

PRELIMINARY SQUAD FOR LANKA TOUR ANNOUNCED

Russel the only newcomer



SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm paceman Syed Russel was the only new addition while Alok Kapali got yet another chance to stake a claim to be recalled when the national selectors announced a 23-member preliminary squad on Tuesday for Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka in August - September.

The Faruque Ahmed-led selection committee as expected, decided to stick to all the players who had toured England in May-June.

The squad's camp starts at the Army Stadium from Monday but coach Dav Whatmore can expect to get only 13 cricketers as ten players are now in England with the Bangladesh A side.

"We had a poor Test series in England but the tour ended on a high note and the way the boys played in the one-day series was really inspiring. That was the reason why we did not feel the need to drop anybody from the England tour party. Besides, we do not have a policy of making too many changes," explained Faruque.

About the inclusion of 21-year-old Russel, who is now with the A team in England, Faruque felt that he could add variety to the attack.

"It's true that there are as many as eight pace bowlers in the preliminary squad but we took into consideration the young man's recent performances at different levels and especially his effectiveness in the shorter version of the game. A left-arm pacer can also bring variation to the attack and he is very much capable of swinging the ball both ways although he does not possess great pace."

Faruque said that the International Cricket Council's (ICC) new additions to one-day regulations had played a role behind recalling the out-of-favour Kapali.

"It was a major issue in our discussion. If Kapali gets the final nod he can be a perfect super-sub because he is a brilliant batsman, a top fielder and an effective leg-spinner."

Faruque said that they were desperate to include a quality off-spinner but at the moment they could not think of anyone who could fill the gap.

The chief selector also emphasised on the need for more involvement of the captain in team

selection.

"I have always tried to hold informal discussions with the captain before announcing a team. But I feel he should be officially a part of the selection process. But with the Board's policy of naming the captain on a tour by tour basis, that is not possible. My suggestion is that the Board should pick a captain for a certain length of time."

Faruque informed that they would first announce a 15-member team on August 10 for the three-match one-day series against the islanders.

"During the one-day series we will decide how many players would return home and who would replace them."

PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Habibul Bashar, Khaled Mashud, Javed Omar, Nafees Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees, Mohammad Ashraful, Aftab Ahmed, Rajin Saleh, Mohammad Rafique, Manzarul Islam Rana, Enamul Haque Jr, Abdur Razzak Raj, Khaled Mahmud, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Tapash Baisya, Nazmul Hossain, Shahadat Hossain Rajib, Syed Russel, Anwar Hossain Munir, Talha Jubair, Mushfiqur Rahim, Tushar Imran and Alok Kapali.

Handsome bonuses for cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced bonuses for national cricketers for winning the Test series against Zimbabwe at home and a one-day international against Australia in England.

Each player will receive Tk 2.5 lakh for being a member of the Test series squad against Zimbabwe while a victorious one-day squad during the NatWest Series will receive Tk 1.5 lakh, it was agreed in a meeting of BCB advisors yesterday.

"We had already given the cricketers rewards for winning matches against Zimbabwe. This was given for the series triumph. The board also decided to reward the cricketers handsomely for just winning the match against Australia because it made us proud," BCB CEO Macky Dudhia told the Daily Star Sport last night.

A cricketer, who was in both the sides, would be richer by Tk four lakh for his commendable performance.

After a marathon meeting in the absence of BCB president Ali Asghar, the advisors also decided to approach bowling coaches to assist the national team bowlers in preparation for the tour of Sri Lanka.

It was learnt that the Board has

already contacted former West Indian great Andy Roberts and ex-Australian bowler Damien Fleming.

BCB advisor Mahbub Anam and Dudhia will represent Bangladesh at the two-day ICC Scheduling Summit starting in Dubai on August 25 which will finalise the Future Tour Programme for the next six years.

Bangladesh will also wait for India's advice before deciding the fate of the proposed tri-nation one-day series in December involving Zimbabwe, Kenya and hosts Bangladesh. The BCB has also taken steps to hold matches at the Fatullah Stadium in Narayanganj and the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

Besides, the Board of Control for Cricket in India is expected to inform the BCB this week whether it would host the series against Bangladesh or not.

It was also decided that the BCB would donate Tk two lakh for the treatment of first national team coach Osman Khan, who is critically ill. Furthermore, the meeting agreed on the appointment of a cricket historian and formation of a committee to gather historic documents and preserve records in a systematic way.

Meanwhile, the prize-distribution ceremony of the Sixth National Cricket League will be held on July 24 at the Kurmitola Golf Club.



PHOTO: AFP
PLOTING THE ENGLISH FALL: Australia coach John Buchanan (R) and captain Ricky Ponting discuss something during a practice session at Lord's on Tuesday.

