

# 'Relaxed Shakib gets the best out of us'

SPORTS REPORTER

**AKS BPL 100**  
Shakib Al Hasan led Dhaka Dynamites to the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) title last season and his star-studded side are once again on a mission for a repeat in the fifth edition of the BPL.

Despite losing their tournament opener to Sylhet Sixers, they staged a turnaround, winning their next two games including an eight-wicket thrashing of Sylhet in the opening fixture of the Dhaka leg.

With the likes of Kumar Sangakkara, Shahid Afridi, Kieron Pollard, Sunil Narine featuring in the squad, it could be a challenge for the all-rounder to captain the team, especially in the face of expectations to do well and display leadership qualities.

However, according to the Dynamites West Indian spinner Narine, who participates in T20 leagues the world over, Shakib has those qualities that define a proactive leader.

"Yeah I think when you have a star-studded team it can be a challenge at times but I think he is doing a good job. He is letting all the individuals do what they have to build on their strengths and I think he



SUNIL NARINE

is a relaxed captain and gets the best out of his players," Narine told reporters ahead of today's game against Khulna Titans at the National Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

The 29-year-old became just the third bowler to cross the 300-wicket landmark in T20s when he claimed three Sylhet wickets on Saturday. Narine, who is the first spinner ever to achieve this feat, also added that he looks forward to more personal milestones in the coming days.

"In cricket, I mean you always want to do good and doing good and getting achievements at the end of the day by itself is a lot. It says that you are working on your game and focusing a lot and hopefully there will be more achievements in the future and I am taking it step by step, game by game," he said.

Asked whether it is challenging to perform in a team featuring Afridi and Shakib, Narine informed that it makes the job easier.

"I think the quality bowlers we have actually makes things easier. I think it's less pressure on one individual so that makes it a good team effort. If you don't do well there's someone to fill the gap and do it for the team," said Narine.



Shakib Al Hasan's Dhaka Dynamites juggernaut will look for another strong display when the Bangladesh Premier League resumes today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur after a day's break. Dhaka will take on Khulna in the first game starting at 1.00pm.

PHOTO: STAR

## Ajmal quits cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan spinner Saeed Ajmal announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Monday, two years after losing his wicket-taking bite with a remodelled bowling action that was twice deemed illegal.

During a successful but controversial career, Ajmal was once celebrated as the world's number one bowler in one day internationals (ODIs) and Twenty20 cricket, and was almost as successful in Tests.

He famously captured 24 wickets in three Tests against England in 2012.

But his time in the lime-light was cut short after a temporary ban for chucking saw him return to the sport in 2015 without the same form.

He took just one wicket in two ODIs and a Twenty20 in Bangladesh, his first matches after being cleared to bowl, and was never selected for the national team again.

"I am quitting all forms of cricket after the current National Twenty20 tournament," Ajmal told AFP from Rawalpindi on the phone.

"It was a highly satisfying career in which I achieved whatever goals I set for myself and helped the team win matches."

Ajmal took 178 wickets in 35 Tests, the last of which was at Galle in Sri Lanka in 2014, where his bowling action was reported for a second time. It was first reported during an ODI series against Australia in the UAE in 2009.

He finished with 184 wickets in 113 ODIs, and 85 in 64 T20Is.

## Tamim set to return today

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Tamim Iqbal will return to action today when his side Comilla Victorians take on Chittagong Vikings in today's second match of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"I didn't appear in the first few matches in BPL as I wanted to be fully fit. I was supposed to play the last game against Rajshahi Kings but after consulting with national physio [Bayjidul Islam] I have changed my mind to avoid any risk. Now, after ticking all the boxes I am ready to play the BPL. Let's see what happens," said Comilla Victorians captain.

It is however not yet certain whether Tamim will take the reins immediately, and it may be that Mohammad Nabi will continue his stopgap role today.

Tamim Iqbal sustained a thigh muscle injury during a practice match against a South African Invitation XI on September 21 but played the first Test a week later, which only aggravated his injury. Tamim was retained for the three-match ODI series in South Africa and despite not being hundred per cent fit he played the second ODI before he was ruled out of the remainder of Bangladesh's tour to South Africa.

Meanwhile, under the leadership of Nabi, Comilla have won one match against Rangpur Riders out of three games played so far.



After missing most of Bangladesh's South Africa tour and the first few games of the BPL due to injury Tamim Iqbal (L) is set to make his return to competitive cricket today when his side Comilla Victorians take on Chittagong Vikings. PHOTO: STAR FILE

## 'First target is to win opening Test'

PTI, Kolkata

India's wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha on Monday said that his team's first target is to win the opening Test at the Eden Gardens to set the momentum for the three-match series against Sri Lanka.

"We are yet to see the wicket but the first target is to win the first Test and get momentum to win the series," Saha said after Indian team's first practice session ahead of the opening Test against Sri Lanka from November 16.

Not looking too far ahead of the South Africa series, beginning with Cape Town Test on January 6, Saha said it was about taking it match by match.

"Every match is important and poses a different challenge, there's nothing like preparation. We will go match by match. If we do better here then we will think of the SA series."

Rating Ravichandran Ashwin ahead of others, Saha said the off-spinner posed a big challenge to keep behind the stumps with many variations.

"Ashwin is ahead of others. He has got many variations, also the length varies, so it's tough against him. He has more

variation than (Ravindra) Jadeja, Kuldeep (Yadav).

"We have played many matches in Ranji, India A and during practice. The more you keep, the better idea you develop. It becomes easier after a point. I've always played with them in all my 28 Tests," he said.

India boast of three spinners -- Ashwin, left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja and left-arm chinaman Kuldeep Yadav -- all very different from each other.

"Your 50 per cent job is done mainly by reading the hand at the point of release then you see how it bounces off the pitch and turns. The challenge is to hold on to all the balls, even if it turns or not."

Among the pacers, Saha picked Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami as the seam bowlers who pose a bigger challenge than swing.

"The ball wobbles after it goes past and it becomes tough for the wicketkeepers too. But being swing bowlers, Umesh Yadav and Bhuvneshwar Kumar there's not much of a problem."

Asked whether they would play three spinners, he said: "Ultimately we will decide as per the wicket and see who gets maximum purchase from the wicket."

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