

SPORT

NZ squad still up for discussion?

BCB boss wants inclusion of BPL performers

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong

Impressed by performances of certain local players in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon has said that one or two additional performers from the BPL may be included in Bangladesh's preparatory squad for the New Zealand series.

The BCB have already announced a 22-member preliminary squad for its preparatory camp in Australia, set to begin on December 10, and for its tour of New Zealand in December. However, the likes of Shahriar Nafees, Mehedi Maruf and Nasir Hossain, players who have been doing well in the ongoing BPL, have not been included in that squad.

Speaking to reporters at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday, Papon said that he had spoken to the selectors, the coach and the chairman of cricket operations regarding the issue.

"The biggest achievement for us is that the local players are playing well. Mushfiqur [Rahim] is scoring runs again, Tamim [Iqbal] is doing well too. Among the older players, Shahriar Nafees and Mehedi Maruf

are playing well.

"Having seen this I have already conveyed my message to our coach and the selectors and I have also spoken to Akram Khan from cricket operations. I have told them that we will send additional players if required. I have spoken to them and asked them to think about how the good performers from the BPL can be included in the squad," said Papon.

"There may be changes in the squad or some additional players may go. Nothing has been confirmed as yet. My understanding is that one or two players may be included. They [team management] haven't confirmed anything with me yet," he added.

The president's statement yesterday came as a surprise since head coach Chandika Hathurusingha during an exclusive interview with The Daily Star earlier this month had said that the performances of the players in the BPL would not affect Bangladesh's tour of New Zealand.

When Hathurusingha was asked if the BPL would be important in deciding the teams for the New Zealand series, he said: "No. If you wait to plan till the last minute, you fail. The players can enjoy their cricket, but there is nothing to do with BPL."



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Dhaka Dynamites pacer Mohammad Shahid ran through the Chittagong Vikings middle-order, picking up three wickets for 23 runs in his four overs during their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

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SCOREBOARDS

DYNAMITES V VIKINGS

Player	R/B	4s/6s
Muruf lbw b Nabi	33/20	6/1
Sangakkara lbw b Mills	17/22	2/0
Nasir b Mills	20/14	3/0
Mosaddek c Nazmul b Mills	35/26	2/2
Shakib b Nabi	13/7	2/0
Bravo run out	3/4	0/0
Prasanna c Saqlain b Nabi	8/11	0/0
Coles c Elliott b Imran	4/4	0/0
Alauddin run out	5/7	0/0
Sunzamul not out	7/5	1/0
Extras: (lb-2, w-1)	3	
Total: (For 9 wickets in 20 overs)	148	
Did not bat: Mohammad Shahid.		
Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-72, 3-73, 4-93, 5-100, 6-128, 7-134, 8-138, 9-148.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mills	4	0	25	3
Subashis	4	0	42	0
Nabi	3	0	18	3
Mahmudul	1	0	12	0
Saqlain	4	0	26	0
Imran	4	0	23	1

CHITTAGONG VIKINGS

Player	R/B	4s/6s
Tamim c Mosaddek b Bravo	26/35	2/0
Jahurul run out	6/7	1/0
Anamul c Prasanna b Nabi	17/15	0/1
Mahmudul b Coles	20/22	1/0
Nabi c Sangakkara b Shahid	15/10	2/0
Elliott c Nasir b Shahid	8/6	1/0
Nazmul c Sangakkara b Shahid	13/7	2/0
Saqlain not out	9/12	0/0
Mills run out	4/3	1/0
Imran not out	5/3	1/0
Extras: (lb-2, lb-4)	6	
Total: (For 8 wickets in 20 overs)	129	
Did not bat: Subashis Roy.		
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-38, 3-66, 4-84, 5-90, 6-96, 7-112, 8-122.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nasir	3	0	26	1
Shakib	2	0	9	0
Coles	4	0	23	1
Bravo	4	0	25	1
Prasanna	3	0	17	0
Shahid	4	0	23	3

Result: Dhaka Dynamites won by 19 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Mohammad Shahid.

RIDERS V BULLS

Player	R/B	4s/6s
Shahzad c Nafees b Tajjul	14/12	2/0
Soumya st Mushfiqur b Tajjul	14/9	3/0
Mithun b Perera	62/44	6/2
Dawson c Hider b Emrit	46/36	3/1
Afridi c Munaweera b Perera	22/10	1/2
Ziaur not out	2/4	0/0
Senanayake run out	7/4	1/0
Shohag not out	2/1	0/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-5)	6	
Total: (For 6 wickets in 20 overs)	175	
Did not bat: Arafat Sunny, Rubel Hossain, Naeem Islam.		
Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-46, 3-124, 4-159, 5-165, 6-173.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tajjul	4	0	27	2
Al-Amin	3	0	38	0
Hider	3	0	30	0
Kamrul	1	0	12	0
Emrit	4	0	25	1
Mendis	1	0	11	0
Perera	4	0	31	2

