

# SPORT

## Rookie leggie in 14-man squad

Shahadat, Shakib & Marshall return

SPORTS REPORTER

Leg-spinner Jubair Hossain has been included in the 14-member team for the first Test against Zimbabwe which begins in Mirpur on October 25. The Bangladesh Cricket Board announced the team yesterday evening.

The 19-year-old bowler has played just two first-class matches and is going to be Bangladesh's first specialist leg-spinner to make a Test squad.

As other changes to the side that played in West Indies, pacer Shahadat Hossain has returned to the Test fold after 19 months. Top-order batsman Marshall Ayub has also returned to the team. Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has returned from his disciplinary suspension.

Anamul Haque, Elias Sunny, Robiul Islam, Shohag Gazi, Nasir Hossain and Imrul Kayes, who all toured the Caribbean, will not feature in the first Test.

While Elias, Anamul and Nasir will be participating in an invitational tournament in India, Robiul has been dropped due to fitness issues. Imrul, whose return to Test cricket was cut short due to a skin disease in the last series, has also been dropped.

Shohag, on the other hand, has been banned by the ICC over his suspect action.

Shohag's replacement Jubair took 11 wickets in the four-day match series against Zimbabwe A last month and caused the visitors plenty of trouble.

"With Shohag not available due to suspension we felt we needed a bit of variation in our bowling and that is why Jubair is in the squad.

"He is a bright young prospect and it is always good to start at home. He has the talent in a difficult art and gives the side an interesting option despite his inexperience," explained chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

With regards to Shahadat's inclusion Faruque said, "He will bring in valuable experience and we have been impressed by the work he has put in on his fitness and bowling during the last few months. He looks motivated and hungry."

The first Test will begin at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on October 25.

### FIRST TEST SQUAD

Mushfiqur Rahim (captain), Tamim Iqbal (vice-captain), Shakib Al Hasan, Shamsur Rahman, Mominul Hoque, Rubel Hossain, Shuvagata Hom, Mahmudullah Riyad, Shaiful Islam, Jubair Hossain, Shahadat Hossain, Marshall Ayub, Al-Amin Hossain, Taijul Islam.



JUBAIR HOSSAIN



Bangladesh U-16 captain Monika Chakma (C) tries to get past an Indian defender during their AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The hosts conceded a 1-2 defeat.

PHOTO: STAR

## Narrow defeat for hosts

SPORTS REPORTER



Ten-player Bangladesh conceded a 1-2 defeat against India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday as their chances of qualifying for the final round of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship became bleak.

The defeat left Bangladesh in second position with six points from three games and makes their last match against top-of-the-table Iran on October 23 a must-win affair. India, on the other hand, earned their first points after losing the first match against Iran.

The odds were heavily stacked against the hosts, who have never managed to win or even draw against the powerhouse of South Asian women's football at any level. The senior team of Bangladesh, which stands a whopping 64 places below their mighty neighbours in the latest FIFA women's rankings, conceded 0-6 and 0-3 defeats in the last two SAFF Championship encounters.

But the gulf of difference has been reduced to a great extent at the age-level, as was on display yesterday. The

Bangladesh lasses fought shoulder to shoulder with their Indian counterparts, in front of about five thousand enthusiastic spectators, and took the lead in the 20th minute when forward Krishna Rani earned a penalty after being adjudged to have been brought down inside the box by the Indian skipper Amrita Kumari.

The decision seemed a bit harsh as Krishna fell on a shoulder charge, but the hosts were obliged to take the lead, thanks to a calm conversion by Sanjida Akhter. The nippy winger, who had scored the decisive penalty kick in the 1-0 win over Jordan in the opening match, chose the right side of the net as the Indian keeper stayed rooted to her position.

Nine minutes later, another debatable penalty decision paved the way for the India equaliser. India forward Sushmita Bardhan went down in a heap inside the danger zone under pressure from a couple of Bangladesh defenders and Australian referee, Katherine Margaret, pointed to the spot. Roja Devi stepped up and found the back of the net.

The rest of the first half was an even affair as both sides looked for the lead yet were unable to find it. The third crucial decision of the match came in the 63rd minute when the referee

showed Masura Parvin a straight red card for high-studs action as the Bangladesh defender was trying to clear the ball on the edge of the box. Masura did get the ball, but struck the forehead of an Indian player, which on another day might have warranted a yellow card.

But credit to India, they took full toll of the decision as the resulting free-kick was turned in by Roja after the initial effort by Kashmina was fisted in front of goal by Bangladesh goalkeeper Ayesha.

