



I think it's better for me (the role of an all-rounder) as now I will have to think about two jobs. You can be happy if you get to perform at least in one department. But with only the batting role, my room to perform becomes less and if I cannot perform with the bat, it eventually ends up as a bad day for me.

**SOUMYA SARKAR**  
BANGLADESH ALL-ROUNDER

All-rounder Soumya Sarkar works out in gym in Mirpur yesterday ahead of the Bangladesh Cricket League, which is set to begin from tomorrow. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Hassan's concerns only on team combination!

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket, especially the senior team, is not in good shape.

The Tigers' performance in the T20I series in Pakistan once again exposed cracks but that was just an extension of the multifaceted problem the country's cricket has been facing since the World Cup in England.

Since the showpiece event, one problem after another has plagued the national team. There was hardly any good news as they hit new lows, suffering home defeats against Zimbabwe and Afghanistan.

While many have identified the poor showing in Pakistan as an ominous sign, it was expected that the custodian of Bangladesh cricket, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hassan,

the reason behind the national team's continuous failures since the World Cup?

The BCB president's observation was: "You have to understand one thing. We are facing few issues too. Whether you are talking about team management or the board; we are also struggling with some issues. It was a big setback when we were informed just before the India tour that Shakib [Al Hasan] would not be available. It's difficult to find a replacement for Shakib. On the other hand, Tamim [Iqbal] also said that he would not go to India which was also a setback. We gave Naim [Mohammad Naim] the opening slot on the India tour. After Tamim's return we had to change the opening combination from the earlier setup. Mushfiqur [Rahim] did not go there [Pakistan], so we had a problem with the number four position. It could possible to manage if we learnt

## Injury troubles plaguing BCL

SPORTS REPORTER

With the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) scheduled to begin from tomorrow, injuries remain the biggest concern for many cricketers.

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim, representing North Zone, is among the big names set to miss the opening round. Mushfiqur has been suffering from fever and is also yet to recover from a hamstring injury sustained during the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL).

The 32-year-old, who skipped the tour of Pakistan citing personal reasons, was expected to be available for most part of the BCL.

"Mushfiqur had a hamstring injury during the BBPL and played despite it but now the injury has been aggravated. He will not be available for the first-round BCL game as their physio advised him to rest," BCB chief physician Debashish Chowdhury told the reporters yesterday.

Islami Bank East Zone are probably going to suffer the most due to injuries, with pacer Khaled Ahmed sustaining a side strain while bowling at



**MUSHFIQUR RAHIM**

the nets during a practice session yesterday and being the latest on the list. Khaled was looking forward to a return to competitive cricket after a long recovery programme following a knee injury that forced him to go under the knife.

"Khaled was bowling well in the nets but unfortunately he had a side strain and is has been ruled out from the opening phase of the tournament," East Zone coach Abdul Karim said.

East Zone will also miss all-rounder Nasir Hossain, who was unable to pass the beep test after getting ten points yesterday, one shy of the 11-point benchmark.

"We are not seeking any replacement for Nasir. We have decided to wait for him and see if he can be available to us for the other rounds of the tournament," Karim added.

Walton Central Zone also have injury issues. They are yet to confirm the availability of Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who sustained a finger injury and will not be available to bowl.

Although Mehedi came to a practice session yesterday, he did not take part in any activity. Instead, he went to the BCB medical room to get an update on his injury.

Meanwhile, South Zone's top-order batsman Imrul Kayes is also suffering from hamstring problems and is likely to miss the first round of the franchise based first class competition.

I have not heard anything like this (that Bangladesh will arrange the Asia Cup). Pakistan will decide where the tournament will take place. They have not said anything to us so they will decide.



**Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan over the recent news that Pakistan had offered Bangladesh to host the upcoming Asia Cup.**

would make some bold statements providing solutions to the lingering problems.

However, the BCB boss himself was searching for answers. But when he spoke to reporters yesterday, Hassan's concerns, as usual, lay with technical issues like the batting order and decisions regarding the toss, which he thought was a very serious issue.

He said that the way Bangladesh played in Pakistan was a new experience for him as he believed it was 'unlike Bangladesh' in terms of T20 performance.

