

Nasiruddin Academy skipper

SPORTS REPORTER

Nasiruddin Faruque was named captain and Zahurul Islam his deputy of the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy squad for the upcoming series against South Africa and Pakistan Academy teams.

The national selectors announced a 20-member preliminary squad for the home tour yesterday.

The Academy will play two four-day games against the South African Academy first and then play a triangular series before taking on Pakistan Academy in two four-day matches.

SQUAD

Nasiruddin Faruque (captain), Zahurul Islam (vice-captain), Imrul Kayes, Mehrab Hossain, Shamsur Rahman, Naeem Islam, Nazmus Sadat, Nasir Hossain, Sahagir Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahim, Dollar Mahmud, Mahbubul Alam Robin, Talha Jubair, Delwar Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Rubel Hossain, Sajidul Islam, Enamul Haque, Raihanuddin Arafat and Suhawardi Shuvo.

ITINERARY

April 4-7: 1st 4-dayer against SA Academy in Jessore

April 9-12: 2nd 4-dayer against SA Academy in Khulna

April 15: 1st one-day (NCA v SA Academy) in Chittagong

April 16: 2nd one-day (NCA v Pakistan Academy) in Chittagong

April 17: 3rd one-day (SA Academy v Pakistan Academy) in Chittagong

April 19: 4th one-day (NCA v SA Academy) in Chittagong

April 20: 5th one-day (SA Academy v Pakistan Academy) in Chittagong

April 21: 6th one-day (NCA v Pakistan Academy) in Chittagong

April 23: Final in Mirpur

April 26-29: 1st 4-dayer against Pakistan Academy in Bogra

May 2-5: 2nd 4-dayer against Pakistan Academy in Bogra



WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO DESERVE THIS? The ten hockey players, who resigned from the national team after failing to find any team for the coming season, show their frustration yesterday at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Mass resignation in hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Once very popular, the dying game of hockey seemed to fall into further abyss after eleven national players failed to find any team on the final day of the Premier Hockey League transfer yesterday.

The eleven players, down and out, also decided to quit the national team for the bleak future they face this season in the wake of the controversial pool system responsible for their doom.

Players like Rajan, Yamin, Tuhin, Tabib, Zahid, Shakil, Dinar, Titu, Rahul, Hasan and Habul who have been dominating the domestic scene for quite some time, appealed to the Bangladesh Hockey Federation's ad-hoc committee last night to accept their resignation.

Apart from Yamin, the centre-back who has been suffering from a

major injury and is unlikely to play this season at all, the other ten submitted their resignations to general secretary Sajed Adel.

"We don't want to play for the national team. As national players, we get no reward rather this punishment of being included in the pool. If there had been no pool, we might have escaped this situation," told the jobless players showing their disgust over the pool system at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

The other national stars who have found teams for the season, however, came to show their unity with their colleagues and told they are also ready to step down.

"We have commitment to our clubs so we are not resigning now. But we will also quit step by step. Otherwise we all will suffer in the future," commented the senior

national players.

Meanwhile, a few teams have been trying to bank on the situation and recruit players cheaply.

Defending two-time champions Usha Krira Chakra said they will not go for the hat-trick championship by recruiting top players. They even did not bother to include some players till the evening.

"Our budget is just Tk 20 lakh. We would not pay more than Tk 10,000 for a single player," said club's joint secretary Shafayet Hossain.

Usha have six pool players with all resigning and in case they don't join any other team before the transfer deadline (last night), they will belong to the old-Dhaka outfit.

It apparently looks like a 'trap' that will force the players to stay if they decide to continue with their domestic career.

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5 win, 5 lose in Kolkata

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Masters Abdullah Al Rakib, Ziaur Rahman and Neaz Murshed got off to fine starts in the third Kolkata Grand Masters Chess competition yesterday.

Rakib, Zia and Neaz beat Ram Krishna, Hrishpal Singh and Sahaj Grover respectively in the opening day matches while FIDE Masters Nasir Ahmed and Minhazuddin Ahmed also won their matches. Nasir beat Satyajit Kunta and Sagar outplayed Bhairab Suri, all from India.

But it was not all plain-sailing as International Master Enamul Hossain, FIDE Masters Taibur Rahman and Mehedi Hasan, Mohammad Javed and Mohammad Ali lost their particular matches.

Old Dhaka on top

UNB, Dhaka

Old Dhaka Hockey Association went atop in the Dhaka Bank Independence Day Hockey tournament beating Mirpur Academy 4-1 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Nader struck twice while Titu and Faisal scored one each for the winners, who dominated the first half by 2-0 goals. Mohammad Jewel netted the consolation goal for Mirpur Academy.

With the win, star-studded Old Dhaka took solo lead in the table securing 13 points from five outings while Army are a point behind with 12 from straight four matches, one less than Old Dhaka.

In the day's other match, Sipahi Para tasted their second win in their third match outplaying Navy 6-1 in the afternoon.