BARISAL BULLS

Player	R/B	4s/6s
Munaweera c Shahzad b Shohag	0/1	0/0
Mendis c Shahzad b Afridi	57/53	3/3
Nafees st Shahzad b Shohag	12/9	1/1
Mushfiqur st Shahzad b Dawson	8/11	0/0
Nadif c Soumya b Afridi	41/25	0/3
NLC Perera not out	17/10	1/1
Emrit b Rubel	9/4	0/1
Hider c Ziaur b Rubel	0/1	0/0
Kamrul run out	0/1	0/0
Tajjul st Shahzad b Shohag	6/2	0/1
Al-Amin run out	0/1	0/0
Extras: (lb-6, lb-1, w-6)	13	
Total: (For 10 wickets in 20 overs)	163	
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-18, 3-48, 4-122, 5-135, 6-155, 7-155, 8-157, 9-163, 10-163.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shohag	3.4	0	19	3
Senanayake	4	0	49	0
Rubel	4	0	36	2
Dawson	3	0	16	1
Afridi	4	0	31	2
Arafat	1	0	5	0

Result: Rangpur Riders won by 12 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Mohammad Mithun.

Mash's current quandary

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



He might be the most successful captain Bangladesh has ever produced in limited-overs cricket but at the moment, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is in a bit of a pickle.

Comilla Victorians, the reigning champions of the Bangladesh Premier League, are the only side that have not managed a single win in the BPL this season and so their skipper Mashrafe now finds himself under pressure.

"Life isn't always the same," said Mashrafe, with a smile, while speaking to reporters in Chittagong yesterday ahead of his team's crucial clash against the Rangpur Riders scheduled to take place today.

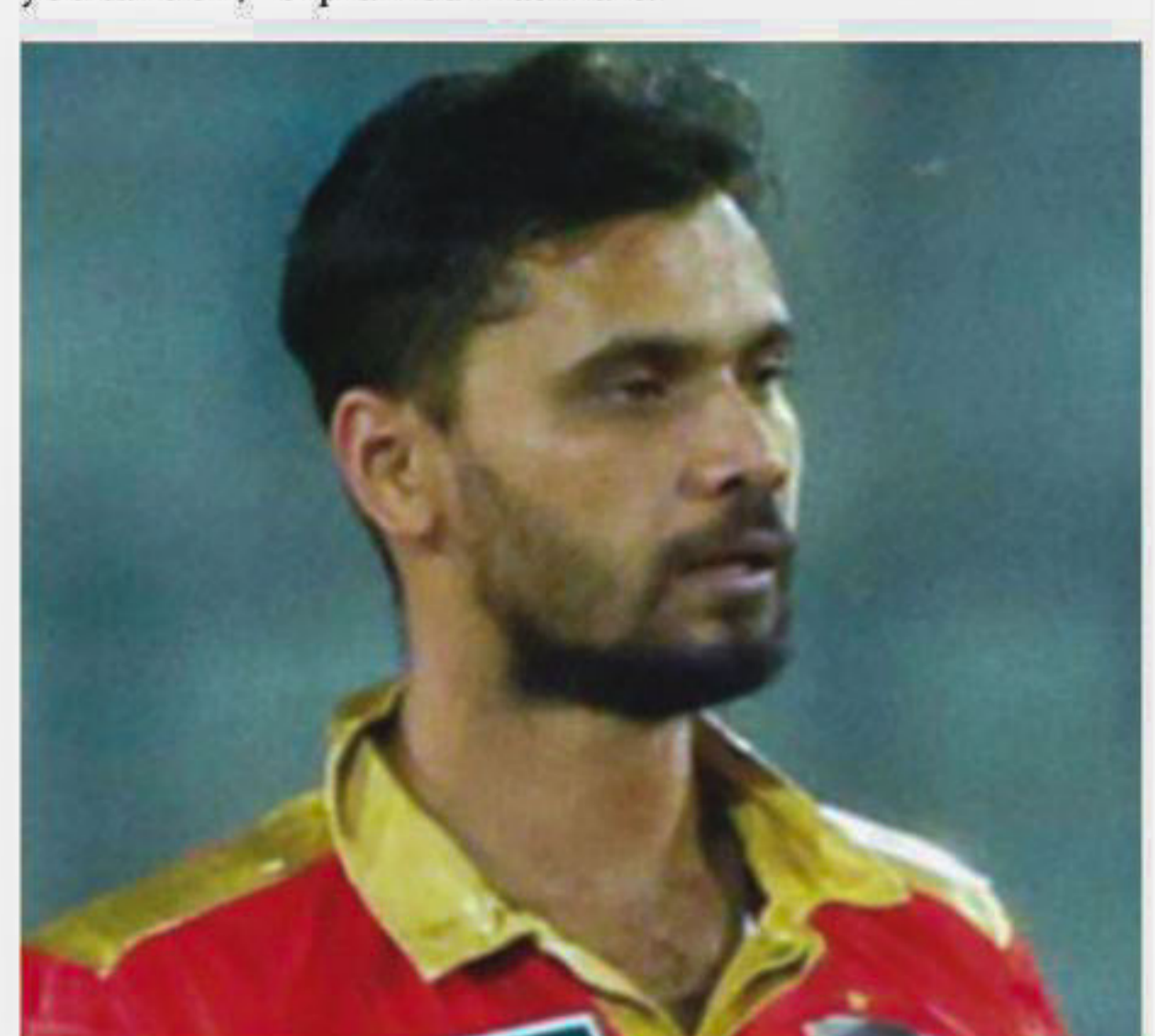
"There are times when you have to overcome difficult moments. No matter how well I have done in the past, honestly speaking I don't think about that. This is a new tournament and a new situation, let's see what happens," he added.

