

## Tk 1 cr Super Cup in June

SPORTS REPORTER

The postponement of Bangladesh's FIFA friendlies against India and Pakistan has prompted the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to think of staging Super Cup next month. The football's governing body had earlier scrapped the money-spinning tournament from the calendar, shifting it to November at the start of the upcoming season, due to the friendlies which were scheduled to take place in England in June.

The suspension has seemingly helped the federation to realise its promise of holding four competitions in the same calendar year. "After learning about the postponement of the FIFA friendlies on Monday night, I thought about bringing forward the Super Cup to June. I spoke with a few club officials today (Wednesday) and they have responded positively," BFF president Kazi Salahuddin told reporters yesterday.

Sheikh Russel, Abahani, Mohammedan and Brothers Union have responded positively while Sheikh Jamal DC are mulling about the option, informed the BFF boss. He however said that he would try to convince the Dhanmondi outfit and a positive



announcement from BFF will be forthcoming soon.

Meanwhile, the third edition of the Super Cup will only be a platform for local players, unlike the previous two editions where local players along with foreigners competed for the Tk one-crore championship money.

"The SAFF Championship is ahead and we want to create give the local players maximum opportunity to perform so that we can find a few new players for the championship. That is why we want to keep the foreign players out of the Super Cup," said Salahuddin.

To compensate for the loss of the foreign players, the clubs will be given the opportunity to rope in new players apart from their registered ones that they had signed at the stat of the season.

However, it has been learnt that this decision was made keeping the clubs' preference in mind as most of the clubs have already released their foreign players after the completion of the Bangladesh Premier League. It would have been hard for the eight participating clubs to sign up new foreign players for 15 days or one month for Super Cup only.

## Shakib to be away for 3 months

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan will be away from home for the next three months.

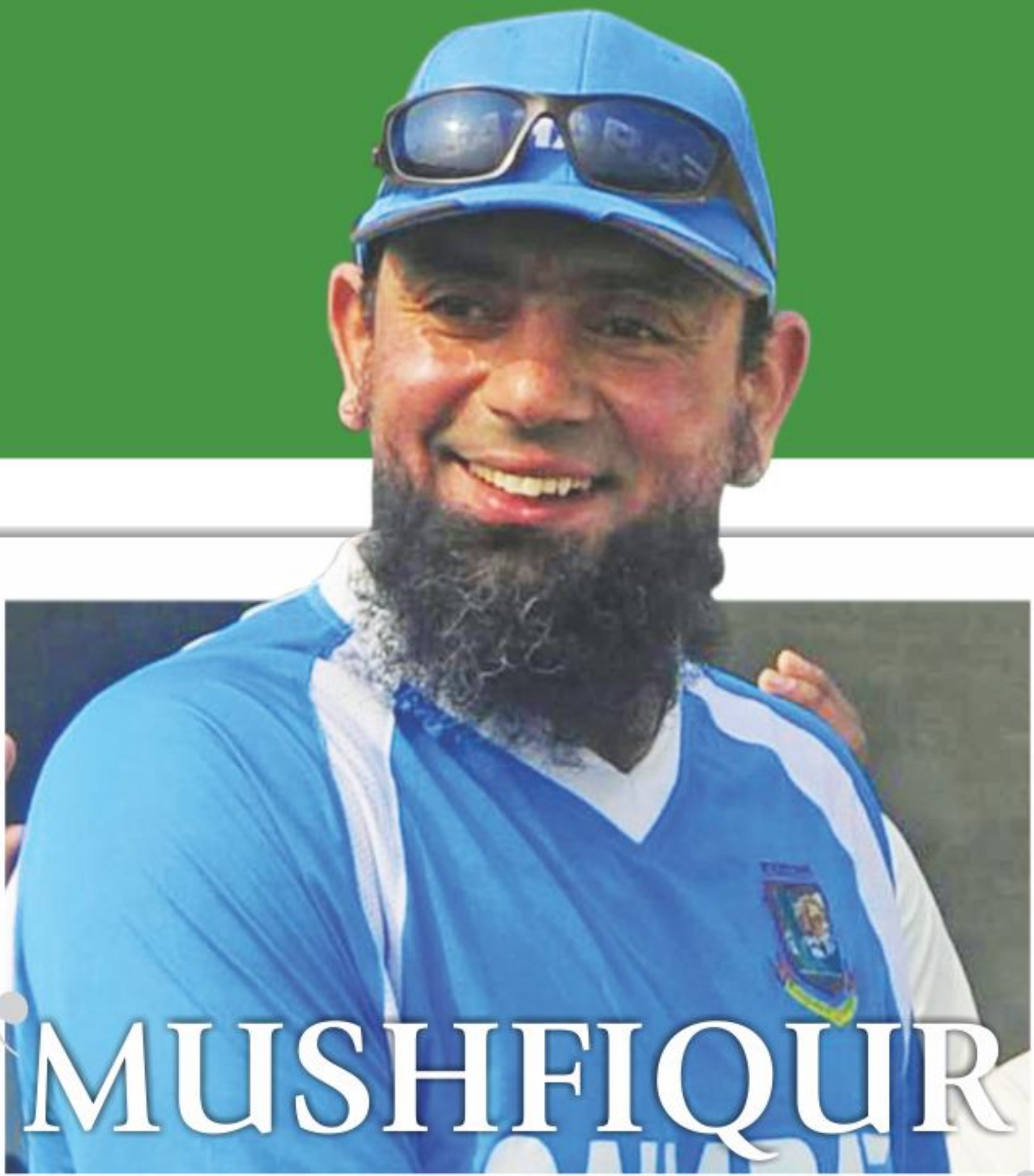
Shakib will leave the country soon after getting the UK visa. But he will first go to the United States to spend time with wife Umme Ahmed Shishir, who lives there.