The one-goal deficit proved too much for the 10-man Bangladesh team as they chased the ball most of the remaining time. India almost got a third goal in the stoppage time when Kashmina's long-range effort looped over the Bangladesh 'keeper and thudded the crossbar. But India had already done enough to earn their first points of these qualifiers.

Earlier, United Arab Emirates scored their first goal of the tournament after conceding a total of 23 goals during a 1-8 defeat against Jordan in the first match of the day. The defeat means UAE stay at the bottom of the table with zero points while Jordan went to third with three points, ahead of India on goal difference.

## WI's PULLOUT BCCI ponders Rs 400 cr claim

INTERNET, Mumbai

West Indies' pullout from their tour of India may cost the country's board heavily with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) mulling to claim damages to the tune of approximately 400 crore rupees from the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

The BCCI is due to have a working committee meeting on October 21 to discuss the matter, where a final decision will be taken.

The West Indies announced their decision to withdraw, owing to a pay dispute between WICB and its players, before the fourth ODI in Dharamsala on Friday, which enraged the BCCI officials who then scheduled a five-match ODI series with Sri Lanka.

The visitors' decision to return home midway saw the BCCI losing out on an ODI, a T20 international and three Tests, which adds up to a loss of 17 match days and the revenue it would have generated for the Indian board.

Sri Lanka's acceptance to play a five-ODI series will reduce that damage by five days, but the BCCI intends to recover the loss of revenue from the remaining 12 days from WICB.

"We have referred the matter to our legal cell and asked them to let us know by 21st [October] about how we can pursue the issue legally," BCCI secretary Sanjay Patel told ESPNcricinfo.

## SL will host India in '15

CRICINFO, Colombo

Sri Lanka, who were supposed to tour India for three Tests in August 2015, will now host the series, according to SLC secretary Nishantha Ranatunga. The decision has come in the wake of Sri Lanka agreeing to plug the gap in India's home calendar after West Indies' pullout.

"As we are obliging India with a five-match ODI series there next month, India are obliged to return the tour next year and we have switched the Test series," Ranatunga said.

The BCCI, however, is yet to confirm the swap. It is understood that the BCCI has held preliminary discussions with SLC in this regard. The proposal of switching the venue for the 2015 Test series will be put before the working committee for consideration, which will "finalise" the arrangement, according to a senior BCCI functionary.

By hosting the three-Test series with India, SLC stands to make around 7-8 million dollars, according to Ranatunga. There will be no ODIs or T20Is included in the itinerary.



Zimbabwe Test captain Brendan Taylor is busy giving instructions during the visitors' training session at Fatullah yesterday. They will begin their tour with a three-day practice match against BCB XI today.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'Tigers are powerful'

SPORTS REPORTER

Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor has said that his side will not pay any heed to Bangladesh's poor run in international cricket in 2014 as they expect the Tigers to put up their best show at home.

Bangladesh have lost three out of the four Tests and 12 of the 13 ODIs they played this year. Zimbabwe, in comparison, have had a better year with ODI wins over Afghanistan and Australia.

"I don't think we are worrying too much about their past form. We know how powerful they can be in Bangladesh. They always have a good record at home; especially in one-day cricket. Hopefully in the Test matches we can put some pressure on them," said Taylor at the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

"Our team's target is to win away from home. We have struggled to do that in the past. It's nice to finally play away from home. But what lies ahead of us is a big challenge. We know how threatening Bangladesh can be at home and they have got some wonderful players," he added.

The last time Zimbabwe played a Test series in Bangladesh was back in 2005. The series was historic for Bangladesh as the hosts won their first Test match in that series.

Taylor, who was a member of the squad that toured Bangladesh in that series, recalled the defeat.

"Yeah it's a tough one. I remember losing the first Test in Chittagong. I think Enamul [Haque] bowled really well, picked up 10 wickets and made it really difficult for us. We came back strong in the Dhaka Test and could draw that.

"I think they have lost a lot of their players but they have produced a lot of younger players that have come through the ranks as well."

Zimbabwe will begin the tour with a three-day practice match, which begins at Fatullah today, against a BCB XI. The first Test will begin on October 25 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka.

## Nasir's challenge

NAIMUL KARIM



"Let's distribute some sweets. I have made it to the team (BCB XI) for the tour of India," was what Nasir Hossain said on Saturday immediately after he came to know that he was chosen in a second-stringed national side to play an invitational tournament in India, instead of playing the Test series against Zimbabwe.

On any other day Nasir's statement would have depicted his typical, care-free attitude; a characteristic which has perhaps helped bail Bangladesh out of a number of precarious positions.

Be it his defiant 44 against New Zealand which helped Bangladesh overcome 307 at Fatullah or his pressure-free 54 which knocked India out of the Asia Cup in 2012; with Nasir in the lower middle-order there was always hope.

On Saturday evening though, the tone with which he blurted out the sarcastic statement had a hint of sadness in it. He was not exactly shocked or surprised; he did have a chat with the selectors long before the team was officially announced. However, it seemed as though Nasir was still reeling from the gravity of the decision, which is arguably the first major setback in his career.

This is the first time that Nasir has been dropped from the Test team since his debut in 2011.

There was enough reason for the selectors to play the resolute middle-order batsman in all the 16 Tests that Bangladesh have played since then.

In between 2011 and 2013, Nasir had scored 859 runs in 12 matches at an average of 45.21. The same period saw only Shakib Al Hasan and Mominul Haque—who played only five Tests then—averaged better.

In the ODIs, his average of 43.1 surpassed every other player who played at least 10 matches in between the same period. In other words, until 2013, Nasir was arguably Bangladesh's most consistent batsman.

And that's the reason why his plummet this year has been extraordinary. While his current batting averages in both Tests and ODIs—36.84 and 34.80—keep him in the top three spots, his performance this year has been inexplicable. In Tests he scored 99 runs in four matches while in the ODIs scored 225 runs at an average 20.00.

Nasir admits that he has let go a good opportunity.

"My average was 42 at one point of time. I had a



chance to take it to 50 but instead it fell to 36. I obviously feel bad. There is a difference between the way I performed in the first couple years of my career and this year. It's not like I did not want to play well. But there was a bit of pressure," a dismayed Nasir said on Saturday.

And a major reason behind that pressure, according to Nasir, is the media. However, the extent to which the media can affect a player's career is a debatable topic, but for now Nasir needs to work on regaining his confidence levels, for his ability to stay strong during crisis moments is what he has shone for.

His care-free drives through the cover region or the cuts through point were missing this year. They were replaced with cautious, unsure drives and an aggressive swing of the blade which clearly depicted the immense pressure on a player who relies more on his natural ability than a conventional technique.

Nasir's fine run before this year earned him an enviable tag as the fourth 'pillar' in the team alongside Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim. The situation now however is different. The 22-year-old has to fight to get back his spot in the side.

He may have notched a series of comebacks for his side, but now its time for him to launch one for himself.

## De Kruif wants to continue

SPORTS REPORTER



Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruif has said that he wishes to continue to work for the Bangladesh Football Federation, a day after BFF president Kazi Salahuddin went on record saying that the board had relieved de Kruif and his assistant Rene Koster of their duties due to their 'lack of dedication'.

However, it was learnt yesterday that Salahuddin's outburst was an emotional one and that the BFF had in fact served the Dutch duo with a show-cause notice.

"We have started the process of removing him and served a show-cause notice asking him to reply within 48 hours," informed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, adding that they would also apprise FIFA, football's world governing body, of the recent developments regarding the national coach.

De Kruif was therefore surprised when he heard the news regarding his 'termination' from a group of reporters. In response he said that he needed to talk to the BFF officials at the earliest.

Speaking to reporters upon his arrival yesterday de Kruif refused to take blame for his seven-and-a-half months' vacation — a major reason behind the show-cause. He told reporters his side of the story.

"It was not my choice that I spent seven-and-a-half months of the 14 months in my country. It's on the contract of the BFF because they have to arrange programmes; they have to arrange work for me.

"I came with a lot of plans 14-15 months ago and I gave them it on paper. So for me, there were always plans and programmes. When there is no programme, they can't offer me anything. So it was difficult to work as I did not have anything to do. They were responsible for my programmes. I work for them and I don't agree with him [Salahuddin]," said the 44-year-old coach.

"I have good hope. We have two games against Sri Lanka and I'm happy to be here to work with the guys. I have regular contact with my players, they call me every day. I also know that they are happy with me. I would like to continue working with them," hoped the Dutchman.

BFF vice-president and a member on the National Team Management Committee, Tabith M Awal, was scheduled to talk with de Kruif last night as the game's governing body has begun the termination process after serving a show-cause notice.

It was learnt that the discussion between Tabith and the coach will mainly be confined to the solution regarding the unpaid wages of de Kruif and Koster as the BFF has yet to pay them one-year's salary.