

## SA pick IPL players for BD ODIs

AFP, Johannesburg

Eight South African cricketers with Indian Premier League contracts will play in a one-day home series against Bangladesh before leaving for India.

Cricket South Africa on Tuesday named a 16-man squad for the three-match series, which is part of the World Cup Super League.

The series will be played between March 18 and 23.

The IPL starts on March 26 which means that the South African players may miss the start of the tournament because of quarantine requirements.

But it is not yet clear whether IPL-bound players will be available to play for South Africa in two World Championship Tests against Bangladesh which follow the one-day games and only finish on April 12.

Fast bowler Anrich Nortje, who has not played for South Africa since the T20 World Cup in November, remains unavailable as he continues rehabilitation following a hip injury and it appears his participation in the Tests and in the IPL is in doubt.

The only change from the squad which beat India 3-0 in January is the absence of fast bowler Sisanda Magala, who failed a fitness test.

The IPL players in the squad are Quinton de Kock, Marco Jansen, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada and Rassie van der Dussen.

Jansen, Markram, Ngidi, Rabada and van der Dussen would all probably feature in a full-strength Test squad.

Test captain Dean Elgar said last week he would be asking the players to put loyalty to their country ahead of the earning potential of the IPL.

**Squad:** Temba Bavuma (capt), Keshav Maharaj, Quinton de Kock (wkt), Zubayr Hamza, Marco Jansen, Janneman Malan, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Wayne Parnell, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne (wkt).



Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal goes for an expansive stroke at the nets against pacer Taskin Ahmed during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Tamim will look to rectify mistakes he made in the series against Afghanistan as the Bangladesh team leave for South Africa on Monday for three ODIs and two Tests.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## ‘Need to put a full stop’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national team's team director Khaled Mahmud struck a conciliatory tone over Shakib Al Hasan's remarks regarding him not being ready to play international cricket while making it clear that the board needs to put a 'full stop' to such situations where a senior player can pick or choose what formats he is willing to play right before a series.

Mahmud dictated that players like Shakib have given the team and the country a lot. The board is considerate of issues that players face, especially during pandemic times with bio-bubble protocols making life difficult. However, he was clear regarding what the BCB needs to do and the problems that the management faces when someone like Shakib chooses to play in particular tournaments.

"It's true that players get exhausted. Those of us who have played, know this. During our playing days, there weren't so many matches. Even I get exhausted as team director now. There is bio-bubble all day and it's just hotel and grounds. It's difficult. If we think straight, then a player can say things like that but my thinking is that Shakib could have said it sooner," Mahmud said.

Shakib had not featured in the Tigers' Test tour of Sri Lanka in April-May last year due to his IPL involvement. He then missed one home Test against Pakistan through injury and then opted out of the away Test series against New Zealand. This time he was initially given permission

to miss the South Africa Tests and only feature in the ODIs, but following his IPL snub, BCB president Nazmul Hassan told him to play the upcoming Test series as well.

Shakib had agreed to that following the ODI series but last Saturday, before he left the country, Shakib reiterated not being mentally or physically ready to play international



matches. More confusion was added as Shakib said that it may well be that he misses the South Africa ODIs and play the Tests.

"At BCB, we want that our best available team always plays. We know we will miss Mustafizur [Rahman] in the Tests but we have accepted that he doesn't want to play Tests nowadays," Mahmud noted.

Mahmud, however, struck the same tone as BCB president had on Monday. The question of seniors not having clarity over which formats they want to play, is

hampering team management's processes regarding future stars.

"It's not a problem if Tamim or Shakib plays a series but problem is that we're playing someone instead of them but when Shakib returns, what happens to that player? We're not being able to create a team. If Shakib doesn't want to play Tests, then he shouldn't and I don't care. BCB is not concerned and can't force him. We want him to play as long as he is fit but if he says he isn't enjoying, then he should say that he doesn't want to play Tests, ODIs, T20s or that he doesn't want to play a particular format or even two formats. From BCB's side, there is the matter of establishing someone in Shakib's place."

With Shakib and others such as Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad nearing the twilight of their career, Mahmud was more eager for continuity of the team building process. The former national team captain made it clear that the last call on the Shakib issue rests with BCB.

