

SPORT

A team packed with national players

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a formidable 15-member A team for its limited overs tour of England in August with pacer Mashrafe Bin Mortaza included as a standby player. According to chief selector Akram Khan, Mashrafe will travel to England only if the pacer is deemed match-fit.

"He is still in the process of recovering from the injury, he has started bowling. If he regains fitness he will be an automatic choice for the team, there is no doubt about that, but he has to recover," said Akram.

13 of the 15 players in the squad have already represented Bangladesh at the top level. Top order batsman Marshall Ayub and pacer Al Amin are the only members to have not played for the senior team in any format of the game.

The selectors left no stones unturned with regards to the bowling line-up as they included pacers Robiul Islam, Rubel Hossain and spinner Shohag Gazi in the squad, all of whom have been regular members of the national team. National discards Rokibul Hasan, Naeem Islam and Imrul Kayes have also been included in the squad.

"The tour of England is a good opportunity for a number of them. It's the best possible practice that they can get before the series against New Zealand in October. In fact, a number of them are in our minds for the New Zealand series, so they should utilise the opportunity," said Akram.

Opener Shahriar Nafees, who did not feature in any of the practice matches last week,

was a notable omission from the squad. The presence of four top-order batsmen in the side - Shamsur Rahman, Jahurul Islam, Anamul Haque and Mominul Haque -- meant that there was no room for Nafees, who had earlier captained the A team for a tour in India.

Elias Sunny is the lone slow left-arm in

ITINERARY

Aug 02: Arrives in UK
 Aug 06: BD A v Hampshire at Ageas Bowl
 Aug 09: BD A v Yorkshire at Headingley Carnegie
 Aug 11: BD A v Lancashire at Old Trafford
 Aug 14: BD A v Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge
 Aug 16: BD A v Worcestershire at New Road
 Aug 20: BD A v Eng Lions at Bristol
 Aug 22: BD A v Eng Lions at Taunton
 Aug 24: BD A v Eng Lions at Taunton.

the squad while Ziaur Rahman and Forhad Reza made the allrounders' cut.

The squad will reach the United Kingdom on August 2 accompanied by the national team's batting coach Richard Corey. They are scheduled to play five one-day matches against domestic teams, after which they'll play three one-dayers against the England Lions.

SQUAD

Mohammad Elias, Ziaur Rahman, Jahurul Islam, Naeem Islam, Anamul Haque, Shohag Gazi, Rubel Hossain, Mominul Hoque, Shamsur Rahman, Marshall Ayub, Robiul Islam, Imrul Kayes, Rokibul Hasan, Forhad Reza, Al Amin.

Standbys: Masrafe Bin Mortaza, Mehrab Hossain, Sajedul Islam, Mosharraf Hossain, Muktar Ali.



PHOTO: COURTESY
 Bangladesh U-16 footballers celebrate their 3-1 win over Sri Lanka U-16, which carried them to the semifinals of the SAFF U-16 Championship, at the Nepal Army Ground yesterday.

SAFF U-16 CHAMPIONSHIP

BD qualify for semis

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh moved to the semifinals of the SAFF U-16 Championship after beating Sri Lanka 3-1 in their opening fixture at the Nepal Army Ground yesterday.

Tutul netted a brace while Torikul scored one for Bangladesh. Nireesh netted the only goal for Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh went ahead in the 28th minute when Tutul hit the back of the net from a free-kick from the edge of the box. Sri Lanka levelled the margin 15 minutes later through Nireesh's long-range effort.

But Bangladesh restored the lead in the 57th minute, when Tutul scored his second with a brilliant header. The victory was sealed by Torikul who unleashed a left footer in the 81st minute to score the third.

The win took Bangladesh, along with India, to the semifinals from Group B. Sri Lanka have been eliminated as this was their second loss after a 4-1 routing by India two days ago. Bangladesh will face India in their last group match on Thursday to decide the group champions and runners-up. Group A consists of Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan and Bhutan.

SL take 2-0 lead

AFP, Colombo



Rangana Herath took two crucial wickets as Sri Lanka defeated South Africa in the rain-affected one-dayer in Colombo on Tuesday, taking a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

South Africa, set a revised target of 176 from 29 overs, were 104-5 in 21 overs when a heavy downpour at the Premadasa Stadium forced the match to be called off.

With 121-5 being the par score at that stage, the Proteas lost by 17 runs to suffer their second defeat in the series following the 180-run loss in the first match last Saturday.

Left-arm spinner Herath trapped opener Alvaro Petersen leg-before for 24, and had Faf du Plessis caught behind to reduce the Proteas to 69-5 by the 14th over.

David Miller (22 not out) and Ryan McLaren (14 not out) put on 35 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket before rain ruined their hopes of pulling off an upset.

South Africa were dealt another blow as star batsman Hashim Amla injured his left knee while fielding and was rushed to hos-

pital for precautionary scans.

Amla, who had been sidelined for the first match due to a strained back, was unable to bat and faces a race against time to be fit for the third match in Pallekele on Friday.

Earlier, fast bowler Morne Morkel claimed 3-34 as the hosts were restricted to 223-9 in 49.2 overs after they won the toss and elected to bat.

Sri Lanka's stand-in captain Dinesh Chandimal and opener Tillakaratne Dilshan top-scored with 43 apiece before heavy rain ended the innings with four deliveries still to be bowled.

South Africa regrouped after the heavy defeat in the first match to keep the free-stroking Sri Lankan batsmen in check on the slow wicket.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 223 for 9 in 49.2 overs (Dilshan 43, Sangakkara 37, Jayawardene 17, Chandimal 43; Morkel 3-34)

SOUTH AFRICA: 104 for 5 in 21 overs (Petersen 24, Duminy 15, De Villiers 12, Miller 22 not out, McLaren 14 not out; Malinga 1-17, Herath 2-16)

Result: Sri Lanka won by 17 runs (D/L method)
Player-of-the-match: Dinesh Chandimal.

One club to be relegated

SPORTS REPORTERS

The Professional Football League Committee (PFLC) has accepted guidelines of the executive committee of Bangladesh Football Federation to hold the 2013-14 Bangladesh Premier League in three phases with participation of 10 clubs.

But, the PFLC decided to relegate one team from the Bangladesh Premier League and promote two teams from the Bangladesh Championship League, a second-tier professional football league from the upcoming season.

The meeting heated up when the issue of players' transfers was brought up. With the official transfer season yet to be opened, some of the players have reportedly taken money from clubs, but not decided to join them. The meeting asked the respective clubs and the players to resolve the issue by August 5.

According to the BPL bylaws, no vouchers, judicial and non-judicial stumps regarding the players' payments will be acceptable until the players sign on the transfers' form provided by the Bangladesh Football Federation.

Team BJMC lose

SPORTS REPORTER

Team BJMC suffered a 1-2 defeat against Thimpu City FC of Bhutan in their first match of the King's Cup at Changlimithang, Thimpu yesterday.

BJMC went two goals down in the first half as Dawagjitshen and Karmasherdup scored a goal for the Bhutanese side. Aminur pulled one back in the 77th minute for Team BJMC, who will play their second match against United Sikkim FC of India on July 27.



PHOTO: STAR

This picture taken yesterday shows the ground at the country's premier international cricket venue, the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, still not settled after being relaid. Maintenance work at the home of Bangladesh cricket had begun during the off-season almost a year ago, but not only does the long-winded process seem to have no end in sight, it has undermined previous strong points of the venue like its acclaimed drainage system, which has reportedly deteriorated because of the slipshod maintenance work.

Series of the unequal

AFP, Harare



Zimbabwe begin a five-match one-day series against India on Wednesday accepting that victory in even one of the games would represent a good result against the top-ranked side in the world.

India may have rested captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, leading spinner R Ashwin and seamers Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, but Zimbabwe's new coach Andy Waller expects their replacements to prove equally threatening.

"All along we've prepared with the hope that we might surprise them in one of the games -- we have to be realistic, and look to be competitive and do the best that we can," Waller said.

"India have got so many cricket players that I don't think there's a huge difference between the guys who have come in and some of the players they've left out."

Zimbabwe go into Wednesday's game at Harare Sports Club with their most settled batting line-up in many years, having been boosted by Sean Williams's performances in the middle order during their series victory over Bangladesh.

Williams has overcome a minor injury that kept him out of a three-day match against Australia A last week, which a Zimbabwe Select XI lost by 80 runs.

"Our top six are settled," Waller said. "The guys are hugely excited about this. We've been preparing knowing that the best side in the world are coming."

Federation assures, but Jimmy undecided

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is trying to convince national forward Rasel Mahmud Jimmy not to take any hasty decisions regarding retirement and assured him all measures are being taken so that his safety is not compromised, following a threatening SMS that the forward received from an unidentified mobile number a couple of days ago.