The most vital question was: What is

about it earlier.

"Let me give you a simple example: we have a Test in our next schedule and there is no one who can be more dependable than Mushfiqur. Think that we pick a new player, what he will do? He will not get a chance even if he does well and his career will be over if he fails to do so. One cannot play with such tension. You have to at least give him three matches. There are so many changes and there is a scope for us to think about it."

So the problems lie with the unavailability of senior players!

## BCB names squad for Women's T20 WC

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the 15-member squad for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled to begin from February 21 in Australia.

The Salma Khatun-led team are expected to reach Brisbane on February 3. The Tigresses are scheduled to play three tour matches on February 7, 10 and 12 at the Gold Coast District Cricket Club Ground. Bangladesh will also play two practice matches prior to the mega event. The two warm-up fixtures will see the Tigresses face Thailand and Pakistan on February 16 and February 20 before they play their tournament opener against India on February 24 in Perth.

**Squad:** Salma Khatun (C), Rumana Ahmed, Jahanaara Alam, Shamima Sultana, Murshida Khatun Happy, Ayesha Rahman, Nigar Siltana, Sanjida Islam, Kadija-Tul-Kubra, Panna Ghosh, Fajana Haque, Nahida Akter, Fahima Khatun, Mst. Ritu Moni, Sobhana Mostary

### FIXTURES

Date	Match	Time	Venue
<b>Practice match</b>			
Feb 16	Bangladesh v Thailand	TBC	TBC
Feb 20	Bangladesh v Pakistan	TBC	TBC
<b>Main event</b>			
Feb 24	Bangladesh v India	5:00pm	Perth
Feb 27	Bangladesh v Australia	2:00pm	Canberra
Feb 29	Bangladesh v New Zealand	2:00pm	Melbourne
Mar 02	Bangladesh v Sri Lanka	2:00pm	Melbourne

(Moreover 3 tour matches will be held on February 7, 10 and 12)

## Raza puts Zimbabwe on top

REUTERS, Harare

Off-spinner Sikandar Raza grabbed career-best figures of 7-113 as Zimbabwe took control of the second and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Harare Sports Club on Wednesday, but for the second match running the home side suffered a concussion scare.

Zimbabwe are 62 for one in their second innings at the close of the third day, a lead of 175 with nine wickets remaining, after Raza helped them bowl the visitors out for 293 on a pitch that is offering plenty of assistance to the spinners.

Prince Masvaure (26 not out) and nightwatchman Regis Chakabva (14 not out) will resume on day four, with makeshift opener Craig Ervine (13) the one wicket to fall.

Ervine was pushed to the top of the order after regular opener Kevin Kasuza had to be stretched off the field when he was hit flush on the helmet while fielding at short leg and was taken to hospital with concussion.

It is the second Test in a row that Kasuza has been concussed fielding in that position and allows Zimbabwe to use the International Cricket Council's



**7-star Sikandar Raza of Zimbabwe punches the air after the dismissal of Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis on the third day of the second Test in Harare yesterday.** PHOTO: AFP

new concussion protocols to bring another batsman into the side. Timycen Maruma has been drafted into the line-up, with his only previous

Test against Bangladesh in April 2013.

Sri Lanka had resumed the third day on 122 for two, but added only 12 runs before Kusal Mendis (22) crashed the ball into the helmet of the helpless Kasuza and was caught at square leg by Carl Mumba.

Angelo Mathews (64) and Dhananjaya de Silva (42) put on 84 for the sixth wicket, before the latter was caught and bowled by Raza.

The prized wicket of Mathews, who scored an unbeaten double-century in the first Test, was claimed by Mumba as he got a tickle to a ball down the leg-side and was caught by wicketkeeper Chakabva with the score on 244.

All-rounder Raza's figures beat the 5-99 he managed against the West Indies in Bulawayo in 2017.

