

SPORT

Three new names in Eng Test squad

AFP, Nottingham

Teenage opener Haseeb Hameed was included in the England Test squad announced Friday for the tour of Bangladesh.

The uncapped 19-year-old Lancashire star was selected after a successful season for the Red Rose county and following the decision of current England opener Alex Hales to rule himself out of the tour on security grounds.

"Haseeb Hameed, for someone so young, has had an impressive season in the County Championship with Lancashire," said England national selector James Whitaker.

"He has been a consistent performer and his four centuries, against some of the best bowling attacks in the country are testament to his outstanding temperament and attitude."

Yorkshire batsman Joe Root, an England mainstay in all three international formats, will be rested for the three one-day internationals, which begin on October 7, before joining the Test squad.

Ben Duckett, another uncapped batsman, has also been included following a

prolific season.

Former England batsman Whitaker added: "Throughout the campaign, he has scored heavily for Northamptonshire in first-class cricket including two double hundreds.

"His 220 not out for the England Lions in a 50-over game against Sri Lanka A earlier this summer was very special."

Meanwhile Surrey captain Gareth Batty, whose last Test match came in 2005, has been recalled at the age of 38, together with fellow Surrey spinner Zafar Ansari.

The pair's selection alongside Moeen Ali and Adi Rashid, means England will have a quartet of slow bowlers to choose from on pitches expected to aid spinners.

SQUADS

Test: Alastair Cook, Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Zafar Ansari, Jonny Bairstow (wkt), Gary Ballance, Gareth Batty, Stuart Broad, Jos Buttler (wkt), Ben Duckett, Steven Finn, Haseeb Hameed, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Ben Stokes, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood.

ODI: Jos Buttler (capt, wkt), Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow, Jake Ball, Sam Billings, Liam Dawson, Ben Duckett, Liam Plunkett, Adil Rashid, Jason Roy, Ben Stokes, James Vince, David Willey, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood.

"Zafar has great potential both with bat and ball and Gareth's experience as one of the country's best slow bowlers and his ability to be effective in subcontinent conditions will be beneficial this winter," said Whitaker.

Alastair Cook, England's Test captain, is set to travel to Bangladesh a week ahead of the Test party to work on his skills before returning home for the birth of his second child.

The left-handed opener will miss the two two-day warm-up matches, scheduled to start on October 14 and October 16, before returning to Bangladesh to lead the team in the first Test in Chittagong commencing on Thursday, October 20.

This season saw England beat Sri Lanka in all formats but they drew a four-Test series with Pakistan 2-2 before winning the one-dayers and losing a lone Twenty20.

The Bangladesh tour -- which begins on September 30 and will include two Tests and three ODIs -- had been called into question after an attack on a cafe in Dhaka in July which saw 20 hostages killed, including 18 foreigners.

Following the attack, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) sent a fact-finding delegation to Bangladesh led by Reg Dickason, their security officer.

Dickason said it was safe to tour but that was not enough to persuade Hales and England one-day captain Eoin Morgan to travel to Bangladesh.



The members of the Bangladesh under-16 women's football team greet each other on their return to the BFF dormitory after Eid vacation yesterday morning. The players will embark on a year-long camp, starting from tomorrow, for the final round of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship, which will be held in Thailand in September next year.

PHOTO: BFF

Year-long plan for U-16 women's team

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday revealed a year-long plan for the under-16 women's team as a part of preparation for the final round of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship, which is scheduled to be held in Thailand from September 9 to 23 in 2017.

The plan includes a year-long residential camp with 28 players under head coach Golam Rabbani Choton and other coaching staff which will later be reinforced with the inclusion of a physical trainer, a goalkeeping coach and a female physiotherapist.

The plan also includes providing the girls monthly allowance as well as teachers at the BFF dormitory to help continue their studies; arranging five to six international friendly matches in the next one year, and parents' days after every one-and-a-half months.

The plan was disclosed by women's football committee chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron after an emergency meet-

ing of the BFF executive committee.

"The BFF will bear the expense of food, accommodation, clothing, education and maintain nutrition of the girls as they will stay here for one year. We will also invite the parents to meet their daughters in every one-and-a-half month at the dormitory. We also have a plan to allow the girls a weak-long vacation in every three to four months," said Kiron during a media briefing yesterday.

"BFF president Kazi Salahuddin is optimistic about fruitful accomplishment of the plan, which was finalised after consultations with the women's committee, national teams' committee, executive committee and coaching staff of the women's team," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin at a press briefing after the meeting.

Even though there is a strong opinion in the footballing circle about appointing a technically sound coach for the U-16 women's team in a bid to fight against the top Asian teams such as Japan, China, Australia and Korea, the game's governing body is seemingly banking on the experience of Choton and the rest of the coaching staff.

"We just need to improve the strength of the girls so that they can fight against big teams and I think this plan will work and improve the girls," opined Salahuddin.

"I think there are no loopholes in this plan. I had a meeting with women's committee and coaching staff and asked them to take help from technical director [Paul Smalley] to revise the plan if needed."

Salahuddin also informed that they will provide a monthly allowance to each of the girls for one year and that the allowance would be more [on average Tk 10,000] than the players of the national men's team have previously received.

Meanwhile, all the 23 players, who were part of the squad which won the group phase of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers earlier this month, reported to the BFF House during the morning. They will start camp from tomorrow, and there will be only one session each day for the time being as the players went through rigorous training sessions in the past two months ahead of the qualifiers.

Kalsindur girls get apology from teacher

AMINUL ISLAM from Mymensingh

A physical education teacher of the Kalsindur High School and College in Mymensingh has apologised to nine players of the Bangladesh under-16 team for his misbehaving with them.

Jobed Ali Talukder met the girls at the Kalsindur Primary School ground on September 14 and apologised, urging them to rescue him from his current situation, principal of Kalsindur High School and College Md Jalal Uddin informed.

The trouble arose when Talukder learned of the girls' unavailability for this year's School Level Football competition starting on September 16 due to their national team commitments.

The teacher reportedly threatened the nine players with TCs if they failed to play.

He then went on to assault U-16 player Taslima Akhtar's 45-year-old father at the Kalsindur Bazar in Dhobaura on September 7 when the latter was sharing the problems faced by the girls with Mohammad Mofizuddin, the school coach.

Sabuj lodged a case with Dhobaura Police Station against Talukder the following day. However, police are yet to arrest the accused.

At an emergency meeting of school governing body held on September 9, Talukder was suspended temporarily for his actions.

30 stitches for Starc

AFP, Sydney

Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc was in hospital Friday following surgery on a leg wound which required 30 stitches.

Starc suffered deep lacerations after hitting training equipment on Thursday, Cricket Australia (CA) said.

The left-arter, who was rested from Australia's tour of South Africa later this month, is expected to have his left shin in a brace for up to three weeks to aid his recovery.

"There were no bone fractures or tendon damage to his leg and he underwent surgery to clean the wound and received approximately 30 stitches," CA Chief Medical Officer John Orchard said.

"He will remain in hospital for the next few days to minimise movement to his leg and will use an extension brace for the next two to three weeks until his stitches are removed.

"At this stage we are hopeful he is on track to play at the start of summer."

Australia will play South Africa in the first of a three-Test series, starting in Perth on November 3.

Morgan set to take the reins in India ODIs

AFP, Nottingham

England selection chief James Whitaker expects Eoin Morgan to lead the one-day side in India even though he has opted out of the upcoming tour of Bangladesh on security grounds.

Morgan, England's one-day international captain, and Alex Hales, who opened in both Test and limited overs cricket this season, informed the selectors before Friday's squad announcement they would not be touring Bangladesh because of security fears which arose after the July 1 terror attack on a Gulshan cafe which claimed the lives of 20 hostages.

Former Ireland batsman Morgan has won plaudits for overseeing an England revival in 50-over cricket following their embarrassing first-round exit at last year's World Cup.

"Eoin has done exceptionally well as captain," national selector Whitaker told reporters at Trent Bridge after announcing the squads for the Bangladesh tour.

"Over the last couple of years he's established a really good leadership base. He's done a marvellous job. It's slightly disappointing that he's turned this opportunity down, but we expect him to be captain in India."

"At the same time, we'll review as we do after every series. And all I'll say is, I expect him to be captain in India."



Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (C) was all smiles before boarding the chopper to Cox's Bazar, which later crashed on its return journey after dropping off Shakib safely.

Shakib's close shave

SPORTS REPORTER



The sports fraternity was shaken by the news yesterday morning that Shakib Al Hasan narrowly escaped a tragic incident when a chopper of Meghna Aviation Limited, that dropped off the Bangladesh all-rounder moments earlier, crashed in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar. The helicopter that took the star Bangladesh cricketer to Cox's Bazar to shoot a commercial crashed on its return journey, leaving one -- 32-year-old Ogilvy Bangladesh accountant Shah Alam -- dead and four others injured.

People from all walks of life expressed gratitude to the Almighty for the safety of the champion all-rounder and his teammate and Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim was one of them.

"All thanks to Almighty Allah.. this is what happens when you have blessings of 170 million people... just happy to hear Shakib is safe and sound. But, may Allah grant Jannah to the person

who lost his life. Let's pray for the departed soul," wrote Mushfiqur on his Facebook page.

Shakib's father, Mashrur Reza, told our Magura correspondent: "Shakib returned to Dhaka from Magura on Friday after Eid. He went to Cox's Bazar today where his helicopter crashed while it was on its way back. Allah saved my son's life as the countrymen's blessings were with him. A milad mehil was held at Magura's Judge Court Mosque after Jumma prayers to pray for him.

"After the incident I talked with him over phone. He is fine and will return today," he added.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) media manager Rabeed Imam earlier told The Daily Star that Shakib confirmed his safety and wellbeing.

"I am fine, but feel rather shocked at the news of the chopper crash," the all-rounder told the BCB media manager.

Shakib flew to Tulip Sea Pearl Beach Resort for a television commercial shoot. After Shakib landed at his destination at 9:30am, the chopper took off with five passengers including its pilot and crashed around 9:45am in Redu Khal area near Inani sea-beach.

Expected the best from Eng: Minhajul

SPORTS REPORTER



The very moment that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) officially agreed to tour Bangladesh, questions regarding the quality of the touring side were raised. And that was because their team director Andrew Strauss had publicly said that no player would be forced to tour Bangladesh.

That statement and the fact that a majority of the English players were not willing to publicly state their decision initially led to a belief that England could just be compelled to send a team without a number of their main players.

However, as time progressed, it was clear that England had no such intentions. Weeks before the start of the tour it was clear that except for Alex Hales and Eoin Morgan -- who earlier declined to tour because of security fears -- the entire team was keen on touring Bangladesh. That was confirmed yesterday when England named the strongest possible squad, leaving aside Hales and Morgan, for the tour.

That England would send their strongest possible squad was something that Bangladesh's chief selector Minhajul Abedin had no doubts about.

"England have a very rich cricketing history and I never expected them to send any team other than their best. There was never any chance for them to take this series lightly," Minhajul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Interestingly enough, England have selected four spinners for the

Tests, including 38-year-old Gareth Batty who last played a Test for England in 2005.

Batty made his Test debut against Bangladesh in 2003 and of the seven Tests that he has played, three were against the Tigers. In other words, the last time Batty faced Bangladesh, the likes of Habibul Bashar and Khaled Mahmud, who now don the roles of selector and team manager respectively, were in the playing eleven.

Minhajul was not surprised at the off-spinner's inclusion. "Whenever England come to the sub-continent they send an extra spinner. And personally I don't think it's a surprise that Gareth Batty is back. Experienced spinners can be recalled at any point of time in this game," said Minhajul.

"Going by the makeup of the England side I can't point towards one specific challenge that we may face. The challenges will be different in the two formats and we have to be ready for everything," he added.

Minhajul further said that the selection committee is likely to announce Bangladesh's squads by Monday.

"We will announce the squad once the head coach [Chandika Hathurusingha] returns to Bangladesh. He will join the training camp on September 18," said Minhajul.

England are scheduled to arrive on September 30 to play two Tests and three ODIs. The teams will play the first two ODIs in Dhaka and the final ODI in Chittagong. After which they will play one Test in Chittagong and return to Dhaka to play the final Test.