This will be Shakib's first visit to his in-laws' house after his marriage with the computer science student in December last year.

The star all-rounder will then will fly to England to play for Leicestershire in the Friends Life T20 Cup that begins June 26.

Therefore, the all-rounder has very slim chance of playing in this year's Dhaka Premier League Cricket if it takes place at all.

Shakib came to the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium yesterday and had a lively adda with pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.



## MUSHFIQUR is the engine

*During Bangladesh's tour of Zimbabwe, the best Test cricketer in the country was neither Bangladeshi nor Zimbabwean, but former Pakistani off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq -- 496 international wickets.*

*When not in the Bangladesh practise jersey and cap, he wears a salwar and turban, having turned to religion near the end of his career in order to unearth, in his own words, the purpose of life. On the last day of the tour, after the second T20I, he took time out to talk to The Daily Star's Sakeb Subhan. The following are excerpts:*

**DSS:** *Everyone back home is wondering about the immediate future of the Bangladesh captaincy. What is your take on Mushfiqur Rahim's resignation?*

**SM:** I spoke to him in fact today, and I said that I will have a stick in my hand and I will beat you. I am older than you and I can beat you. Whatever you said or whatever is your decision I am not happy with that. The BCB, the whole country should support him. I think he is a very, very good captain. He is full of energy, very patriotic, loyal and hard-working.

I think he is the engine of the team. A train has an engine and bogeys. Bogeys have no power and he is the engine of the team which can take it to its destiny. If BCB will be unsuccessful in making him take back the job, I think Bangladesh cricket will go ten years back.

He is a gem of a person. He loves his team and his country. Whenever you see him he is in the nets, he is always planning, thinking.

He goes to the ground before everyone, he does his job properly. His preparation I think is the best preparation I have ever seen in my life. I played with great players, and I saw their preparation as well.

**DSS:** *How would you rate the performances of the spinners on this tour?*

**SM:** If you see the figures and the stats in the first two Test matches, you will see that for both sides the fast bowlers were dominating. I don't want to compare Bangladeshi spinners to Zimbabwe spinners, but our spinners are much better than theirs.

I am very happy with the way the spinners bowled. In the first Test match, Enamul (Haque Jr) bowled very well after coming back to the team after five, six years. Normally, it takes time (to adjust) when you come into the interna-

tional arena, in that sort of environment and that sort of professionalism. Performance-wise, he has done a good job for the team.

Shohag Gazi could not bowl enough in the first Test, probably because of the scenario -- there were more right-handers and the captain bowled Enamul more. In the second Test match he took crucial wickets and got the main batsman out in both innings. He is progressing and is improving his awareness of the game.

**DSS:** *Is it true that Gazi often comes up with his own plans during strategy discussions?*

**SM:** Yes, he does. Rather than me controlling him I want him to follow his thinking. I come with a lot of questions and I want to know what is in his heart and what he is thinking about how to get the batsman out. We discussed a few technical issues but we could not do a lot of work on that.

**DSS:** *What went wrong in the ODIs?*

**SM:** In the ODIs the spinners bowled well, and unfortunately there was not enough runs on the board. Unfortunately again, we lost all three tosses. The pitch was totally different after the first one or two hours in the morning -- for the rest of the day it was flat.

