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Tigers teams to be named today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will announce a 14-member team today for next month's triangular one-day series involving India and Pakistan.

The selection panel, led by Rafiqul Alam, will also declare teams for the Asia Cup to be held in Pakistan and Bangladesh A team for the coming tours of Ireland and England.

For the tri-nation tournament, which will kick off with the match between Pakistan and hosts Bangladesh in Mirpur, the national selectors were in difficulties to find the replacement for all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who is unavailable for his HSC examinations.

The selectors have been talking against changes in the last few days despite the Tigers' disappointing performance in their last assignment in Pakistan during a five-match one-day series and a Twenty20 match.

Their headache seems to be finding a similar replacement of Shakib and opener cum left-arm spinner Mehrab Hossain is the likely candidate to get the place as the selectors might not be ready to bring another fresh face in the fold in Nayeem Islam.

On the other hand, wicket-keeper Mushfiqur Rahim has become a strong contender to get back his one-day place following his tremendous batting form, which saw him finish as the top scorer of the recently concluded Premier League.

It is also expected that the selectors will announce a 15-member team for the Asia Cup.

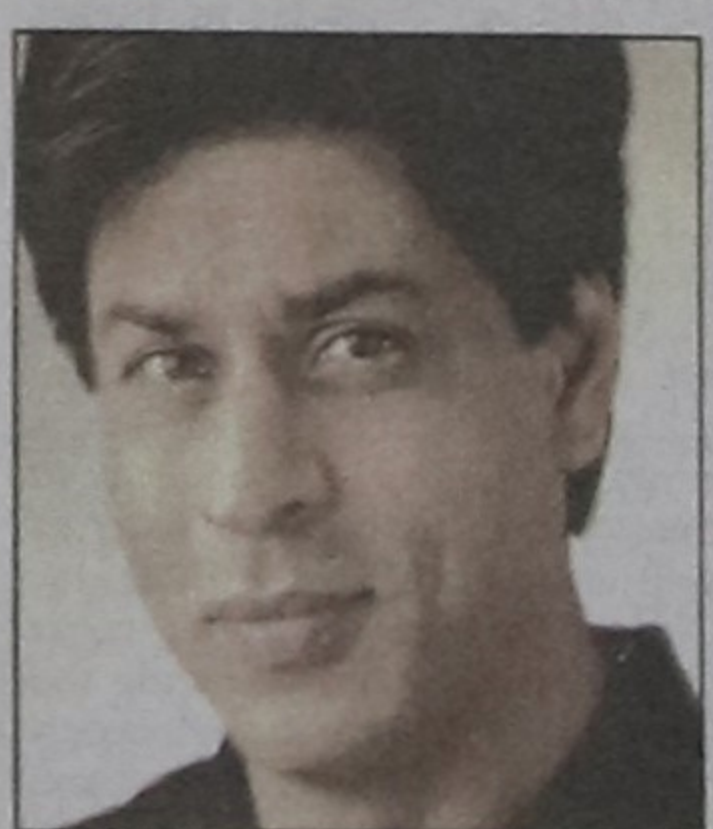
For the second string Bangladesh A team, the panel mostly considers those who are in the pipeline for the national side. That is why a number of out-of-favour players like Alok Kapali and the impressive performers of the Under-19 and Academy teams may crowd the squad.

The Tigers' full-fledged training camp for the tri-series will start tomorrow at Mirpur.



Did U Know?

At the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, a total of 687 matches take place throughout the tournament.



Shah Rukh Khan

(Bollywood megastar and owner of Kolkata franchise in the IPL)
"My team told me that they have yet to meet a better human being than me. This is a huge compliment." Who doesn't have time for false modesty.



What to Watch
SET MAX
Indian Premier League
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STAR Sports
French Open
First Round
Live from 3:00pm
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



Bangladesh coach Abu Yusuf (2nd from L) addressing a press briefing as BFF vice-president Badal Roy (L), national captain Aminul and vice-captain Biplab (R) look on at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

Rajasthan take top spot

CRICINFO, undated



The Mumbai Indians lost their third successive nail-biter to leave their semifinal hopes hanging by a thread in the Indian Premier League. With 43 needed off the final three overs for the Rajasthan Royals to protect their 100 per cent home record, youngsters Niraj Patel and Ravindra Jadeja kept their nerve -- while several more experienced Mumbai players lost theirs -- to win it off the final ball at the Sawai Man Singh Stadium in Jaipur on Monday.

