

## BCB seeks govt clearance to finalise Pak tour

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national cricket team will depart for the UAE this morning for a two-match T20I series against the hosts in Sharjah.

The matches are scheduled for May 17 and 19. If the following Pakistan tour that includes five T20Is and was originally scheduled to begin on May 25 goes ahead, the team is expected to travel there directly from the UAE. Otherwise, they will return home.

However, the question now remains whether the Pakistan series will go ahead as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will seek government clearance before finalising it.

"They [Pakistan Cricket Board] have unofficially asked for our consent regarding the series. Once we receive official communication about the dates and venues, we will forward it to the government. The BCB is not the decision-maker in this matter," said Iftexhar Rahman Mithu, chairman of BCB's media and communications committee.

The tour proposal comes after a recent ceasefire agreed between Pakistan and neighbouring India following a period of heightened tension. However, PCB sent BCB a revised itinerary yesterday, which states the start date of the series on May 27 in Faisalabad.

However, due to the rescheduling of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) – which will now resume on May 17 and conclude on May 25 – the PCB had to revise the fixtures for the Bangladesh series, as the original dates clashed with the PSL final.



Bangladesh women's cricket team batters Sharmin Akhter and Sobhana Mostary train along the shore of Cox's Bazar sea beach as part of the Tigresses' ongoing fitness training camp. A total of 15 players are participating in the camp, which began on May 9 and will continue until May 19, before they start a 13-day skill training camp at BKSP.

PHOTO: BCB

## Ancelotti set to be highest-paid national team coach

AGENCIES

Carlo Ancelotti will become Brazil coach after leaving Real Madrid at the end of the season, the Brazilian FA (CBF) confirmed on Monday.

Brazilian soccer sources said Ancelotti will sign a one-year deal to become the highest-paid national team coach ahead of the 2026 World Cup, with the option to extend his contract.

Although the CBF has not disclosed official figures, outlets such as El Pais and Diario AS report that the veteran coach will earn close to €10 million net per season. He will also earn €5 million bonus if he manages to lead Brazil to World Cup glory in the United States in 2026.

Ancelotti's debut for the national team will be on June 5 in Guayaquil against Ecuador, in the World Cup qualifiers. Real are yet to announce the Italian's departure and name a replacement, although Xabi Alonso is a strong favourite to take over after confirming he will leave Bayer Leverkusen.

"I'll be the coach of Brazil from the 26th. Madrid will issue a statement whenever they want," Ancelotti told reporters on the eve of his team's match against Real Mallorca. "I've never had a problem with the club and I never will."



## 'Attaining No.1 spot would be better'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Mehedi Hasan Miraz said yesterday he would have been much more delighted if he could have made it to the top of the ICC all-rounders' rankings in Tests.

Miraz, who scored 104 and claimed a five-wicket haul in Bangladesh's comprehensive win over Zimbabwe in the Chattogram Test last month, reached a career-best 327 rating points to overtake South African all-rounder Marco Jansen recently. India's Ravindra Jadeja is leading the Test all-rounders chart with 400 points.

"Obviously, it feels good, but truth be told, it would be better if I could notch the number one position," said Miraz, who was presented with a crest Bangladesh Cricket Supporters' Association yesterday, marking his landmark of 200 wickets and 2000 Test runs that he reached during the Zimbabwe series.

"The target obviously is to go higher, but at the end of the day, I have to remain fit to perform, and I am not thinking too big at the moment and taking small steps," he added.

Miraz has 205 Test wickets to his name, with Shakib Al Hasan and Taijul Islam being the only Bangladesh players to have bagged more Test wickets. Shakib is the only Bangladesh player to have attained the No.1 spot in ICC all-rounders' rankings.

## PWD eye glory after remarkable comeback

SPORTS REPORTER

While many government-backed organisations distanced themselves from football over the years, Public Works Department Sporting Club (PWD SC) have scripted a remarkable comeback, returning to the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) after more than three decades.

Once a dominant force before and after the country's liberation, the 70-year-old club is now eyeing a return to its former glory.

With three matches still remaining in the second-tier Bangladesh Championship League (BCL), PWD SC have already secured promotion to the BPL, thanks to an unassailable lead. Their campaign, however, began inauspiciously – with a loss and two draws – but they soon found momentum and have barely stumbled since.

The club had been absent from top-flight football since their relegation from the then Dhaka Premier Division League in 1994. For years, they remained stuck in the lower tiers, caught in cycles of promotion and relegation.

Their chance came in the 2023-24 season, when they met the Bangladesh Football Federation's criteria to enter the BCL. They narrowly missed promotion that season by a single point, but remained determined. This time, they built a stronger squad – and the results followed.

"The start was really challenging," said head coach Anwar Hossain. "Nothing was ready. Players even had to clean our club tent in Segunbagicha because our planned



camp at Sheikh Jamal DC fell through.

"We began with only two days of training. I barely knew some of the players. Unsurprisingly, we lost our first match and drew the second. But after that, we have performed really well, except for one match."

Anwar, an AFC 'A' Licence holder, who worked six years at BKSP, credited the team's turnaround to experienced BPL players and a potent attacking unit – two of whom combined for 14 goals. Goalkeeper Anik Hossain also earned praise for saving two penalties that secured six vital points.

He also highlighted the club management's role. "They ensured we had the facilities we needed and have paid 80 percent of players' dues," said Anwar, who previously played for Abahani, Mohammedan SC, and Sheikh Russel KC.

Manager Iftexharul Islam praised president Shamim Akhter and general

secretary Moshir Akanda for leading the club's revival.

