

Star SPORT

DHAKA SATURDAY APRIL 6, 2013, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Wright-Phillips out for season

QPR's hopes of avoiding relegation from the Premier League suffered a blow on Friday when former England winger Shaun Wright-Phillips was ruled out for the rest of the season. Wright-Phillips, 31, had surgery on his right ankle earlier this week and QPR manager Harry Redknapp revealed the ex-Chelsea and Manchester City star will not be back in action until next season. It is a significant setback for Redknapp, whose side are seven points from safety with just seven matches remaining and face a crucial clash against fellow strugglers Wigan on Sunday.

- AFP



Shakib, Tamim return

15-man squad named for Zimbabwe Tests



SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has been recalled in the 15-member Test side for the tour of Zimbabwe. However, the left-hander, who is recovering from an injury on his right shin, can play only as a batsman in the first Test.

Apart from Shakib, slow-left armer Enamul Haque Jr and top order batsman Shahriar Nafees, both of whom missed the tour of Sri Lanka due to injuries, have been recalled as well. Also selected in the side is left-arm pacer Sajidul Islam, who last played a Test match for Bangladesh in 2008. Experienced Bangladesh paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, as earlier speculated, has not been included in the 15-man squad as he is yet to recover from a heel injury.

"We received Shakib's fitness report on Thursday and based on that it was decided that Shakib can play the first Test only as a batsman. His chances of bowling in the first Test are fifty-fifty, however we expect him to bowl from the second Test onwards," informed Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) chief selector Akram Khan.

While it is still unsure whether Tamim Iqbal, recovering from a thumb fracture, will play the first Test, the team management is confident that the player will recover in time for the second. The other openers in the team include Jahurul Islam and Nafees. Mominul Haque's good performance in the last series has led



Chief selector of the national cricket team Akram Khan announces Bangladesh's 15-man Test squad yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

In: Shakib Al Hasan, Enamul Haque Jr, Sajidul Islam, Shahriar Nafees.

Out: Marshall Ayub, Abul Hasan, Anamul Haque, Elias Sunny, Abdur Razzak.

SQUAD

Mushfiquur Rahim (captain & wicketkeeper), Mahmudullah Riyad (vice-captain), Tamim Iqbal, Jahurul Islam, Mohammad Ashraful, Shakib Al Hasan, Mominul Haque, Nasir Hossain, Shohag Gazi, Rubel Hossain, Shahadat Hossain, Shahriar Nafees, Enamul Haque, Robiul Islam, Sajidul Islam.

to him being retained. He will however have to fight to get his place in the playing eleven. With Shakib and Tamim back in the side, there are a

number of possible combinations that the team management can afford to go with.

As far as batting goes, the team selected yesterday bears a solid look as the Tigers will travel to Zimbabwe with a full-strength batting line-up. The bowling however is a different story. The recent tour of Sri Lanka saw the team struggling with a barely-fit and inexperienced pace line-up. The situation is not likely to improve significantly when the Tigers take the field for the first Test against Zimbabwe on April 17.

With pacer Abul Hasan injured and Mashrafe deemed unfit to play Test cricket, the selectors picked Sajidul to provide an extra option. "There remains a weakness in our pace bowling department. Sajidul had a good run in the Bangladesh Cricket League and also played a few good matches in the Bangladesh Premier League. He also trained under the academy here the last month. So we are trying out a different bowler," said Akram.

The other pacers in the side are Rubel Hossain, Robiul Islam and Shahadat Hossain. While Rubel and Robiul are more likely to make it through to the playing eleven, Shahadat will have to contest with Sajidul.

"Shahadat is doing okay in Tests. Not too bad but not that good either. If I had a better option then I would have taken someone else. But its time for him to show some improvement," said Akram. Spinners Shohag Gazi and Enamul complete the bowling line-up.

Bangladesh to play India, Pakistan in England

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will play two FIFA friendly matches against neighbouring India and Pakistan in England in June, informed Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin yesterday.

India-based sports management company, Celebrity Management Group, is going to organise the friendlies among Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and they invited all of three national federations to play the friendlies in England.

