

BCB to make major decisions today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is set to take a few major decisions today, including determining the new ODI captain, in a meeting that will be presided over by the board president Nazmul Hassan Papon in Mirpur.

As things stand, star allrounder Shakib Al Hasan is in pole position to take up the reins of the Tigers' ODI unit as Papon mentioned on Saturday that appointing Shakib would be the 'easiest choice' keeping in mind the Asia Cup later this month and the ODI World Cup in India in October-November.

According to sources, Papon and other board members will discuss the matter with Shakib, skipper of the Test and T20I sides, today and get his opinion on being in charge of the ODI side as well after Tamim Iqbal stepped down from the role last week.

Coach Chandika Hathurusingha is also slated to return to the country today, and the Sri Lankan is expected to be present in the vital meeting.

It was also learned that the selectors are expected to announce the 20-22 member preliminary squad today before revealing the main squad for the Asia Cup.

Apart from Shakib, wicketkeeper-batter and vice captain of the ODI side, Liton Das, was also considered as an option for the captaincy role. However, it was learned that the board remains concerned over handing the player the burden of leading the side in major events like the Asia Cup and the World Cup, especially considering his underwhelming form in the past year.

The captaincy issue aside, the board will also discuss appointing the team director for the upcoming events, with former Bangladesh captain and BCB director Khaled Mahmud Sujon reportedly being considered to assume the role once again. The board is also likely to discuss the inclusion of experienced Mahmudullah Riyad in the squad for the upcoming flagship events.

PCB appoints Inzamam as new chief selector

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan appointed former cricket captain Inzamam-ul-Haq as their new chief selector on Monday, giving him the task of picking squads for the Asia Cup and subsequent World Cup later this year.

The 53-year-old replaces Haroon Rasheed, who was shown the door after a change in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) set-up two months ago.

In a PCB press release, Inzamam said the new job was challenging.

"Heading the selection committee is a tough job, but it will be more challenging this time with Asia Cup and World Cup around the corner," he was quoted as saying.



People take pictures of the ICC World Cup trophy in front of the Padma Multipurpose bridge yesterday afternoon after the silverware arrived in Bangladesh in the early hours of the day. The iconic trophy will be displayed at two more venues before leaving the country tomorrow.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Franchise leagues helping Taskin and Co face 'DIFFERENT PRESSURE'

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Taskin Ahmed's short stint in the Zim Afro T10 league was tremendous -- the pacer ended up among the highest wicket-takers with 11 scalps from seven games maintaining a very impressive economy rate.

Taskin had to use variations that he perhaps did not think of previously and those are the kind of experiences that can take someone's cricket to a new level and help them gather much-required nous of the global level.

Having had to skip so many franchise league opportunities, it was no surprise that playing in the Zim Afro T10 league felt very special to Taskin.

"Playing in a franchise-based league for the first time was a great experience. There is a different pressure in franchise cricket and I feel playing these types of leagues gives a very good experience. Also, being able to play them when the opportunity arises is a good thing," Taskin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Franchise leagues pit players of different calibre against each other, requiring everyone to come up with different approaches. And Taskin only wants to keep on improving in this regard.

"I want to keep my improvement curve upward. Giving my best and trying smartly is what is in my control," Taskin was hopeful of further improvement.

Taskin's spells in the T10 on flat wickets showed the level of adjustments that even

faster bowlers need to make in a batter-dominated format. With a bowler only allowed to bowl two overs, the challenge is steep, and taking on such challenges was important ahead of the ODI World Cup in India where such flat pitches are expected to be awaiting.

"Batters' intent in T10 cricket is very high and it is not easy to bowl economically. I was focusing on execution.



It was a great experience, it doesn't matter whether the format is Test or T10.

"It's difficult to hit good deliveries and when you can execute according to your strengths that's always the best thing. The tournament went very well but there are big tournaments coming ahead for me and I will try to do well. Process-wise, my work now is to do the hard work off the field and practice the right way before giving my best on the field," Taskin, who bowled at an economy of 7.85 -- the lowest among the top 20 wicket takers -- said about the challenges he faced.

Tawhid Hridoy's case is similar to Taskin's as he kept his international exploits going in the ongoing Lanka Premier League (LPL).

Hridoy managed 141 runs -- third-highest in the LPL top scorers' list -- at an average of 47 in four games, that too on pitches where deliveries do not come easily to the bat. Despite conditions in Sri Lanka making it difficult for batters to time their shots, vastly experienced Shakib Al Hasan bore the brunt of fellow Hridoy's aggression when the youngster struck an unbeaten 44 off 23 against Galle Titans.

The other player who played in the Zim Afro T10 League, Mushfiqur Rahim, scored 126, averaging the same, as he always batted till the end in T10 league.

