

Warner 'pleased and relieved'

AFP, Sydney

David Warner was reunited on Friday with his missing "baggy green" Test caps after the veteran Australian cricketer issued a public plea.

The opening batter said on the eve of his 112th and final Test that his bag containing the cherished caps had gone missing during the team's flight from Melbourne to Sydney.

The "baggy greens" are revered by Australian cricketers and there is a long tradition of them wearing their caps throughout their careers, even when they become torn and tattered.

"David Warner's missing baggy greens have been located," CA said in a statement.

"The bag in which they were packed was found at the team hotel with all the contents inside.

"The movements of the missing bag are unknown despite extensive searches and the review of CCTV footage at multiple locations and the efforts of numerous parties since Tuesday."

Warner said on Instagram that he was "pleased and relieved" to get his caps back.

"Any cricketer knows how special their cap is and I will cherish this for the rest of my life," he said.

The on-going third Test against Pakistan in Sydney will be Warner's farewell to Test cricket.



Playing only his third Test, Aamer Jamal [inset] once again proved to be the standout pacer for Pakistan, returning career-best figures of six for 69 in an innings to bundle out Australia for 299, helping the visitors take a 14-run lead in their second innings on Day 3 of the third Test in Sydney yesterday. However, a four-wicket haul from Aussie quick Josh Hazlewood had Shan Masood and Co reeling at 68 for seven at stumps, slimming the chances of Pakistan getting their first Test win on Australian soil since 1995.

PHOTO: AFP



NoFeL to join Championship League exodus

SPORTS REPORTER

NoFeL Sporting Club are poised to follow Muktiyoddha Sangsad KS and Fortis FC Academy in joining the exodus from the upcoming Bangladesh Championship League (BCL), threatening the country's second-tier professional football with a participant shortage.

NoFeL general secretary Shakhawat Hossain Bhuiyan Shahin said that Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) would soon be informed of the decision.

"The club president [former BFF vice-president Tabith Awal] on Wednesday had let me know the decision of not playing the upcoming BCL, though I have taken all preparation to form the squad after confirming 24 players and the coaching staff," Shakhawat told The Daily Star on Friday.

"We are supposed to make an agreement with players and coaching staff after the national elections," he added.

Initially designed with 11 clubs, the 2023-24 season's BCL will now be a seven-team competition -- commencing in the first week of February following the completion of player registration formalities on January 25.

The second-tier professional football league failed to attract clubs after its inception in 2012, with the first six editions having seven to eight clubs and the final five editions featuring ten to 12 teams.

"By making such a decision, the players will have a difficult time finding another team to play in the BCL," Shakhawat added, revealing that Tabith Awal is their major financier.



TAMIM obliges to U-19 cricketers' request

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal arranged high-quality bats for all the members of the Bangladesh under-19 World Cup team.

Several members of the under-19 side, notably opener Ashikur Rahman Shibli, had expressed their desire to purchase high-quality bats through Tamim during their Asia Cup campaign last month.

Shibli and teammates got much more than they had wished for as Tamim, after discussing with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Paopn and the CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury Sujon, arranged top-quality bats from the renowned bat manufacturing company CA, which also sponsors the dashing left-hander.

Having received the bats from the CA company during his personal visit to Dubai, the Bangladesh stalwart handed over those to the young Tigers during the training session at the indoor premises of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The young Tigers are slated to fly to South Africa on January 7 to compete in the ICC Under-19 World Cup.

'No point pondering over oppositions'

ICC reveals 2024 T20 WC fixtures

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have been pitted in a tough group in the upcoming ICC Twenty20 World Cup in the West Indies and the United States in June as the ICC revealed the tournament groups and fixtures yesterday.

The Tigers have been drawn in Group D alongside South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Netherlands and Nepal and will begin their campaign against the Sri Lankans on June 7 in Dallas, USA.

Bangladesh will then face the Proteas

BANGLADESH'S T20 WORLD CUP GROUP FIXTURES

- Vs Sri Lanka on June 7 in Dallas
- Vs South Africa on June 10 in New York
- Vs Netherlands on June 13 in Saint Vincent
- Vs Nepal on June 16 in Saint Vincent

in New York on June 10 before taking on the Dutch and Nepal in St. Vincent on June 13 and 16 respectively.

The top two teams of the group will move on to the Super Eight, meaning the Tigers will be vying against two Test-playing nations and a potent Dutch team, who defeated them in the ODI World Cup

2024 T20 WORLD CUP GROUPS

GROUP A: India, Pakistan, Ireland, Canada, USA

GROUP B: England, Australia, Namibia, Scotland, Oman

GROUP C: New Zealand, West Indies, Afghanistan, Uganda, Papua New Guinea

GROUP D: South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Netherlands, Nepal

last year, for a spot in the second round. However, selector and former captain Habibul Bashar feels there is no point in worrying too much about the makeup of the groups.

"To be honest, nothing is ever easy in a World Cup. So, there is no point thinking about which group we are in," Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to the Future Tours Programme (FTP), Bangladesh will play eight T20s this year ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup -- three at home against Sri Lanka in March and five against Zimbabwe in April.

With so few T20s left before the World Cup, five of them being against a team that could not even qualify for

the tournament, Bashar hopes that the forthcoming 10th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), scheduled to begin on January 19, will help the players prepare for the tournament and discover new talents.

"We also have the BPL coming up. As we have gotten a few players through BPL in the past, I am hopeful about this time too," Bashar said.

Bangladesh's record in T20 World Cups has been consistently poor, with just two victories in the last edition in Australia held in 2022.

Bashar did not want to raise expectations too much but hoped that the Tigers will utilise the conditions in the US and the West Indies to their advantage.

"We may have done well in the recent past, but we are still not a proper T20 side... We will be playing in the West Indies and the US and from my experience, the pitches there are relatively slower which will suit us. But then again, we need to play our best cricket to perform better than we have in the past few ICC events."

The 20-team tournament will begin on June 1 in Dallas with a match between the US and Canada.

The Super Eight stage will start on June 19. The tournament will draw to a close on June 29 with the final in Barbados.

Sri Lanka seek boost against Zimbabwe

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's white ball series against Zimbabwe starting at the weekend is a chance for the team to show improvement after last year's dismal World Cup campaign, skipper Kusal Mendis said Friday.

Mendis led the team to a second-from-bottom placing at the World Cup, after captain Dasun Shanaka withdrew injured, finishing ahead only of the Netherlands.

Appointed one-day captain this week, Mendis said the team had trained intensely to bolster their fielding, after 16 catches were dropped in India.

"Fielding is one area that we have worked really hard during the last two weeks. It was a big letdown for us during the World Cup," he said.

"It was bitterly disappointing. We could have fared better in the World Cup had we been more disciplined on the

field," he added. "I can promise you that there's been a lot of hard work and you can see the results in this upcoming series."

Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe will play three ODIs starting Saturday followed by three T20 fixtures, all in Colombo.

The one-day matches form part of the Super League that will determine qualification for the next ODI World Cup.

Eleventh-ranked Zimbabwe missed the last two tournaments, after attending every World Cup from 1983 to 2015, and captain Craig Ervine welcomed plans to accommodate more teams in the next edition.

"It is hugely important that more teams compete in global events. It's better for cricket," he said. "Teams like us don't get to play top teams like India, Australia and England often and events like the World Cup are the only occasion we get to compete against the best."

