

Talha surprise

Mashud replaces Saleh as vice-captain

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Fast bowler Talha Jubair was a surprise inclusion when the Bangladeshi Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday revealed its 13-member squad to face India in the opening Test of their two-match series as the home team dwelled on the prospect of playing a full-strength pace attack for the first time.

Fellow quick Mashrafee Bin Mortuza expectedly returned to the fold after convincing everyone that he had fully recovered from a career-threatening knee-injury which kept him away from all cricket for a year. 22-year-old Mashrafee has been virtually unplayable in the recently concluded Corporate Cricket League and also in the ongoing Dhaka Premier Division. However, Jubair's name at the third pace behind Tapash Baisya was on nobody's mind as the 19-year-old had not made much of an impact since fighting his way back from a nagging back injury which also prevented him from playing for nearly two years.

The trio have never played a Test together but are widely regarded as

the three best pacers of the country. Chief selector Faruque Ahmed while announcing the team at a press conference, said the decision to take Jubair stemmed from India's prolific record against spinners.

"Talha is a good Test bowler and we believe he can be effective in this series," explained Faruque.

Although left-arm spinner Enamul Haque (Jr) was tipped to partner Mohammad Rafique, another left-arm spinner Manjul Islam Rana got the final nod for his ability with the bat although his inclusion in the final XI will depend on Jubair's playing status.

Pacer Tareq Aziz Khan and middle order batsman Alok Kapali were the two others apart from Enamul to be dropped from the 13 in Bangladesh's last Test which was against New Zealand in October.

Captain Habibul Bashar made a welcome return to the side. The only Bangladeshi with over 2000 Test runs, Bashar had missed almost all international cricket since September including the home Tests against New Zealand first due to an injury to his knee.

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TALHA JUBAIR

FIRST TEST SQUAD

Habibul Bashar (captain), Khaled Mashud (wicketkeeper), Nafees Iqbal, Javed Omar, Mohammad Ashraful, Rajin Saleh, Aftab Ahmed, Mashruque Rahman, Mohammed Rafique, Tapash Baisya, Mashrafee Bin Mortuza, Talha Jubair and Manjul Islam Rana.



GOOD THAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A BREAK! Excluded duo Alok Kapali (L) and Tareq Aziz Khan (R) share a light moment while returning fast bowler Mashrafee-bin-Mortuza fixes his shoelace during a practice session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Premier cricket
Biman, DOHS
 battle today

SPORTS REPORTER

Title aspirants Bangladesh Biman will play their third successive big match in the Green Delta Premier Cricket League when they take on Old DOHS at the Fatulah Cricket Stadium in Narayanganj today.

Having beaten Abahani in the opener, Biman stormed to another comprehensive victory against runners-up City Club in the second round.

Yet to hire a foreign player, the national air liner, who avoided relegation by a whisker last season, look in great form and will have an almost free ride in the rest of the elite 12-team competition if they can topple Akram Khan's DOHS.

Newcomers DOHS began with an impressive victory against City but crashed to holders Victoria the very next match.

They will be hoping hard-hitting Pakistani batsman Zahoor Elahi delivers the goods for a team that is supposed to contain an experienced batting line-up.

In other matches, Abahani play Uttara Sporting Club at the BKSP in Savar while rank-outsiders Indira Road KC are pitted against impressive newcomers Agrani Bank at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Kumble, Laxman angry

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Did U Know?

WG Grace is the first person to have scored over 100 first class centuries.

What to WATCH

ESPN
 Football Extra
 Repeat at 10:30 am
 Sportscentre
 Live at 8:00 pm
STAR Sports
 Sportsline
 Live at 8:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

Green Delta Premier Cricket League
 Abahani vs Uttara SC (BKSP)
 Old DOHS vs Biman (FCS)
 Agrani Bank vs Indira Road (DCS)
 Green Delta Premier Hockey League
 Abahani vs Sadharan Bima (11:15 pm)
 Ajax SC vs Sonali Bank (3:00 pm)
 Dutch-Bangla Chess League

TALK TURKEY



Shane Warne

(Australian master spinner)
 "It's pretty simple. I love the way he plays the game. He entertains the crowd, the crowd likes watching him play."

On Michael Clarke.

Zimbabwe set to return to Test fold

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe is all set to get back Test status next month, without need for a fresh assessment, Ehsan Mani, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said.

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"I know I was never spectacular but my level of fielding has not deteriorated. The same standard of fielding was good when it suited some people," he said.

Kumble is widely considered India's most potent weapon in Tests but has struggled to hold on to a place in one-dayers, most recently in a one-off match against Pakistan in Kolkata last month when he was restricted to the bench.

Laxman, 30, has not been a regular in the shorter game either

Div I chess

Leonine tighten their grip atop

SPORTS REPORTER

There was no stopping Leonine Chess Club who remained on top of the Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League with an comprehensive 4-0 win over Destiny 2000 at the Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

Featuring four Grand Masters,

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and was not part of the squad for last year's World Cup in South Africa.

"Why should I be rested? I never asked for any rest. I'm fit and as keen as anyone else. I'm very hurt with this treatment. Why do I deserve this?" Laxman said.

The pair can boast two of the best records for India in Tests.

Kumble became only the second bowler after famous England off-spinner Jim Laker to take all 10 wickets in a Test innings -- and that against Pakistan at Delhi in 1999.

Laxman hit an epic 281 when India were following on against Australia at Kolkata in 2001 to turn the match and series around.

In one-dayers, Kumble has 321 wickets from 259 matches while Laxman has 2,309 runs in 83.

Kumble and Laxman are part of the squad for two Tests that precede the one-dayers.

The first Test will be held in Dhaka from December 9 and the second match in the eastern port city of Chittagong from December 16.

