



## EXPECTATIONS DOWN UNDER

# 'It's unfair for Tigers'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's first ever ODI captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain puts it as straight as possible. The 54-year-old believes that the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand has begun on an 'unfair' note and that the more powerful members of the ICC already have an undue advantage over the others.

"Overall, it has started in an unfair way. The big three have taken a big advantage," referring to the recently concluded tri-series in Australia played between England, India and the host nation.

Gazi also believed that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) should have 'negotiated' better in a bid to get official matches in Australia and New Zealand prior to the World Cup.

"Again, we have to blame ourselves. Whatever meetings we had in the ICC, we should have planned a series of tours, whether the Academy team or the A team, to Australia and New Zealand. I am not only blaming the current board, even the previous board [which he was a part of] could have arranged such tours," said Gazi.

"We should have had some kind of a tour in Australia. Even Afghanistan



GAZI ASHRAF HOSSAIN

had one. It was an administrative failure. Hopefully the boys can make the most of the camp in Brisbane," he added.

Gazi believes that all of Bangladesh's opponents are likely to use the pace conditions against the Tigers.

"If it were any other team, they probably would have played a bit of spin. But we are likely to face 40 overs of pace. We are used to facing deliveries around 130 to 135 Kms per hour, but

how well can we face deliveries that come at 140 or 145? The players need to prepare well," opined Gazi.

"We need to master our belief. Our opponents have played so much cricket that they are a lot more confident. An English or Australian lower order batsman, has the confidence of coming in and scoring a quick half-century because of all the T20 cricket they have played. They are ahead of us," he added.

Despite battling against the odds, Gazi believed that there was still a way for the Tigers to reach the quarterfinals.

"We have to play carefully in the first 15 overs, if we don't then we may not survive the first 15 overs. Don't be too adventurous because we are not used to these conditions. We have to accept reality. This will be a big test for the coach and the players," reckoned Gazi.

The key, according to Gazi, lies with the more experienced players of the side.

"Players like Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiquir Rahim and Tamim Iqbal are playing their third World Cup. They are at the peak of their careers and will have to deliver for the team to perform," believed Gazi.

## Aamer in hot water again

AFP, Karachi

A petition was filed in a Pakistan court Monday demanding a lifetime ban of disgraced paceman Mohammad Aamer after he was cleared last week to return to domestic cricket.

Aamer was given permission to play domestic cricket by the Anti-Corruption Unit of the International Cricket Council, bringing him a step closer to redemption for his part in one of the most scandalous episodes in modern cricket.

But a petition filed Monday to the Sindh High Court by lawyer Rana Faizul Hasan called for the 22-year-old to be banned for life to stop him damaging the image of Pakistan and cricket.

"Aamer stained the image of the country," Hasan told AFP. "He is a proven fixer and will do it again if he is allowed to play again."

The court issued notices to the deputy attorney general and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for a hearing on February 16.

# Papon against India Test

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon stirred a debate yesterday by disclosing that he would prefer India to play three ODIs instead of a one-day Test during their tour of Bangladesh in June this year.

"Pakistan, Australia and South Africa will play full series' this year. Only India are supposed to play one Test. We are thinking whether there will be one Test or three ODI matches. What benefit will we get by playing a solitary Test against India?"

"It may be better to play three ODIs against them. We are going to put forward this proposal. It is almost finalised that we will play a Test against India in 2016 at Eden Gardens," said Papon, while speaking to reporters at his Gulshan residence yesterday.

Papon's statement however came as a surprise to many, especially since Bangladesh are already scheduled to play three ODIs apart from the solitary Test against India this year.

"I don't know why he said this when, as far as I know, we have a one-off Test and three ODIs against India in the schedule. Maybe playing more ODIs can give us a chance to improve our ranking. The ranking will be an issue for direct entry into the next

World Cup, but we cannot sacrifice any Test matches at this stage," said a BCB higher-up preferring anonymity.

The last time India played a Test in Bangladesh was back in January 2010. They are yet to play a series in India. Bangladesh barely get the opportunity to play Tests. In 2014 they played seven Tests, five of which came against Zimbabwe and the West Indies. In 2013 they played just six Tests.

Regarding Pakistan Cricket Board's demand of sharing the revenue from the upcoming series against the Tigers, Papon said that any pre-condition for playing a series in Bangladesh is unacceptable. The BCB boss also made it clear that they were not ready to share any revenue with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and stated that the prevailing security situation in Pakistan is not favourable enough to send any team there.

"Of course there will be a discussion. I don't want our relationship with the Pakistan board deteriorate. I don't want Pakistan cricket to suffer but we have to give the highest priority to security," added Papon.

