

ASIAN GAMES

BCB goes all out for gold

India, Pakistan not sending teams

SPORTS REPORTER



As per the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) directive, the national selectors submitted a strong 15-member squad for the Asian Games to be held in Incheon, South Korea from September 19 to October 4.

Almost all the leading cricketers except captain Mushfiquir Rahim, who has opted out in order to attend his marriage ceremony, were drafted in the side as the board is desperate to retain the gold in the multinational competition. But many have questioned the wisdom of sending the best Bangladesh cricketers to the Asian Games while regional giants like India and Pakistan were reluctant even to send teams for the men's competition.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have ignored multinational meets in the past and their attitude was no different this time as neither the men's nor the women's teams from India will be part of the upcoming event while the Pakistan Cricket

Board (PCB) have opted only to send the women's team for the tournament.

South Korea, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka will take part in the men's competition while South Korea, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand will play in the women's competition.

It is common practice that the authorities rest their best players when the level of competition is not very high.

"As far as I know India and Pakistan are not participating and we are also not sure about the Sri Lankan side. We have been advised by the board to make a strong team with the best available players as our main focus is to win the gold medal again in the cricket competition," explained chief selector Faruque Ahmed when he was asked about the logic behind picking his best players for the low-key competition.

Pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is likely to lead the side, but again a question arises about the wisdom of sending an injury-prone bowler like Mashrafe for

such a low-profile tournament, especially as the board has a policy to handle him very carefully with the 2015 World Cup looming. "If you talk about the injury concern then I am not too worried because it's a T20 tournament where the workload is not too high," said Faruque.

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who is serving a six-month ban, understandably is not in the side but according to sources he may come into the team if the board takes a positive decision about reducing his punishment.

Cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan defended the board's position by saying: "We have decided to send the best possible team because we want to earn the gold medal again. The expectation is high as we won the gold in the last edition. The selectors already submitted the team but Mushfiquir has opted out for his marriage ceremony."

Banned batsman Mohammad Ashraful led a second-string Bangladesh side to the gold medal in cricket, a sport that featured for the first time in the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China in 2010.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina warmly embraces Bangladesh cricket captain Mushfiquir Rahim at Ganabhaban yesterday during the latter's visit to invite the premier to his wedding ceremony. Mushfiquir's wedding reception will be held on September 27. His nuptials will take place 11 months after his engagement to Jannatul Khifayet Mondi last October.

PHOTO: BSS

Sabbir dislocates collarbone

SPORTS REPORTER

National hockey team's key midfielder Sabbir Hossain is likely to be ruled out of the Asian Games as the youngster dislocated a collarbone during a match between Bangladesh and India at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) ground yesterday.

The midfielder suffered the injury when Indian player Harbir Singh Sandhu made a rough tackle on him as he was making a run down the left wing. The injury forced Sabbir to leave the field on an ambulance.

"His collarbone has been dislocated and he has been sent to the Hospital. This type of injuries usually needs four weeks to recover. However, we can't confirm whether he will be out of the Asian Games until we get the doctor's report," said Bangladesh team manager Anvir Adil Khan.

BANGLADESH-INDIA HOCKEY SERIES

Visitors edge out hosts

SPORTS REPORTER

Visiting Indian hockey team came from one goal down to beat Bangladesh 2-1 in the first of the three-match test series at the newly-laid turf at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) yesterday.

Farhad Ahmed Shitul gave Bangladesh a 30th-minute lead before Gurjinder Singh levelled the margin from a penalty corner in the 32nd minute and Harjeet Singh struck the winner in the next minute. The game was split into four quarters of 15 minutes each.

The Indian national team is generally dominated by players from Punjab and there is no exception in this second-string side either, as there are seven players from Punjab and they are the ones who form the nucleus of the side.

Defenders Gurjinder and Gurmail Singh thwarted Bangladesh's sporadic attacks while Harjeet and Gurinder Singh made the inroads in the attack behind striker Talwinder Singh.

Though penalty corner specialist Gurpreet Singh is not in this squad, Gurjinder himself is a very promising player, who scored the equaliser and became the man of the match, putting behind Gurmail Singh and Bangladesh goalkeeper Ashim Gop.

"It was a good game even though the pitch was a little bit slippery. But I think we can improve on our performances match by match," said Gurjinder, who was the top scorer in Indian Hockey League last season

with 22 goals and won one crore rupees as the highest goal scorer as well as the best player of the league.

Gurjinder informed that there is a lot of hockey played in Punjab and the players earn handsome amount of money by playing hockey.

Bangladesh, who suffered a 1-9 defeat to Indian main squad last time around, played comparatively better against the second-string side yesterday but could not build up the game properly. The midfield was the area of concern for the home and the midfielders lost possession number of times, allowing the opposition to dominate. Besides, defender Mamunur Rahman Chayan often deposited the ball to opponents with his unnecessary flick shots which made the task for the other defenders a lot harder.

However, goalkeeper Ashim Gop played brilliantly as he spoilt some penalty corners as well as field attempts from the Indian side.

"I am happy with the result. Our boys implemented the plans sixty per cent and pressed hard in the last quarter and they never gave," said Bangladesh's Pakistani coach Naveed Alam. "A 2-1 defeat against India is alright but we will be trying to catch up with them in the next match."

"I am not happy with the result but I am sure in the upcoming matches, our boys will play better hockey," said Indian coach Tusher Khandoker.

