

RT

Tough task for old faces

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 29-member preliminary squad for the home series against Australia in August, September and the tour of South Africa in September-October. The national selectors, led by Minhajul Abedin, did not include any fresh faces to the long list; instead recalling old faces like Nasir Hossain,

the logic of Musfiquer Rahim keeping in Tests, carrying pacer Shaiful Islam apparently for no reason and the omission of all-rounder Nasir Hossain, who is in form. But it is believed that the current team is more or less a settled one and it will not be an easy task for anyone to force their way in.

In reality Anamul, who played his last international match in November 2015, will need to beat Imrul Kays and Soumya if he wants to get back his place. Nasir, who

2016, the job is also a tough one. "Nobody's place is permanent. If someone fails consistently he will be replaced by another player as there are a number of performers outside the national team. But in reality, at this moment it's very tough," said selector Habibul Bashar yesterday.

"Yes, there are some questions about a few places in the team but I think this team has been doing well and there is hardly any scope to

in the league but the problem was that we could not accommodate him in the preliminary squad but gave him a place in the High Performance team for the Australia tour. We will definitely keep our eyes on this High Performance trip and I think it will be a great opportunity for players like Anamul and Ronny to grab the spotlight," said Bashar.

"We also called Tanvir Hayder because we don't want to dismiss

Afghanistan, Ireland complete their rise

AFP, London

Ireland and Afghanistan have been awarded Test match status, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced Thursday, thereby expanding the number of elite level nations for the first time in 17 years.

The move, which means the two countries become full members of the ICC, cricket's global governing body, shows the number of Test-playing nations from 10 to 12.

Both countries were confirmed as full members after a unanimous vote at an ICC Council meeting during its annual conference in London on Thursday.

Now Ireland and Afghanistan's men's teams will be eligible to play Test cricket, widely regarded as the sport's pinnacle format.

Ireland have established themselves on the international scene during the course of several World Cups, recording wins over Pakistan, the West Indies and England.

Afghanistan's progress has been even more rapid, with many Afghans' first contact with cricket taking place during the 1980s and 1990s, as refugees fled to Pakistan to escape the Soviet invasion.

The ICC announced the establishment of cricket's 11th and 12th Test nations with a statement via its Twitter feed saying: "ACB officials and @Irelandcricket confirmed as Full Members after a unanimous vote at ICC Full Council meeting."

"Both will now be eligible to play Test cricket following a recommendation that

their applications met newly approved member criteria."

Bangladesh were previously the last country to be granted Test status in 2000. But Afghanistan and Ireland have now joined an exclusive club.

Ireland international Gary Wilson welcomed the news with a statement on his own Twitter feed, saying: "An historic day for Irish cricket."

"Years worth of work feels like it has been

PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kays, Soumya Sarkar, Musfiquer Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Sabbir Rahman, Madhira Bin Morata, Mahmudulhaq Riyad, Liton Das, Momtazul Haque, Mehedi Hasan Mirza, Tajul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Anwar Hossain, Saikat Mishra, Kamrul Islam, Rubel Hossain, Nurul Hasan, Sanjaul Islam, Mousaddek Hossain, Muhammad Saifuddin, Anamul Haque, Abul Hasan, Al Amin Hossain, Nasir Hossain, Haidar Ali, Tanvir Hayder, Soumya Sarkar, Shaiful Islam.



Nasir Hossain played the tri-series in Ireland, which would not see Mosaddek Hossain, who has been showing some character, or Sabbir Rahman. Liton, the wicketkeeper-batsman and the highest run-getter in the recently concluded Dhaka Premier League, will have to wait to see whether Musfiquer, who has recently improved his batting, leaves his additional job behind the stumps. For pacer Al-Amin Hossain, who last played an international match during the T20 World Cup in March

make big changes in the team now. One will need to be outstanding in his performance to force the selectors' hands. The main thing is one should always be ready because you never know when the chance comes your way," he added.

It was a bit surprising that pacer Abu Hider, who was the highest wicket-taker in the recently concluded Dhaka Premier League in unfriendly conditions for seamers, didn't get a place in the long list.

