

## Shakib joins Renegades

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan will play for Melbourne Renegades in the second half of the Twenty20 Big Bash League in Australia. The all-rounder, who had represented Adelaide Strikers last season, has been signed up by Renegades as replacement for all-rounder Andre Russell, who will join West Indies ODI squad in South Africa.

Shakib is expected to fly to Australia in the first week of January and will be available for Renegades' final four group matches starting with a clash against Hobart Hurricanes on the 7th.

"I know I kept you all waiting about this news, but yes it has been confirmed that I will be playing for Melbourne Renegades! I am really excited to join them and I am sure you all are excited too. It will also be a great preparation for me before the World Cup. Everyone please keep me in your prayers so that I can perform at my best. Thank you all for your support!" tweeted the world's leading all-rounder.

Shakib was only recently available to play in the Australian league after the Bangladesh Cricket Board had lifted his ban regarding participation in overseas competitions.

He will join the Bangladesh national team in Australia for the ICC World Cup. The Tigers will fly to Sydney on January 24.

"We were looking for someone who could contribute across the board for us and being able to call on the top ranked T20 all-rounder in the world is a terrific boost," said Renegades coach Simon Helmot, adding that "He brings plenty of experience and cool head under pressure".



## 'CMG offers lucrative' BFF boss wants Bangabandhu Cup to be grand

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin said he is 'in principle' willing to accept Celebrity Management Group's (CMG's) proposal to award the company the rights to arrange FIFA friendly fixtures for the Bangladesh national team, but expressed his scepticism over the feasibility of the proposed franchise football league.

Talking to The Daily Star at the BFF Bhaban yesterday, the BFF boss said he would form a committee to analyse the pros and cons of the proposals before taking a decision on either issue.

"We only got the proposals. I will form a committee to do the research on the proposals," said Salahuddin. "I think I will give permission over the proposal on arranging FIFA friendlies, provided they [CMG] give us the details which teams our team will play against and on which dates."

However, on the main proposal of CMG, the Kolkata-based sports management company which helped BFF host the friendly match between Argentina and Nigeria in September 2011 in Dhaka, the BFF boss expressed his scepticism while not ruling out the possibility completely.

"I am not saying no to the proposal, but I'm not very confident that this style of tournament can help football. With the cost that this type of league will involve, it's not

very feasible to be run here. It's feasible in India because they have sponsors spending millions as it is more of a showmanship of actors and sportspeople."

"My knowledge of world football over the last 45 years tells me that this [franchise football league] is not my cup of tea; neither is it English or German or Italian. I want football itself to promote the game rather than any entertainment side-shows to try to promote it. I want football to be developed here the European way," added Salahuddin.

The BFF boss also quelled any suspicion over the sixth participant in the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which is supposed to be held between January 16 and 27. While keeping cards as close to his chest as possible, he said he wanted to make it a memorable and grand event.

"We have a few options in our hands regarding the sixth nation as you know Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Bahrain have already confirmed their participation," said Salahuddin.

"The logo unveiling will be done in a grand manner either on 12th or 13th of January and that is when all the details of the tournament will be revealed.

"We may even defer the tournament by a week or so because of the Asian Cup [January 9-31] so as to make sure that the tournament gets maximum attention and more international viewership. The tournament will be a memorable one," wished the BFF boss.



## Tamim leaves for Australia Friday night

SPORTS REPORTER

Opener Tamim Iqbal will leave for Australia on Friday night to see a specialist for his knee injury.

"Tamim will fly for Melbourne on Friday and is expected to consult Dr David Young on Monday [December 29]. We will decide on the best possible management [of the injury] according to Young's advices," informed BCB physician Debashish Chowdhury yesterday after talking with the Australian physician.

The left-handed opening batsman was diagnosed with a Grade I meniscus tear in his left knee and his treatment would be based on the opinion and suggestions of the Melbourne-based orthopaedic surgeon.

"He is a very important player for us and with the World Cup less than two months away, our priority is to get him fit in the shortest possible time. However, it is also equally important to ensure that the recovery and rehab are not hurried," added Chowdhury.



Abahani batsman Nasir Hossain attempts to smack one out of the ground during his game-changing 82 against rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club at Fatullah yesterday. Nasir's charge led Abahani home in a nerve-wrecking finish.

PHOTO: STAR

## Nasir blitz sees Abahani home

SPORTS REPORTER



Nasir Hossain hit form at the right time and did what he was best known for in the first two years of his international career; finishing games. His unbeaten 82 defied Ariful Haque's century to lead Abahani to a three-wicket win over traditional rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club in a close encounter of the first round of Super Sixes of Dhaka Premier League at Fatullah.

