

SPORT

Mosharraf set for second innings

SPORTS REPORTER

When the national selectors announce the 14-member squad for the Afghanistan ODI series, the return of left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain may be the only surprise.

According to sources the selectors submitted the team to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for the board president's approval, although the selectors say that there is more discussion to be conducted. In the submitted list veteran left-arm spinner Mosharraf got a place and pacer Taskin Ahmed was also in the list though his bowling action is yet to be cleared. Board officials were still trying to know when they can receive the report from Australia.

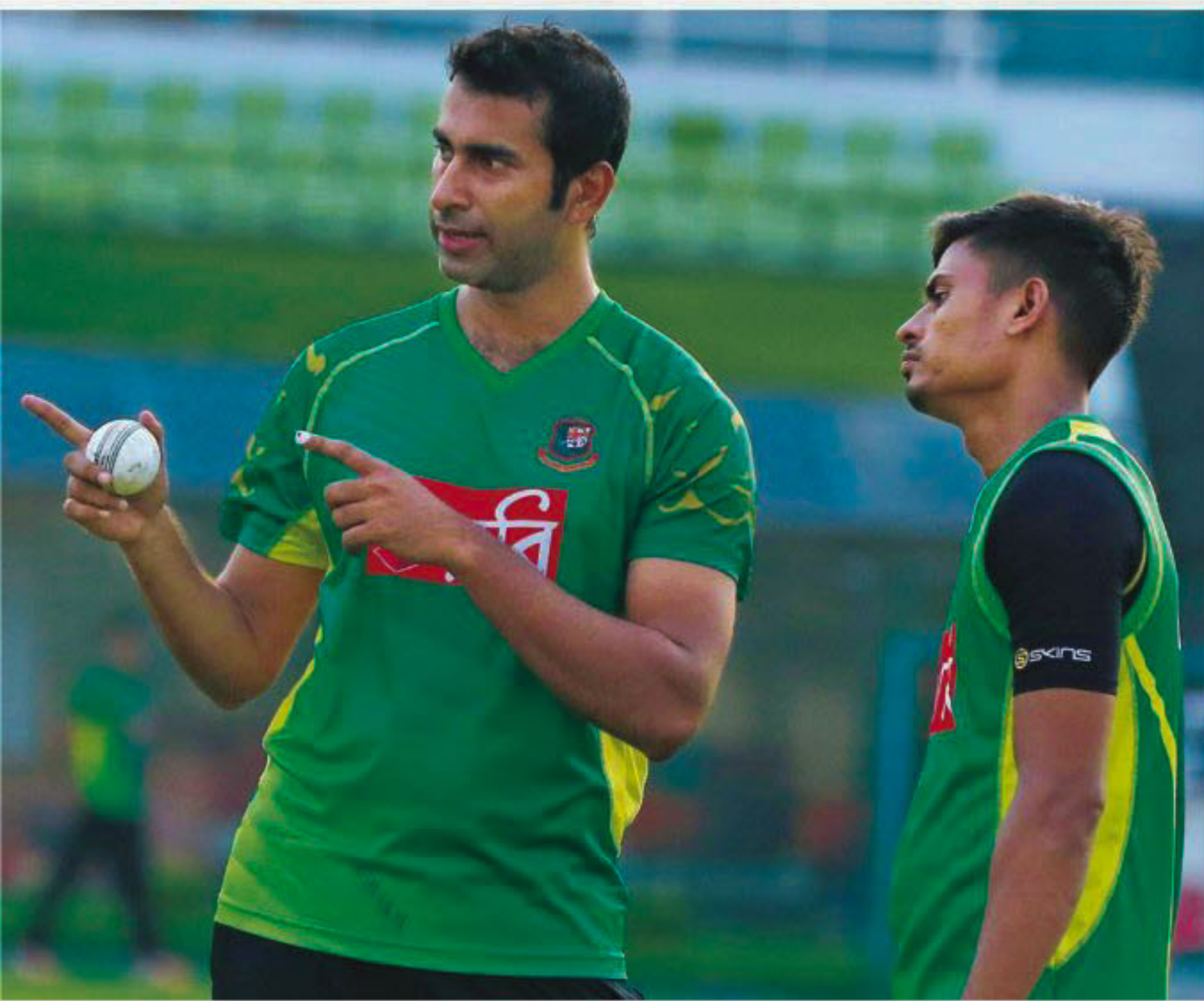
In the domestic circuit Mosharraf is considered a utility cricketer because of his bowling and ability to bat in the late order. He came to the national side with a lot of promise in 2008 but till date has played only three ODIs. His progress was hin-

dered by an ICL stint and the BPL match-fixing controversy but former Indian spinner Venkatapathy Raju's positive feedback during the recent HP training camp saw the 34-year old left-arm spinner recalled into the 20-member ODI Pool.

Taskin was the automatic choice when the selectors settled on picking four pacers, but the board is yet to ascertain when they will get the results of Taskin's bowling action review.

