

## Experiment goes on

BISHWAJIT ROY

**WARID Cricket Series**  
A cloud of confusion hovers over Bangladesh cricket team after a sequence of losses in the last seven months. Now it is for us to imagine who is the most confused: the players or the team think-tank?

The question was raised as the team management returned to their old policy of 'cutting and chopping' in the name of combination by making two changes in the side for the second one-day of the three-match series to be held at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

It seems that changing players one after the other is the only solution for the management to bring out the team from the vicious circle of failure -- better to say the batting debacle.

If the decision to bring back leading paceman and vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza to the playing eleven was a surprising one, then the omission of left-handed opener Zunaed Siddiqui left a hundred questions to answer.

"We dropped Mashrafe in the first game because he didn't fit into our plans but what we now feel is that his experience and late-order batting can be handy in this condition," was the explanation of Ashraful behind his deputy's

return for the second game.

Alas! He did not feel the value of experience in the first match in Chittagong where they meekly surrendered in an embarrassing nine-wicket defeat against the Proteas to put more misery on their frustrating performance in the two-match Test series.

The word 'experience' actually sounded ridiculous after the way players were brought into the fold and then were thrown away and Zunaed was the latest example of the concept.

Zunaed's performance in the four one-day matches (35 runs) was nothing more than ordinary.

But don't forget what the team management always said while defending inclusions of any young player in the side -- "he has the ability and talent and you must give him enough time to flourish in this level, we don't want to make frequent changes in the team and something like that".

And now outcome of only four matches was good enough to change their heart to bring another young guy into the frying pan of international cricket. Middle-order batsman Nazimuddin will make his one-day debut, seventh in seven months, and none can say how much time he will get to show his potential or how long the team management will keep their patience on the Chittagonian.

"Zunaed, we feel is a little low on

confidence after not getting runs in four one-day matches so far he has played. The most important thing is that he could not perform to our expectations," explained Ashraful.

But one may raise the same questions against few other players in the Bangladesh team including the captain himself.

Chief selector Rafiqul Alam however came up with a different explanation as he said that they have taken the decision to strengthen the middle-order as they missed the services of Aftab Ahmed.

"It's not true that we returned to the 'cut and chop' policy rather we are focused on our own policy to give the young players enough opportunities to find a right combination before the next World Cup in 2011," said Rafiqul.

"What we felt was that we need one batsman in the middle-order and we included Nazimuddin who is one of our future prospects. And I think it would work if experienced (Shahriar) Nafees open the innings with Tamim (Iqbal)," added the former national player.

Then the question was that why they unnecessarily tried Nafees in the middle-order.

"It's because of combination," was the reply of chief selector.

Lets see how the combination works in the second match. Ashraful however was confident to win the match but the precondition was: we have to bat well.



**GUESS WHO'S THE NEXT DEBUTANT?** Young opening batsman Zunaed Siddiqui (C) is about to grab the disk while playing the game of Frisbee as Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (R) and Nazimuddin (L) look on during Bangladesh's final practice session ahead of the second one-day international against South Africa at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Nazimuddin, who replaced Zunaed, is set to make his one-day debut today.

## Razzak enters billion-dollar tournament

SPORTS REPORTER

A surprised Abdur Razzak was proud to be the first Bangladesh to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL) after he was auctioned off to the Bangalore franchise in Mumbai yesterday.

"Obviously I am excited. A player from our country will be benefited in a lot of ways playing against and with such big names. More importantly, I am representing my country in IPL," said Razzak after Tigers' practice yesterday.

There was no trace of the left-arm spinner's name in the IPL auction list till Saturday and it was Razzak's skipper Mohammad Ashraful and Tigers vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who were offered to the different franchises.

Mashrafe and Ashraful, the two draft picks, did not draw interest because their starting price was set at USD 40,000.

But in Sunday's second IPL auction, it was consistent performer Razzak who engrossed attention, and around Tk 3,400,000 (USD 50,000) for the first season.

