

Senior four to make the cut

SPORTS REPORTER

The four senior hockey players -- Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, Zahid Hossain, Imran Hasan Pintoo and Kamruzzaman Rana -- are expected to make the cut when the 39-member squad is trimmed to 28 players after a fitness test in Bangladesh Krira Shikhha Protishthan (BKSP) today.

The camp started on December 3 with 17 players including the senior four, who went through a fitness test after serving one-year suspension, while 22 members of the U-21 team joined the squad after the completion of the Junior AHF Cup on December 8.

The senior four, who were out of any hockey activities for the last one year due to domestic and international suspension, are believed to be still below the required fitness level. However, an official of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation, on condition of anonymity, said that these four players will make the cut today as some younger and lesser experienced players will be left out of the squad.

However, it will be interesting to see whether the senior four take their fitness to required level when the final 18-member squad for the Hockey World League (Round-2) is named two weeks later. Bangladesh will play against Singapore, Japan, Malaysia, Oman, Poland and Ukraine in Round-2, which will be held in Singapore from January 17-25. The Bangladesh team are likely to play to practice matches in Malaysia ahead of the tournament.



Legends of Rupganj opener Tamim Iqbal scored 45 runs off 48 balls in his first Dhaka Premier League game this year, against Prime Doleshwar at Fatullah yesterday. (INSET) Legends captain Shakib Al Hasan joyously celebrates one of his four wickets in the same match.

PHOTOS: STAR



Legends back on track

SPORTS REPORTER



The controversy surrounding Legends of Rupganj owner Lutfur Rahman Badal did not seem to affect his team on the field yesterday as the Shakib Al Hasan-led side edged Mushfiquur Rahim's Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club by 28 runs at Fatullah.

The match was a must-win encounter for the Legends, who are yet to confirm their place in the Super Six. Managing the only win in the last five matches yesterday, it has taken them to fifth place.

Batting first in a match curtailed to 31 overs per side due to the morning fog, Legends were bowled out for 211. Playing his first match of the DPL, opener Tamim Iqbal scored a 48-ball 45, hitting two sixes and three fours. He shared a half-century stand with Ashar Zaidi, who scored an equally impressive 41-ball 47.

Towards the end, Nazmul Milon and Shakib chipped in with a series of boundaries. Shakib hit five fours in his 18-ball 30 while Nazmul struck four sixes in his 12-ball 35.

Shakib starred with the ball as well, finishing with figures of 4 for 27, to help bowl Doleshwar out for 183 in 30 overs. Shakib took the crucial wicket of Mushfiquur, who had smacked a 22-ball 32 and was looking dangerous. Pacer Mohammad Shahid, who has been included in the 30-member preliminary squad for the World Cup, chipped in with three wickets.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza-led Mohammedan Sporting Club also earned valuable points on the day as his side romped to a seven-wicket win over Partex Sporting Club at BKSP. Batting first, Partex were restricted to 175 for 8 in 36 overs. Pacers Alauddin Babu and Mashrafe shared seven wickets between them. Veteran batsman Rajin Saleh top-scored for Partex with 82. In reply, MSC reached their target in 33 overs, courtesy of half-centuries from their openers Ezaz Ahmed and Tanvir Haider. MSC now have 12 points and are placed sixth.

Old DOHS Sporting Club suffered their tenth consecutive defeat of the competition at Mirpur yesterday, being beaten by Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club by six wickets. A stroke-filled 83 from Myshukur Rahman helped Sheikh Jamal overcome DOHS's target of 156 in 42.2 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ: 211 all out in 30.1 overs (Ashar 47, Tamim 45; Elias 3-29, Delwar 2-22)

PRIME DOLESHWAR SC: 183 all out in 30 overs (David 53, Mushfiquur 32; Shakib 4-27, Shahid 3-28)

Result: Legends won by 28 runs.

PARTEX SC: 175 for 8 in 36 overs (Rajin 82, Zain 35; Alauddin 4-27, Mashrafe 3-30)

MOHAMMEDAN SC: 177 for 3 in 33 overs (Ezaz 59, Tanvir 56; Rajibul 1-25)

Result: Mohammedan won by seven wickets.

OLD DOHS: 155 for 9 in 45 overs (Joyraj 61; Shohag 5-27)

SK JAMAL DC: 158 for 4 in 42.2 overs (Myshukur 83, Arafat (jr) 44 not out; Sanjit 2-21)

Result: Sk Jamal won by six wickets.