The demand was made as Bangladesh refrained from touring Pakistan due to security concerns back in 2012.

"It is a different issue, if they demand something like plane fare, that's something we can work out, but we cannot share our profits," said Papon.



Abdul Majid, who was involved in a record opening stand the other day, went on to score a majestic 253 before retiring hurt at Fatullah yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

# Majid maroons Metro

SPORTS REPORTER



"Whatever my partner can do, I can do better," was probably what Dhaka opener Abdul Majid told himself when he cautiously guided himself to his first double century on the second day of the second round of the National Cricket League at Fatullah yesterday.

Majid, who began the day on 173, ended with 253 before retiring hurt. The batsman, who had earlier shared a record stand of 314 with Rony Talukdar on day one, continued on his merry way on the second day and provided Dhaka Metro with no respite.

His 253 came off 383 balls and overtook Talukdar's 227, which was previously the highest score of the tournament. He batted for nearly ten hours and smashed 26 fours and two sixes. The Metro bowlers failed to find a way to deceive Majid and eventually began attacking him with bouncers. One of those hit his elbow and he had to leave the field.

A soft spoken man, Majid said that he was happy to have made such a good start to the league and hoped to continue with his current form.

"It really feels great. This is the first time I crossed the 200-run mark and it has helped my confidence a great deal. I began the day on 173, and my first target was obviously to get to my double century."

"Once I achieved that I just looked to bat for as long as I could," Majid told The Daily Star.

While his effort helped Dhaka post a

powerful 525, their opponents Metro were bundled out for just 90, indicating that the wicket at Fatullah was not another batsman's paradise.

"You have to begin slowly here. You can't be in a hurry or else you're likely to fall. I tried to stay for as long as I could and the runs came," explained Majid, adding that his favourite stroke was the cut shot.

After the innings break, Dhaka's spinners Jubair Hossain and Shuvagata Hom took nine wickets to give their side a staggering 435-run lead in the first innings.

Khulna's Imrul Kayes and Rajshahi's Junaid Siddique were the other batsmen who scored centuries yesterday. While Kayes's 166 helped Khulna take a crucial 119-run lead at the BKSP, Junaid's 113 helped Rajshahi recover from an early stumble to finish the day on 379 for 7 at Mirpur.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**DHAKA DIVISION:** 525 for 9 dec (Majid 253, Rony 163; Shohid 4-100, Elias 4-110)

**DHAKA METRO:** 90 all out in 34.2 overs (Saykat 31; Shuvagata 5-17, Jubair 4-23)

**BARISAL:** 271

**KHULNA:** 390 all out in 120 overs (Imrul 166, Dollar 38; Shohag 5-94, Nasum 3-102)

**RANGPUR:** 367 all out 112.5 overs (Tanvir 73, Mahmudul 60; Enamul 5-107, Rahatul 2-94)

**SYLHET:** 191 for 5 (Kapali 70 not out, Roman 40; Sajedul 2-23)

**CHITTAGONG:** 209

**RAJSHAHI:** 379 for 7 (Junaid 113, Muktar 88 not out; Iftekhar 6-109)

## Shakib back on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has regained the top position of the ICC ranking in all three formats.

The southpaw, who is currently the best all-rounder in both Tests and T20 format, lost his top ODI position to Sri Lankan captain Angelo Mathews a few days back.

The latest ICC ranking, published today, has once again put Shakib back to the top with 403 rating points, while Mathews' poor performance in their seven-match series against New Zealand pulled down his rating point to 393.

Ahead of the ICC World Cup 2015, Shakib's latest position in the ICC ranking would be a great boost for the tigers.

Shakib Al Hasan is the only cricketer in the history to have ranked top in ICC rankings as an all-rounder in all the three formats of the game.

## Junaid out of World Cup

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's World Cup hopes were dealt a major blow Monday with frontline paceman Junaid Khan ruled out of the event after failing to pass a fitness test following a leg injury.

The 25-year-old left-arm, considered one of the country's most promising prospects in recent years, sustained a thigh injury in training last month that forced him out of the team's current tour of New Zealand.

"Junaid appeared in a fitness test and was not found fit enough to play the World Cup," a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) spokesman said.

His absence means Pakistan's attack will be led by the relatively inexperienced Mohammad Irfan, following the losses of veteran paceman Umar Gul to a knee injury and ace spinner Saeed Ajmal, who is serving a suspension for chucking.

All-rounder Mohammad Hafeez meanwhile faces a race against time to get his action cleared.

He was suspended in November last year and will participate in a reassessment test on February 6.