The first one-dayer in Chittagong will be followed by back-to-back day-night matches in Dhaka on December 26 and 27.

Featuring four Grand Masters,

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PHOTO: STAR

An Usha forward (M) tries to make his way through a couple of Wari defenders during their Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League clash at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Eng complete whitewash

Cricket

AFP, Bulawayo

before being bowled by Paul Collingwood.

Collingwood also accounted for captain Tatenda Taibu, who made 23 as he and Masakadza put on a 75 run partnership for the fifth wicket and rescued some respectability for the hosts after they had been reduced to 43-4.

England's innings had been built round a superb 150 run partnership by captain Michael Vaughan and Geraint Jones.

England were 104 for 5 when Vaughan and Jones got together and they excelled to notch up the third best partnership by a sixth-wicket pair in one-day internationals.

Vaughan scored 90 not out for his fourth half-century in his last six

one-day matches and his best ever total.

Jones made 80 while Zimbabwe bowler Edward Rainsford notched up 2 for 29.

England opener Matt Prior scored a brisk 35 on his one-day debut.

Vaughan played more of an anchor role than Jones who let fly with seven fours and two sixes in his 80 off 75 balls.

England had picked an untried side with Prior coming in for Vikram Solanki, Ashley Giles making way for Gareth Batty to make his first appearance in the series, and Gough was preferred to James Anderson.

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BD-India series Hospitality boxes go on sale today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladeshi Cricket Board will sell hospitality-box tickets for one Test and two one-day internationals between Bangladesh and India at its Gulshan headquarters today.

The Bangabandhu National Stadium will host the first Test from December 9-13 as well as back-to-back day/night ODIs on December 26 and 27.

The AC and non-AC boxes have priced at Tk 60,000 and 50,000 respectively including food.

Premier hockey Usha drub Wari

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Krira Chakra maintained their joint lead in the Green Delta Premier Hockey League when the title-contenders brushed aside Wari Club 60 in yesterday's lone match at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium.

Rahul Kanti Roy struck twice as Usha, who won with the help of six field goals, shared top spot with Mohammad with maximum nine points after three rounds.

After a sluggish start to the 10-team fray, it was a cakewalk victory for Usha who went ahead through Mazharul after four minutes. Rahul gave the old-Dhaka outfit a 2-0 half-time lead and added his second soon after the breather.

Skipper Shuvra Talib and Iqbal netted one each in the last quarter.

For bottom side Wari, it was their third consecutive defeat.

GP-Prothom Alo Sports Award coming soon

SPORTS REPORTER

The country's largest cellular operator GrameenPhone and leading Bangla daily Prothom Alo will jointly announce sports awards for established and promising athletes of the country.

Five athletes and a veteran sports personality will receive the first GrameenPhone-Prothom Alo Award 2004 in a grand ceremony in February next year, it was revealed during a press conference at the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

A panel comprising sportsmen and leading personalities of local sports will select three finalists for the 'Best Athlete of the Year' Award. The winner will receive a medal, a certificate and cash award of Tk one lakh. The other two nominated athletes will receive Tk 50,000 each.

The organisers will also reward the best and most promising female athletes, each receiving Tk 50,000.

GrameenPhone's marketing director Mehbub Chowdhury, Editor of Prothom Alo Matiur Rahman, Sports Editor Utpal Shuvra and GrameenPhone's head of media Moyeen Tariq were present on the occasion.

Kiwis mug Kasprowicz

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Cricket

Wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum and young batsman Hamish Marshall snatched an exciting victory for New Zealand over Australia in the opening match of the inaugural Chappell-Hadlee Trophy one-day cricket series with two balls to spare on Sunday.

The Kiwis looked to have the job ahead of them needing 32 runs for victory off the last 18 balls, but the match swung decisively when McCullum and Marshall plundered 22 runs off the third-last over, bowled by Michael Kasprowicz.

In a twinkling the asking rate plummeted to 10 off 12 balls which McCullum and Marshall achieved without problems for New Zealand's first one-day victory over the world champions in their last eight meetings.

Marshall, left out of New Zealand's two-Test drubbing by Australia, hit a defiant unbeaten 50 off 52 balls with one four and McCullum cracked 20 off 13 balls to give the beleaguered Kiwis a morale-boosting win.

"It's pretty damned good, considering the last two or three weeks, they've been pretty tough as they usually are when you come to Australia," Black Caps captain Stephen Fleming said.

"It's a nice change of fortune through some good cricket and I'm pleased it sets up a series we think pretty highly of."

Australian captain Ricky Ponting said Australia let the match slip after twice being in a strong position -- at the start of its innings and in the field, where two crucial catches went down.

"But in saying that we still probably should have won," he said.

"We all make mistakes, Kasper's (Kasprowicz) bowled a few ordinary deliveries in that over but we're certainly not blaming him."

"The whole fielding side of it was pretty sloppy. The bowling was very good, we just didn't back them up in the field."

New Zealand had restricted Australia to 246 for nine off their 50 overs after early Adam Gilchrist fireworks and although the Kiwis were 128 for one in the 32nd over they appeared to lose their chance

with a tumble of wickets.

Fleming was out leg before wicket off the second ball of the innings from Brett Lee, but Nathan Astle (70 off 102 balls) and Mathew Sinclair (48 off 86) had the Black Caps in contention with a 128-run second-wicket partnership.

But the Aussies hit back with Darren Lehmann removing Astle and Scott Styris (5) and Kasprowicz had Jacob Oram caught behind for 25 leaving the Kiwis struggling for five in the 44th over.

Big-hitting Chris Cairns lasted 11 balls for 14 before Lee bowled him with a yorker leaving the Kiwis at 208 for six when McCullum came out to join Marshall.

Earlier