Clarke, Smith pile up the runs

AFP, Adelaide



Captain Michael Clarke defied a back injury and grief over the death of Phillip Hughes to post an inspirational century as Australia took charge of the first Test against India on Wednesday.

Clarke, who was supported by Steve Smith's career-best unbeaten 162, retired hurt on 60 on Day One but after painkilling injections he returned to compile 128 in one of his bravest knocks.

The skipper's 28th Test ton, on a rain-disrupted second day in Adelaide, came in his first innings since Hughes was tragically killed by

a blow to the head while batting in Sydney last month.

The centuries by Clarke and Smith, together with David Warner's ton on Tuesday, left the hosts on 517 for seven and in command against a bedraggled Indian attack.

Clarke was out late in the day for 128 off 163 balls with 18 fours, and he put on 163 runs for the seventh wicket with Smith.

Smith enhanced his growing stature in the Australia set-up with his highest Test score, his fifth Test hundred and his fourth in his last 15 Test innings.

It was tough going for the tourists in the gloom with only 30.4 overs possible in between the day's three lengthy rain delays.

Clarke made his surprise return to the crease at the outset and despite batting in discomfort, he provided dependable support for Smith after the clatter of three wickets in the last five overs on the first day.

The captain grimaced and yelped in pain as he twisted his torso to play some shots, and his running between the wickets was constrained. But he and Smith gradually took control, hitting out late in the day as India faltered.

Clarke brought up his ton with a single off his pads, taking off his helmet and kissing its emblem in a subdued celebration, to the acclaim of an admiring crowd.

The captain played a leading role in the days after Hughes's death, in which

he read a tearful tribute at the funeral and was one of the pallbearers.

The Australian skipper has earned a reputation for his batting heroics in adversity. Last March he batted on with a fractured left shoulder in an unbeaten 161 to help his team to a 2-1 series victory over South Africa in Cape Town.

Clarke, who has a long history of back trouble, only made the Adelaide Test after passing a late fitness test for recurring hamstring trouble.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 517 for 7 in 120 overs (Smith 162 not out, Warner 145, Clarke 128, Marsh 41; Shami 2-120, Aaron 2-136, K Sharma 2-143)

Transfers till January 7

SPORTS REPORTER



The Professional Football League Committee (PFLC) of Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday decided to defer the closing date of the inter-club players' transfer window to January 7 on the request of large number of professional league clubs. The transfer window for the local players, which opened on November 12, was scheduled to close today.

"We have extended the deadline for closing of transfer window to January 7 after most of the clubs of the Bangladesh Premier League applied to us as many of their players will be engaged with the national team till 27th January," PFLC chairman and BFF's senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The clubs argued that if the transfer window closes now, they will have to make some early payments and incur expenditures to run camp while the players will stay in the national team's camp," added Murshedy.

The window for registration of foreign players, meanwhile, will remain open till January 30, as decided previously.

The 23-member national team is currently training at the Bangabandhu National Stadium for the December 18 Friendly against Japan U-21 team, and will stay in the camp till the end of Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which is scheduled for January 16-27.

Murshedy also informed that they would hold the season's curtain-raising Federation Cup as soon as the Bangabandhu Gold Cup finishes while they will hold next year's Independence Cup and Super Cup in the same slot.

Woakes puts the brakes before rain

AGENCIES, Kandy

Play of the fifth match of the seven-game ODI series between Sri Lanka and England was abandoned after the home team's innings in Kandy on Wednesday. The England innings will start at 2.30pm local time today with the game picking up where it's left off. England will come out for a full 50-over chase of 240 after their bowlers kept the hosts on a tight leash.

Chris Woakes dominated the proceedings with 6 for 47, while off-spinner James Tredwell conceded just 33 runs from his 10 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 239 all out in 49 overs (Sangakkara 91, Mathews 40, Dilshan 35, T Perera 27; Woakes 6-47, Jordan 2-56)

Hafeez to have test in Chennai

AFP, Lahore



Pakistan's suspended all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez will be sent to Chennai in India for remedial work and tests on his bowling action which was declared illegal this week, cricket authorities said Wednesday.

"We have decided to withdraw Hafeez from the one-day series against New Zealand and he will go to Chennai for unofficial tests and some remedial work," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan told reporters.

Hafeez is likely to leave Sharjah after the second one-day against New Zealand on Friday.

The 34-year-old had his action reported during the first Test against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi last month.

He was suspended from all international cricket after a bio-mechanical test in England, which found his elbow flex was more than the permissible 15 degrees.

Hafeez's suspension is the second jolt for Pakistan before next year's World Cup after their ace spinner Saeed Ajmal was suspended for an illegal bowling action in September.

Ajmal has also undergone remedial work under former Pakistan spinner Saqlain Mushtaq.

The PCB last week announced Ajmal would have his action reassessed by the ICC, a prerequisite for obtaining clearance to resume international cricket. But the board had to delay the reassessment after unofficial tests showed Ajmal's action still needed improvement.

NATIONAL WEIGHTLIFTING

Sabira, Reshma set new records

SPORTS REPORTER

Molla Sabira Sultana and Zahura Akter Reshma set new national records in their respective weight categories of the 11th national women's weightlifting competition at National Sports Council gymnasium yesterday.

Lifting overall 138kg (snatch 60kg, clean-and-jerk 78kg) Sabira set the new national mark in the 48kg category while Reshma lifted an overall 121kg (snatch 53kg, clean-and-jerk 68kg) to set the new record in the 44kg weight category.

Meanwhile, South Asian Games gold medallist Hamidul Islam retained gold in his favourite 69-kg weight category lifting 252-kg in the 34th National Senior Weightlifting Championship.

Ex-national booter dies

SPORTS REPORTER

Shahinur Kabir Shimul, a former footballer of the national team, died of cardiac arrest at a hospital in Bogra yesterday. The former national booter was 48.

Shimul, who had played for clubs like Mohammedan SC and Muktijoddha Sangsad KC during the 1980s, left behind his wife, a son and a host of well-wishers. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Shibganj Eidgah maidan at 11:00am.

Bangladesh Football Federation officials and officials of different sports clubs expressed their deep condolences at the untimely death of Shimul.



Steve Smith celebrates his emotional century against India yesterday by pointing his bat to the sky, while standing beside the large 408 painted on the ground at Adelaide in tribute to Phillip Hughes.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Steve salutes skipper

AFP, Adelaide



Steve Smith praised inspirational skipper Michael Clarke's "unbelievable" strength and courage after the pair batted Australia into a strong position in the opening Test against India on Wednesday.

Smith, who is seen as a future captain, said Clarke was "mentally drained" after a heart-wrenching few weeks over the death of their close friend Phillip Hughes, fatally struck by a bouncer in a domestic game.

Clarke comforted Hughes's family, delivered a tribute at his funeral and acted as a pallbearer.

"He has done amazing over the last couple of weeks," Smith told reporters.

"It has been tough for all of us but he spent the whole time by Hughesy's family's side.

"Just the strength and courage he has shown through those times was unbelievable.

"He must be mentally drained coming into this game but the way he played speaks the world of that guy. He came out here and tried to do something for Hughesy and he certainly did that."

Clarke returned to the crease at the outset of Day Two after retiring hurt on 60 with

back trouble on Tuesday's opening day.

"He was pretty keen to get out there this morning. He had a good hit this morning and he just came out and played beautifully," Smith said.

"A few shots hurt him but he got himself into as many good positions as he could and manipulated the field a little bit as well. He played beautifully under the circumstances."

Smith, 25, marked his own century by moving away from the wicket and pointing symbolically towards the '408' -- Hughes's Test cap number -- painted on the playing surface.

He said Hughes's death had been a shattering experience for the team.

"The last couple of weeks have been very tough for every one of us," he said.

"I thought I'd be able to get over it pretty quick after the funeral and try to move on and go out there and do something I love to do.

"I know that's what Hughesy would have wanted, all of us to be out here doing the job and he was with me, Pup [Clarke] and Warner all the way this innings.

"We're all good mates with Hughesy, us three, so I was sort of hoping all three of us would get runs."

Smith took 23 Test innings to reach his maiden century.

STEENKAMP KILLING

Prosecutors to seek murder conviction

REUTERS, Pretoria

South African prosecutors on Wednesday won their bid to appeal the culpable homicide verdict handed down to athlete Oscar Pistorius for killing his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp and will now seek a murder conviction.

The decision could leave Pistorius open to a prison sentence of at least 15 years if he is convicted of murder.

"I cannot say the prospect of success at the Supreme Court is remote," Judge Thokozile Masipa said in granting the appeal.

The Olympic and Paralympic track star, aged 28, is currently serving prison time after being convicted in October of culpable homicide after a seven-month trial.