"Ronny [Abu Hider] did really well

someone only after one series. And you know we are looking for a good leg-spinner and a pace-bowling all-rounder," he added, referring to the inclusion of Hayder, who played in the last New Zealand tour, and Mohammad Saifuddin. Meanwhile, Australia will arrive in Dhaka on August 18 to play two Tests at Mirpur and Chittagong against the Tigers while the Tigers will leave for South Africa in the last week of September to play two Tests, three ODIs and two T20is.

FULL MEMBERSHIP TIMELINE

COUNTRY	FULL MEMBERSHIP STATUS	FIRST TEST
England	1909	1877
Australia	1909	1877
South Africa	1909	1889
West Indies	1926	1928
New Zealand	1926	1930
India	1926	1932
Pakistan	1952	1952
Sri Lanka	1981	1982
Zimbabwe	1991	1992
Bangladesh	2000	2000
Ireland	2017	--
Afghanistan	2017	--

recognised. There are many people in the background that have made this happen. Current officials, players and management have been major cogs but let's not forget the tireless volunteers who worked so many years to get us where we are.

"Men who played for free and managed for free... As well as for us, this is for them."

Earlier this week, ICC chief executive David Richardson had been optimistic about their applications.

Malinga in 'monkey' trouble

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka fast bowler Lasith Malinga faced an investigation Thursday after he compared a government minister to a monkey following criticism that the country's cricketers were too fat.

Sports minister Dayasiri Jayasekera said he ordered an investigation after Malinga later boasted him for questioning the endurance of players following their failure to reach the Champions Trophy semifinals.

"He is now under investigation for making statements to the media in breach of his contract with Sri Lanka Cricket (board)," Jayasekera told AFP.

"In my criticism of the appalling fitness levels of our players, I did not name Malinga, but he has chosen to put the hat on and attack me," Malinga said.

Malinga told a television network the minister knew nothing about cricket.

"I don't care about criticism from those who are simply warning chairs," he said. "What does a monkey know about a parrot's nesting behavior? This is like a monkey getting into a parrot's nest and talking about it."

"We are trying to create some

'New ideas slowly taking shape'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Andrew Ord yesterday expressed his happiness at the positive attitude of the players of the U-23 team who were involved in a three-day preparation camp at the BKSPP.

The 36-year-old was in Savar to prepare his charges for the next month's AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers in Palestine and conducted five football over the three days. He returned to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday to discuss the tour of Palestine among other issues.

"The players showed a great attitude and were very keen to learn. We have given the players lots of information and new ideas and it is slowly taking shape on the field," Ord replied when asked to evaluate the players.

Before going to BKSPP Ord had conducted two trial sessions to trim the 54-member squad to 36, although he is yet to get all 36 players together due to injuries and players from clubs joining up late.

The British-born Australian said he wants to form a squad with depth so that he can rotate the team during the tight schedule in Palestine.

"We are trying to create some



Andrew Ord (2nd from R) enjoys a friendly relationship with his new charges and the coach has been pleased by the youngsters' willingness to learn and their positive demeanour.

depth in the squad as it will not be possible to play the same 11 players [successively] due to three games in five days," opined Ord.

"To select the right players, the coach has been playing the footballers in the positions they

play in during domestic competitions.

"The training is initially focused on the players' fitness, but the coach is also focusing on training with the ball. He is forming an idea about each player by playing them

position wise," informed U-23 team manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

Ord had earlier declared that nothing would be achieved without training hard and that he would try to inject some confidence into the players and make

the players enjoy the game. He has just started implementing his hard-working philosophy on the ground. At the same time the young coach is a stickler for discipline and off the field.

"On the first day of training, he

[Ord] conducted some drills which were basically bonding exercises. He is friendly with the players and has fun during training sessions to make the players relaxed," Rupu said.

"However, he is strict about discipline. Monetary punishment is given to a player if he is late to training. There are also instructions to go to bed early after having dinner, though the players have an hour of leisure time before dinner," Rupu explained.

The AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers are going to be a tough task for Bangladesh considering the strength of their opponents Jordan, Palestine and Tajikistan, but Ord wants to show character in each of the games.

"It is very important that we are competitive in each game. We also need to have a goal threat in attack while keeping the balance in defence," said Ord, adding that his ultimate target was to unearth players for the national team.

"Ultimately we want [players] who can cope with the demands of an international tournament, so it gives us more options for the full national team selection at the end of the year," said Ord, who will guide the national football team in two international tournaments in 2017. D c c b m e r s

Sarfraz set to be named Test captain

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan's limited over skipper Sarfraz Ahmed, who is still banking on the glory of winning the Champions Trophy, is set to be appointed as the captain of the Test team as well.

A senior official of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that in principle when Shaharyar Khan, the head of the executive committee, and Najam Sethi were in London for the Champions Trophy, it had been decided to promote Sarfraz as Test captain.

"It is now just a formality for the PCB chairman making an announcement when he returns home. The decision has been taken and is final. Sarfraz will take over as Test captain after being appointed deputy to Misbahul Haq on the recent tour to the West Indies," the official said.

He also said that after Shaharyar returns home in a week's time, a meeting of the governing body will be held in which formal approval will be given for the appointment of Sarfraz as Test captain as this is already in the hands of the PCB.

Misbah will be Test captain after seven years in this position following the West Indies tour. He served as Test captain from late 2010 going to become the most successful Test captain for his country.

Pakistan's next Test series is not until September-October when it will play against Australia. The long gap has come about after Pakistan pulled out of a scheduled Test tour of Bangladesh in July. The official said that a committee of former Test players, Haroon Rasheed and Mudassar Nazar who hold key positions in the board and chief operating officer, Subhan Ahmed will also submit its feedback on the performance of the support staff/coaches.

Flintoff to star in a musical

AFP, London

England cricketer great Andrew Flintoff is to try his hand at a different type of live performance – starring in a musical it was revealed on Thursday.

The 39-year-old former England skipper is taking the lead role of Kevin Chadwick in 'Fat Friends' on a tour of England.

The curtain will go up on the show in Leeds, Yorkshire, in November.

Flintoff has also appeared in Mollers' TV drama 'Love, Lies and Records' due to screen on BBC.

"Having had the pleasure of recently working on an episode of it's great to have the opportunity to work with her again," said Flintoff. "I loved the TV series and think 'Fat Friends' The Musical is going to give me a great night out. I'm really looking forward to it."

India's share of revenue hiked in latest deal

AFP, New Delhi

India's share of world cricket revenue will increase from 293 dollars to 405 dollars million under a new deal agreed at a meeting of the global governing body in London, the Press Trust of India reported Thursday.

The deal came after India protested a decision in April to divide revenues more equitably among members of the International Cricket Council (ICC) – a move which would have cost the Indian cricket board a large chunk of its funding over the next eight years.

PTI revealed details of the new agreement ahead of the release of an official statement later Thursday. It said England will receive 139 million dollars, while Australia, Pakistan, West Indies, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh would get 128 million dollars and Zimbabwe 94 million dollars.

An unnamed official for the Board of Control for Cricket in India told PTI that

"the BCCI has agreed to the terms and conditions" of the deal.

India had earlier threatened to withdraw from the Champions Trophy tournament beginning in England on June 1 unless the revenue-sharing deal was restructured.

The deal drawn up in April was aimed

COUNTRY	PROPOSED	FINAL
India	293	405
England	143	139
Australia	132	128
Sri Lanka	132	128
Pakistan	132	128
South Africa	132	128
West Indies	132	128
New Zealand	94	94
Zimbabwe	94	94
Associates	280	240

Ronchi retires

REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand wicket-keeper Luke Ronchi has retired from international cricket but will continue to play in franchise-based Twenty20 tournaments around the world, the country's cricket board said on Thursday.

The 36-year-old played four ODIs and three T20Is for Australia in 2008 and 2009 before switching back to his native New Zealand in 2013.

Ronchi went on to play four Tests, 85 ODIs and 32 T20 matches in total with this month's Champions Trophy match against Bangladesh his last for the Black Caps.

"It was a dream come true," Ronchi said in a statement released by New Zealand Cricket. "I can't think of a better time to have been involved with New Zealand cricket." From the 2015 World Cup campaign, through to the overseas tours of that time and some amazing games and series, it's been a genuine highlight for me."

New Zealand coach Mike Hesson called Ronchi, known for his ability to score briskly with the bat, the perfect team man.

"We'll remember Luke fondly for the energy he created in the field and his selfless attitude towards the team," Hesson said.



Mat	Runs	Hs	Ave	100	50
Test	4	319	88	39.67	0
ODI	85	1397	170	23.67	4
T20I	32	359	51	18.89	0