Shakib, meanwhile, is the sixth-highest wicket-taker in LPL, gathering further experience ahead of the Asia Cup.

On the other hand, Liton Das' maiden stint in the GT20 Canada did not go according to plan as he scored only 143 runs in eight matches but it could go a long way to toughening him up for the opportunities that might appear in the future.

Considering how players from Bangladesh are currently doing in different franchise-based leagues, it is now up to the Bangladesh Cricket Board to facilitate such opportunities when they do arrive. Contrary to the notion that playing in foreign leagues would somehow negatively affect the players' performance in the national team, players can actually return to the national team with more confidence, knowledge, and with an expanded set of skills gained from playing in different formats and conditions.

New faces in Australia's extended WC squad

REUTERS, Melbourne

Marnus Labuschagne's World Cup dreams are over after the batter was left out of Australia's extended 18-member squad for the showpiece tournament in India later this year.

Uncapped duo of leg-spinner Tanveer Sangha and all-rounder Aaron Hardie have been picked in the squad, which would later be trimmed to 15, Cricket Australia said in a statement on Monday.

A five-match series in South Africa in September will be the first assignment of the Pat Cummins-led side, the cricket board said.

Labuschagne has played 30 of Australia's 38 matches since his debut in early 2020 and was part of the team that won a three-match series in India in March this year.

Skipper Cummins sustained a wrist injury during the recent Ashes series that will keep him out of the three-match T20 series in South Africa preceding the one-dayers.

"We view a period of enforced rest for Pat as a positive ahead of this important World Cup campaign," Australia's selection chair George Bailey said in a statement.

"There are still a number of games he could play before the World Cup which is more than enough for him to have a strong preparation."

In his absence, Marsh will lead Australia in the T20 series in South Africa.

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell will miss the ODIs in South Africa as he expects the arrival of his first child, and will join the team in India for a three-match ODI series in September.

Five-time champions Australia will begin their World Cup campaign with an Oct. 8 clash with hosts India in Chennai.

Australia ODI squad: Pat Cummins (captain), Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Aaron Hardie, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, Adam Zampa



Australia players celebrate Caitlin Foord's opening goal during a 2-0 win over Denmark in the Round of 16 of the Women's World Cup in front of nearly 76,000 fans in Sydney yesterday. In another Round of 16 encounter, England survived the sending-off of Lauren James to scrape past Nigeria on penalties. The defeat was cruel on Nigeria, the world's 40th-ranked team, who followed up their impressive performances in the group stage by pushing England all the way.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Why are our opinions not being heard?'

REUTERS

The new rules that English football has enacted to avoid time wasting will increase player workload in an already packed schedule, Manchester United defender Raphael Varane said on Monday as he slammed authorities for ignoring player concerns.

As part of the new regulations, referees will add the exact time lost in goal celebrations, substitutions or injuries to the stoppage time. In previous seasons, the policy was to aggregate a nominal period of time.

There were eight minutes of added time in the second half of Arsenal's victory over Manchester City in the Community Shield, while several matches in the second-tier Championship's first round had 10 or more minutes of added time.

"From the managers and players, we have shared our concerns for many years now that there are too many games, the schedule is overcrowded, and it's at a dangerous level for players physical and mental well-being," Varane said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

"Despite our previous feedbacks, they have now recommended for next season:

longer games, more intensity, and less emotions to be shown by players.

"We just want to be in good condition on the pitch to give 100% to our club and fans. Why are our opinions not being heard?"

City manager Pep Guardiola also criticised the officiating changes after the Premier League champions conceded an equaliser in the 11th minute of stoppage time.

"What is their opinion, we have to accept it. Now the games will be 100 minutes, that's for sure," Guardiola told reporters on Sunday.

"It never happened today and it was eight minutes, imagine if they extend for goals and every time you score a goal in a game (that is) 4-3. You put 30 seconds, 45 seconds on for seven goals, tomorrow morning 9 am I am here playing."

The Community Shield also demonstrated how officials would enforce new rules established to improve the behaviour of players, managers and fans, with Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta being shown a yellow card for protesting a refereeing decision on the touchline.

"I just said 'listen, I cannot change my behaviour in three days'," Arteta told reporters of his yellow card.



Both Cristiano Ronaldo and his longtime archrival Lionel Messi got their names on the scoresheet for their respective clubs on Sunday. Al Nassr's Ronaldo scored the opener in their 3-1 win over Raja Casablanca in the quarterfinal to see his Saudi Pro League outfit make it to the Arab Club Champions Cup semifinal for the first time since the turn of the century. Messi, meanwhile, scored twice, including a brilliant late equaliser from a trademark curling freekick, as Inter Miami advanced past FC Dallas to the quarterfinals of the Leagues Cup on penalties after an enthralling 4-4 draw.

PHOTO: AFP/INSTAGRAM