The sources confirmed that as per the new selection procedure the three selectors and head coach Chandika Hathurusingha met with the cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan, who is the convenor of the selection panel, to decide on the final squad before sending it to the board president.

National team manager Khaled Mahmud, who is also a member of the selection panel, was supposed to convey the opinions and desires of captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan but the former national skipper is abroad.



The last time Mosharraf Hossain played for the Tigers was against South Africa at Dhaka in March 2008. More than eight years later, he is reportedly close to making the cut in the 14-member squad for the Afghanistan series and it may well be the 34-year-old's last chance to impress.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Cricket returns with Afghans' arrival

Dutch-Bangla Bank named title sponsors of BD-Afg series

SPORTS REPORTER



Cricket fever is all set to grip the cricket-crazy fans in the country after a long break with the arrival of the Afghanistan team this afternoon. It will be the first bilateral series against Bangladesh for the war-torn ICC associate member country. The three-match ODI series will be followed by a three-match ODI and two-match Test series against England in October.

The series will be named after Rocket Dutch-Bangla Bank Mobile Banking Bangladesh-Afghanistan ODI series as Dutch-Bangla Bank won the title sponsorship right for all BCB home international commitments for next two years from T Impress Matra Consortium, which got the title sponsorship and in-stadia sponsorship rights for a period of two years starting from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2018 as the highest bidder.

The two sides will play the three-match series on September 25, 28 and October 1 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and before that Afghanistan is scheduled to play a practice match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on September 23.

BCB XI SQUAD
Imrul Kayes, Anamul Hoque, Mosaddek Hossain, Shabbir Rahman, Litton Das, Shuvagata Hom, Abu Hider Rony, Sanjamul Islam, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Al-Amin (Jr), Shuvashish Roy, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and



THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE: Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha has a captive audience in the Tigers batsmen as he revisits his playing days with a casual hit on the centre wicket of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium during the practice session yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

The BCB selection panel named a 13-member team for the practice match against Afghanistan.

Bangladesh and Afghanistan have so far played two ODIs and equally shared the honour as Afghanistan beat Bangladesh in the Asia Cup 2014

in Fatullah but lost in the 2015 World Cup in Australia against the Tigers.

In their only bilateral series against a full member nation, in October 2015 against Zimbabwe, Afghanistan emerged winners by a 3-2 margin.

Green-tops wanted for NCL

SPORTS REPORTER



Once again the selectors asked for green-top pitches for the four-day National Cricket League (NCL), which will start from September 25.

Although their track record of keeping this promise is not encouraging, Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) director and tournament committee chairman Saiful Islam Swapan said yesterday that they have prepared bouncy tracks in all four venues in Bogra, Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet as per the selectors' desire.

Chief selector Minhajul Abedin was also hopeful this time. "We were asking for green-

top pitches as we have the New Zealand tour after the two home series against Afghanistan and England. I am hopeful this time the matches will be played on pitches prepared as per our desire."

Selector Habibur Bashar echoed the sentiment. "The NCL is going to take place on fresh pitches as the season will start with this first-class tournament. And there is a three-day gap between matches, so we can hope for the best. I think the national players will be benefited if they can play some matches on green pitches ahead of the New Zealand tour."

Swapan informed that they have decided to increase the match fee of the players from Tk 21,000 to Tk 25,000 this year.

BCB plans Sydney camp for NZ tour

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to arrange a short camp in Sydney as part of the Tigers' preparation for the New Zealand tour in December and January next year.

According to close sources the board all but confirmed the arrangement as per the wish of head coach Chandika Hathurusingha. Ahead of the 2015 ICC World Cup in Australia-New Zealand a similar conditioning camp took place in Brisbane.

The Tigers are likely to fly for Sydney on December 9 to attend the camp till December 18 before leaving for New Zealand where they will play three ODIs, three T20Is and two Tests against the Black Caps. There is a chance that a few players will fly later if the BPL final takes place on December 9.

Ishant out of first Test

AFP, Kanpur

Indian pace bowler Ishant Sharma was Tuesday ruled out of the first Test against New Zealand after contracting the mosquito-borne disease chikungunya.

"Ishant Sharma is recovering from chikungunya and will not be available for the first Test match," coach Anil Kumble told reporters in Kanpur, where the opening Test starts on Thursday.

Kumble said a replacement has not been sought for Sharma in the 15-member squad that includes three other fast bowlers -- Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav.

Kulasekara out on bail

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka seamer Nuwan Kulasekara has been released on bail after he was involved in a crash that resulted in the death of a 28-year-old motorcyclist, the country's cricket board said.

Kulasekara, 34, was returning to Colombo from Kandy on Monday when the motorcyclist, travelling in the opposite direction, lost control of his bike while trying to overtake a bus and got flung into the cricketer's path.

"Kulasekara is currently enlarged on bail by the Kadawatha Chief Magistrate pending completion of the investigation," Sri Lanka cricket said in a statement.

The right-arm medium pace bowler played 21 Tests but retired from the longest format in June to focus on limited overs cricket.

4TH BOYS' U-18 ASIA CUP Hosts eyeing final

SPORTS REPORTER



Hosts Bangladesh will have their eyes on the final of the 4th Boys' U-18 Asia Cup when the seven-nation hockey tournament gets underway at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium on Saturday.

Bangladesh will play their first match of Pool A against India on the opening day, with Oman being the other team in that pool. Pool B features Pakistan, China, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong.

"Considering previous records of age-group teams, we are hopeful about reaching the final this time. As India are a strong side, our target will be to beat Pakistan [in semifinals] and reach the final," hoped Bangladesh Hockey Federation's vice president Khaza Rahmatullah at a press briefing yesterday.

"The boys have been preparing for nearly two months and they have played a couple of practice matches against Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Navy. They will play another warm-up match tomorrow [Wednesday] against Army," Rahmatullah said, adding that the under-18 team includes four national players - Rumman Sarker, Fazle Rabbi, Arshad Hossain and Ashrafur Islam.

India and Chinese Taipei were scheduled to land here last night while the other teams are scheduled to arrive tomorrow.

Beximco Group is sponsoring the tournament as part of the company's long-term plan to be involved with the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF), said the company's director Azmol Kabir.

BHF general secretary Abdus Sadeque, vice president Shafiullah Al Munir, joint secretary Anvir Adel and members Ehsan Rana and Rafiqul Islam Kamal were, among others, present at the press conference.

India aim at NZ in 500th Test

AFP, Kanpur



Sachin Tendulkar and Kapil Dev will be among the icons celebrating India's 500th Test in Kanpur this week as Virat Kohli's team

begin their quest to regain the top spot in the world rankings against a dangerous New Zealand.

The match marks both the start of a three-Test series against the Black Caps and a packed programme of international cricket for India, who will also host England, Bangladesh and Australia later this season.

India are strong favourites after their recent 2-0 victory over the West Indies in a four-match away series, which saw Kohli lead from the front by scoring his first Test double century in Antigua.

But their success was tinged with disappointment as they managed to topple Australia at the top of the rank-

ings, only to be leapfrogged by their arch-rivals Pakistan when rain wrecked their hopes of a clean sweep in the Caribbean.

India start the series just one point behind Pakistan, and they will be hopeful of returning to number one before Pakistan play three Tests against the West Indies in October and November.

Inspired by Kohli, India's top order has been in fine form of late -- with the newcomer Lokesh Rahul scoring three centuries in the last eight Tests.

But they can't afford to be complacent after their stunning defeat by New Zealand at the start of the World Twenty20 in March.

Their last Test series with New Zealand ended in a 1-0 away defeat in 2014, a contest which saw the then Black Caps' skipper Brendon McCullum score a triple century.

Although McCullum has since retired, his successor Kane Williamson

is now established as one of the game's finest batsmen and he has already found form in India, hitting a belligerent half-century in a warm-up last week.

Other former captains such as Sunil Gavaskar and Mohammad Azharuddin are expected to join Tendulkar and Dev at Kanpur's Green Park as part of the festivities organised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

The hosts will also be bolstered by the return on home soil of medium-pacer Mohammed Shami, who took 11 wickets in the West Indies after a long lay-off.

Williamson, who has so far skippered New Zealand in just four Tests, said he was excited by taking on such a tough assignment in the early days of his captaincy.

"We have a great bunch of guys and we are enjoying our cricket. We have to keep improving and that's my focus as a captain," he said.



At the ceremony where Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd (DBBL) was unveiled as title sponsors for Bangladesh's upcoming series against Afghanistan, (From L) DBBL managing director K Shamshi Tabrez, BCB Directors Kazi Inam Ahmed and Jalal Yunus and Impress Telefilm Ltd managing director Faridur Reza Sagar talk to the media.

PHOTO: STAR

Walton rewards U-16s

SPORTS REPORTER



The members of the national U-16 women's football team were accorded a reception yesterday by Walton, one of the leading electrical and electronics companies of the country, which gave away monetary rewards to the girls as well as the coaching staff.

Before the start of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers, the event's sponsors Walton had promised to give the team Tk 5 lakh if they could qualify for the final round. The promise was fulfilled yesterday as Tk 20,000 was handed over each to each of 23 members as well as three coaches at a simple reception at the BFF headquarters.

"I want to thank Walton for felicitating us in such a way," under-16 team's captain Krishna Rani Sarkar said. "Even though we never thought about mone-

etary rewards when we took to the field, I think such recognition and incentive will inspire us to do better in future."

Walton's games and sports director FM Iqbal Bin Anwar expressed his happiness to have been associated with women's football and promised to come forward in a bigger way.

"We have been proposed to be part of different women's football activities and we have agreed to sponsor upcoming national women's football championship and inaugural women's beach football, co-sponsor JFA U-14 women's championship and provide as much financial assistance to women's football activities as we can," said Anwar.

The programme was attended, among others, by BFF vice president Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi, members Mahfuza Akter Kiron, Fazlur Rahman and Amit Khan and general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.