Mashrafe has always been one of those players who rate the value of Tests and ODIs ahead of the T20 format. Whenever he speaks on the topic, he tends to acclaim the versions apart from T20 cricket.

That philosophy however has not softened the blow that his team has suffered since the start of the tournament.

"I always feel that everyone should enjoy T20 cricket. After all, it is entertaining for everyone. But still when your team loses, it obviously feels bad as a player.

"I feel that in T20 cricket a batsman may get out in the first ball. It's difficult to analyse players in this format. So to me, I think the more you enjoy T20 cricket the less pressure you take on," explained Mashrafe.



Unlike last year, the Comilla Victorians have not gelled as a team yet. It was a combination of performances that had led them to the title last year. This year however has been the opposite, with none of the players managing to follow a plan.

Mashrafe reckons that the burden of expectations has gotten the better of his colleagues.

"Right from the start of the league there was a lot of expectation from the players. It's obvious because we won the competition last time. But we didn't even manage to go close in any of the games [this time].

"Now we are in such a position that we have nothing to lose. There are times when players begin to perform once all the expectation disappears. I think right now, we have nothing to lose. All we can do is go out there and fight. Hopefully the current scenario will help revive our players," said Mashrafe.

The Bangladesh captain also reckons that the Victorians need just one win to change their fortunes.

"I don't think we can try anything new. We have a set number of players and if they don't perform then there is no point of trying something new. Just like other teams we do have weak areas. But we have to overcome that like everyone else. What we need right now is one win. In tournaments like these, one win can clear your head," concluded Mashrafe.

Vikings go from bad to worse

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



By the looks of it, the Chittagong Vikings are headed for a distasteful year, almost akin to their last season. With two points in five games, they are sixth in the table and will need a major turnaround to make it to the playoffs.

It is not as though they do not stand a chance mathematically. There are still a number of games left and they are just one win away from entering the top four. However, their confused approach and their lack of confidence make it seem as though they still have a long way to go before they can end up on the winning side.

And truth be told, they seemed a completely different unit during their first game against Comilla Victorians, against whom they scored their only win. However, ever since that game they have been struggling not just to win matches, but also with their team combination.

They dropped Taskin Ahmed due to his lack of form and decided to bank on Tymal Mills and Imran Khan against the Dhaka Dynamites yesterday. Dwayne Smith could not find a place either.

The changes did not work though, as they slumped to their fourth consecutive defeat of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Tymal Mills and Mohammad Nabi each took three wickets to restrict Dhaka to 148 in the first innings. But after the exchange, Chittagong's batting lacked the firepower and they only managed to score 129.

Like in their previous matches, Dhaka made a ballistic start. Mehedi Maruf utilised the Powerplay and hammered six fours and one six during his 20-ball 33 and set the tone. Much to Chittagong's relief, he was trapped in front by Nabi in the fifth over. Nasir Hossain replaced him and continued on his merry way with three fours in his 14-ball 20.

He was however, bowled by Mills with a faster delivery in the 10th over. Mills removed Kumar Sangakkara three balls later and that stopped Dhaka's run flow. They fell from 72 for one to 73 for three in 10 overs.

Mosaddek Hossain came in at four and tried his best to revive Dhaka with a 26-ball 35, however, Chittagong took regular wickets and managed to keep the league leaders in check. At the end, the total did not seem too threatening on a track that looked good for batting.

However, Chittagong's batsmen imploded during the chase. It seemed as though they were under pressure right from the start.