The result means Delhi Daredevils become the third team to make it to the semifinals and if the Chennai Super Kings win their match against Deccan Chargers on Tuesday, Mumbai will be out of contention.

When Shane Watson was dismissed with 69 runs still needed off 48 balls and no big-name batsmen to come on a pitch not conducive to stroke-making, Mumbai were in

command. The Mumbai bowlers maintained a tight line-and-length and runs came mainly in singles. With Niraj and Jadeja hardly threatening, the equation became a difficult 43 off the final three.

A streaky inside-edge for four and a misdirected yorker which deflected off the pads to the fine-leg boundary left Rajasthan needing 34 off the last two. Jadeja then clubbed Rohan Rajee over cover for six off the first ball and a couple of two followed in the over. Rajee's final delivery should also have gone only for a couple, but shoddy work at the bowler's end -- one among Mumbai's several elementary fielding errors -- gave away a crucial, extra run.

Four runs came off the first two balls of Dhiren Fernando's last over and Rajasthan required 11 off the final four balls. A flat, powerful six over long-on from Niraj got them closer but only two runs were scored off the next couple of deliveries and three were needed from the final ball. Fernando, an experienced international, then sent down a leg-side wide and Niraj mistimed the last delivery to mid-

on. Only one run should have been taken but the batsmen chanced their luck and set off for the second. Sanath Jayasuriya, another experienced campaigner, fumbled the throw from the deep to fluff a simple run-out opportunity and hand Rajasthan yet another victory.

After choosing to field, on a pitch where was keeping low, Rajasthan restricted Mumbai to 145, a modest total that was reached thanks to Yogesh Takawale's eight-ball 24. Rajasthan's bowlers held sway for most of the innings, and man-of-the-match Sohail Tanvir reinforced his status as the tournament's best bowler with a four-wicket haul that earned him the purple cap.

Mumbai struggled to find momentum from the start, and the opening pair of Jayasuriya and Sachin Tendulkar were stifled by the new-ball bowlers to such an extent that only 29 runs, and two boundaries, came in the powerplay. Yusuf Pathan, bowling flat and quick, and Siddharth Trivedi also kept Mumbai in check before Shane Warne came into the

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Abahani rope in 16

SPORTS REPORTER



Defending B. League champions Abahani registered 16 footballers including Mohammed Sujan yesterday for the coming season.

Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu handed over the registration forms to B. League officials in presence of the footballers last night at the BFF Bhaban.

Brothers Union officials earlier claimed they have signed Sujan, the national defender who has been out of the scene for one year due to serious injury.

Sujan has returned to play this season but his actions have been limited to friendly matches, not in any competition.

"Even Sujan was surprised to hear the news that he has joined Brothers," told Rupu.

Sujan claimed he had not taken any payment for the Brothers, who were interested to sign their former captain of 2005 side.

"It was unfortunate that his injury kept him out for long but he has always wanted to play for us. Some people say Sujan will play free for Abahani this year because he had taken most of his payment for 2007. It's not true. We will have him with full honour," said the sky-blues manager.

Rupu said Abahani's budget is lesser than last year but the players are happy considering the financial crisis.

"We completed the formalities soon because we want the national players to play with a free mind.

Also, they will know who are going to be their teammates."

Among the 16, Rahmatganj defender Shoaib Hossain Sony and Brothers midfielder Mamunul Islam Mamun are the only new faces. The sky-blues will add their old players Obaidur and Mintu to the list and want to have 22 local players.

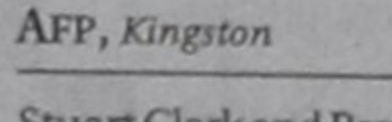
Awudu Ibrahim and Samad Youssif of Ghana are the two foreign players who have been registered for Abahani's AFC President's Cup campaign in late June in Malaysia.

Abahani's contract with all the 16 players run till May 2008.

