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CELEBRATING THE

Sabbir, Forhad in WC squad

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Sabbir Rahman, who just made his international debut in the T20 series against Sri Lanka, has been included in Bangladesh's 15-member squad for the ICC World Twenty20 2014 announced yesterday.

Mushfiqur Rahim and Abdur Razzak, who both missed the last T20 series due to injuries, have returned in place of Arafat Sunny and Mithun Ali.

Speaking on the team, chief selector Faruque Ahmed said, "We have considered the fact that this is a global event and experience is necessary as well as giving opportunity to youngsters like Mominul Hoque and Sabbir who have the potential to excel in the shortest format."

"Someone like Arafat Sunny, who has impressed everyone and had been performing consistently at domestic level, will have to miss out because we needed to have that balance," he added.

The women's squad has also been announced, with Salma Khatun leading the team.

MEN'S SQUAD

Mushfiqur Rahim (captain), Tamim Iqbal Khan, Anamul Haque Bijoy, Shamsur Rahman, Shakib Al Hasan, Mominul Hoque, Nasir Hossain, Shabbir Rahaman, Md Mahmudullah, Abdur Razzak, Shohag Gazi, Masrafe Bin Mortaza, Farhad Reza, Rubel Hossain, Al-Amin Hossain.

WOMEN'S SQUAD

Salma Khatun (captain), Jahanara Alam (vice-captain), Rumana Ahmed, Fargana Hoque, Ayasha Rahman, Lata Mondol, Sanjida Islam, Fahima Khatun, Panna Ghosh, Sharmin Akter, Nuzhat Tasnia, Khadijatul Kubra, Shohaly Akther, Shamima Sultana, Saila Sharmin.

Kiwis pick T20 squad

AFP, Wellington

Jesse Ryder's fall from grace continued Sunday when the big-hitting left-hander was left out of the New Zealand squad for the World Twenty20 starting next month in Bangladesh.

Ryder's omission comes less than a week after he was dropped from the New Zealand Test squad following a late-night drinking session that ended just hours before the start of the first Test against India.

New Zealand selection boss Bruce Edgar confirmed that Ryder had been almost assured of making the World Twenty20 squad, but was ruled out because of his behaviour.

"We've had to exclude him from the tour. Character is really important as part of our selection process," Edgar said.

The prolific scorer Ryder has been involved in several alcohol-related incidents throughout his career, and only recently returned to the New Zealand squad after a self-imposed 22-month exile to sort out "personal issues".

SQUAD
Brendon McCullum (captain), Corey Anderson, Trent Boult, Anton Devcich, Martin Guptill, Ronel Hira, Mitchell McClenaghan, Nathan McCullum, Kyle Mills, Colin Munro, James Neesham, Luke Ronchi, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Kane Williamson.

Bangladesh captain Misuhiqur Rahim missed both the T20s against Sri Lanka in Chittagong due to a finger injury. He is however back at the helm for the three-match ODI series with the first one taking place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

PHOTO:
FIROZ AHMED

Mushfiqur back, will bat only

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim will be entering unfamiliar grounds when he takes the field at Mirpur for the first ODI against Sri Lanka today. It will only be the third time in his ODI career that he will not be wearing the wicketkeeping gloves.

"To be honest, I enjoy keeping a lot. That is one spot from where you can handle the field positions easily. I also get to judge the wicket better from behind. But at the same time, [as a keeper] one has to be ready for every ball, so from that aspect I might feel a bit relaxed," he added.

With mega events such as the Asia Cup and ICC World Twenty 20 in the offing, there were talks in the cricketing forum about resting the captain for the ODI series and giving him a slightly longer break. The captain however was not in favour of any such move.

mixed emotions regarding the slight change in his role in the team.

"I feel no pain when I bat, but as I hurt the last finger, it will be a risk if the ball hits it again and I could possibly be out for a long time. Batting-wise though, I am fine and the team management also thinks I am good for going," said Mushfiqur in the pre-series press conference.

"Personally I feel that I am good enough to play and the team management has backed me up. It's not as though Bangladesh won't win if I don't play, but I don't want to miss any opportunity. I wanted to play the T20s as well, but I guess that would have been a bit too risky," he further explained.

With regards to his expectations in the ODI series, Mushfiqur followed a cautious approach.

"We have been performing well at home for the last one and a half years and we are confident to do the same. But to be honest it will be a tough contest and we have to play our best cricket because Sri Lanka are aware of our conditions," he said.

"I have recovered well. The kind of

injury I have might generally take up to five to six weeks to recover, but it's not certain to be healed hundred percent, I might have to carry it. For instance, I have another finger that I can't bend properly, but I have been playing with that for about one and a half years," said Mushfiqur.

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We've to be 'on-guard'

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Last week saw a spectacular start to the tour's limited-overs games, with both the T20 Internationals turning into cliff-hangers. With the three-match ODI series due to begin today, a similar sort of contest will be anticipated.

The visitors, who have managed to win just one out of their last five bilateral series, will be looking forward to breaking the trend. A 3-0 win here can take them to the number four spot and put them above England in the ODI rankings.

However, it won't be an easy task for the visitors and as their captain Angelo Mathews put it, they would have to be 'on-guard'.

"Looking at the Test series and the T20s, they played very differently. I thought it was very hard for us in the T20s. They are a young team and a fighting unit. They don't give up at any stage. They almost defended 120 in the last game. We can't go off-guard at any given time," said Mathews in the pre-match press conference.

With the Asia Cup around the corner, Sri Lanka would have ideally liked to try out different strategies in the series. However, such has been the intensity of the tour that the visitors are in no mood of experimenting.

"We want to play our best eleven. It's pretty straightforward; there won't be too many changes. As of now we are not planning to experiment," said Mathews.

With a mere whisker separating the sides in the T20s, Mathews believes that the side that sustains pressure better will take the series.

"There will be tough periods. I think it's about being positive and hanging in there just like in the T20s. Every player has to play their role. Handling situation is going to be the key," said Clarke.

Champs' tag in danger

AFP, Centurion

South Africa entered their Test series against Australia as undisputed world champions in the five-day form of the game.

But the crushing nature of their 281-run defeat in the first Test at SuperSport Park has raised the possibility that their era of dominance may be coming to an end.

Irrespective of the result of the current three-Test series South Africa will remain on top of the International Cricket Council rankings - but they will need to raise their game in order to be regarded as champions in more than name only.

Left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Johnson was the destroyer with match figures of 12 for 127.

Johnson not only blasted through South Africa's top order batting in both innings, he intimidated the hosts with fast, hostile short-pitched bowling. Hashim Amla and Ryan McLaren both took sickening blows on their helmets.

Australian captain Michael Clarke had no doubt that it was a performance that would have been noticed around the cricketing world.

"I don't know what South Africa are feeling at the moment," said Clarke.

NZ avoid innings defeat

AFP, Wellington

A dogged 158-run stand by century-maker Brendon McCullum and BJ Watling kept New Zealand alive in the second Test against India on Sunday, although the odds continue to favour the tourists.

After New Zealand looked on the ropes at 94-5, McCullum and Watling ensured India will have to bat again as they wiped out the 246-run first innings deficit to reach 252-5 at stumps on the third day.

McCullum, who brought up his ninth Test century with a powerful six off Ishant Sharma, was on 114 with Watling on 52.

However, despite their heroic partnership, New Zealand will likely need to bat through the fourth day, with only a brittle tail to come, if they are to deny India a seemingly inevitable series-leveelling victory.

It has been an impressive innings by McCullum who, despite his reputation as a punishing batsman, showed that when the chips are down he can still graft away for the good of the team.

He faced 146 deliveries to bring up his 50, reaching the milestone sweeping Jadeja to the square leg boundary, before upping the pace to

cover the second 50 in only 54 balls.

As the score mounted, India were left to rue lost chances when McCullum was dropped on nine by Virat Kohli at short mid-on, and then at 36 when Ishant Sharma put down a caught and bowled opportunity.

While Sri Lanka are by far ahead in terms of matches won between the two sides, Bangladesh are steadily closing the gap. In the last ten games Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka thrice.

However, the manner in which the series has progressed, the momentum has largely been with the visitors. Even since their arrival, they adjusted to the conditions well and deservedly won both the Test and T20 series.

As Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim put it yesterday, for the hosts to salvage something from this tour, they have to put in their best effort.

Bangladesh face a tricky situation with regards to their team selection ahead of today's first ODI. Their main concern revolves around the fact that Mushfiqur won't be keeping which means that either Shamsur Rahman or Anamul Haque will be doing the job.

Lavillenie breaks Bubka's world mark

AFP, Donetsk

Frenchman Renaud Lavillenie broke Sergey Bubka's 21-year-old indoor pole vault world record on Saturday at the same Donetsk meeting where the Ukrainian great set the old mark in 1993.

Lavillenie, the Olympic champion, easily vaulted 6.16 metres at his first attempt to improve the record by one centimetre and to make the moment sweeter, Bubka was present to witness it.

An ecstatic Lavillenie, or 'Airvalenie' as his fans nickname him, put his head in his hands and ran round the auditorium celebrating.

"It was totally crazy. I wanted to do my best. It was incredible," said the 27-year-old, who also sent out a jubilant tweet that he was "still in the air" over his victory.

Bubka cleared 6.15 metres in 1993 and still holds the outdoor world record of 6.14m set in 1994.

LIONS IN TIGERS' DEN

All three NCL games drawn

SPORTS REPORTER

Inclement weather brought a tame end to the third round of the National Cricket League yesterday as three remaining matches ended in draws on the fourth and final day.

Sylhet, who had completed a nine-wicket win over Dhaka on Saturday, were the only winners in the round.

The fourth day of the match between Khulna and Chittagong in Bogra and Rajshahi and Rangpur at the Cricket Garden in Rangpur were called off due to unplayable conditions caused by overnight rain. The match between Dhaka Metro and Barisal at Fatullah was called off due to bad light.

DAKA METRO: 400-9 declared and 123 for 5

BARISAL: 249 for 9

Result: Match drawn.

KHULNA: 265 CHITTAGONG: 309-4 declared

Result: Match drawn.

RAJSHAHI: 273 and 98-5

Result: Match drawn.

RANGPUR: 101-9

Result: Match drawn.