"Former general secretary Masud made the first attempt to revive PWD SC in football, and then the current president and general secretary strengthened that initiative by taking it on as a form of social work, as well as an effort to restore PWD SC's glorious past," informed Iftexharul, adding that the club has some permanent income from FDR and a fuel station near the National Parliament, while sponsors are also offering support.

"Besides, PWD has a strong sports culture compared to other government departments, and that has also helped revive the football team."

As for their BPL ambitions, Iftexharul acknowledged the financial pressure. "The budget for BPL is huge. But we're not aiming to build a title-winning team – just one strong enough to avoid relegation."

### SHORT CORNER

#### Hesson named as Pakistan's white-ball head coach

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday announced the appointment of Mike Hesson, as the white-ball head coach of the Pakistan men's cricket team effective from 26 May, 2025. Hesson had previously served as head coach of various international teams including New Zealand and Kenya. He is also currently serving as head coach of Islamabad United, who is the defending champions of HBL Pakistan Super League.

#### PSL to resume on same day as IPL

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday announced that the remaining eight matches of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) – postponed due to the conflict with India – would resume from May 17, with the final scheduled for May 25.

#### England announce squads for Brook's first series as captain

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced the squads for the upcoming white-ball series against the West Indies, comprising three ODIs and three T20Is, beginning on 29 May. Harry Brook will lead both squads in his first series as skipper in what promises to be an exciting summer contest against the Caribbean side.

#### Murray and Djokovic end coaching partnership after six months

Andy Murray and former rival Novak Djokovic have ended their coaching partnership after six months, the pair announced on Tuesday. Djokovic stunned the tennis world in November when he hired the retired Murray, who had no track record as a coach.

\*\*Read full stories on The Daily Star website.

## India embark on a fresh journey post Kohli-Rohit era

AGENCIES

Indian cricket is on the cusp of a historic transition. For the first time in more than a decade, their Test squad will be without Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma – two stalwarts who have defined an era of dominance, resilience, and unmatched passion.

In a single week, both batting maestro Kohli and inspirational captain Rohit have bowed out from the longest format, leaving a void in the Indian lineup and in hearts of millions.

Their exits, following spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's retirement last year, signal the end of a golden chapter.

Now, the responsibility of ushering in a new era falls on the young shoulders of Shubman Gill. The elegant right-hander, seen as the natural heir to the leadership, is widely tipped to lead India in the five-Test series against England, starting June 20. Though he boasts five centuries in 32 Tests, his overseas average of 29.50 remains a concern.

Gill is expected to open with Yashasvi Jaiswal, 23, while the likes of Shreyas Iyer, Sarfaraz Khan and Rajat



Patidar battle to fill Kohli's shoes.

Behind the stumps, Rishabh Pant remains a wildcard – talented but inconsistent, and with leadership still under question after a lukewarm IPL season.

Bowling responsibilities now lie with a younger, hungrier attack. While Jasprit Bumrah brings experience and star quality, his recent injury troubles may rule him out of a leadership role.

Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, and a fit again Mohammed Shami could form the pace battery, with Ravindra Jadeja and potentially

Washington Sundar taking spin duties.

Cricket pundit Ayaz Memon acknowledges the scale of the shift, calling Kohli's exit "a big moment in Indian cricket." But he also highlights the depth in India's talent pool. "They look good. It's a strong bench," he said.

Former selector Sandeep Patil echoes that optimism. "The two pillars have gone, but if one player exits, the next one is ready," he noted.

The stage is set. The question now is not just who steps up, but how this generation will write its own legacy in the unforgiving cauldron of Test cricket.

## Stars return for Lord's clash

AGENCIES

Australia and South Africa have named full-strength squads for the highly anticipated World Test Championship (WTC) final at Lord's, starting June 11.

Australia welcome back skipper Pat Cummins, pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood, and all-rounder Cameron Green in a 15-man squad.

All three missed the Sri Lanka series due to injury but return in peak form. Cummins and Hazlewood have impressed in the Indian Premier League, with Hazlewood taking 18 wickets despite a minor shoulder niggle ruling him out of his last IPL appearance.

Green, recovering from back surgery, is already in England playing county cricket for Gloucestershire. He's hit form quickly, scoring a century in his first game back, albeit as a specialist batter.

Another key inclusion is 19-year-old batting prodigy Sam Konstas, who dazzled on debut against India at the MCG. He's expected to partner Usman Khawaja at the top.

Chair of selectors George Bailey said, "We are fortunate and looking forward to having Pat, Josh, and Cam back in the squad." He praised the team's momentum after their WTC cycle-ending win in Sri Lanka and their historic home series victory over India.

Meanwhile, South Africa are bolstered by the return of ace pacer Kagiso Rabada, back from a suspension after testing positive for a recreational drug during the SA20 league.

He leads a potent pace battery featuring Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi, and Corbin Bosch. Spinners Keshav Maharaj and Senuran Muthusamy would provide variety on a seam-friendly Lord's surface.

Captain Temba Bavuma heads a stable batting group, including Aiden Markram and exciting youngster Tristan Stubbs. "We've stuck with the core group," said coach Shukri Conrad. South Africa will fine-tune their preparations with a four-day warm-up match against Zimbabwe in Arundel from June 3-6, while Australia aim to defend their 2023 title and become the first team to retain the WTC crown.

### AUSTRALIA SQUAD

Pat Cummins (captain), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Sam Konstas, Matt Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Beau Webber.

### SOUTH AFRICA SQUAD

Temba Bavuma (captain), David Bedingham, Corbin Bosch, Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Senuran Muthusamy, Lungi Ngidi, Dane Paterson, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tristan Stubbs and Kyle Verreynne.



ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP