

# SPORT

## Fifteen for Champions Trophy, eighteen for Ireland

Shafiu recalled; Nasir in for Ireland

SPORTS REPORTER

Shafiu Islam made a comeback into Bangladesh's ODI squads for both the Champions Trophy and the tri-series tour of Ireland. Nasir Hossain, on the other hand, has been given a spot in the 18-member squad for the Ireland series but was not included in the 15-member squad for the Champions Trophy. On a similar note, Subashis Roy, Nurul Hasan and Shuvagata Hom, who were a part of Bangladesh's ODI squad for their last series against Sri Lanka, were included for the Ireland series and not the Champions Trophy. Nurul, how-



Had Shafiu [Islam] not been injured in the last BPL, he would have played many more games. He has trouble playing back-to-back games, hence we didn't pick him in Sri Lanka, because it's hot there. It will be cold in England. His fitness levels are better. Minhajul Abedin

Nasir [Hossain] has been out of the team for a long time but he played well in the Emerging Cup and in domestic cricket. He has come through a process and will hopefully return to form very quickly. We want him to gel with the team. Minhajul Abedin

ever, will be travelling along with the Champions Trophy squad to England as a back-up wicketkeeper. He will take Mushfiqur Rahim's place if the latter gets injured. Both squads were announced by the selection panel at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The squad that will be travelling to Ireland to take part in the tri-nation series along with New Zealand will also be going to Sussex to take part in the conditioning camp for the Champions Trophy in England. The squad for the Champions Trophy, expectedly so, has not changed much from the previous squad that played the three-ODI series in Sri Lanka. The selectors have kept their faith in Shafiu Islam, who has not been a regular member of the Bangladesh ODI team. Since November 2014, Shafiu has played just four ODIs. He played one ODI against Afghanistan and

the three ODIs against England in 2016. The wiry pacer has been prone to frequent injuries and that is one reason why he has not been a part of the squad for long periods of time. He missed out on the tours of New Zealand and Sri Lanka. However, the selectors reckon that if Shafiu remains fit he could do well in the swinging conditions of England. The only uncapped player in the team is Sanjamul Islam. He was a part of the ODI squad that toured Sri Lanka but did not feature in the main eleven. The 27-year-old left-arm spinner is quite experienced and is being groomed to be Arafat Sunny's replacement in the team as the other slow left-arm bowler. The selectors have decided to give Nasir a go in the tri-nation series in Ireland following his string of good performances in the domestic circuit. He was also

included in the Emerging Cup, which took place in Bangladesh recently, in a bid to keep him close to international cricket. However, it seems he will have to work harder to find a permanent spot in the main eleven considering that he has not been included for the Champions Trophy. Bangladesh are expected to leave for Sussex towards the end of this month. The tri-nation series in Ireland will begin on May 12 with Bangladesh taking on Ireland first. The Champions Trophy will begin on June 1, with Bangladesh taking on England in the tournament opener. As of now, the players, except for Mustafizur Rahman and Shakib Al Hasan, are busy with the Dhaka Premier League. Mustafizur and Shakib, engaged in the ongoing Indian Premier League, are expected to join the team before the Ireland series.

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## Abahani teamwork trumps Junaid ton

Sk Jamal win a thriller; Rupganj hammered

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A combined effort from Abahani helped them overcome a Junaid Siddique century and continue their winning streak in the ongoing Dhaka Premier League yesterday. The other matches of the third round of the league saw Sheikh Jamal scrape past Prime Doleshwar by just five runs and Gazi Group Cricketers comfortably beat Legends of Rupganj by eight wickets. Apart from the Abahani game, which had taken place at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah yesterday, the other two matches at the BKSP were affected due to rain. The game between Sheikh Jamal and Prime Doleshwar was reduced to 38 overs a side. Batting first, Sheikh Jamal rode Imrul Kayes' 67 and Fazle Rabbi's 55 to post a decent 235. The chase was an exciting one. Punit Singh's 83 off 60 balls, which featured 11 fours, set the tone for Doleshwar. The innings helped them rise from 66 for three in 14 overs to 174 for 3 in 29. However, Abdur Razzak got him stumped in the 30th over and that pegged them back. Eventually, they needed 13 runs off the last over with three wickets in hand. Razzak bowled a tidy last over which saw him give away just one run off the first three balls. While he did consider a boundary off the fourth, Sheikh Jamal were safe by then and eventually restricted

Doleshwar to 230 for eight. The other game at the BKSP saw Rupganj bundled out for just 156 in 44 overs. Mushfiqur Rahim was their saviour in the last two games, but even he could not do much this time as he was bowled by Parvez Rasool for 26. Abu Hider got four scalps as Gazi Group put in a dominating finish. After the exchange, Jahurul Islam scored an unbeaten 62, while Mominul Haque posted 44, to lead them to a comfortable eight wicket win. They overcame the total in 36 overs. At Fatullah, Abahani rode on their top four to post a brilliant 327 for six in the first innings. Uday Kaul anchored the innings with a 120-ball 94. Liton Kumar scored a 49-ball 48, while Mahmudullah and Nazmul Hossain Shanto each posted 49. Towards the end, Shuvagata Hom, who has been left out from both the Ireland tour and the Champions Trophy, hammered a 17-ball 44 with seven fours and one six to help them post the formidable score. After the exchange, Shuvagata scalped three wickets and helped stop Brothers' run-flow. Brothers were in the game for as long as Junaid was at the crease. While he stood rock solid at one end for most part of the innings, he kept losing partners. In the 40th over, Brothers were poised at 225 for six with Junaid having reached the three-figure mark. However, he got out in the very next over for a 112-ball 114, studded with eight fours and three sixes, and that ended Brothers' hopes.

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Shuvagata Hom received some bad news from Mirpur, but he gave himself a pick-me-up by smashing a 17-ball 44 and picking up three wickets in Abahani's win over Brothers Union in the Dhaka Premier League at Fatullah yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Siddikur off to mediocre start in Japan

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Ace Bangladesh golfer Siddikur Rahman's campaign in the Panasonic Open Japan got off to a mediocre start as he was tied for 60th with a score of one-over-par (72) on the opening day of the tournament. The 32-year-old finds himself well behind leader Jason Knutzon, who carded eight birdies and a bogey to finish the day with a seven-under-par (64) in the USD 1,370,000 tournament. Siddikur played an unspectacular round, trading two bogeys for a birdie at the Chiba Country Club's Umesato Course. Thailand's Udorn Duangdech and local Satoshi Kodaira shared the second position after hitting five-under-pars (66). PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED T20 Trophy shared

## All eyes on Younis & Misbah

Duo's last Test series, against Windies, begins today

AFP, Kingston

West Indies and Pakistan get a three-Test series underway on Friday at Sabina Park in Jamaica with both teams struggling in the midst of challenging transition periods. Despite victories in both the T20 and One-Day International series earlier in the tour, the tourists have shaped up as a far more vulnerable outfit in the traditional format of the game. The home side, who remain mired in the lower reaches of the international rankings, look set to make further alterations to their line-up in the quest for a consistent winning formula. Pakistan topped the Test rankings last September following their drawn series in England. But a slump of six consecutive defeats, ironically initiated by the West Indies in Sharjah five-and-a-half months ago at the end of an otherwise disastrous campaign for the Caribbean team, has seen them slip to fifth and increased public pressure on Misbah ul Haq to step down as captain. After much speculation Misbah has

announced that this series will be his last before retiring. And only last week fellow veteran Younis Khan, Pakistan's most prolific run-scorer in Test history, also revealed that the West Indies tour will be his last in national colours. Khan goes into the match needing just 23 more runs to become the first Pakistani to amass 10,000 runs in Tests, and while the milestone will be of immense personal significance, of even greater concern to the visiting team is completing their first-ever Test series triumph in the West Indies. Sabina Park's 50th Test since the first was staged in 1930 against England is likely to be an intriguing affair given Pakistan's less than flattering display in their lone warm-up match ahead of the series where they were outplayed in a drawn three-day fixture by a West Indies Board President's XI Trelawny. Three of the representative team who starred with the bat against the tourists - Kieran Powell and the uncapped pair of Vishal Singh and Shimron Hetmyer -- were named in the West Indies squad for the opening Test although it is anticipated that Hetmyer and fast-medium bowler Miguel Cummins will be omitted from the final eleven.

Kraigg Brathwaite, the mainstay at the top of the batting order over the past three years, goes into the match still basking in the glow of his historic effort in the Sharjah Test victory when his unbeaten innings of 142 and 60 guided the West Indies to their first Test win over Pakistan away from home in 26 years. Notwithstanding his outstanding entry to senior international cricket during the limited-over leg of the tour, Pakistan's Shadab Khan may not make his Test debut alongside established wrist-spinner Yasir Shah unless the pitch looks extremely dry before the toss on Friday morning. TEAMS (PROBABLE) WEST INDIES: Jason Holder (capt), Kraigg Brathwaite, Kieran Powell, Shai Hope, Vishal Singh, Jermaine Blackwood, Shane Dowrich, Roston Chase, Devendra Bishoo, Alzarri Joseph, Shannon Gabriel. PAKISTAN: Misbahul Haq (capt), Azhar Ali, Ahmed Shehzad, Babar Azam, Younis Khan, Asad Shafiq, Sarfraz Ahmed, Mohammad Amir, Wahab Riaz, Yasir Shah, Mohammad Abbas.

## Australia name pace-heavy squad

AFP, Sydney

Fast bowlers Mitchell Starc and James Pattinson were Thursday named in Australia's 15-man squad for next month's ICC Champions Trophy in England and Wales. Starc has recovered from a stress fracture in his right foot which sent him home from Australia's Test series in India last month, while Pattinson is fit again after serious shin and back injuries. Selectors have boosted Australia's fast-bowling stocks for the Champions Trophy with Starc, Pattinson and John Hastings joining Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins. "Both James and John have made very good returns from injury and are bowling well for their respective teams... as well as both contributing well with the bat," chief selector Trevor Hohns said. "When you also add Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins to the fast bowling artillery it becomes a very exciting proposition for Australian cricket." Big-hitting Queensland batsman Chris Lynn has also been named in the squad as he returns from a third shoulder injury inside two years, while playing for the Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League. "Our medical staff will continue to monitor Mitchell and Chris' recovery from their respective injuries but we are hopeful they will be fit in time for the team's departure on May 18," Hohns said. New South Wales batting all-rounder Moises Henriques has also been recalled to the side having last played for the national one-day squad against Sri Lanka in August last year. "Moises finished off the domestic season very well and has had a great start in the IPL," Hohns said. "We believe Moises' batting has improved significantly in the past six months and he will provide us with a strong option should he be selected." SQUAD Steve Smith (capt), David Warner, Pat Cummins, Aaron Finch, John Hastings, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Moises Henriques, Chris Lynn, Glenn Maxwell, James Pattinson, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, Adam Zampa.

## Amla century insufficient

AGENCIES, Indore

Jos Buttler and Nitish Rana plundered a hapless Kings XI Punjab bowling to help Mumbai Indians win by eight wickets in an IPL encounter yesterday at the Holkar Cricket Stadium. Chasing a target of 199, which Mumbai Indians reached in 15.3 overs, Buttler hit 77 off 37 while Rana scored an unbeaten 62 off 34 balls. Mumbai Indians now have 10 points from six games. Earlier, opener Hashim Amla's unbeaten 60-ball 104 powered Kings XI Punjab to a formidable 198 for four being sent into bat. Amla top-scored for Kings XI Punjab with his maiden T20 century, while skipper Glenn Maxwell smashed his way to 40 off just 18 balls. Amla struck eight fours and six sixes during his whirlwind knock. SCORES IN BRIEF PUNJAB: 198 for 4 (Amla 104 not out, Maxwell 40, Marsh 26; McClenaghan 2-46) MUMBAI: 199 for 2 in 15.3 overs (Buttler 77, Rana 62 not out, Patel 37; Stoinis 1-28) Result: Mumbai won by 8 wickets Player-of-the-match: Jos Buttler

Bangladesh suffered an unlucky break as their Physically Challenged Tri-Nation Series 2017 final against India was called off due to a wet wicket at the Jagannath Hall ground in Dhaka University. The trophy was shared after Bangladesh and India were declared joint champions. Bangladesh had high hopes of securing the title in the final after handing India a heavy 110-run defeat in the side's last meeting in the group stage, but they were denied by the forces of nature. Bangladesh's Sujaul Islam was named the player-of-the-series, while the bowler-of-the-series, Mozammel Haque, also belonged to the home side. Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Arif Khan Joy handed over prizes to winners.



Bangladesh celebrate with the trophy of the Physically Challenged Tri-Nation Series 2017 at the Jagannath Hall grounds after the final against India was called off yesterday. The teams were declared joint champions. PHOTO: STAR