

Proteas train amid Shakib protests

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa had their first training session on Thursday ahead of the first of the two-Test series against hosts Bangladesh but the Proteas' training was overshadowed by some off-field incidents at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

The Proteas, who arrived in Dhaka on Wednesday for their first tour here since 2015, reached the stadium premises in Mirpur yesterday at noon with their full squad amid tight security.

However, at the same time, there was a protest going on at the main entrance of the stadium where some 100 protesters carrying different banners and boards were trying to grab the attention of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials, asking them not to give all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, a former lawmaker of



PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

the ousted Awami League government, an opportunity to play in the opening Test against South Africa.

Shakib, who was scheduled to return home yesterday night to bid adieu to Test cricket through the first Test in Mirpur, had to change his plan after youth and sports adviser Asif Mahmud advised the cricket board to discourage Shakib from

returning because of public anger.

He is now expected to return to the USA and is very likely to miss the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League as well.

As all these things were happening outside the stadium premises, it hardly could affect proteas as they had their regular practice session both at the main

ground and National Cricket Academy (NCA).

After a few warm-up sessions and a football match at the main ground, the proteas had some fielding sessions, focusing mainly on slip catching. At the NCA nets, they focused mostly on facing spinners, perhaps in anticipation of a spin threat from Bangladesh.

Along with seven to eight net bowlers, South African spinners Keshav Maharaj, Dane Piedt, and all-rounder Aiden Markram were also seen bowling against Protea batters, who seemed to be very much comfortable as they were frequently playing sweeps and straight shots.

Regular skipper Temba Bavuma, who will miss the opening Test due to left tricep muscle strain, joined his teammates for his recovery session. Meanwhile, it was more about adjusting to the wickets and conditions for pacers like Lungi Ngidi and Kagiso Rabada, who were hardly seen bowling at full pace.

The visitors will have three more practice sessions before facing the hosts in the opening Test in Mirpur, scheduled to start on October 21. Bangladesh will start their training under new head coach Phil Simmons for the series from today.



India's Bala Devi celebrates scoring 50th international goal during her side's 5-2 win against Pakistan in the opening match of the 7th SAFF Women's Championship at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu yesterday. India will face defending champions Bangladesh in their second Group A fixture on October 23. PHOTO: FACEBOOK



Athletes upset as many sports AT STANDSTILL

SPORTS REPORTER

Frustration is building among top athletes from different disciplines who are having to either sit idle or engage in other activities while their respective federations remain at a standstill.

Last month, the ministry of youth and sports removed heads of 42 sports bodies, many of whom had close links with the ousted Awami League government and had gone into hiding after the fall of the previous regime.

The absence of decision makers at the top and a shortage of funds has caused many federations like athletics, shooting, hockey, kabaddi and volleyball to lay inactive and suspend training camps.

Swimming and archery federations are notable exceptions, with the former



Diya Siddique



Mohammad Ismail

National Championships beginning tomorrow [Friday]," said national team's archer Diya Siddique, adding that the national training camp will go on a scheduled break for two-three weeks after October 22.

The suspension of training camps has upset the players as they fear it would have an adverse effect on their performance.

"Our camp got suspended on October 10. From what I know, it happened due to shortage of funds as there are no signatories to withdraw the fund from the bank," said shooter Robiul Islam, adding that the shooters may lose their consistency ahead of the upcoming Asian Shooting Championships in Thailand if the camp does not resume soon.

Four-time fastest man in the country sprinter Mohammad Ismail said, "We were in the national camp from June till August 20, preparing for two international meets, before it got suspended due to the unrest. Since then, we have returned to our service teams, doing our usual practice while some have joined duty."

"We don't know when the national camp or the national competitions will get underway and when we would return to the national camp."

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) suspended their national training camp due to shortage of funds as there are no signatories following the removal of BAF president Tofazzal Hossain Miah and resignation of

general secretary Abdur Rakib Montu.

Though the men's and women's Under-21 hockey teams have been preparing at BKSP for November's AHF Asian Youth Cup preparation, more than 20 national hockey players failed to get permission to play in different leagues in Europe.

"It is better to do something than doing nothing. We have been training with our respective service teams as we usually do round the year," said hockey player Nayeem Islam, who is a contractual player of Bangladesh Navy.

"Among those who are not part of service teams, some are helping their fathers in business, some are working as riders for ride sharing apps to earn their bread and butter. Some are under pressure from their families as all path of earning from tournaments is currently shut off," said the national midfielder Nayeem.

Kabaddi player Mizanur Rahman, a Bangladesh Police athlete, said he is preparing ahead of participating in the Indian Pro Kabaddi League while most players from service teams are on duty instead of being in training.