"Board won't make requests; they will dictate since these are contracted players. Shakib has been given two days' time, so it's better not to say something. I am hoping he will go because it makes a difference for us at the moment. If Shakib wants to play he will go, if he doesn't, the board will take a decision. It's high time now and we need to put a full stop to it. It can't happen every time that someone doesn't want to play and he doesn't play," he concluded.

## Pindi run-feast ends in draw

REUTERS, Islamabad

Imam-ul-Haq smashed his second hundred in the run-feast in Rawalpindi but Australia's first Test in Pakistan in 24 years ended in a dull draw on Tuesday.



Opting to bat on run-filled surface, Pakistan had made 476-4 before declaring their first innings at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

By the time they bowled out Australia for 459 on the final day, the chances of any team winning the contest had

evaporated.

Pakistan decided to bat on allowing Imam, to score his second hundred of the contest.

The bespectacled left-hander's unbeaten 111 included seven boundaries and two sixes. Imam went on to win the man-of-the-match award.

His opening partner Abdullah Shafique, who made 136 not out, also brought up his maiden Test century as Pakistan posted 252 for no loss in their second innings before the teams shook hands and left.

A total of 1,187 runs were scored over five days and only 14 wickets fell in what Australia's Steve Smith called a "pretty benign, dead wicket" which risks censure from the game's governing body.



## Chattogram Open starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

International professional golf returns to Bangladesh following a three-year gap when the Mujib Borsho Chattogram Open gets underway at the picturesque Bhatiary Golf & Country Club today.

The Bangladeshi players and officials are excited about being part of an international event with Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR) points after a long gap due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sanctioned by Professional Golf Tour of India and Bangladesh Professional Golf Association, the Rs 50-lac event will offer Official World Golf Ranking points for the golfers.

Around 60 leading golfers of PGTI and top 65 Bangladeshi players including star golfer Siddikur Rahman will be taking part in this 72-hole strokeplay event. Some of the leading players from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will be taking on the challenge of Bhatiary's tough hilly layout.

The top Indian players in the field are Chiragh Kumar, Shankar Das, Kshitij Naveed Kaul, Akshay Sharma, M Dharma, Kartik Sharma and Sunit Chowrasia.

## ‘Real ready to restore pride against PSG’

REUTERS, MADRID

Real Madrid were hurt by their worst performance of the season in their 1-0 loss to Paris St Germain in their Champions League last 16 first leg and will try to play smart in the return leg on Wednesday, coach Carlo Ancelotti said.

The LaLiga leaders were sunk by a stoppage time goal from Kylian Mbappe in their meeting last month but are no strangers to pulling out extraordinary performances in the Champions League, having won the competition a record 13 times.

"We are a very proud team and that performance hurt us pretty bad," Ancelotti told a news conference on Tuesday.

"We are a proud team, mainly in a competition like the Champions League. So we will play for pride. We saw the best version of PSG in Paris. I wish to see the best version of Real Madrid on Wednesday."

Ancelotti's side will be buoyed by their 4-1 win over LaLiga contenders Real Sociedad on Saturday, having initially been pegged back by an early goal.

"Our team is calm and motivated. The mental aspect is crucial in a moment like this. If we play with Saturday's intensity, we



have a good chance to qualify," the Italian said.

"We have to be smart and play smart. We need to go out there and win. We don't need to score many goals. We need to keep it together and the support of our fans will be major for us."

PSG forward Mbappe, who has been linked with a move to Real Madrid next summer as a free agent, is a doubt for the match after he was hurt in training on Monday. But Ancelotti said his potential absence would not affect Real's preparation.

"We will prepare for the game as if Mbappe would play. That's the only way we can do it," Ancelotti said.

"It would not surprise me if Mbappe gets a great reception by our fans. They always received great players with respect. But our fans want us to win. That's what they care about the most."

Meanwhile, in the other match of the night, English Premier League leaders Manchester City will entertain Sporting CP, after having thrashed the Portuguese outfit 5-0 in the away fixture when Bernardo Silva had bagged a brace while Riyad Mahrez, Raheem Sterling and Phil Foden scored one apiece.



Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane celebrates one of his two goals during a 5-0 thrashing of Everton in London on Monday. The two goals saw the England captain overtake Arsenal great Thierry Henry with his 176th goal, climbing to sixth in the Premier League scoring chart led by Alan Shearer (260).

PHOTO: REUTERS