Jimmy, a key player of the national team and a leading voice among the players on different issues including the current crisis regarding inter-club players' transfers, told the team management yesterday that he wanted to retire from the game as his parents are worried about his security.

"Thus far I had taken all major decisions on my own, but this time decision to retire was on the insistence of

my parents, who do not want me to continue my playing where there is no security. I will talk to my parents again and inform the federation of my decision in a couple of days," said Jimmy after talking with BHF's general secretary Khwaza Rahmatullah yesterday afternoon.

The players under the banner of Hockey Players' Welfare Association has been crying for the players' transfers for nearly two-months with six clubs declaring not to take part in any hockey activities under the newly-elected committee. Jimmy, as the most well-recognised and influential player in the side, had been voiced his concern over the issue as he had done previously to press home the players demands on different platforms.

"I have spoken on behalf of the players on different times as I felt I had a responsibility as a senior player in the side and there was no personal interest in those. Why should I be made a target then?" said Jimmy.

Jimmy informed that he has lodged a general diary with the Bangshal Police Station while BHF also filed a general diary with the Motijheel Police station.

"He (Jimmy) may be contemplating retirement from an emotional standpoint. But we need him in the national team and we are taking every necessary steps to protect him," said Rahmatullah adding that he has already spoken to Jimmy's mother to assure her.

"It is natural that parents will be worried in such a situation but we assured her that law enforcement agencies are taking all the necessary steps ensure there is no threat on the players' safety," said Rahmatullah adding that they have also informed Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) to investigate the matter.

The general secretary however believes someone is intentionally doing this to provoke the players so that they leave the camp ahead of the Asia Cup, in a bid to jeopardise the newly-elected committee.

U-23 and U-19 squads named

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday announced the Under-19 and Under-23 squads that will travel to England and Singapore respectively. The Under-19 team will take part in a tri-nation series also featuring their counterparts from Pakistan and England. The competition will take place from August 2 to 19.

The under-23 team will take part in the ACC Emerging Team's Cup. Under-23 sides of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will take part in the competition alongside the national teams of Afghanistan, Nepal, Singapore and the UAE. The one-day tournament will be held from August 17 to 26.

Under-23: Litton Kumer Das, Mizanur Rahman, Myshukur Rahman, Soumya Sarkar, Shabbir Rahman, Md Mithun, Asif Ahmed, Alauddin Babu, Mahmudul Hasan, Nur Hossain, Taijul Islam, Nazmul Islam Apu, Dewan Shabbir Ahmed, Ariful Haque, Abu Jayed Chowdhury.

Standbys: Quazi Nurul Hasan, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Rony Talukder, Ruman Ahmed.

Under-19: Joyraj Sheik, Shadman Islam, Najmul Hossain, Munim Shahriar, Musaddek Hossain, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Rahatul Ferdous, Shaif Uddin, Jasim Uddin, Abu Sayem Chowdhury, Abu Hider Rony, Mustafizur Rahman, Mehede Hasan, Rifat Pradhan, Jubair Hossain.

Standbys: Nahid Hasan, Anil Babu, Nihad Uz Zaman, Mohammad Sumon, Saeed Sarker.

Shakib's Leics tie in FLT20

SPORTS REPORTER

In an intense finish at the Friends Life T20 yesterday, Shakib Al Hasan's side Leicestershire drew against Lancashire. Batting first Leicestershire posted 139. Shakib arrived at the crease when the team had lost early wickets and helped revived them with a 16-ball 23.

In the second innings the all-rounder posted miserly figures of 1 for 22 in his four overs. He was given the responsibility to bowl the crucial last over where Leicestershire needed to defend 13 runs.

Despite having picked a wicket in the over, Shakib gave away two boundaries and the match was drawn.

Pattinson out of Ashes

AFP, London

Australia bowler James Pattinson is out of the remainder of the Ashes series owing to a stress fracture in his back, Cricket Australia confirmed Monday.

Pattinson was diagnosed with the lower back problem after the tourists' defeat in the second Test at Lord's and he will now return home after the third Test at Old Trafford.

"James Pattinson reported some hip and back soreness on the final day of the second Ashes Test," said Team doctor Peter Brukner said.

"We had some scans done today [Monday] in London that have identified an early stage low back stress fracture.

"Unfortunately he will not take any further part in this Test series and will commence a rehabilitation program with the aim to have him back for the Australian summer."

Australian selectors may now recall Mitchell Starc, left out for the 347-run loss at Lord's.