"An India-based company, which organised the FIFA friendly between Argentina and Nigeria in Bangladesh, invited us to participate in the friendlies in England," said Salahuddin over the phone from India yesterday.

The BFF boss informed that Bangladesh are supposed to play against India and Pakistan on June 1 and 7.

Bangladesh Football Federation had given their nod to play the friendlies after the Celebrity Management Group invited Bangladesh to play in England as they would provide transport, food and accommodation.

2nd 'first time' for Sajidul



SPORTS REPORTER

The very fact that Bangladesh's team management have included a pacer who has not been in the national setup for the last five years in itself describes the sorry state the Tigers' pace department is in.

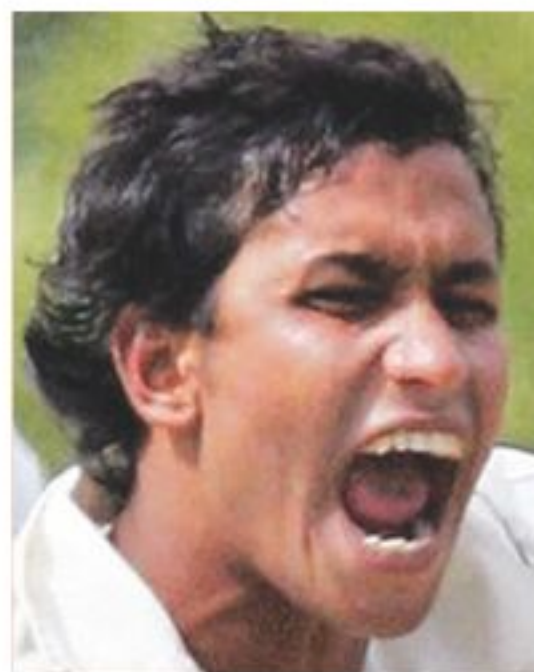
The series of injuries, coupled with some ordinary bowling, have compelled the selectors to try something different and bring in left-arm pacer Sajidul Islam. Sajidul last played for Bangladesh in 2008 when the Tigers toured New Zealand. The bowler picked three wickets in three innings stretched over two Tests, and has not played an international match ever since. All three were wickets of top-order batsman, one of which was that of star batsman Stephen Fleming.

While his return to the side may have been based more on compulsion rather than his performance, Sajidul believes that the tour of Zimbabwe can sketch a new avenue for his international career.

"Honestly speaking, it feels as though I have entered the national team for the first time," Sajidul told The Daily Star. "When I was dropped after the 2008 series, a number of other pacers got into the side and I knew it was going to be tough. But I always said to myself that an opportunity would come and I tried to give my 100 per cent," he added.

Sajidul, who turned 25 last January, believed that he has matured as a cricketer in the last five years. "I am a lot more experienced now. In 2008 I could swing the ball just one way, and sometimes it went the other way by luck. But now I have more control on the ball and can swing the ball both ways. I also understand the game a lot better. I used to bowl

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SAJIDUL ISLAM

India women sweep series

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team lost the third and final T20I against India by ten runs at the Reliance Stadium in Baroda yesterday. With the victory the hosts have completed a comprehensive 3-0 whitewash against the visitors.

After electing to bat first, the hosts rode on a half-century stand for the opening wicket between Mona Meshram (22) and Smriti Mandhana (39). The partnership was broken in the eighth over and the run rate deteriorated over the next five overs. A few late hits from captain Harmeet Kaur and Poonam Raut took India to 123 for nine. Panna Ghosh and Salma Khatun took two wickets each while debutant Fahima Khatun, Jahanara Alam and Shukhtara Rahman took one each.

In reply, Bangladesh began brightly and maintained the required run-rate in the first half of the game. At the half-way mark they were positioned at 50 for 1, with Shukthara and Lata Mondal looking set. However, Shukhtara was run out in the 11th over and that led to a collapse. Captain Salma Khatun fell

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Hockey team's winning spree

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh continued their winning spree in the Asia Cup U-16 Hockey Five competition as they outplayed Kazakhstan 26-1 in their third match in Singapore yesterday.