The contracted 16: Biplab, Tarek, Siraji, Nazrul, Sujan, Pradeep, Sony, Waly, Joy, Zahed Parvez, Abul, Pranotosh, Mamun, Ujjal, Tipu and Emily.

Windies stare at defeat

Cricket



Stuart Clark and Brett Lee shared five wickets to bowl Australia into a match-winning position in the opening Test against West Indies on Monday.

At the lunch interval, West Indies, chasing 287 to win, reached 117 for six in their second innings with Denesh Ramdin not out on 22 and Darren Sammy not out on 13 in a morning period extended by half-hour to compensate for time lost for bad light the previous evening.

In their opening spells, Clark removed Ramnaresh Sarwan, Devon Smith, and Dwayne Bravo, and Lee sent back Runako Morton and Shivnarine Chanderpaul to send West Indies reeling to 82 for six on the fifth and final day of the Test at Sabina Park.

Clark has been the pick of the Australia bowlers with four wickets for 22 runs from 17 overs, and Lee has provided spirited support with two

for 56 from 16 overs. Clark gave Australia a welcome start when he removed Sarwan and Smith in the first half-hour of the morning to leave the home team 60 for three.

Sarwan was caught at extra cover for 12 in the third over of the morning from Clark to a fine catch from Andrew Symonds.

The West Indies captain was squared-up and was essaying a flick at a full-length delivery and the ball flew from the leading edge high to the left of Symonds, who stretched himself, and contorted his body to allow him to palm the ball up before he quickly turned and clutched the ball with both hands.

Clark's dismissal of Smith was far more straightforward. The left-handed opener was adjudged lbw for 28 in the seventh over of the morning, when he offered no shot to ball that pitched and straightened.

Lee came close to removing Runako Morton, when the batsman was nearly bowled on one, after he inside-edged a delivery

and almost played it into the stumps before he had the presence of mind to kick it away.

But there was no saving Morton, when he drove at a full-length delivery from Lee, missed, and was adjudged lbw to Lee for four.

Lee was in the middle of an inspired spell, and had Chanderpaul dropped on five, when the left-hander edged a well-pitched delivery straight into the lap of first slip fielder Simon Katich, and next ball, he had an appeal for an lbw verdict turned down.

But Lee was on the receiving end, when Chanderpaul uncoiled and responded with a crunching pull through mid-wicket for four.

The Australia strike weapon however, had the last laugh, when he held a return catch to remove Chanderpaul for 11.

Clark piled on the pressure, when he removed Dwayne Bravo for a duck caught by the short mid-on fielder deliberately positioned for the batsman's penchant to play uppishly through the leg-side.

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BHF names 24 for AHF Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday announced a 24-member preliminary squad for the 3rd Men's AHF Cup Hockey tournament to be held in Singapore on June 14-22.

Bangladesh are in Group A of the Asia Cup qualifiers along with Chinese Taipei, Uzbekistan, Brunei Darussalam and hosts Singapore while the Group B comprises with Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Oman and Thailand.

Bangladesh will launch their campaign against Brunei Darussalam in one of the three opening day's matches on June 14 and then meet Chinese Taipei on June 15, hosts Singapore on June 18 and Uzbekistan on June 19.

SQUAD

Zahid Hossain, Mehrab Hossain Kiran, Mahbubullah Chowdhury Shaki, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Issa Miah, Asaduzzaman Chanda, Moshir Rahman Biplab, Ferdous Golder, Shamsuddin Tuhin, Tapash Barman, Mahbub Ehsan Rana, Musa Miah, Khondokar Hasan Ahmed, Shahidullah Titu, Mosharraf Hossain Kuti, Shahidul Islam, Sheikh Nannu, Russell Mahmud Jimmy, Zahidul Islam Rajan, Rimon Kumar Ghosh, Iqbal Nader Prince, Zahid Bin Talib Shuvo, Krishna Kumar and Maksud Alam Habul.

Usha play Ajax in Super 5 opener today

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Krira Chakra will meet Ajax Sporting Club in the opening match of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League 'Super Five' today at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

Usha have opened up a five-point lead over their nearest rivals Abahani, who have 22 points from nine matches.

Abahani will launch their campaign on the following day against Sonali Bank while their traditional rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club, who have 20 points, take on Ajax Sporting Club tomorrow.

