

# SPORTS

## Mushy may not keep

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Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan Papon and chief selector Faruque Ahmed both hinted that Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim might not keep during the one-off Test against India due to begin from June 10 in Fatullah.

Mushfiqur, who hurt his right ring finger on the second day of the first Test against Pakistan, is yet to completely recover from the injury though he has been practising batting.

"I have spoken to Mushfiqur. From what I know, he wants to keep wickets. But because the India series is taking place after a short gap he hasn't been able to recover completely as yet. There are still a few doubts. He may not stand behind the stumps," Papon told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Faruque echoed Papon's sentiments and termed Mushfiqur's injury as a concern.

"His finger still hurts and that's why we are a little worried. We have been discussing this issue. But there's still a long time to go. We still have nine more days in hand. We will have to wait and observe this matter before making a final decision," said Faruque.

If Mushfiqur does not keep, it is likely that debutant Litton Kumar Das, who was in the Test squad for the Pakistan series and is currently in the preliminary squad for the India series, will play the Test.

On the contrary, the good news is that pacer Rubel Hossain has recovered from the side-strain he suffered during the Pakistan series and is available for selection. He will be expected to share the new ball with Mohammad Shahid. The question however remains with regards to the third seamer in the 14-member squad.

The management will have to choose from Abul Hasan, Shafiqul Islam or the young left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who made an impressive debut against Pakistan in the lone T20I. Shafiqul is fit, but his decision to not take part in the final round of the Bangladesh Cricket League reportedly annoyed the selectors quite a bit. Abul on the other hand has just started getting wickets in domestic cricket and didn't do too well in the Pakistan series.

The main debate between the selectors and coach Chandika Hathurusingha however, according to sources, is regarding leg-spinner Jubair Hossain. Selectors are against picking Jubair, who didn't get any game-time in the last series, while the coach reportedly wants the leg-spinner in the team.



Bangladesh booters practise headers at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday ahead of their international friendly against Afghanistan today.

PHOTO: STAR

## BD take on Afghans today

### De Kruif hints at experimentation

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Bangladesh get their last opportunity to fine-tune team combination and make an impression before

this month's Joint Qualifiers for the World Cup and Asian Cup when they take on South Asian powerhouse Afghanistan in an international friendly at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The men in red and green, who suffered a 1-2 defeat against Singapore in another friendly on Saturday, would want to finish the warm up matches with a win before they take on Kyrgyzstan on June 11 and Tajikistan on June 16 at home.

However, SAFF champions Afghanistan are a higher-ranked side than Singapore and most of their players ply their trade in Europe. Bangladesh have played twice against these opponents and both of those matches ended in draw. However, the Bangladesh under-23 team beat their Afghan counterparts twice, including the 1-0 victory in the most recent Asian Games last year, where Lodewijk de Kruif was in charge of the Bangladesh side.

The Dutchman, who opted a defensive approach to fashion the in that match, admitted that he is not too informed about the strength of Afghanistan's senior side.

"They have 80 to 85 percent change in the squad, with players from Germany, Netherlands,

Denmark, USA and Vietnam. They have a German coaching staff and I am happy to have such a good team to play against. It is difficult to analyse them because they are a totally different team (from the one we beat)," said de Kruif.

The 45-year-old coach believes he has an experienced side at his hands and hinted that he would do some experiments in this friendly fixture.

"We can do a few experiments and give some players game experience because we are not going to collect points from this match. Our focus is to analyse the tactical aspects before facing Kyrgyzstan," said de Kruif, who is likely to give new goalkeeper Ashrafur Islam Rana a chance as first-choice goal-

keeper Mazharul Islam Himel has been excluded from the 23-member squad.

"I hope tomorrow (Tuesday) will be a little bit different (from the Asian Games match) because we would like to take initiative as it is our home match. I expect my boys to dominate and have good ball possession," said de Kruif.

Bangladesh skipper Mamunul Islam, who scored the decisive goal in the Asian Games match last year, believes the hosts have the better chance of winning.

"Afghanistan are a strong side, but we have never lost against them. We have the ability to beat them and we want to carry the good feeling of winning to the World Cup Qualifiers," hoped Mamunul.

## Sethi quits ICC presidency run

AFP, Lahore

Former Pakistan cricket chief Najam Sethi on Monday withdrew as sole nominee for the presidency of the game's world governing body, calling for a top former player to take his place.

Sethi had been nominated for the post of International Cricket Council (ICC) president.

The ICC was due to consider Sethi's nomination in their board meeting in Barbados later this month and he would have taken charge for one year from July 1.

But Sethi said the ICC's recent announcement that the president's post will only be open to leading former players from July 2016 prompted him to take the decision.



Led by ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (C), Bangladesh's national players pose for the camera with their new national jerseys, sponsored by Robi Axiata Ltd, at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Maruful back at Sk Russel

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Sheikh Russel KC yesterday appointed Maruful Haque as the head coach of the club for the rest of season after terminating their contract with Montenegrin coach Dragan Djukanovic.

Maruful, who guided Sheikh Russel to a treble in the 2012-13 season, was sacked by defending league champions Sheikh Jamal DC only last week.

Sheikh Russel in fourth position in the premier league table, three points behind leaders Sheikh Jamal.

"As a professional coach, I am happy to return to my old club and I will be enjoying it because it is a challenge for me to take the club to the top," said Maruful, who will start work today.

## IN A NUTSHELL

### Royal honour for Kiwi duo

New Zealand's unprecedented success in reaching the ICC World Cup final earlier this year has resulted in honours for captain Brendon McCullum and coach Mike Hesson. Both were appointed Officers of the New Zealand Order of Merit (NZOM) in the Queen Elizabeth II Birthday Honours list released Monday.

Therese Walsh, head of the New Zealand organising committee for the World Cup, which was co-hosted with Australia, was made a Dame Companion of the NZOM.

The honours were announced as McCullum eyed a series-levelling Test victory over England after leading his side to a commanding position on the third day of the second Test at Headingley. Hesson said he hoped the accolades would be seen as recognition for the entire New Zealand team, both on and off the field.

### Gayle hurricane in vain

Chris Gayle ended up on the losing side despite marking his home debut for county side Somerset with a remarkable hundred in their Twenty20 Blast match against Kent on Sunday.

The 35-year-old West Indies left-hander, renowned as one of the most dynamic batsmen in world cricket today, struck 10 fours and 15 sixes as he made a stunning 151 not out off just 62 balls at Taunton's County Ground.

Yet Kent still came away with a three-run win after they defended a total of 227 for seven that featured Sam Northeast's 114 from 58 balls.

### Messi to wear specially designed Adidas boots

Adidas have revealed their latest boot design for Lionel Messi ahead of the Barcelona forward's appearance in the Champions League final against Juventus on June 6 at the Olympiastadion in Berlin.

The ice blue, lightweight pair of boots, aptly named the Messi 15s are said to include all sorts of footwear technology, including round forefoot studs to improve traction.

Messi, who has scored 58 goals for Barca in all competitions this season, will be bidding to win the fourth Champions League title of his career when he takes on Juve this Saturday.

As ever, the 27-year-old has been central in Barca's surge towards a potential treble this term and netted in the 3-1 Copa del Rey final win last weekend to help seal the second of the three targeted trophies.

Barca wrapped up the Spanish league title last month with a 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid, with Messi again on the score sheet.

This season Barca's goal-hungry front three of Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar have notched a combined total of 120 goals between them, bettering the previous record of 118 set by Gonzalo Higuain, Karim Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo for Real Madrid in the 2011-2012 season.

Compiled By Star Sport Desk

## A true gentleman in all whites

Aminul Haq Moni, the former general secretary of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, died on Sunday night at a Dhaka hospital. He was 66. Aminul had been ill for more than two years and had suffered a heart attack on April 8. He was on life support in the ICU since then. BCB director and sports organiser Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby reflects on the life of this selfless gentleman, his works and contribution towards developing the sport of cricket in Bangladesh.

When I was attending the namaz-e-janaza of Bachchu bhai (Sirajul Islam) at the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday (Sunday night) television journalists asked what I was doing there since I belonged to the cricketering arena and Bachchu bhai was known for his work in football.

I told them that when we organised sports and worked with clubs back in the mid 70's, and early 80's Bachchu bhai was already an established organiser. In those days, clubs like Mohammedan and Abahani participated in many disciplines and we didn't think that if this wasn't our sport, we wouldn't go there.

We all went together. We only specialised in a sport after coming into a board or at the federation level, but at the club level, every discipline belonged to us.

When I returned home late last night, someone rang me up and told me that Moni bhai passed away as well. I wanted to go to the hospital, but I was told to come to the Mohammedan Sporting club the next day.

from Bachchu bhai -- both were organisers of the same school of thought -- a philosophy that we learned from them.

Moni bhai was a multi-skilled personality. He played cricket for Bangladesh Boys and National Sporting. He was also a very good student and obtained first class degree in applied physics from Dhaka University where he also did a bit of teaching.

He later got involved in business but at the same time found time to discuss cricket and other sports with close friends --- Jogesh da, Pakka bhai and Kamal bhai -- at that Islamia restaurant of the Bangabandhu National Stadium. I still recall and relish those addas in the late seventies and early eighties.

Moni bhai also used to do a bit of umpiring whenever there was a crisis. He was basically the man to go to during a crisis. Whenever Mohammedan fell in trouble, they turned to him.

I first met him in the 70s when I represented Abahani in the DMSA (Dhaka Metropolitan Sports



Association). It was an organisation that ran all the Dhaka leagues, including football and cricket.

Moni bhai became a joint secretary of the cricket board in 1983. And it was the time when KZ Islam was president and he excelled as an organiser. KZ Islam bhai did provide the funding, but it was Moni bhai's tireless effort that made Nirman School cricket so popular and successful.

It was also at that time Bangladesh travelled to Kenya, the most important bilateral tour, and Moni bhai was the manager. A

man who was always in pyjama and Panjabi was wearing a blazer, and that's when I jokingly told him that he looked ill.

Our domestic cricket, especially the Dhaka league really flourished after he became the cricket board's general secretary in 1991. At that time many international players started coming to Dhaka and that popularised the game and attracted sponsors as well.

There were a number of things that he did for Bangladesh's cricket but to me his landmark achievement was when he managed to install two AstroTurf for the Dhaka Cricket League. One was at the Abahani ground, while the other was at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The sole intention behind that was that the 1997 ICC Trophy was going to be played on AstroTurf in Malaysia. So our players got two full seasons on those turfs and the result was phenomenal. We won the 1997 ICC Trophy from where our cricket never looked back. It's a legendary story now. I never saw him get angry. He was

soft spoken, never shouted or never did he use any slangs or any swear words. I also never saw him use the board's money for any personal purpose, not even to drink a cup of tea. He always put his hands in his own pocket and bought food for us.

He, along with Reza-e-Karim, formulated the tournaments and leagues' playing conditions and bylaws, which we still use today. Back then the MCC's rules and laws were translated into Bengali and spread throughout the country with the help of another gentleman, Ataul Haq Mallik. They worked silently.

He also served as chairman of BCB's game development committee. But I feel that he couldn't progress the way he wanted to because of some obstacles that were deliberately put in his way by people who were supposedly close to him.

I talked with him on a number of occasions when he was Bangla Vision's managing director. I had promised to meet him there but unfortunately, I couldn't keep that promise. That is one regret that I will carry for the rest of my life.