## WALSH'S TOP XI

West Indies bowling great Courtney Walsh put together a list of his top XI fast bowlers in one-day internationals in a column that appeared in the Media Zone of ICC's official website yesterday. The list is as follows:



### RICHARD HARDLEE

He was so accurate that batsmen would wait for him to just bowl out his spell



### MICHAEL HOLDING

What he had was real pace and that would test any batsman's skills



### WASIM AKRAM

He was simply a genius and one of the most devastating left-arm fast bowlers



### ALLAN DONALD

He had real pace, enough to have batsmen around the world hopping around against the new ball



### BRETT LEE

His raw pace helped him stand out, he played a vital part in Australia's success in this format of the game



### MALCOLM MARSHALL

He was the complete fast bowler



### JOEL GARNER

He really mastered the art of bowling yorkers



### ANDY ROBERTS

He was the ultimate thinking fast bowler



### CURTLY AMBROSE

He was very accurate & tight; he had a very dangerous yorker



### GLENN MCGRATH

He is one of the most accurate and consistent fast bowlers to ever play this format



### WAQAR YOUSIF

He was truly special, the king of reverse swing

## Serena, Novak on top

AFP, Paris

Novak Djokovic is now 3,800 points clear atop the ATP world rankings following his Australian Open triumph on Sunday.

The Serb is in clear water well ahead of second-placed Roger Federer who lost ground with a third round exit in Melbourne.

Big movers in the top 10 were Andy Murray whose run into the Australian Open final saw him move up two places to fourth with Milos Raonic also climbing two spots to sixth.

They both moved past Stan Wawrinka, who failed to defend his title in Australia and dropped five places to ninth.

Serena Williams defeated Maria Sharapova in straight sets for her sixth Grand Slam title in Melbourne and 19th in all.

Williams is over 1,500 points clear of the Russian who in turn is well ahead of third placed Simona Halep of Romania.

One of the biggest movers of the week was Serena's older sister Venus. The former world number one reached the last eight in Melbourne.



# WORLD CUP COCKTAIL

Michael Clarke said he'd be happy to play under Steven Smith if it was decided the younger man should retain the captaincy even when he returned.

"Most definitely I would," Clarke said in Brisbane.

"I feel for Smithy because I sat in his shoes when a lot of the media were calling for (former captain) Ricky Ponting (to go)."

"It's certainly not personal between Smithy and I. We've been friends for a long time and we'll continue to be."

"The people that sit above both him and I will make their decisions. Whatever they feel are the best 11 players and whoever they feel is the best captain, they'll pick that."

## 'Morgan is dreaming'

Australia's Mitchell Johnson has hit back at Eoin Morgan's claim that England will not be under pressure in their opening World Cup match in Melbourne, saying the captain is "dreaming" if he thinks otherwise.

Morgan, speaking after Australia's to a 112-run victory in the Tri-Series final in Perth, played down the 14 February meeting with the tournament co-hosts.

"I think the pressure builds on Australia. They're the home side at a

World Cup playing against a dangerous side. We're going out all guns blazing. There's no pressure from our point of view," said Morgan.

Those words left Johnson unimpressed.

"I think every team is under pressure, it is a World Cup. I think they are dreaming if they think they are not under pressure. Every team is going to be under pressure, you've got to win pretty much every game. That's how I see it," the fast bowler said.

"Our plan is to win every game. There will probably be a little more pressure on us being a home World Cup but we are prepared for that."

## 'Let Kohli blow kisses'

Former India captain Kapil Dev said that he is fine with Virat Kohli's antics as long as he is performing on the field.

"If Virat Kohli scores a century and then blows a flying kiss towards his girlfriend, I have no problems. Rather I have problem if a player scores zero and is blowing a flying kiss. We played cricket in a different era and now it's a different era. We have to accept that," Kapil said.

"We can't just sit back and think that cricket is no longer a gentleman's game. Times have changed. The generation I played in was different. We grew

up with Test cricket. But now you have sledging, abuse and T20 is an accepted format."

On India's chances in the World Cup, Kapil said India would reach the semifinals and then it was 25 percent and also explained his reasoning.

## Ishant's WC in doubt?

Mohit Sharma is likely to replace Ishant Sharma in the Indian squad for the 2015 World Cup. According to a report in the Mumbai Mirror, the BCCI has given the team management the deadline of February 05 to finalise the squad and weed out the injured players. The report stated that Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ravindra Jadeja and Mohammed Shami are all having fitness issues but Ishant's case is more serious.

Ishant has been suffering from a knee injury since the end of the Melbourne Test in December. He missed the Sydney Test and was not picked for the first two ODIs in the tri-series. He resumed training and was picked in the Australia Day clash in Sydney but the match was rained out and Ishant was unable to bowl. He was dropped for the Perth match against England and the doubts over his fitness have only grown. The report also stated that Mohit has been told not to leave Australia. -Compiled