Meanwhile, brilliant efforts from openers Rony Talukdar and Mehedi Maruf, with both scoring centuries, helped Mushfiquur Rahim's Prime Doleshwar chase down Kalabagan Cricket Academy's total of 262 with ease at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at Mirpur. The pair shared a 214-run stand.

At the BKSP, second placed Prime Bank Cricket Club rode on half-centuries from Soumya Sarkar, Thilina Kandambi and Mahmudullah Riyad to thump Shakib Al Hasan's Legends of Rugganj by 84 runs.

After electing to bat, Mohammedan slumped to 38 for 4 in 8.1 overs. Pacer Shubhasish Roy took three wickets as he ran through the top order. It seemed as though Mohammedan were done

and dusted, but that's when Naeem Islam and Ariful Haque stepped up. The pair shared a 121-run stand for the fifth wicket and revived Mohammedan's chances. Coming in at number six, Ariful scored a 137-ball 109, an innings which saw 11 fours and a six. A few lusty blows from Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who smacked three sixes and one four in his 27-ball 38, towards the end helped the side reach 240.

The momentum was with Mashrafe and company and Abahani faltered at the start of their chase. They were struggling at 33 for 2 after eight overs, with Mashrafe and Sajedul Islam picking up one wicket each. At the end of 46 overs, a win seemed unlikely as Abahani were reduced to 199 for 6. But Nasir was still there. The out-of-favour batsman smacked three consecutive sixes off Rahmat Shah in the following over and changed the complexion of the game. Abahani hammered 43 runs in 4.4 overs to win the game.

At Mirpur, half-centuries from Sabbir Rahman and Nafees Iqbal led Kalabagan to a fighting 262 for 9. A double-century partnership from Doleshwar's openers though brushed aside KCA's effort. Rony scored his second consecutive unbeaten century in the league. His rollicking 132 came at a strike-rate of 100 and saw him

smack four sixes and 14 fours. His partner Mehedi was as dangerous. He scored a 106 of 113 balls and hit five sixes. They eased to their target with 5.5 overs remaining.

An all-round effort from Soumya helped Prime Bank score an important win over Legends at the BKSP. With the bat the opener hit 81 off 90 balls and then came back to take two wickets in his five overs with his medium-pacers.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**MOHAMMEDAN SC:** 240 for 7 (Ariful 109, Naeem 51; Shubasish 4-56, Nasir 1-34)

**ABAHANI:** 241 for 7 in 49.4 overs (Nasir 82 not out, Forhad 59; Mashrafe 3-42)

**Result:** Abahani won by three wickets.

**KALABAGAN CA:** 262 for 9 (Sabbir 75, Nafees 70; Delwar 4-41, Shafiu1 2-55)

**PRIME DOLESHWAR:** 264 for 1 (Rony 132 not out, Mehedi 106; Miraz 1-42)

**Result:** Prime Doleshwar won by nine wickets.

**PRIME BANK CC:** 304 for 7 (Soumya 81, Thilina 71, Riyad 52; Ashar 2-47, Sharif 2-55)

**LEGENDS OF RUPGANJ:** 220 all out in 43 overs (Abul 72, Ashar 41; Forhad 3-46, Soumya 2-30)

**Result:** Prime Bank CC won by 84 runs.

## Busan IPark coming today

SPORTS REPORTER

Busan IPark, a top-tier football club of South Korea, will arrive in Dhaka today for a friendly fixture against Bangladesh Premier League champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club on Saturday.

The four-time Korean League champions will arrive here at 8:20pm, with a 24-man contingent including 18 players -- two goal-keepers, seven defenders, five midfielders, four forwards -- and six officials. The Busan-based club, which won the AFC Champions League in 1986 and finished the recently-concluded K League in eighth position among 12 clubs -- are only bringing 18 of their home-grown players, four of whom have experience of either playing for the Korea U-20 or U-23 teams, while leaving out quite a few registered players including two Brazilians.

The K League outfit will have a training session at the match venue later in the evening. The president of Korea Football Association (KCA), Chung Mong-gyu, will arrive on Friday to witness the friendly match at 5:00pm on Saturday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

## 'World Cup not in mind'

SPORTS REPORTER

That Nasir Hossain is no longer the selectors' first choice is something that was proved in the Zimbabwe series, where he was given a single match. Sabbir Rahman, his replacement, has been highly lauded for his power and the confidence he displayed in the series and is more likely to make the final cut.

However, Nasir's game-turning 82 at Fatullah yesterday, which saw him hit three consecutive sixes in an over, at a time when Abahani required more than 40 runs in the last four overs, displayed a glimpse of how the player had mesmerised many with his finishing skills in 2013.

While Nasir admits that the innings has given him plenty of confidence, he however, claims to be not worried about the World Cup squad.

"If I play cricket with the World Cup in my mind, it will be difficult for me to perform. I am not thinking about it at the moment. I did not think of this as an opportunity to get into the national team. I just wanted my team to win today," Nasir told reporters after the innings.

"There is a lot of difference between international cricket and Premier League. It's difficult to say if I have got back into form. But this innings will definitely give me a boost. It has strengthened my belief," he added.

## Zia loses 6th round tie in Al Ain

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman earned 3.5 points after the 6th round of the Alain Classical Chess Tournament held in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates on Tuesday.

In the sixth round, Zia lost against GM Areshchenko Alexander of Ukraine.

150 players including 43 grandmasters, 9 women grandmasters and 14 international masters from 27 countries are taking part in the event.

## Bavuma SA's 6th black hope

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Temba Bavuma could become only the sixth ethnic black African to play Test cricket for South Africa when the second Test against the West Indies starts at St George's Park on Friday.

Bavuma, 24, is next in line if South Africa continue a policy of seven batsmen and four specialist bowlers.

A vacancy for another batsman was created by an injury to wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock which led to AB de Villiers keeping wicket in Centurion, a role which he is set to continue.

In almost 23 years of Test cricket since a united cricket board was admitted to the International Cricket Council in 1991, cricket officials have been embarrassed by the scarcity of Test-quality players from South Africa's largest racial group.

Fast bowler Makhaya Ntini, who took 390 wickets in 101 Tests, is the only black African to have held down a long-term place in the Test team.

## W means well for Oz

AFP, Melbourne



Opener David Warner and all-rounder Shane Watson both took part in training on Wednesday as injury scares eased for Australia ahead of the

Boxing Day Test against India.

The pair returned to the fray during a Christmas Eve session at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Warner, batting for the first time since hurting his thumb in the second Test victory over India in Brisbane last week, was soon driving and hooking with little sign of discomfort.

Watson, who was dazed when struck on the helmet by a bouncer on Tuesday, took on a bowling machine in the indoor nets before moving outdoors.

The blow sparked concern Watson might have sustained serious injury, coming after Australian batsman Phillip Hughes was killed by a bouncer on November 25.

In a sure sign Warner was on the mend, he told reporters he would keep up the "banter" against the tourists, despite a spate of fines.

Indians Shikhar Dhawan, Virat Kohli and Ishant Sharma have all been fined for their conduct in the four-Test series, as has Warner after a heated exchange in the first Test in Adelaide.

"If it requires a little bit of banter to get the other person talking, that's what is going to happen," said Warner.

Australia believe they have an edge over India in the sledging stakes after Indian attempts to rile Mitchell Johnson backfired with the quick taking four wickets and hitting 88 runs in a match-winning performance in Brisbane.

"I like to go to at them, to try and get them to bite back at me when I go out there and bat. At the moment it's working," Warner added.

Meanwhile, Shaun Marsh was struck on his left hand by a rising delivery from Josh Hazlewood in training at the MCG Wednesday. The 31-year-old was assessed by team doctor Peter Brukner and left the nets but later returned.

India trail 2-0 in the series and must reverse a 23-year losing streak in Melbourne to stop Australia regaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

## Proteas call back Tahir

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Leg-spinner Imran Tahir earned a recall to the South African Test squad on Tuesday following an injury to Robin Peterson, three days before the second Test against the West Indies, which starts at St George's Park on Friday.

Peterson was ruled out of the rest of the series after being hit on the left index finger -- on his spinning hand -- during fielding practice on Tuesday.

Tahir, who was born in Pakistan and became eligible to play for his adopted country in 2011, has not been part of the South African Test team since he played against Sri Lanka in July this year.

Since then off-spinner Dane Piedt and left-armers Peterson have been preferred.

## Clarke upbeat about WC

AFP, Sydney

Australia captain Michael Clarke eased fears Wednesday his career may by over, saying he is recovering well from surgery on a torn hamstring.

The 33-year-old set alarm bells ringing with a stark warning the injury sustained during the first Test against India at Adelaide could cut short his stellar cricketing life.

But in an upbeat column for Sydney's Daily Telegraph Clarke gave a positive assessment a week after the operation. "The biggest thing for me is getting back on the field for the World Cup," he said of the tournament that starts in Australia and New Zealand in mid-February.

"I have been told by medical staff that I am in as good a condition as I can be a week after undergoing the surgery," added Clarke, who also carries a chronic back problem.

"There is no swelling and no pain when I walk. I can't wait to begin stage two of the rehab process which involves starting to run again."

He offered strong support to fellow veterans Brad Haddin, Shane Watson and Chris Rogers who have come under pressure for weak performances since the start of the four-Test series against India this month.

"It's crucial to have experienced guys like these in a team when you're bringing through youngsters," Clarke said.

Clarke also backed them for the 2015 Ashes squad to face England.

"Personally, I hope all three of them are on the plane to England for next year's Ashes series," he said.