"One local official and (Mohammad) Ashraful informed me that my name was up in auction. I was a little bit surprised because I was never mentioned (for IPL). Rather it was Ashraful and Mashrafe (Bin Mortaza) whose

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### BTV & NEO Sports

Bangladesh v South Africa  
Second ODI  
Live from 9:30am

### SAB tv

New Zealand v England  
Second Test, Day One  
Live from 3:30am (Thursday)

### ZEE Sports

Indian Cricket League  
Mumbai Champs v Kolkata Tigers  
Live from 6:30pm

### ESPN

Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm

### English Premier League

Portsmouth v Birmingham City  
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)

### STAR Sports

English Premier League  
Chelsea v Derby County  
Live from 1:55am (Thursday)

## IPL will have no official status

AFP, New Delhi

Runs and wickets at the Indian Premier League's Twenty20 competition will not gain official recognition, cricket's world governing body said Tuesday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) regards the multi-million-dollar IPL, promoted by the Indian board and featuring top stars from around the world, as a domestic Indian competition, a spokesman said.

"The IPL is not international cricket, it is a domestic tournament," ICC spokesman James Fitzgerald told AFP when asked if players' performances will gain official recognition.

"Therefore, the matches do not have Twenty20 international status."

The IPL is a city-based tournament with eight teams bought by franchises who selected their respective line-ups via auction in Mumbai last month.

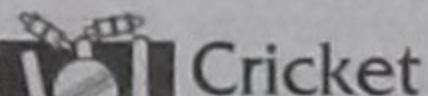
The tournament, which runs from April 18 to June 1, will mark the first time international cricketers will put aside their national allegiances to play for privately-owned teams.

Players have received huge pay packets, starting from 100,000 dollars for the first year, to take part in the 44-day, 59-match extravaganza across cricket-mad India.

In a sport where only a few top stars net more than a million dollars a year in fees and endorsements for their respective countries, the IPL has showered unprecedented riches.

The Chennai franchise bought India's limited-overs captain Mahendra Dhoni for 1.5 million dollars, while Hyderabad snagged Australian all-rounder Andrew Symonds for 1.35 million dollars.

## Biman, DOHS soar high MSC ride on Imtiaz's ton



SPORTS REPORTER

Fast bowler Alamgir Kabir piloted Bangladesh Biman to a two-wicket triumph over Victoria in the Premier League at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The well-built Rajshahi pacer took three wickets as Victoria posted a competitive 241-9 in 50 overs and then Alamgir came back to score a crucial 26 to give Biman its third consecutive victory in the competition as the national airliner reached the target in 49.4 overs.

Away in Dhanmondi, Old DOHS fought back in the final hour to rescue a 12-run win over Sonargaon Cricketers and Mohammedan Sporting Club thanked Imtiaz Hossain for their facile win over the Young Pegasus by 79 runs.

### BIMAN-VICTORIA

Victoria restored themselves after Alamgir removed Gazi Salahuddin in the 12th over, caught behind by Sajjad Kadir.

Nasiruddin Faruque and Farhad Hossain shared a 63-run second wicket stand with both batsmen hitting 40 and 48 respectively. Farhad struck five boundaries in his 75-ball innings but failed to get a fifty for the second match in a row.

Alamgir returned to dismiss discarded national all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad after he made 39 off as many deliveries.

In their reply, Biman skipper Sanwar Hossain held the innings together with a typically composed 51 off 70 balls but after their eighth wicket fell in the 46th over, Victoria were in with a chance. But man-of-the-match Alamgir and Mahbubul Alam Robin ensured Biman got the two points with an unbeaten ninth

wicket stand worth 37 runs. Alamgir cracked 26 while Robin supported him with 20 not out.

### OLD DOHS-SONARGAON

Old DOHS's innings was built around contributions from Saquib Razzak, Hamidul Islam and their Hong Kong-based Pakistani recruit Monir Ahmed.

Saquib smashed eight boundaries in his 44-ball 40 while wicketkeeper-batsman Hamidul, batting at three, anchored the innings with 68 from 110 balls with two fours and two sixes.

But it was Munir's quickfire 54 off 53 balls that added impetus to the Old DOHS innings. He smashed three boundaries and two huge sixes, including one that was reverse swept. But his dismissal sparked a mini-collapse and Sonargaon kept Old DOHS at 240-9 in 50 overs.

Sonargaon were always in the

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## Dimitri first Englishman



AFP, Mumbai

Dimitri Mascarenhas on Tuesday signed to play in the Indian Premier league (IPL), becoming the first Englishman to be involved in the multi-million-dollar Twenty20 event.

The all-rounder was snapped up by the Jaipur franchise for 100,000 dollars in the second auction of players for the eight city teams taking part in the 44-day, 59-match extravaganza across India from April 18.

"Dimitri was allowed to play by his county Hampshire," IPL commissioner Lalit Modi told reporters.

