

How Bangladesh's T20 World Cup HOPES UNRAVELLED

STAR SPORTS DESK

With events unfolding over more than three weeks, the International Cricket Council (ICC) yesterday officially confirmed that Bangladesh will be replaced by Scotland in the upcoming T20 World Cup, co-hosted by Sri Lanka and India from February 7. The sequence of events is as follows:

JAN 3: Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Kolkata Knight Riders drop Mustafizur Rahman from their squad on instructions from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul instructs the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to request the ICC to move Bangladesh's World Cup matches outside India and calls for IPL broadcasts in Bangladesh to be halted.

JAN 4: BCB formally requests the ICC to relocate Bangladesh's matches, citing security concerns and following government advice. The board also announces Bangladesh's 15-member T20 World Cup squad.

JAN 5: The interim government decides to suspend IPL broadcasts.

JAN 6: The ICC writes back and seeks detailed security observations from the BCB regarding travel to India.

JAN 8: BCB sends a second letter to the



ICC, reiterating its relocation request with detailed security observations.

JAN 12: Asif Nazrul reaffirms Bangladesh's stance against travelling to India and refers to three security points raised by the ICC Security team through inter-departmental communication between the ICC and the BCB.

JAN 17: An ICC delegate arrives in Bangladesh for further discussions, with another ICC delegate, Gaurav Saxena, joining the meeting virtually. Both parties maintain their initial stance.

JAN 21: The ICC again rejects Bangladesh's

relocation request and gives the BCB one day to consult the government during a virtual meeting. The meeting includes a vote on Bangladesh's relocation request, with the majority voting against it. The ICC issues a press release confirming the schedule remains unchanged, with Bangladesh's matches in India. BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul says he is waiting for a "miracle from ICC."

JAN 22: Bulbul and Asif Nazrul meet with cricketers for the first time during the period. The BCB seeks intervention from the ICC's Dispute Resolution Committee after Asif Nazrul states there is "no scope" to travel to India due to security concerns.

JAN 24: The ICC confirms Scotland as Bangladesh's replacement in the T20 World Cup after no agreement is reached.

Three clubs, one ambition

Three debutants -- Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Samiti, Shuktara Jubo Sangsad and Chattogram City Football Club -- will begin their Bangladesh Championship League (BCL) campaigns on Sunday with a shared ambition of earning promotion to the Bangladesh Football League (BFL). The 10-team second-tier competition will be played across three venues, with champions and runners-up securing promotion. Khelaghar return to football after a long hiatus, Shuktara aim to reclaim their place in the top tiers after past relegation, and Chattogram City seek to restore the port city's football presence in Dhaka. Despite limited preparation time, all three clubs are targeting promotion amid strong competition from established BCL sides and recently relegated teams.

***Read full story on The Daily Star's website*



PHOTO: BFF

Rajshahi Stars celebrate Alpi Akter's (C) decisive goal against Farashganj Sporting Club in a 1-0 win in their crucial Bangladesh Football League fixture at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium on Saturday. The vital win keeps Rajshahi top with 21 points from seven matches, strengthening their grip on the title race and dealing a major blow to Farashganj's title hopes.



Heat bakes, Djokovic shines

Brutal heat dominated the Australian Open on Saturday, forcing a five-hour suspension of matches on outside courts as temperatures soared to 38C at Melbourne Park. The tournament's Heat Stress Scale hit the maximum level of five, with players and spectators baking in extreme conditions. Reigning champion Jannik Sinner visibly struggled, seen using a cooling tube between games during his third-round match against American Eliot Spizzirri. Battling cramps and losing his first set since October under a blazing sun, the Italian was a limping wreck before the extreme heat policy allowed the roof at Rod Laver Arena to be closed, helping him recover and reach the last 16 with a dramatic 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 win. Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic escaped the worst of the heat to beat Botic van de Zandschulp 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4), securing his 102nd match victory at Melbourne to match Roger Federer's record, while also becoming the first player to reach 400 Grand Slam wins.

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