It has been learnt that the youth and sports ministry is likely to announce ad-hoc committees for nearly a dozen federations within a week as per the recommendations of the search committee, which was created to reform the existing sports bodies as well as provide recommendations for overhauls in the sports sector.

"We don't know when the national camp or the national competitions will get underway and when we would return to the national camp."

resuming its training camp with 24 swimmers on October 1, after it got halted for three weeks, to prepare the athletes for December's World Swimming Championship in Hungary while the latter is carrying on its national camp with only four archers.

"I have been in training and preparing to participate in the Youth Archery

Mbappe to keep any explanations for Swedish justice

AFP, Paris

Kylian Mbappe, linked by media to being the target of a rape investigation in Sweden, is to keep any explanations for Swedish justice, "if necessary," his lawyer said on Thursday.

"He retains primacy of his explanations, if necessary, to the Swedish justice system," Marie-Alix Canu-Bernard told AFP.

The lawyer strongly denounced "media allegations suggesting that Kylian Mbappe spoke about the events of his trip to Stockholm".

French daily Le Parisien and RMC Sports both reported on Thursday the France and Real Madrid striker had consensual sex with a young woman during the trip last week.

Mbappe, the two news outlets reported, has messages from the woman "with a very positive tone", telling the tale of a happy meeting and consensual relations.

As discomfort in his left thigh kept him out of France's squad for Nations League games, Mbappe went to Stockholm with few friends, arriving on October 9 and departing on October 11.

Reports in several Swedish media say they visited a restaurant and a nightclub. Once the group had left Sweden, a woman went to police to allege she was the victim of a rape.

On Monday, after Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet became the first media outlet to reveal that a rape probe had been opened, Mbappe slammed the report as "fake news" on his social media and alleged there was a link between the accusations and his financial dispute with his former club Paris Saint-Germain. A hearing into the case was held on Tuesday.



Off-spinner Sajid Khan turned hero for Pakistan, who are now in a strong position to win the second Test and level the three-match series against England at the end of Day 3 in Rawalpindi on Thursday. Sajid took 7-111 to bowl England out for 291 in their first innings and helped Pakistan get a 75-run lead. After the hosts scored 221 all out, setting a 297-run target on a turning pitch, Sajid dismissed Ben Duckett while fellow spinner Noman Ali had Zak Crawley to leave England on 36-2 at stumps.

PHOTO: AFP

BLACK CAPS ROCK INDIA

Devon Conway's 91 powered New Zealand to a lead of 134 after fast bowlers Matt Henry and William O'Rourke, who removed India's star batter Virat Kohli for a duck, combined to take nine wickets to dismiss India for 46 on the second day of the weather-hit first Test at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Thursday. The visitors reached 180-3 at stumps.

India's 46 all out was their lowest total at home and third-lowest score overall. Their previous lowest at home was 75 against the West Indies in New Delhi in 1987. Their lowest overall is 36 against Australia in a pink-ball Test in Adelaide in 2020.

It was only the second time that five Indian batters got dismissed without scoring in a home Test. The last time it happened was also against New Zealand in Mohali in 1999.

Matt Henry's figures of five for 15 is the fourth-best by a New Zealand pacer in India, and the best since Tim Southee took seven for 64 at the same ground 12 years ago.

Playing his 26th Test, Henry also completed 100 wickets in the format, the joint-second fastest for a New Zealand bowler along with Neil Wagner.



PHOTO: X

SHORT CORNER

BCB officially terminates contract with Hathurusingha



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has officially terminated the contract of national men's team head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, citing misconduct and breach of employment terms, as per a press release issued yesterday.

Tuchel's appointment raises questions about English coaching: Neville

Former Chelsea and Bayern Munich boss Thomas Tuchel is the first German to manage England and just the third foreigner to take charge after Sweden's Sven-Goran Eriksson and Italian Fabio Capello. "Everybody in our country including myself will wish him all the best and hope we can get over the line and win a trophy, but I think there are some serious questions for the FA to answer in respect of English coaching," former Manchester United captain Neville told Sky Sports News.

Pogba 'willing to give up money' to stay at Juve

Paul Pogba is adamant that he wishes to return from his reduced doping ban with Juventus even if it means accepting a pay cut, the French World Cup winner told La Gazzetta dello Sport in an interview Wednesday.

Cricket Australia losses lower than expected

Cricket Australia announced a net deficit of A\$31.9 million (\$21.34m) for the 2023-4 financial year on Thursday, results that were better than expected at a low-point in the game's four-year cycle. "The strong growth in registered participation was the result of targeted programmes to increase participation in areas including 5-12 year-olds, women and girls and players of South Asian heritage," chief executive Nick Hockley informed.

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