**DSS:** *Would you consider being a full-time spin coach?*

**SM:** It depends on what exactly they want from me. If they think I am good for the country, not just the main players. For the full-time option I have to discuss with my family as I mentioned before.

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## Shane's new assignment is A team

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket team's head coach Shane Jurgensen will take charge of the Bangladesh A team for their upcoming England tour.

Jurgensen, who left Dhaka last night for Australia, will supervise the camp from June 9 after returning from home on June 7. The second string Bangladesh side will fly out for England on August 2 to play eight limited-over matches.

"I met Shane and three selectors -- Akram Khan, Minhazul Abedin and Habibul Bashar -- today to discuss our next course of action. As the national team don't have any assignment until the home series against New Zealand in October, that's why we have decided to give Shane the charge [of the A team]," informed Enayet Hossain Siraj, chairman of the BCB's cricket operations committee.

"We may send a 21-member team to England and we are planning to send at least 18 players and that's why we are planning to send Shane as a coach-cum-manager of the team. The camp will start with 25 players and we have a plan to accommodate as many young national players as possible in the A team," he added.

## Boult aims to outdo his idol

AFP, London

New Zealand's Trent Boult hopes to succeed where cricket hero Wasim Akram failed by getting his name on the Lord's honours board during this week's first Test against England.

Left-arm seamer Boult proved a thorn in England's side with six wickets in the drawn third Test at Auckland in March.

Pakistan great Akram was the pre-eminent left-arm fast bowler of his generation, and arguably the best of all-time. Yet for all the occasions he was too hot to handle for England's batsmen with his blend of reverse swing and pure pace, he never managed the five-wicket innings haul, or 10 wickets in a Test, that would have put his name on the Lord's honours board.

"Idolising Wasim Akram and what he did, it has always been with me that I want to be a swing bowler," Boult told on Tuesday.

## Fitness upto the players

SPORTS REPORTER



Fate has not been too kind to Mashrafe Bin Mortaza over the last few months. The bowler has been struggling to remain 'un-injured' ever since he led Dhaka Gladiators to a second successive title in the Bangladesh Premier League.

He went from almost featuring in Bangladesh's Test side against Zimbabwe -- national selectors, in March, had asked him to play -- to completely missing the tour, due to his heel injury. He was not the only pacer to miss out. Abul Hasan missed out due to a back pain, Nazmul Hossain injured his knee, and Shahadat Hossain too, returned without playing any part. These led many to doubt the board's rehabilitation process in place for the pacers.

Mashrafe, who yesterday returned to training after a short break, however, stated that the players were equally responsible for their recovery process.

"At the moment, we probably have the best trainer in the world [in Stuart Karppinen] at the Academy. I have worked with the facilities at the Academy for the last two months and they are really good," said

Mashrafe. "Youngsters and the pacers should be able to utilise them properly. If you can't get fit with such facilities then how can you?" he added.

The bowler further stated that he was 'trying his level best to get fit as soon as possible'. A statement that BCB's sports physician, Debashish Chowdhury concurred with. "We had initially planned to give Mashrafe an injection today [Wednesday]. But his heel was almost painless and we decided not to. In fact if this was his state two weeks before the tour, we would have probably let him go," said Debashish.

Despite having missed out on the tour, the Narail Express religiously watched all the matches and as opposed to many, described it as a positive tour.

"Yes, we lost the ODI series but you have to understand that things can go either way in one-day cricket. It's all about how you play on that day," said Mashrafe. "The only disappointment was losing the Test series. We need to concentrate on that," he added.

The paceman also had good words for Robiul Islam, who picked up 15 wickets in the series. "There was never any doubt regarding his prowess. However, this is just the start. He has a long way to go and a number of things to tackle in the near future."



MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA



England skipper Alastair Cook (L) and his New Zealand counterpart Brendon McCullum pose with the trophy on the eve of the first Test at Lord's yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Lord's Test starts today

AFP, London



It will be a case of familiarity having bred respect when England face New Zealand in the first of a two-Test series at Lord's on Thursday.

England could have been forgiven for thinking they had completed the hard part of their most recent tour programme when they wrapped up an

impressive Test series win in India before Christmas.

They then travelled to New Zealand for a three-match series against a home side still reeling from the botched way in which senior batsman Ross Taylor was stripped of the captaincy and replaced by Brendon McCullum.

But the green pitches and easy haul of wickets against a New Zealand side who as recently as January had been bowled out for just 45 by South Africa

in Cape Town did not materialise.