Zimbabwe will want to bat quickly on the fourth day to build a sizeable lead as they attempt to square the series, having lost the first Test at the same venue by 10 wickets.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**ZIMBABWE:** First innings 406 and second innings 62-1 (Masvaure 26 not out; Fernando 1-9)  
**SRI LANKA:** First innings 293 (Mathews 64, Karunaratne 44, Fernando 44; Raza 7-113)

## U-19s face tough task against hosts

SPORTS REPORTER

The stern test of nerve awaits the Bangladesh Under-19s today as the young Tigers face hosts South Africa in the Super League quarter final of the ongoing ICC Under-19 World Cup at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom.

The young Tigers, who entered the mega event with high hopes, made their way to the last 16 by topping Group C. However, the young Tigers were lucky to have topped their group as rain saved their blushes during their last group encounter against Pakistan when Bangladesh were struggling on 106 for nine.

"It is going to be a challenging game [against South Africa]. We need to do well in both batting and bowling if we are to beat a decent side like South Africa. We batted poorly against Pakistan. We played some bad shots and we are trying to reduce the number of mistakes. We are focusing more on our batting and our aim in bowling is to bowl tightly in the first and final Powerplay," said skipper Akbar ahead of the clash yesterday.

The young Tigers have a few injury concerns -- all-rounder Mohammad Mritunjoy Chowdhury has already been ruled out of the World Cup due to a labral tear of the left shoulder. He has been replaced by another all-rounder SM Meherob Hasan.

Akbar, however, did not seem very concerned about the injuries as the young skipper said that they would have to fight with whatever ammunition they have.

"We actually can't do anything about injuries. We need to fight with whatever we have."

## Scratched out by monkey

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia opener Jake Fraser-McGurk will return home from the ongoing ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup in South Africa after being scratched on the face by a monkey at a nature reserve, Cricket Australia (CA) said on Wednesday.

Fraser-McGurk, who was attacked while on a team outing after last week's victory over England in Kimberley, will undergo precautionary treatment in Australia, CA said.

"We want to make sure that Jake doesn't have any ongoing medical concerns as a result of the incident so we have taken the best course of action," CA Sports Science and Sports Medicine Manager said.

## India win Super Over thriller to clinch series

REUTERS, Wellington

Rohit Sharma belted two sixes off the final two deliveries of a Super Over to give India victory in the third Twenty20 international against New Zealand at Seddon Park in Hamilton on Wednesday and clinch the series with two games to spare. Sharma finished on 15 not out after he hit two sixes off Tim Southee to lead India to 20-0 after New Zealand scored 17-0 in their over bowled by Jasprit Bumrah, with Kane Williamson scoring 11, while Martin Gupthill finished on five.

New Zealand captain Williamson had almost single-handedly led his side to a win in the regulation 20 overs

when he blasted 95 from 48 balls but was dismissed by Mohammed Shami with three balls remaining and two runs needed for victory.

Shami, however, conceded just one run through a bye on the penultimate ball then bowled Ross Taylor on the final delivery to leave New Zealand on 179-6.

India, who scored 179-5 in their innings, won the first two games of the five-match series in Auckland at the weekend.

Rohit (65) and KL Rahul had given India a blistering start, with Rohit's 20th Twenty20 half century being reached inside the first six overs as they put on 77 runs in the first seven.

Rahul was dismissed on the final ball of the ninth over but at 89-1 with 11 overs remaining the tourists were

still well placed to score over 200 before New Zealand clamped down in the second half of the innings.

Hamish Bennett, who got clubbed for three sixes and two fours by Rohit in the sixth over, dismissed the Indian opener in the 11th then two balls later got rid of Shivam Dube and the torrent of runs slowed.

The fourth game is in Wellington on Friday.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**INDIA:** 179 for 5 in 20 overs (Sharma 65, Rahul 27, Kohli 38; Bennett 3-54)  
**NEW ZEALAND:** 179 for 6 in 20 overs (Gupthill 31, Williamson 95; Thakur 2-21, Shami 2-32)  
**Result:** Match tied, India won Super Over decider and lead 5-match series 3-0.  
Player-of-the-match: Rohit Sharma.



**India's Rohit Sharma (R) hit back-to-back sixes to take his side to a win off the last ball of the Super Over during an exciting third T20I against New Zealand in Hamilton yesterday.** PHOTO: BCCI