Rimon and Dinar scored two goals each while Asif and Krishna netted one each for the winners.

Mizan netted the lone goal for Navy.

Rasel returns Squad announced for Pakistan ODIs

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

There were no changes apart from bringing in left-arm seamer Syed Rasel to the fold after he missed the Ireland series when the national selectors announced a 15-member squad for the tour of Pakistan yesterday.

Rasel was recalled as the Rafiqul Alam-led panel extended the team by a single player for five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 game.

Mohammad Ashraf's men will fly to Karachi on April 6 to play the matches in four different cities -- Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan and Karachi -- under floodlights.

This selection panel finally kept away from their 'cut and chop' policy as the series whitewash against Ireland made them believe that it would be unwise to bring any changes into the winning combination.

But the interesting fact is that only skipper Mohammad Ashraf and vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza survived from the team that last visited Pakistan in 2003 under the leadership of Khaled Mahmud.

"We kept faith in the winning squad as the boys got back the much-needed confidence and team spirit after winning the last series against Ireland quite comfortably," said Rafiq, while disclosing the team at a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"We didn't consider Rasel for the last series because we gave special attention on the spin attack. But this time we felt that we

need to have more options in our pace attack for the Pakistan series, so we recalled Rasel. And the most important thing is that the board extended the size," he added.

The former national player however didn't forget to reiterate their future plan as he said what-

ever they are doing is with an eye on the next World Cup to be held in the subcontinent in 2011.

"We want to stick to our long-term policy which is to make a team for the next World Cup," he said.

Rafiqul also explained the reasons behind their decision to keep faith in middle-order batsman Rokibul Hasan and wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh and not to consider left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain after poor showing in only one series.

"We have a left-arm spinner in (Abdur) Razzak who is one of the best bowlers in the world and Shakib Al Hasan and we didn't feel the need for another left-arm spinner. On the other hand we believe that Rokibul and Dhiman

SQUAD

Mohammad Ashraf (captain), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (vice-captain), Tamim Iqbal, Zunaed Siddiqui, Aftab Ahmed, Nazimuddin, Shahriar Nafees, Shakib Al Hasan, Rokibul Hasan, Dhiman Ghosh, Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Mahmudullah Riyad, Forhad Reza and Syed Rasel.

STAND-BY: Nazmul Hossain, Mehrab Hossain and Mushfiqur Rahim.



Former national captains Akram Khan (R) and Naimur Rahman Durjoy (L) flanking chief selector Rafiqul Alam as he announces the national team for the tour of Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Musharraf pilots Biman

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Musharraf Hossain carved out yet another sparkling performance with the bat to steer Bangladesh Biman to a facile 63-run win against Kalabagan Krira Chakra in yesterday's Premier Cricket League.

A national team discard after just one series, against South Africa, specialist left-arm spinner Musharraf made an anchoring 75 as Biman totalled 243 for eight in 50 overs at the Fatullah Stadium on

way to their sixth win in seven matches that kept them at second place jointly with Abahani.

Despite opener Shahbaz Butt's valiant effort, Kalabagan crashed to 180 all out, their fifth loss in seven matches.

The match was rescheduled for yesterday after all attempts for a start on Monday failed due to overnight rain and Biman, removed

from the top of the table following a tie in the previous round, were lucky to see bright weather.

After electing to bat, the national airliner lost quick wickets, former and current national openers Javed Omar and Tamim Iqbal falling cheaply to Syed Rasel, the left-arm seamer who has been recalled to the national team for the coming Pakistan tour.

But Nafis Iqbal and man-of-the-match Musharraf, promoted to number four, repaired the damage by adding 50 runs for the third wicket.

The middle-order, however, gave tremendous support to Musharraf, who hit five fours in his 92-ball knock before being caught by Syed Rasel off left-arm spinner Rokibul Hasan.

Alok Kapali, who lost his father earlier this week, made a 49-ball 40 with three fours and a six while skipper Sanwar Hossain contributed a quickfire 35.

Rasel was the peak of Kalabagan attack with four wickets for 41 from

his ten overs.

Pakistan batsman Shahbaz lost two fellow players with the scoreboard reading three but found an ally in Hannan Sarkar, who made 33 during a 65-run partnership for the third wicket.

After Hannan, it was all Shahbaz who went on to bat till the 36th over before being trapped in front by Kapali's leg-break. The Pakistani, who faced 103 deliveries, made 72 with half-dozen boundaries and one six.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BIMAN: 243-8 in 50 overs: Nafis 24, Musharraf 75, Kapali 40, Sanwar 35, Mashrafe 12, Mahbubul 10, Sajjad 11, Nabil 12, extras 15, Rasel 4-41, Aslam 1-43, Jupiter 1-31, Rokibul 1-31, Farid 1-48.

KALABAGAN: 180 all out in 45.5 overs (Shahbaz 72, Hannan 33, Jupiter 28, Rasel 15, extras 12, Mashrafe 1-35, Mahbubul 2-22, Niaz 2-37, Musharraf 1-33, Nabil 2-22, Kapali 1-13).

Result: Biman win by 63 runs.

Focus back on the field First India-S Africa Test starts today

Cricket

CRICINFO, Chennai

Quotas and colour, senior and junior -- they are the controversies that have been part of South Africa and India's build-up to the first Test in Chennai that starts today.

South Africa's controversial quota-based selection policy exploded during their win in Bangladesh with Andre Nel reacting strongly to his exclusion from the tour of India, while Charl Langeveldt later opted out because he did not want the tag of a quota player.

India's historic CB Series victory in Australia reignited the senior-junior debate that has been a rage ever since Mahendra Singh Dhoni led a young squad to Twenty20 glory in South Africa.

However, the Indian team that will take the field against South Africa will be their tried and tested Test veterans. They've performed superbly in recent series -- winning a Test in South Africa and Australia, and the series in England and against Pakistan.

South Africa are also on a hot streak -- they won in Pakistan, came from behind to beat West Indies at home and thumped Bangladesh. The contest which begins today at the Chidambaram Stadium could be billed as the fight for No 2. South Africa have toppled Australia from top spot in the one-day rankings; a win in India will boost their Test rankings as well.

Wasim Jaffer's place at the top of the order is under the spotlight after six consecutive failures in the Test series in Australia where he scored 49 runs in three Tests. He was in excellent form in the home series against Pakistan, when he scored a double-century and two fifties. The pressure will be on Jaffer, for if he fails in the Tests against South Africa, Gautam Gambhir is a strong contender for his spot.

It takes a special bowler to beat

Allan Donald to 100 Test wickets, and Dale Steyn has done precisely that: he took his 100th wicket in his 20th Test, against Bangladesh in Chittagong, at an average of 21 apiece.

Apart from tearing through New Zealand and West Indies at home, Steyn has also adapted to extremely different conditions in Pakistan and Bangladesh and taken 23 wickets at less than 20 apiece in four Tests in those two countries. He's quick through the air, which reduces his dependence on the pitch, and possesses a well-disguised slower yorker that has uprooted the stumps on several occasions. Trying to run through a strong Indian batting line-up on their home turf will be his toughest challenge yet.

India's top order picks itself,

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Salma again leads from front

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Bangladesh women's cricket team took a 2-0 lead

against their Hong Kong counterparts with an emphatic 109-run win in the second match of the EBL cricket series at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Skipper Salma Khatun led the hosts from the front once again with a cracking 86 in a total of 249 for 5. Bangladesh's highest score against a foreign team.

Salma, who won the player-of-the-match award in the first game at the same venue two days back for a five-wicket haul, dominated a 156-run fourth wicket stand with vice-captain Panna Ghosh after Bangladesh lost their first three wickets for 66 runs.

Salma's 95-ball knock featured nine boundaries while Panna's unbeaten 80 off 105 balls contained five fours.

Set to scale a virtual mountain, the multi-racial Hong Kong side, who were bowled out for 38 in the first game, showed a lot of improvement with their openers Connie Wong (26) and Kennu Gill (61 off 77 balls).

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



Salma Khatun, who romped to 86 against Hong Kong during the second one-day match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday, swings one towards square-leg.

PHOTO: STAR



What to WATCH

DD National

India v South Africa
First Test, Day 1
Live from 10:00am

ESPN

Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

SAB TV

New Zealand v England
First Test, Day 5
Live from 3:30am

TEN Sports

West Indies v Sri Lanka
First Test, Day 5
Live from 8:00pm

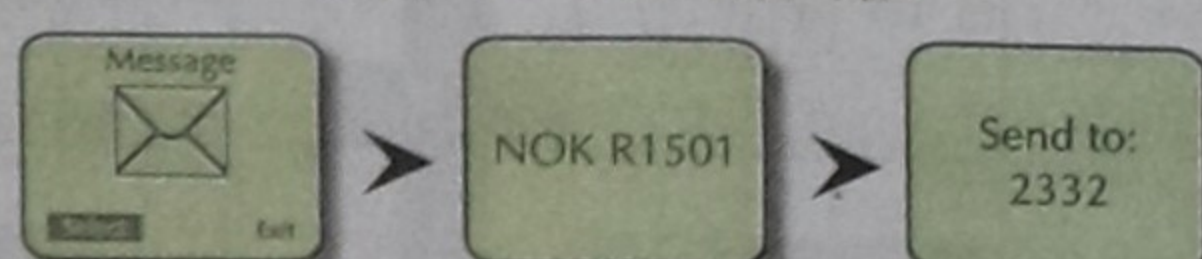


Premier Div Cricket League

Mohammedan v Kalabagan
Venue: BKSP-2
Sonargaon Cricketers v Young Pegasus
Venue: Dharmadil Cricket Stadium
BKSP v Sunjo Torun
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Abahani v Victoria
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium
Biman v Old DOHS
Venue: BKSP-1

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Sony Ericsson (SONW): All K and W Series

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