Twenty-eight players from six countries were bought in the second auction organised by the Indian cricket board, adding to the 75 stars purchased on February 20.

Five top Indians -- Sachin Tendulkar (Mumbai), Sourav Ganguly (Kolkata), Rahul Dravid (Bangalore), Yuvraj Singh (Mohali) and Virender Sehwag (Delhi) -- were not auctioned.

They will lead their respective city teams and earn 15 per cent more than the highest-paid player in their side.

Among the players auctioned on Tuesday, Pakistan batsman Misbahul Haq went to Bangalore for 125,000 dollars while Australian all-rounder Shane Watson was picked up by Jaipur for the same amount.

Fourteen members of India's under-19 team which won the junior World Cup in Malaysia

earlier this month will also take part in the IPL for a flat fee of 30,000 dollars each.

Besides Misbah, Bangalore also signed Indian under-19 captain Virat Kohli, Bangladesh's left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak (50,000 dollars), New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor (100,000 dollars) and under-19 wicketkeeper Shreevats Goswami.

Jaipur picked up, along with Mascarenhas and Watson, South African fast bowler Morne Morkel (60,000 dollars), Pakistan seamer Sohail Tanvir (100,000 dollars) and India juniors Taruwar Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja.

The Kolkata franchise, owned by Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan, purchased two Pakistanis, Salman Butt (100,000 dollars) and Mohammad Hafeez (100,000 dollars) besides India juniors

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Indian actor and co-owner of the 'Kolkata' cricket team Shahrukh Khan (L) displays the team jersey as his captain Sourav Ganguly watches during a press meet in Kolkata yesterday. The Indian Professional League featuring eight franchised city-based teams drawn from a star cast of cricket's top players, will be held over 44 days in 12 Indian cities from April 18.

## Wise words for Mashrafe

SPORTS REPORTER

The intense pressure of playing the highest level of cricket was evident yesterday when leading paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza lost his temper during the Tigers' practice session in Mirpur.

A regular feature of practice in the home of cricket has been the presence of a number of fans to see the national stars. And there was no exception on Sunday but the fans were not in the usual mood as they were showing their disappointment towards the Tigers.

But it was hard for Mashrafe to check his anger following the abusive language hurled by some fans and his teammates had to cool him to restrain from doing anything untoward.

The security personnel however dispersed the crowds quickly but the words of an old man attracted everyone's attention.

"You must hear something like that. I pray five times a day for you people and you should play well, if you can," shouted the man on crutches.

If the omission from the playing eleven in the first one-day was a lesson then this was more of a bitter experience for Mashrafe, a popular cricketer.

And the best way for the man they call 'Narail Express' will be to give answer through his performance.

## HK women arrive on March 20

SPORTS REPORTER

The Hong Kong side will reach Dhaka on March 20 to play four one-day matches against the Bangladesh women's cricket team.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named 14 women cricketers for the upcoming four-match one-day series against Hong Kong.

The selected cricketers will take part in a training camp ahead of the tour.

Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra will host the first two matches on March 23 and 25 while the last two games will be played out at Fatullah Cricket Stadium on March 27 and 29.

### TEAM

Shathira Zakir Jessy, Shukhtara, Ayesha Akhter, Salma Khatun, Irin Sultana, Chamilly Khatun, Rumana Akhter, Panna Ghosh, Shamima Akhter Pinky, Jahanara Alam, Lily Rani, Tithi Rani, Papiya Haque Babu, Mina Khatun.

Reserves: Fatematuzzohura, Rifat Ara, Mahmuda Khan, Lata Mondal.

## Buchanan Kolkata coach

REUTERS, Kolkata

Former Australia coach John Buchanan will link up with old adversary Sourav Ganguly after signing up with the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) on Tuesday.

Buchanan, who guided Australia to two World Cup titles in 2003 and

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## BCB accepts PCB invite

SPORTS REPORTER

Tigers to play five ODIs in Pakistan next month

"We have agreed in principle to tour Pakistan next month. But the details of the tour are being worked out and will be announced soon. We have to place it in our board before taking a final decision," said BCB's media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam yesterday.

BCB however was not too much concerned over the security fears in Pakistan, where at least 26 people were killed by suicide attacks in Lahore on Tuesday prompting the

postponement of the Australian tour which was scheduled to begin on March 29.

"We will want the same security we usually enjoy on any other tour," said Alam.