Pakistan safe for Asia Cup

AFP, Karachi

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has declared adequate security arrangements are in place in Pakistan for next month's Asia Cup cricket tournament, an official said Monday.

The ninth edition of the Asia Cup will be held in Pakistan from June 24 to July 6, for which security arrangements were discussed at an ACC meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Sunday.

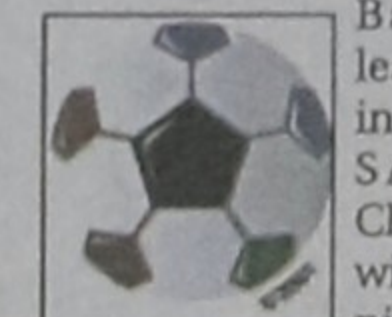
"Everything is in order and we are satisfied with the security arrangements made by Pakistan. We hope that the event will be held in a befitting manner," ACC chief executive Ashraf Huzaidi told AFP.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials made a presentation on the tournament, which will feature India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates.

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Mission regaining title

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will leave Dhaka today in a bid to regain the SAFF Football Championship title with just two recognised strikers.

One of the penalty area specialists being the only debutant in the 20-member squad that was announced yesterday, all suspect whether the current crop of the national team would be able to match their predecessors from 2003 when Bangladesh triumphed the regional football extravaganza at home.

Expectedly, recalled veterans Joy and Nazrul made the squad to add experience while youngsters Maruf and Robin made way for Komol and Abul who missed the AFC Challenge Cup earlier this month.

Coach Abu Yusuf, however, believes that his array of multi-purpose players would be able to fill in the void.

"Those days are gone when a striker would have waited for the ball. So our priority is to have players who can work with or without the ball. We have players in the midfield who started their career as forwards. So this would not be a problem," said Yusuf at a press conference at

the BFF Bhaban yesterday. Bangladesh's first stoppage en route to Sri Lanka is Bangkok where they will play preparation matches on May 28 and 30 against the second string national side and a club.

They will depart for Colombo on May 30 and open the SAFF campaign against Bhutan on June 4, followed by matches against Afghanistan and hosts Sri Lanka on June 6 and 8.

"It is a plus-point that we are playing Bhutan in the first match. Although we respect all the oppositions, Bhutan are probably the weakest. It would give us a chance to find the right combination," said Yusuf.

Bangladesh drew with Afghanistan in the Challenge Cup but the coach thinks that he would need 70 per cent of his team's strength on the pitch to beat them and ensure the semifinals.

"Sri Lanka would be our main opponents in the group but they are not unbeatable," Yusuf opined about the hosts, who recently thrashed Pakistan 7-1 in the Challenge Cup.

When asked whether the team, who have not been impressive in the two warm-up matches at home, have any hopes to win the title, Yusuf commented that their mission will be to regain the trophy after losing the 2005 final to India in Karachi.

"India are the best team in this

region. Can they guarantee winning this title? We will be there to win and I feel our team will play 90 minutes in the same rhythm."

Team manager Sheikh Mohammed Aslam, who criticised Yusuf's style and the team's strength only a day before, said he was not frustrated.

"In fact, I have been with the team for only a few days and felt that they are not playing at a level where I want to see the national team. The coach knows better and I hope once we are in Sri Lanka, things will get better," the former national striker said.

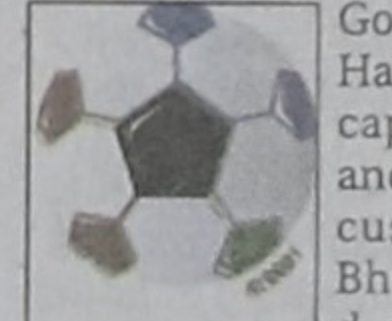
THE SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Aminul Haq (captain), Biplab Bhattacharya (vice-captain); defenders: Hassan Al Mamun, Nazrul Islam, Ariful Islam, Wali Faisal, Rajani Kanta Barman, Atiqur Rahman Mishu, Mofazzel Hossain Saikat, Arup Kumar Baidya; midfielders: Anif Khan Joy, Arman Aziz, Enamul Haq Sharif, Zahed Parvez, Faisal Mahmud, Abul Hossain, Mamunul Islam Mamun; forwards: Mehdi Hasan Ujjal, Abdul Baten Komol and Zahid Hasan Emily. Officials: Shafiquzzaman (team leader), Sheikh Mohammed Aslam (manager), Abu Yusuf (coach), Golam Rabbani Choton (assistant coach), Mahfuzullah Chishti (physician), Mohammed Mohsin (team staff).

Aminul named captain

No fear for booters

SPORTS REPORTER



Goalkeeper Aminul Haque was named captain yesterday and second-choice custodian Biplab Bhattacharya his deputy of Bangladesh's SAFF Football Championships squad.

There was, however, not much explanation for giving Aminul the armband, which he had originally lost for missing one year (2007) through injury.

"Both the goalkeepers have been playing for the national team for over a decade. Aminul is first choice at the moment so he would be the right one to lead. We also felt that their combination has a role to play in and off the field," said Badal Roy, Bangladesh Football Federation vice-president and chairman of the National Team Management Committee yesterday.

In reply to a question why Hassan Al Mamun -- who led Bangladesh in the AFC Challenge Cup earlier this month -- was replaced, Badal said that it was not because of Mamun's failure.

"We feel Aminul has the leading quality better than others," said Badal, who also called the players to give their hundred percent in the competition.

"We have seen in the past that players tend to save their legs for the clubs. But I announce that if any player is injured for playing the national team, the federation will take full care of him."

"The president (Kazi Salahuddin) guaranteed this in the players before his departure to Sydney to attend the FIFA Congress. Also, we will see that they do not face any financial troubles with the clubs for injury."

"In the future, all national players would be insured."

Aminul, who stood under the

bar during Bangladesh's SAFF title winning run in 2003, was hopeful that the new look team have a bright future.

"Almost the same players played in the first four SAFF Championships, so we had good results. We are a few veterans and some young talented players now who are eager to do well," said the SAFF captain.

"Our first target is to ensure the semifinal and then focus on the next matches."

Biplab, who has a SAF Games gold medal from Kathmandu 1999, said their preparation was better than the past.

"We have played two matches at home and will play two more in Bangkok. We never had such games before a tournament. If we can build the team work, I believe we have the team to go till the end," said Biplab.

"We have played the last three finals and it would not be surprising if we repeat that."

Strauss steers England



AFP, Manchester

Andrew Strauss's 106 was the centrepiece of England's run chase in a come-from-behind six-wicket win against New Zealand in the second Test here at Old Trafford.

England, set 294 for victory, finished on 294 for four on Monday as they won with more than a day to spare and so went 1-0 up in this three-match series following the drawn first Test at Lord's.

When opener Strauss was out, England still needed 59 more to win.

And their nerves weren't helped when the in-form Kevin Pietersen, going for a needless second, was run out for 42 by Iain O'Brien's throw from fine leg to wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum.

That left England on 248 for four, 46 runs adrift.

And with 30 runs wanted, pace bowler O'Brien dropped a gentle caught and bowled chance offered by Ian Bell on nine.

Bell, who finished on 21 not out, and Paul Collingwood, unbeaten on 24, guided England home off the last ball before tea.

England captain Michael Vaughan reflected: "We looked dead and buried yesterday. This morning's first session was crucial."

"To win by six wickets on that type of pitch is a very special victory...but we're only 1-0 up. New Zealand are a very difficult team to beat."

This victory saw England set a new record for the highest fourth innings winning total scored in an Old Trafford Test, breaking the mark of 231 for three they posted against the West Indies here four years ago.

Middlesex left-hander Strauss, who top-scored with 60 in England's meagre first innings 202, faced 186 balls with 12 fours.

This was the 31-year-old's 12th hundred in his 48th Test, his first having come on his debut against New Zealand at Lord's four years ago.

But that England had a chance

of victory in a match where they had been largely outplayed owed much to Monty Panesar.

The left-arm spinner's Test-best haul of six for 37 in New Zealand's second innings 114 kept England's

target within manageable bounds.

"That was probably the telling point in the game," said New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori.

Strauss had not long completed

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England opener Andrew Strauss roars for joy on reaching his century against New Zealand on the fourth day of the second Test at Old Trafford yesterday.

PHOTO: CRICINFO