60-over practice game at Mirpur today

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The Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium at Mirpur will take a leap back into the 1970s today morning when the national players face off in the first of their two 60-over practice games.

The two teams will be captained by Mushfiquir Rahim and Mashrafe bin Mortaza. According to national selector Habibul Bashar, the decision to add ten extra overs was to allow the players to bat and bowl for longer periods.

"We are only getting enough time to play two practice matches before we head for the West Indies and the coaching staff wanted to make the most of it. It will allow the players to bat for a longer time," said Bashar, adding that he could not recall the last time a 60-over game was played at Mirpur.

Opener Tamim Iqbal, who had hurt his ankle on Monday during training, is expected to feature in the practice game today.

"Tamim trained in the nets today and he seemed fine. He did not complain. He looked good and fit. So he will be playing today," said Bashar.

The Bangladesh National team will leave for the West Indies on August 13 to play three ODIs, one T20I and two Tests. The first ODI will take place on August 20.

BPL FIXING

Final hearings from Sept 8-11

SPORTS REPORTER



The final hearing of the appeals against the decisions of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) anti-corruption tribunal regarding match-fixing in the BPL will take place between September 8 and 11, the BCB's disciplinary panel through a press release informed yesterday.

The tribunal's decisions -- which acquitted six out of the nine individuals charged for corruption by the ICC and imposed suspensions of varying lengths on cricketers Mohammad Ashraful, Kaushal Lokuarachchi and Dhaka Gladiators owner Shihab Chowdhury -- were challenged by four parties and as per the BCB's code, a separate hearing needs to take place with the chairman of the panel.

Representatives of Ashraful, the ICC and the BCB, Mahbubul Alam, Mosharraf Hossain, Shihab and Gladiators CEO Gaurav Rawat were present during the preliminary hearing which took place at an office in Gulshan yesterday.

According to the press release, Ashraful -- who was handed an eight-year suspension on June 18 by the tribunal -- appealed against the sanctions which he claims to be 'excessive.'

The ICC and the BCB appealed against the acquittal of Dhaka Gladiators owner Salim Chowdhury, Rawat, Gladiators spin consultant Mohammad Rafique and players Mosharraf, Mahbubul and Darren Stevens. They also appealed for the imposition of 'life ineligibility' on Shihab, who on June 18 received a 10-year suspension.

On the other hand, Shihab appealed against the tribunal's decision. Likewise, Sri Lanka's Lokuarachchi, who received an 18-month suspension, also appealed against the verdict.

According to the press release from the disciplinary panel, all four appeals will be heard and disposed separately in September.

If the parties are unhappy with the verdict of the chairman of the disciplinary panel they can make a last appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.



Bangladesh and India players tussle for possession during the first match of the three-match series at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) ground in Savar yesterday. The visitors won the match 2-1.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Younis rescues Pakistan

AFP, Galle



Veteran batsman Younis Khan hit an unbeaten 133 to steer Pakistan out of trouble on the opening day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle on Wednesday.

The tourists, electing to bat in overcast conditions, slumped to 56-3 before Khan's rescue act helped them recover to 261-4 when bad light ended play two overs early at the Galle International Stadium.

The 36-year-old middle-order batsman, who came to bat in his 90th Test at 19-2, hit 11 boundaries and a six in his 24th century. Only Inzamamul Haq (25) has more Test hundreds for Pakistan.

Skipper Misbahul Haq, making a typically dour but determined 31, put on 100 for the fourth wicket with Khan before he was caught behind off left-arm spinner Rangana Herath.

Asad Shafiq ensured the effort did not go waste as he saw off the second new ball to help Khan add 105 for the fifth wicket, himself returning unbeaten at close on 55. Khan was given a reprieve

by the Decision Review System (DRS) when he was on 59 after umpire Bruce Oxenford had declared him leg-before to off-spinner Dilruwan Perera.

Television replays showed the ball pass over the stumps.

The partnership between Khan and 40-year-old Misbah came after Sri Lanka dominated the morning session with three quick wickets.

Seamer Dhammika Prasad removed both openers cheaply to make it 19-2 by the sixth over before a partial recovery helped the tourists move to 59-3 by lunch.

Prasad, working up a tidy pace on a pitch that afforded bounce and movement, bowled Ahmed Shehzad off the inside edge with his third delivery after being hit for a boundary off the first.

The seamer then trapped Khurram Manzoor leg-before in his third over, but Azhar Ali and Khan settled in to put on 37 as the wicket eased out under the mild sun.

Ali, who hit five boundaries in his fluent 30, failed to last till lunch as he fell to a good delivery from Herath, which turned and clipped the off-stump.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: First innings				
Manzoor lbw b Prasad		3		
Shehzad b Prasad		4		
Azhar b Herath		30		
Younis not out		133		
Misbah c Dickwella b Herath		31		
Shafiq not out		55		
Extras: (lb-4, nb-1)		5		
Total: (For four wkts in 88 overs)		261		
To bat: Sarfraz, Rehman, Talha, Ajmal, Junaid				
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-19, 3-56, 4-156				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Eranga	19	11	30	0
Prasad	16	1	54	2
Mathews	11	4	22	0
Herath	26	6	68	2
Perera	15	1	73	0
Vithanage	1	0	10	0
SRI LANKA: Mathews, Silva, Tharanga, Sangakkara, Jayawardene, Vithanage, Dickwella, Herath, Perera, Eranga, Prasad				
Toss: Pakistan				