Instead, a three-match series ended 0-0 with England clinging on, by just one wicket, to a draw in the finale at Auckland's Eden Park in March where only a superb rearguard century by wicketkeeper Matt Prior denied the Black Caps a famous win.

But at least they had regained a measure of pride after their problems with the Proteas' formidable pace attack.

## Knight Riders out, Mumbai on top

AGENCIES



Pune Warriors snapped their nine-match losing streak and knocked Kolkata Knight Riders out of the Indian Premier League with a thrilling seven-run win in Ranchi yesterday. Manish Pandey (66), skipper Aaron Finch (48) and Yuvraj Singh (30) guided Pune to competitive 170 for four after being asked to bat.

Yusuf Pathan (72) cracked his first IPL half-century in three years and almost steered KKR home with splendid hitting but he got out in a bizarre fashion towards the end of the chase as he became the first batsman in the IPL history to be given out for obstructing the field.

Pune restricted Kolkata to 163 for seven to complete their third win from 15 matches.

In the second match of the night at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai Indians eased to a 14-run win against Rajasthan Royals, thanks to an attacking half-century from Mumbai's young glovesman Aditya Tare. Tare, who replaced an injured Sachin Tendulkar, paid back for the faith showed in him by the team management, with a 37-ball-59 that was studded with eight boundaries and a six. to power his side to 166 for eight. Maxwell contributed with 23 as Mumbai powered to 166 for eight. The Royals' reply stuttered to 152 for seven in their allotted 20 overs as the Mumbai bowlers kept a tight leash on runs from the beginning right to the end.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**PUNE WARRIORS:** 170 for 4 in 20 overs (Uthappa 25, Finch 48, Pandey 66, Yuvraj 30; Senanayake 1-22)

**KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS:** 163 for 7 in 20 overs (Gambhir 12, Pathan 72, Ten Doeschate 42; Parnell 2-34)  
**Result:** Pune Warriors won by 7 runs.

**Player-of-the-match:** Manish Pandey.

**MUMBAI INDIANS:** 166 for 8 in 20 overs (Tare 59, Maxwell 23; Watson 2-30)

**RAJASTHAN ROYALS:** 152 for 7 in 20 overs (Hodge 39, Binny 37 not out; Kulkarni 2-21)

**Result:** Mumbai Indians won by 14 runs.

**Player-of-the-match:** Aditya Tare.

## Hockey camp postponed

*Players want immediate transfer*  
SPORTS REPORTER

Hockey players, under the banner of the Players Welfare Association, yesterday placed a memorandum before the Bangladesh Hockey Federation demanding immediate announcement of players' transfer after the BHF postponed the national team's camp for the Asia Cup citing 'unavailability of accommodation facilities'.

National team's prolific forward Rasel Mahmud Jimmy told reporters that they would not join the camp or take part in any tournament until the federation declares schedule for players' transfer for the upcoming season.

BHF general secretary Khaza Rahmatullah thinks there is conspiracy behind this boycott by the players ahead of the BFF polls. Rahmatullah said that the league committee has already announced that the players transfer would take place within a week after the completion of the polls and it might even take place earlier in case the polls were not held by June.

"(Ariful Islam) Prince is playing a dual role for Mohammedan," alleged Rahmatullah. "As a Mohammedan representative, Prince brought a resolution to start the players' transfer after the polls at the league committee meeting. At the same time he, as a secretary of Players' Welfare Association, is demanding immediate date of players' transfer".

**WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS**

## Iran arrive today

SPORTS REPORTER

A 32-member Iran women's national football team is scheduled to arrive here today to take part in the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers which will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from May 21 to 25.

Philippines and Thailand are scheduled to arrive in the capital tomorrow. The Group B matches will get underway from May 21 when hosts Bangladesh will be taking on Thailand. Bangladesh will face Iran on May 23 before playing against Philippines on May 25. The group champions will advance to the eight-team finals.

## India's Zim tour 'on hold'

CRICINFO, Delhi

India have put their ODI tour to Zimbabwe that was scheduled for July "on hold". A BCCI official told ESPNcricinfo that the "fatigue factor", which will follow the Champions Trophy and a tri-series in the West Indies between June 28 to July 11, was the reason for the board's decision to put the series on ice.

The Future Tours Programme had pencilled in three ODIs to be hosted in Zimbabwe but there was talk of that being extended to five. The BCCI has given an assurance it will "respect" its commitment to Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) and intends for India to travel there at some stage, but it has not set a deadline for taking a call on when to reschedule.