Deen Islam led goalfest scoring five goals while Rezaul Karim, Noyeem Uddin and Ashik Mahmud struck four goals each. Ashraful Islam and Roman Sarker netted three goals each while Khaled

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Siam draws this time

SPORTS REPORTER

National junior champion Ikramul Haq Siam played out a draw against Walid Anwar of United Arab Emirates in the seventh round of the Asian Junior Under-20 Chess Championship held in Sharjah on Thursday.

At the close of the seventh round, Siam has 3.5 points and was scheduled to play his eighth round match against Ali Rashid Ghanem of UAE on Friday night.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh pace bowler Shahadat Hossain (sitting 2nd from L) is all smiles as he takes a wedding photo with his newlywed bride and Bangladesh teammates during his wedding ceremony at the Ruposhi Bangla hotel yesterday.

Topsy-turvy Siddikur



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman had a topsy-turvy day in the second round of the Panasonic Open India yesterday. The 28-year old golfer carded seven birdies, three bogeys, and a triple bogey to finish the day on one-under-par (71) for an aggregate of two-under-

par (142). That score took him to joint seventh position from an overnight joint 12th, but things could have been much better had he not faltered badly on the sixth hole.

Starting the day with a bogey, Siddikur quickly bounced back with three birdies in the next four holes. But Siddikur undid all that good work as he took seven shots to finish the par-five sixth hole. Siddikur carded

two more bogeys and three birdies on the abck nine to finish the round on one-under-par (71).

The other Bangladeshi golfer, Shakhawat Hossain Sohel made the cut despite going five-under-par (77) in the second round. Carding just one birdie against four bogeys and a double-bogey on the day, Sohel took his overall tally to five-under-par (149) which pitted him at joint 61st position.

Sunrisers too bright for Pune

SPORTS DESK

Some inspired bowling from Dale Steyn handed Sunrisers Hyderabad a 22-run win over Pune Warriors in their IPL match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday.

Steyn took 3-11 from 3.5 overs, with all three of his victims coming in his last over, inside four balls as Pune capitulated for 104, while chasing Hyderabad's gettable target of 126. Amit Misra also took 3-19 as Pune never settled in their chase. Robin Uthappa was the only batsman showing some semblance of application as he made 24.

Earlier, a good all-round bowling performance from Pune had restricted Hyderabad to only 126-6 from their 20 overs. Thisara Perera topscored with 30 and Akshath Reddy chipped in with 27 as Hyderabad found the going tough against some disciplined bowling, led by Ashokh Dinda who took 2-29 from

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Russel focus on league

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel will be hoping to carry their Independence Cup performance into the professional football league when the Bangladesh Premier League resumes today after six weeks through the tie between Sheikh Russel KC and Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

After clinching the season's second title by beating Sheikh Jamal DC in the enthralling Independence Cup final, title aspirants Sheikh Russel are upbeat ahead of today's tie. A win against Brothers Union will put them on top of the nine-team table which is currently headed by Abahani with 28 points from 13 matches. Sheikh Russel have two points less but also a game in hand.

Considering the performance of the Independence Cup, Federation Cup champions Sheikh Russel are considered the favourites against Brothers, who also suffered a 1-2 defeat at the hands of Sheikh Russel in their league's first meeting despite taking a first-half lead.

Nevertheless, this time too Sheikh Russel are going to face a tough challenge from Brothers Union but will bank on in-form strikers Zahid Hasan Emily and Haitian Sony Norde, who struck one goal each in the Independence Cup final.

"Soon after the completion of the Independence Cup final, we have shifted our focus to the professional football league and we are eager to win our third title of the season," said Sheikh Russel captain-cum-goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee.

Midfielder Mamunul Islam termed the rest of their four league matches against Brothers, Sheikh Jamal, Feni Soccer and Arambagh KS like finals.

"We are considering each of our league match as a final whoever the opponents," said Mamunul. "It seems

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