



Bangladesh captain Musfiqur Rahim (2nd from L) shares a light moment with three injury replacements -- Mohammad Ashraful (L), Elias Sunny (2nd From R) and Marshall Ayub -- at the Harzrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Cox's Bazar stadium gets land

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) dream of building an exclusive cricket stadium in the tourism city of Cox's Bazar is set to come true as board high-ups were given assurance regarding the land for the structure during a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

The BCB officials, led by its president Nazmul Hassan Papon, met with the Prime Minister at her office to discuss next year's ICC Twenty20 World Cup to be held in Bangladesh.

BCB's ad-hoc committee member Dr. Mallick, who accompanied the team along with Ahmed Sajjadul Alam, Mahbubul Anam and AJM Nasir, informed that they had a very fruitful meeting with the Prime Minister.

"Our president

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# Confident Tigers reach Colombo



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team reached Colombo yesterday with hopes of turning the tide of a woeful record in Sri Lanka during the month-long trip.

Mushfiqur Rahim's men travel to Matara today where they will play the tour-opening three-day game against the Sri Lanka Development Emerging Team starting from March 3. The Tigers will then play two Tests, three ODIs and a T20I against former world champions Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh have a woeful record in the island as they have lost all eight Tests played there since 2001, but captain Mushfiqur Rahim expressed his optimism, taking into account the current strength of the Sri Lanka team.

Even the loss of star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan due to injury and the last-moment injury casualties of Naeem Islam, Shahriar Nafees and Enamul Haque could not dent the confidence of the Bangladesh team. They were instead looking forward to cash in on their recent good showing against West Indies at home in November-December last year.

Mushfiqur said during the first official

press conference in Colombo yesterday that they were looking forward to the three-day practice game before the two-match Test series.

"They [Sri Lanka] are a formidable team especially at home, but it is not impossible to do well against them. Our first priority is the Test series. We got ourselves into decent positions but failed to finish the job in the Tests against the West Indies. That is something we are looking to improve upon here. We have a three-day practice game before the first Test and a few training sessions. We have to make the best use of that and then see how it goes," said Mushfiqur.

"There's no secret really. Everyone has worked hard and everyone has contributed. Players have understood their roles and have delivered, even the newest member. The team spirit has been excellent," he added when asked about the secret behind Bangladesh's improved showing over the last couple of years.

Like the skipper, Bangladesh coach Shane Jurgensen said that they have a good chance this time to improve their record in Sri Lanka.

"We have had very good preparation. We have come here to win and I think this

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## AIUB win Uni crown

SPORTS REPORTER

AIUB became champions in the Clemon Indoor Uni Cricket Tournament with a 59-run victory over Jahangirnagar University at the Shaheed Sohrwardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur last night.

AIUB scored 160 runs and then dismissed Jahangirnagar University for 101 runs. Iftekhar Nayeem Ahmed was adjudged man of the final for his knock of 30.

In the first semifinal, AIUB (162/4) defeated Sylhet Metropolitan University (100/6) by 62 runs and Jahangirnagar University (132/4) beat Stamford University (82/5) by 50 runs in the second semifinal.

Earlier in the quarterfinals, Sylhet Metropolitan University beat IUBAT, Jahangirnagar University beat Dhaka Medical College, AIUB beat East West University

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# Players press for starting spots

SPORTS REPORTER



There is a healthy competition among Bangladeshi booters for places in the starting eleven for Saturday's match against the Palestine in Kathmandu, Nepal which will kick-off the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers.

"All players are taking every practice session seriously and trying to give their best to impress the head coach [Lodewijk de Kruif] and I can tell you that a healthy completion among the players is going on to secure a place in the playing eleven," said young striker Toklish Ahmed, who has been drafted into the squad for the first time due to his good shooting and movement.

"I am a new member in the squad but everyone is helping me to cope with the team," said Toklish. "I am also toiling hard to impress the coach."

According to the BFF message received here in Dhaka, the booters had practice

for one-an-half hour at the Police Headquarter ground and played a warm-up match amongst them.

Referring to coach Kruif, the BJMC striker, Toklish said, "The coach wants to install pressing football and reduce the period of the ball changing."

Echoing the sentiment of Toklish, young winger Shohel Rana said that all players are serious to deliver good results and having practice in line with the Dutch coaches.

"We are all but accustomed with the weather and conditions of Nepal in the last three days and I believe we will be able to produce a good result in the tournament," said Mohammedan winger Shohel Rana, who had played his first international match against Nepal in August last.

The players were supposed to watch the video footages of recent friendly match between Palestine and India where Palestine came from behind to beat India 4-2.

On the other hand, the Palestine

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## TIGERS IN SRI LANKA

# S'kara to play in tour match



CRICINFO, Colombo

Kumar Sangakkara has been named in the squad for the Emerging XI that will play a three-day warm up match in Matara against Bangladesh while off-spinner Akila Dananjaya misses out due to injury.

"I've started batting in the nets this week and have had a good week of practice, so the match against Bangladesh is a good opportunity to get some match practice," Sangakkara said. "As long as I pull through ok, I will play in the Galle Test."

Sangakkara has not played competitive cricket since fracturing his index finger during the Boxing Day Test. He is the only player above 23 in the side captained by middle-order batsman Angelo Perera.

Off-spinner Dananjaya had been named in the preliminary squad for the match, but has been left out after straining his finger while taking a return catch in the latest round of first-class cricket. He will be rested for one to two weeks, but is likely to be available for the limited-overs leg of the Bangladesh tour. All-rounder Ramith Rambukwella takes his place in the Emerging XI squad.

Batsmen Ashen Silva and Kithuruwan Vithanage, who

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# SIDDIKUR eyes history



ASIAN TOUR, Chonburi

Siddikur is on track of making history when he shared the opening round lead with Japanese amateur Hideki Matsuyama on six-under-par 66 at the Open Championship International Final Qualifying - Asia on Thursday.

The Bangladeshi got off to a hot start where he was five-under after six holes to maintain his bid to become the first player to represent his country in the Open Championship.

China's Hu Mu, Australian Scott Barr and Singaporeans Quincy Quek and Lam Zhiquan were a further shot back in the two-day qualifier where the top-four players qualify for the year's third Major at Muirfield in July.

Siddikur, who is the first Bangladeshi to play and win on the Asian Tour, was in a similar position in the 2011 IFQ-Asia but

he was disqualified on the last day when he failed to write a score for the last hole. He insists he will not repeat the same mistake again.

"There are no excuses for me (two years ago). I just didn't play well after shooting a 66 on the first day. I was so excited but unfortunately I couldn't keep up. My score would have been three-over if I wasn't disqualified," said Siddikur.

With a hot putter in tow, Siddikur traded seven birdies and one bogey to lead the way with the talented Matsuyama, who is a two-time Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship winner and the first Japanese amateur to play in the 2011 Masters Tournament.

"I'm very confident and my game is good. If I can play my game, I'm quite confident I'll be able to qualify for the Open Championship," said Siddikur.

Matsuyama hopes to make amends for last year's heartbreak when he dropped

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PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman was in sublime form during Round One of the Open Championship International Final Qualifying Asia at the Amata Springs Country Club in Bangkok yesterday.

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