Jahurul Islam was run out in the third over after a mix-up between the openers. That brought Anamul Haque to the crease and at that point of time all seemed well for the Vikings. Anamul was hitting the ball well and he displayed his authority with a brilliant six off Nasir in the seventh over.

He tried to do the same thing in the very next ball but was caught at long on instead.

Tamim Iqbal seemed to be trying to play the role of an anchor but was dismissed in the 13th over for a 35-ball 27 and that's essentially when Chittagong's hopes faded away.

Mahmudul Hasan, Nabi and Nazmul Hossain tried to keep the ship afloat with a few stinging boundaries, but some good bowling from Mohammad Shahid ensured that they did not get away.

Shahid mixed his deliveries well and ended up with figures of three for 23.

After the match, Chittagong opener Jahurul admitted that their batsmen lacked confidence.

"We lost three matches in tandem. So obviously there is a dearth in confidence in our team. Maybe that fear of losing a game is in us because we have lost so many. I think what we need is a win. One win can change the confidence of the players," said Jahurul during the post-match press conference yesterday.

India on top after Kohli, Pujara tons

AFP, Visakhapatnam



Skipper Virat Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara hit majestic centuries to help India take opening day honours as they reached 317 for four at stumps against England in the second Test in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

Kohli put on a marathon 226-run stand for the third wicket with Pujara (119) after the hosts lost their openers early to the England seamers.

Fit-again paceman James Anderson enjoyed his return with three wickets only to see the rest of the English attack face a tough time after the hosts opted to bat first.

Kohli on 151 and Ravichandran Ashwin on one were at the crease when stumps were called.

Kohli made full use of his reprieve on 56 when Adil Rashid dropped him at long leg off Ben Stokes to record his 14th Test century.

The star batsman mixed the right dose of caution and aggression to thwart the English bowling attack at India's newest Test venue. Bringing up his 10th Test ton with a six off leg-spinner Rashid, the in-form Pujara tackled the English bowlers with aplomb.

Pujara, who scored 124 in Rajkot, dominated play during his 204-ball knock, laced with 12 fours and two sixes, before being caught behind off Anderson in the final session.

Kohli carried on the good work with consummate ease in the company of Ajinkya Rahane (23) who lost his cool in the penultimate over of the day as Anderson struck with the second new ball.

The batting duo stitched together a 68-run partnership as skipper Alastair Cook juggled with his bowling options.

England spinners, who gave India a run for

their money in the drawn Test in Rajkot, returned wicketless in three sessions with Moeen Ali and Zafar Ansari taking a bit of a stick.

Ali though did give Kohli a scare after going for an lbw referral, but the third umpire upheld the on-field call even though the ball would have clipped the leg stump according to the ball tracker.

Cricket apart, there was drama when a stray dog forced the umpires to call tea four balls early due to it appearing from behind the sightscreen and evading attempts to chase it from the field.

There are thousands of stray dogs on India's streets, and this was not the first time one has interrupted a sporting event.

In 2011, India was forced to halt its first ever Formula One practice session when a stray dog ran onto the Buddh International Circuit.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: First innings 317 for 4 (Vijay 20, Pujara 119, Kohli 151 not out, Rahane 23; Anderson 3-44)



Skipper Virat Kohli (L) scored an unbeaten 151 while Cheteshwar Pujara chipped in with 119 against England as India posted 317 for four at stumps on the first day of the second Test in Visakhapatnam.

PHOTO: AFP

FOURTH SAFF WOMEN'S C'SHIP BD drawn against India, Afghanistan

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh have been drawn along with holders India in the 4th South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship at the draw of the seven-team women's tournament which was held at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday.

Afghanistan are the other team in Bangladesh's group, Group B, while last edition's runners-up Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan were pitted against each other in Group A. The Championship will start in Shiliguri, India from December 26.

"Generally the host nation stages the draw of the tournament but this time AIFF [All Indian Football Federation] requested the SAFF secretariat to complete the draw. All the participating teams were also invited to attend the ceremony but we received no positive responses," said SAFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal at the BFF House before holding the draw in the presence of SAFF president Kazi Salahuddin.

Bangladesh will start their campaign by taking on Afghanistan on December 29 before playing against India on December 31.

"As BFF president, I don't have any big ambitions from the national women's team at the moment. Instead I want to see how they compete against other opponents as the national women's team will feature a majority of under-16 players.

"Our ultimate target is to perform well in the AFC U-16 Women's Championship next September and we are taking the SAFF Women's Championship as a preparatory tournament for the AFC championship," concluded Salahuddin.

When queried, Anwarul Haque informed that the regional football body plans to hold five youth tournaments, including two women's tournaments, as FIFA will allocate 1 million dollars per year for youth tournaments.

GROUP A: Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan
GROUP B: India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan