

SPORT

Taskin & Mithun earn maiden call-ups

SPORTS REPORTER

Two uncapped players in batsman Mohammad Mithun and pacer Taskin Ahmed got the nod when the national selectors announced a 15-member squad for the three-match ODI series against India.

The 24-year old wicketkeeper batsman Mithun earned the call-up for his impressive performance over the last couple of years while 19-year old Taskin, who impressed during his first international appearance in the ICC World Twenty20 match against Australia, won a place ahead of Rubel Hossain as the selectors wanted to see the exciting young prospect ahead of next year's World Cup to be held in Australia-New Zealand.

An under-strength India, led by Suresh Raina, will arrive on June 13 to play three day-night ODI matches on June 15, 17 and 19 against the Tigers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"We kept faith on the settled side and only brought in two uncapped players because we have to think of our back-up players as we start preparing for the ICC World Cup. Mithun deserves a chance at international level while Taskin is an exciting prospect and we thought it was a good opportunity to see how he performs in the 50-over game in home conditions against some quality batsmen," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

SQUAD

Mushfiqur Rahim (captain), Tamim Iqbal, Anamul Haque, Shamsur Rahman, Mominul Haque, Shakib Al Hasan, Nasir Hossain, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mohammad Mithun, Abdur Razzak, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shohag Gazi, Ziaur Rahman, Al-



Argentina midfielder Javier Mascherano (C) celebrates his goal with teammates Ezequiel Lavezzi and Angel Di Maria (L) during their international friendly against Trinidad and Tobago at the Monumental Stadium in Buenos Aires on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Detailed verdict likely on June 8

SPORTS REPORTER

The long-pending detailed verdict on the fixing allegations in the second season of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) is most likely to be submitted on June 8.

Recently BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon expressed his disappointment over the tribunal's delay in submitting the detailed verdict.

The three-member tribunal, led by Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury, cleared six out of the nine who were accused of fixing in their short verdict in February this year. They include players Mosharraf Hossain, Mahbul Alam, Darren Stevens, Gladiators bowling consultant Mohammad Rafique and Gladiators' officials Salim Chowdhury and Gaurav Rawat.

Jamal shines in Samui

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh golfer Jamal Hossain Mollah outshone his more famed compatriot Siddikur Rahman as both had fruitful first-round outings in the Queen's Cup at the Santiburi Samui Country Club in Samui, Thailand yesterday.

Jamal finished the round in joint-sixth position with a round of two-under-par 69, trailing leader Poom Thaksansin of Thailand by three strokes. Siddikur meanwhile finished the day with one-under-par 70 in joint-14th position. Jamal traded three birdies for one bogey while Siddikur hit two birdies and a bogey on the rain-hit day which resulted in 27 players having to return early today to complete their rounds.

Thaksansin, a rookie on tour, played a tremendous round of five-under 66, hitting five birdies in a flawless round. The second position was shared by the Thai trio of Donlaphatchai Niyomchon, Varut Chomchalam, Chinnarat Phadungsil who each carded rounds of three-under 68s. They were joined by India's Manav Jaini who will have to finish his remaining three holes of the round in the morning today.

Andy plots Rafa fall

Novak to face Ernests in 2nd semi

AFP, Paris



Rafael Nadal is standing in his way.

Bunny Austin was the last Briton to get to the men's championship match in 1937 while Fred Perry was the country's last winner in Paris two years earlier.

But Murray is making a habit out of shredding the history books -- his Wimbledon triumph last year ended Britain's 77-year wait for a men's title winner.

The 27-year-old lost to Nadal at the same stage in Paris in 2011 without winning a set.

In fact, Murray, who has 5-14 career record against Nadal, has lost all of his five meetings on clay with the Spaniard.

Despite the facts and figures stacking up against him, Murray believes he has the mental and physical weapons to shatter

the Nadal legend.

Murray defeated the last French hope Gael Monfils 6-4, 6-1, 4-6, 1-6, 6-0 to reach semifinals on Wednesday.

Nadal, in turn, has eight titles in Paris, has won 64 matches against just one defeat and is attempting to become the first man to win five Roland Garros crowns in succession.

The world number one recovered from dropping his first set of the tournament to record a 4-6, 6-4, 6-0, 6-1 win and set-up a clash with British Wimbledon champion Andy Murray for a place in Sunday's title match.

Friday's second semifinal sees world number two Novak Djokovic, who needs a French Open title to become just the eighth man to complete the career Grand Slam, tackle outspoken Latvian Ernests Gulbis who will be playing in his first semifinal at a major. Djokovic is playing in his fourth successive French Open semifinal having been runner-up to Nadal in 2012.

Bangladesh A on verge of whitewash

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A were staring at the jaws of defeat in the second four-day match against West Indies High Performance Centre at the Kensington Oval yesterday. The visitors reached 111 for five at lunch on the fourth day with opener Imrul Kayes batting on 63.

The visitors resumed the day on 32 for three. A promising partnership for the fourth wicket between Kayes and Mominul Haque raised hopes of a revival but the visitors lost two quick wickets before lunch.

On the third day, the home side declared their second innings on 354 for five to set a 490-run target for Bangladesh A.

Messi not on target

REUTERS, Buenos Aires



Lionel Messi, looking to score his first World Cup goals since 2006 in Brazil this month, went scoreless as Argentina cruised to a 3-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago in a World Cup warmup on Friday.

Messi missed several chances in the first half, was repeatedly fouled and hit the post with a free kick from which midfielder Javier Mascherano tapped in Argentina's second goal.

Striker Rodrigo Palacio, replacing the injured Gonzalo Higuain, headed the opener in the last action of the first half and substitute Maxi Rodriguez completed the win in the 64th minute.

Prolific for Barcelona, Messi has only one goal to his name at two World Cups, scored in a 6-0 rout of Serbia & Montenegro on his tournament debut at the 2006 finals in Germany.

He went goalless in five matches at the 2010 finals in South Africa.

"We finished strongly, Trinidad and Tobago were opponents who closed up at the back like some teams in the group will do (at

the World Cup)," Messi told reporters.

Argentina, looking to win their third world title at the June 12-July 13 finals in Brazil, cruised to victory after squandering a string of first-half chances with Ezequiel Lavezzi, replacing Sergio Aguero who was unwell earlier this week, the biggest culprit.

Palacio finally made the breakthrough, heading in an Angel Di Maria corner at the near post in the second minute of first-half stoppage time after Trinidad gave away the corner preventing Messi from scoring.

The pick of the goals was the third with Palacio racing onto a long ball out of defence, touching it past goalkeeper Jan Michael Williams then pulling it back to Rodriguez who blasted it home from a tight angle past two defenders.

Concerned not to lose any of his players to injury, coach Alejandro Sabella took defender Martin Demichelis off at halftime after he had taken a knock on his ankle when stopping striker Kenwyne Jones.

Another concern for Sabella was Palacio, who came off 15 minutes from the end after twisting his ankle.

Messi was paid a curious tribute as players shook hands before kickoff, with Trinidad's Ataullah Guerra making a

JAPAN-KOREA 2002 The Phenomenon hits back

Only occasionally can the bare facts and figures of a player's career convey the sheer talent that they possess. Ronaldo Luiz Nazario da Lima is quite simply one of the greatest strikers in the history of world football. At his best Ronaldo's foot movement and dribbling skills were so mesmerising they had to be seen in slow motion for the perfection of their execution to be fully appreciated.

Voted FIFA World Player of the Year on three occasions and a double World Cup winner, but these honours are merely the tip of the iceberg in the record-breaking career of the man they call 'The Phenomenon', who found the net 62 times for Brazil from 98 internationals.

The fairytale aspect of his career is best illustrated by his overcoming a nightmare three-year knee-injury lay-off to score eight times at the 2002 World Cup, including both goals in the final victory over Germany.

Having been a non-playing member of the World Cup-winning Brazil squad in 1994, the prodigiously talented teenager joined Dutch side PSV Eindhoven in the same year. In only two years at the club, he scored 54 goals in a mere 57 games -- an incredible average of just under a goal every game.

That goal ratio soon attracted Barcelona's interest, and the Catalan club wasted no time in securing their new star's signature. At Barcelona, Ronaldo reached new heights, winning the FIFA World Player of the Year awards in 1996 and 1997 along the way. In 1998, and now with Inter Milan, Ronaldo began the 1998 World Cup in France as a fully-established first-team player for his



Ronaldo made Oliver Kahn moan in agony by beating the great German goalkeeper twice in the final of the 2002 World Cup.

PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

country. Under the guidance of coach Mario 'Lobo' Zagallo, the Brazilians blazed their way through to the final only to lose 3-0 to their French hosts.

It was a result that shook the whole of Brazil to its foundations, and for Ronaldo it signalled the beginning of the most turbulent chapter of his footballing career. On the morning of the final, the mercurial striker suffered a sudden convulsive fit, which almost ruled him out of the match itself. Despite Ronaldo battling on to play, many members of the squad later admitted that the incident destabilised the team at a critical moment.

After lengthy layoffs due to career-threatening knee injuries, Ronaldo moved back to Spain with Real Madrid in 2002 and

was called up by the Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari for the World Cup squad. No one could have predicted a better outcome. Not only had Brazil won their fifth FIFA World Cup, but the 'Phenomenon' was the tournament's top scorer, netting eight goals in only seven games.

Four years later, Ronaldo came back in Germany to take his competition haul to a record-breaking 15 goals before Zinedine Zidane's France undid Brazil once again, this time in the quarterfinals.

Five years later, Ronaldo brought end to a glittering career when he announced his retirement: "My body's beaten me. It's been a wonderful, successful and exciting career. I've suffered a lot of defeats and won countless victories."

Simona to meet Maria in final

AFP, Paris



Simona Halep became the first Romanian woman to reach a Grand Slam final in 34 years Thursday when she beat Andrea Petkovic 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) to set up a French Open title clash against Maria Sharapova.

The 22-year-old fourth seed swept to victory in 90 minutes against the German.

The last Romanian in a final at a major was Halep's manager Virginia Ruzici, who was champion at Roland Garros in 1978 and then finished runner-up two years later to Chris Evert.

The former world junior number one had never previously got beyond the second round in Paris, but the woman voted the most improved player of 2013 has raced through the tournament without losing a set.

Despite her higher ranking, Halep will start as the outsider against seventh seed Sharapova in Saturday's final.

The Russian is in her third Roland Garros championship match having won the title in 2012 and holds a 3-0 winning record over Halep although the Romanian pushed her to three sets in the Madrid clay-court final earlier this year.

"It's very emotional to win and reach my first Grand Slam final," said Halep.

"Andrea's a great player but I think I was a little bit stronger. I tried my best and did everything I could to win the match."

She knows she will have to step up her performance against four-time major winner Sharapova who made the final for the third year in succession with a three-set win over Eugenie Bouchard, digging deep to see off the youthful challenge of the Canadian.

The 27-year-old seventh seed once again did it the hard way, battling back from a set down to edge the 20-year-old from Montreal 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 in a match full of beefy baseline shot-making.

It was the 19th time in a row that the never-say-die Sharapova had won a three-set match on clay, dating back to a loss against Justine Henin at Roland Garros in 2010.

"She played an unbelievable match. Her level was extremely high today and I am just fortunate to be the winner," Sharapova said.