Bangladesh made the positive response as it would hardly clash with their future international commitments with the Tigers' next assignment -- a triangular series at home involving India and Pakistan in May -- is all set to be pushed back due to the billion-dollar Twenty20 tournament in India from April 18.

Bangladesh will play three one-day internationals in Australia in August while their next full series at home against New Zealand is in November.

"We still need to adjust a few things before finalising the tour," Alam said without elaborating.

The only concern for the board is that the unscheduled tour might irk the officials of the Premier Division League clubs, who would miss the services of the national players if the tour was confirmed.

Pakistan last month also invited India for five one-day matches as an alternative if the Australians refused to tour, but the arch-rivals turned down the invitation citing a busy schedule.

AFP adds from Karachi: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Nasim Ashraf told a press conference they had contacted other countries as potential replacements and hoped Bangladesh would come instead, and later Tuesday the PCB got its wish.

Ashraf said he hoped the Australia tour would be rescheduled once they get security clearance.

"The Australian series is not cancelled, it is postponed for the time-being and we hope that once their security team gives clearance Australia tour us whenever they get a time slot," said Ashraf.

The PCB chief denied that Pakistan faced financial losses because of the postponement.

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## Harris counts on pitch

SPORTS REPORTER

Was there any reason for Tigers to draw attention towards the nature of pitch? The answer would definitely be negative.

Because, on the eve of the second one-day of the three-match series, the main question was whether Mohammad Ashraful's men be able to put up a descent total on the board.

But still the spinners came under the spotlight ahead of the second match against South Africa as the pitch is expected to be much more spin-friendly than then the one in Chittagong where the first one-day took place.

The home team is banking on left-arm spinners Abdur Razzak, Mosharraf Hossain Rubel and Shakib Al Hasan like the first match but there is a warning for the Tigers, as the visitors believe it may backfire again.

"It (playing three spinners) backfired in the first game, didn't it? I think our spinners bowled pretty well in the first game; wicket turned quite a bit and it helped us. And there was a bit of bounce as well which was surprising. I haven't



PAUL HARRIS

seen so much bounce here (Mirpur), but in the last game it definitely bounced quite encouragingly," said Paul Harris, the South African left-arm spinner, yesterday.

"Obviously it is encouraging for me that the wicket is slow and low. It's not rocket science; you all know it's going to turn a bit. Obviously spin is Bangladesh's strength, so it's not a surprise that they are going to play three spinners and hopefully we will also play two," he added.

He however hinted that the toss would be crucial in the match as it may turn more in the second dig.

## BFF polls on April 28

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Football organisers hinted at a united panel for the coming election of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), which will be held on April 28.

BFF president SA Sultan officially announced the polls date yesterday at a press conference at the BFF Bhawan with acting general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu beside him.

Although it was a BFF event, Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) chief operating officer Col (retd) M Waliullah and 'leader of the opposition' Badal Roy were also present.

Conveying the decision of Monday night's executive committee meeting, Sultan told that his colleagues have decided to hold an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) on March 27 and the annual general meeting and the election

on April 28, two days before the FIFA-given deadline.

"We feel that the complications that delayed the election have been removed. Now we are prepared to hold the election in time," said Sultan adding that the executive committee also approved that all the FIFA Statutes will be in order before the next election four years later.

The amendments, directed by the FIFA and AFC, in the BFF constitution will be placed for the approval of the EGM, which will be held with the old federation members including the district sports association councillors.

The BFF will then have just a few days over the required one-month notice period for the AGM and the polls, where the district football associations (DFAs) and the divisional FAs apart from the clubs will vote.

"Due to time constraints, the executive committee feels that there is no scope to give chance to form the remaining DFAs and the

divisional FAs," the BFF chief told referring to the 14 districts and three divisions that have yet to form football associations after repeated attempts.

"After the election, whenever the FAs are formed, the federation will affiliate them to run the game properly in the districts," he added.

Waliullah and ex-national captain Badal Roy, however, requested the reluctant BFF boss to give the remaining districts and divisions an opportunity to form FAs.

"It would be better to involve all the districts and give qualified organisers the chance to be a part of the BFF. We also have to be careful about the legal side of all the procedures," said Waliullah, who was a member of the four-man delegation that visited the AFC president Mohamed Bin Hammam in Kuala Lumpur in February and this month.

Badal who along with his friends outside the BFF has long opposed

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