BD A's first 3-dayer from today

SPORTS REPORTER

After losing to British Universities by two wickets in their opening one-day game, the Bangladesh A team will play their first three-day match against Gloucestershire at Bristol today.

It was likely that left-arm spinner Enamul Haque Junior would replace his senior mate Abdur Razzak Raj in the first of the five three-day games.

On Monday, opener Nafees Iqbal (109) and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim's half-century led the way for the second-string national side to start their 35-day tour on a winning note. But their good work later went to waste as most of the bowlers strayed in line and length.

The only successful A team bowler was lanky right-arm pacer Talha Jubair who picked up 4-50 as

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School chess starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

Over 200 youngsters will take part in the Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament that begins in the city today.

Students from 50 local schools will be joined by ten Indian players -- nine from Kolkata and one from Chennai -- in the nine-day competition, which will be held in three groups on Swiss League basis, informed Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) general secretary Syed Sujauddin Ahmed at a press conference yesterday.

The groups are: KG to Class V, Class VI-X for boys and girls.

"We thank the sponsors for being with us for seven long years and hope they will continue their support in future. I thank them because they extended their helping hands when we lost long time sponsors Bata in 1999," Sujauddin said at NSC conference room.

The total prize-money for the tournament is Tk 58,500.



PHOTO: STAR
Bangladesh Chess Federation general secretary Syed Sujauddin Ahmed takes questions during a press conference on Tuesday.

SL tour schedule

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) released the official Sri Lanka tour schedule yesterday with the inclusion of two practice matches.

Earlier, it was reported that Sri Lanka Cricket had announced the tour schedule would start in September with only three one-dayers and two Tests, but the final itinerary not only added the practice matches but also changed the dates and venues.

All matches will be take place in Colombo. Previously the ODIs were due to take place in Dambulla and the first and second in Kandy and Colombo respectively.

The team will now fly to Sri Lanka on August 25.

ITINERARY

Aug 28: one-day practice match at Moratuwa.
August 31: 1st ODI at SSC.
Sept 2: 2nd ODI (D/N) at R Premadasa.
Sept 4: 3rd ODI (D/N) at R Premadasa.
Sept 7-9: 3-dayer practice game at CCC.
Sept 12-16: 1st Test at P Sara Stadium
Sept 20-24: 2nd Test at R Premadasa



AFP, London

Brett Lee has insisted he will not beat himself up if his 18 month Test exile doesn't end in the first Ashes encounter at Lord's starting Thursday -- but he is prepared for a thorough going over by England's pace attack if makes it into the starting side.

Lee has missed Australia's last 17 Tests, an ankle injury and the subsequent good form of Michael Kasprovicz keeping him on the sidelines.

But that hasn't stopped England's attack unleashing a series of bouncers at Lee during the opening one-day stage of Australia's tour, all-rounder Andrew Flintoff hitting him in the right shoulder with the first ball he faced against the 'old enemy' in last month's Twenty20 match at the Rose Bowl.

That kept the fast bowler -- one of only two men along with Pakistan

speedster Shoaib Akhtar to have broken the 100mph barrier in match conditions -- out of the subsequent fixtures against Somerset.

But the 28-year-old New South Wales quick told reporters at the squad's hotel here Monday he was ready for a few more bruises.

"I've been a person that's bowled a few short balls in my time and I've been a person who's copped a few. That's all part of cricket."

"I know England has tried to bounce our tail to put us on the backfoot and get us out as cheaply as possible. But we've got some plans against their tail too."

"It doesn't fire me up. It's not the most pleasant thing, getting hit by 156 grams of leather and cork at over 90mph. It's not great but you know it's part of the game."

"Intimidatory bowling is bowling to a plan and the plan is to get the batsman out. Provided you go by the rules there's nothing wrong with it."

"It's Test match cricket and the reason why is because it's a test, a

test of character, a test of commitment and a test of courage."

Meanwhile Lee, who made an early impression on the tour during the one-dayers, insisted he'd become a better player during his Test absence and was adamant there was nothing more he could have done to regain his place in the five-day side.

"Whatever happens on Thursday morning, I can go to sleep a happy person knowing I've done my very best."

"I think over the past 18 months, as much as it might be hard to admit it, it's been a great learning curve and I think I've matured a lot more as a person and definitely as a cricketer."

And Lee added he'd give up all his speed records for the honour of starring at Lord's, where Australia last lost a Test in 1934.

"I'd like to be a bowler who takes wickets," said Lee, who has taken 139 wickets at 31.66 in 37 Tests.

"My aim as a young kid was to bowl 160kph or 100mph. I've achieved that

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