won a Test in Kiwi soil in 1995 while Dillon never played there). Credit must be given to the team.

DS: What would you be looking for in Taskin Ahmed? He isn't obviously as tall as you.

MD: Taskin is taller than Malcolm Marshall and he was one of the greatest I have seen. I know that height helps but it's not the end-all. Him bowling well depends on the support. I know he has been doing a lot of work with coaches. I look at physique and clearly, he has been doing a lot of work. As my friend and mentor Clive Lloyd used to say, a lot of the game is mental. If your fitness is where it should be, the mental part is easy.

DS: What are the finer points of the support that faster bowlers need?

MD: I think they [the team] have an idea of what they can improve on. I assume this [win in NZ] will be a big boost and big push for youngsters coming through. I came through a system and that belief was created. Because of your history [of spin dependency], some people might look and say it's too difficult. But the current crop can make your country understand that fast bowling has a future in Bangladesh. Even the net bowlers here were surprised that I complimented them. Guidance and providing opportunities with better wickets are key and it's something we have been lacking in the Caribbean as well.

Running some fast bowling camps is good, and bringing in people. If some don't work, bring someone else and help spur them on. The heart of the fast bowler is key. You guys should be proud of what you achieved and hopefully use that to create a new generation of fast bowlers.

DS: What was it like working with legends like Clive Lloyd and Malcolm Marshall?

MD: Clive was the manager for my first tour and Malcolm was the coach. Clive was very polished about the game. He told us about the ability of the likes of Michael Holding to come back and keep fighting and that helped us. Those guys never liked losing. They left a legacy and it's disappointing that it didn't continue for the following generations. They had good and bad days, but the fight was never missing. Malcolm would let you know when he was angry and we knew it came from a good place. I don't think we did ourselves justice but playing under them was really appreciated.



What to WATCH

T SPORTS

BPL: Chattogram Challengers vs Khulna Tigers
Live from 01:30 pm
Sylhet Sunrisers vs Minister Group Dhaka
Live from 06:30 pm
PSL
Quetta Gladiators vs Peshwar Zalmi
Live from 11:30 pm

TEN 2 & SONY SIX

Australian Open
Men's Singles Semi-finals
M. Berrettini vs R. Nadal
Live from 09:30 am
S. Tsitsipas vs D. Medvedev
Live from 02:30 pm

GTV, STAR SPORTS 1 & STAR SPORTS HD 2

ICC U19 World Cup Quarter-final
Pakistan vs Australia
Live from 07:00 pm

TAMIM EXTENDS self-imposed T20I hiatus

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

It felt strange. A day ahead of the start of the Chattogram leg of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), Chattogram's homeboy Tamim Iqbal called a press conference to announce a decision that had been held close to the chest by the player himself alongside the board officials he had discussed it with in the past few days.

Tamim declared that he has opted to skip T20Is for the next six months and focus on ODIs and Tests.

"For the last few days, my T20 career has been in focus. I've held discussions with the BCB president [Nazmul Hassan], Kazi Inam bhai and Jalal [Yunus] bhai. They wanted me to carry on at least until the T20 World Cup but I was thinking differently. After discussions between the two sides, I've decided that I'll not be thinking of T20Is for the next six months. I want to put my whole focus on ODIs and Test cricket for the next few months," Tamim announced at a press conference at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury



Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

There was no stark revelation to his decision. In fact, it would appear to be quite weird to even announce it since Tamim had himself opted out of the last T20 World Cup in UAE owing to lack of fitness along with his eagerness to let youngsters play without burden. In addition, he did not play four T20 series on the trot ahead of that World Cup last year, even though he did feature in ODIs and Tests during that period.

The issue of Tamim leaving T20Is altogether, had in fact come to a head after the BCB President revealed that Tamim had personally told him of his decision to not play T20Is. Then came the media fracas over whether Tamim was going to return to the side following his two fifties in his side Minister Group Dhaka's first two games.

"I hope in the six months, those who play do so well that the team wouldn't require me for this format. However, if after six months there comes a time when the cricket board, selectors and team management need me and I also feel that

I am ready, then I'll discuss it. My decision is based purely on cricketing aspects. There are no scopes for controversy here," Tamim added.

There would be reflection on that lack of trust and issues within the team that have been brought up in the media over the past few months, one that took effect during the World Cup.

"The young players need time. If you lose trust after one or two series that is wrong. Six months would be a good enough time. Personally, I feel that I won't be needed," Tamim added.

Bangladesh will play eight T20Is during that period and it may very well be likely that top-order troubles continue. Tamim himself may feel he is not part of the solution going forward, but he has left things open; perhaps for himself but at least for the team management and the board.

Although the press conference had ended by then, the inevitable question was asked by a journalist present: "So are you really leaving altogether?"

Tamim did not appear to have an answer as he walked away, the scene at the stadium left hanging just like Bangladesh's troubles in the T20 format.

Covid pushing sports towards another halt

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the upsurge in coronavirus's cases, country's sports sector is gradually halting again as some national sports federations have already suspended their scheduled leagues or tournaments.

Though Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is holding BPL T20 tournament in empty stadiums, some other sports federation like football, archery and kabaddi are pondering whether to suspend their tournaments.

Premier Division Chess League was scheduled to get underway on January 20 but the chess federation suspended the meet as clubs could not rope in foreign players to strengthen their squads. Likewise, National Handball Championship, which was scheduled to start on January 22, was suspended as the federation decided not to endanger the athletes who were supposed to assemble in Dhaka.

Ahead of an international tournament in Indonesia next month, Bangladesh Shooting Sports Federation was also to hold an Air Gun Championship this month, but that was suspended while archery federation and hockey federation have also decided not to hold their respective meets before March.

However, the decisions regarding starting Bangladesh Premier League football from Feb 3, Bangladesh Championship League in the second week of February and Pioneer league in the third week are likely to be revised.

"The professional football management committee has called for an emergency meeting on Saturday to discuss different issues," said Jaber Bin Taher Ansari, manager of the professional football league.



A ruthless Ashleigh Barty swept into her first Australian Open final on Thursday with a clinical, straight-sets demolition of Madison Keys to set-up a title match on Saturday with the hard-hitting Danielle Collins, who crushed Polish seventh seed Iga Swiatek 6-4, 6-1 in the second semifinal.

PHOTO: AFP