

SPORT



Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was felled by a blow to his left hand from a Sabbir Rahman straight drive during practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Waqar taught me reverse: Hasan

SPORTS REPORTER

Abul Hasan, primarily a pace bowler, burst onto the international stage when he became the first number 10 to score a century on Test debut in 110 years. He achieved the feat against West Indies in Khulna in November 2012, even before he took the new ball.

Since making his ODI debut in 2012, the pacer has managed to play just six wicketless matches and has had to deal with injuries throughout his short career. He played his last ODI against Pakistan in 2015 and the last of three Test matches -- which yielded three wickets -- in 2013.

The 25-year-old -- the only surprise in the 16-member Bangladesh squad for the upcoming tri-series -- earned his comeback in the side through his performances in the 2017 Bangladesh Premier League which ended last month.

The right-arm pacer bagged 10 wickets in as many games for Sylhet Sixers but it was mainly his variations and ability to undo batsmen with his slower deliveries that caught the eyes of the selectors.

According to Hasan, he has improved his line and length and developed a few other pace-bowling tricks, including reverse swing, from Pakistan fast bowling legend and Sylhet Sixers mentor Waqar Younis.

"The BPL was a big factor for me to reach this stage. Waqar bhai was there and I had the belief that I can improve my bowling skills by working with him. I have worked on reverse swing with Waqar bhai, along with slower deliveries. I was able to prove myself, which is the biggest thing and I am confident," Hasan told reporters during a break from the centre wicket training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Although Hasan is not an express bowler which is one of the main attributes for reverse swing, according to the pacer, physical strength is the main thing that he has been working on and said that Waqar has asked him only to maintain what he is doing and also work on his bowling grip.

It will be a huge task for Hasan, who was picked ahead of two BPL performers in Abu Jayed and Abu Hider, and there will be a lot to prove if he wants to have an extended run in the team this time.



Having learned a few tricks from Sylhet Sixers mentor Waqar Younis, recalled Bangladesh pacer Abul Hasan (L) now has the chance to learn even more from national pace bowling coach Courtney Walsh.

Mominul issues reminder

SPORTS REPORTER

The pitch was flat at the BKSP but chief selector Minhajul Abedin still praised the efforts of Mominul Haque, who was unbeaten on 169 after the end of the opening day of the first-round match of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) yesterday.

The left-hander's knock contained 18 fours and two sixes and put Islami Bank East Zone in a strong position against Prime Bank South Zone as they finished the day on 340 for five. While Minhajul praised Mominul's batting, selector Habibul Bashar rued Walton Central Zone batsmen's inability to deal with movement from the BCB North Zone pacers as Central were dismissed for 188 runs at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

Mominul has an unofficial tag of being Test specialist, mainly due to former Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha's aversion to picking him in the shorter formats, and played his last ODI against Sri Lanka in Melbourne in February 2015. Although he was drafted in the ODI squad during the tour of South Africa last year, things have not changed much following the departure of Chandika as the selectors did not consider him for the first two matches of the tri-series despite the team management's long-standing but hitherto futile attempts to solve the number three riddle in the national team.

Mominul's fluent batting -- he scored at the strike rate of 81.64 -- reminded the selectors that he can

SCORES IN BRIEF		
ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE V PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE	Razzak 2-108, Soumya 1-31, Saqlain 2-64	Irfan 57 not out, Taskin 34; Shaiful 2-39, Shubhashis 2-37, Farhad 2-35, Ariful 4-55
Islami Bank East Zone: 340-5 in 83 overs (Imtiaz 33, Liton 20, Mominul 169 not out, Yasir 33, Zakir 47 not out;	BCB NORTH ZONE VS WALTON CENTRAL ZONE	Walton Central Zone: 188 all out in 56 overs (Mehrab 27, Nazmul 42 not out, Mizanur 49 not out)



Prime Bank South Zone batsman Mosaddek Hossain sustained a painful shoulder injury during the first day of their BCL first-round match against Islami Bank East Zone at BKSP-4 yesterday.

be a contender for the number three spot. "I must say Mominul batted brilliantly on the first day," said Minhajul, who was at the BKSP to watch the game yesterday.

The league has been considered as a platform for players like Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar, who were dropped from the ODI squad for the tri-series, to get back among the runs but Liton



MOMINUL... 169 not out

failed for East Zone in the first innings as the right-hander was dismissed for 20 runs and interestingly the bowler was Soumya, who however will need to make his bat speak to get back his place in the national side.

One stat that will be enough to understand the nature of the pitch was that two pacers in Kamrul Islam and Ziaur Rahman bowled only a combined 17 overs out of 83 after a delayed start to the game due to fog.

At Sylhet, pace bowling all-rounder Ariful Haque claimed four wickets, apart from pacers Shaiful Islam, Subhashis Roy's two-wicket hauls and Forhad Reza's solitary scalp that only portrayed the helplessness of the Central Zone batsmen on a pitch where the ball moved a little.

"Not that much, but there was some movement and the batsmen failed to cope against the pace bowlers," said Bashar, who was in Sylhet to watch the match.

Central Zone were bundled out for 188 but things could have been worse had Irfan Shakkur not top-scored with an unbeaten 57 off 55 balls.

Nazmul Hossain and Mizanur Rahman then made a confident start for North Zone, who ended the day at 93 without loss.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

No forgiving 92 off four balls

SPORTS REPORTER

The officials of second division club Fear Fighters, which was one of two clubs suspended for deliberately bowling wides and no-balls in protest of poor umpiring during the previous season, have submitted a written plea yesterday to Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) chairman Kazi Inam Ahmed to be allowed to take part in the upcoming league.

Fear Fighters stated in the letter that they had received a notice from the Bangladesh Cricket Board on December 17, 2017, asking the club to prepare for the upcoming 2017-18 season and to provide a representative on behalf of the club.

However, the club learned from the Inam's statement on December 19 that there will be 22 teams participating in the upcoming Second Division league, as opposed to 24 in the last edition.

Both Fear Fighters and Lalmatia Club were scratched from the league after Fear Fighters bowler Tasnim Hasan conceded 69 runs in 1.1 overs and Lalmatia bowler Sujon Mahmud had gifted 92 runs in four balls on consecutive days, with both matches being against Axiom Cricketers.

But according to the CCDM chairman, there is no chance for the two clubs to participate in the upcoming league.

"The BCB suspended the two clubs due to unsportsmanlike conduct, suspicion of corruption and bringing disrepute to Bangladesh cricket nationally and internationally. The decision was officially announced to the media and the suspension stands," Inam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Zimbabwe to arrive tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Zimbabwe team, who were supposed to arrive in Bangladesh today, deferred their schedule by one day and are now expected to land tomorrow to take part in the tri-nation ODI series comprised of hosts Bangladesh Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

Ahead of the series, Graeme Cremer's side will participate in a tour game against BCB XI on January 13.

Zimbabwe brought seven changes to the team who recently won their first ODI series against Sri Lanka 3-2.

Sri Lanka, with Angelo Mathews at the helm, is scheduled to arrive on January 13. The first match of the series, between Zimbabwe and Bangladesh, will take place on January 15 at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur.

Five-month doping ban for Yusuf

AFP, New Delhi

India on Tuesday suspended former international all-rounder Yusuf Pathan for five months for taking a banned stimulant.

The ban on the 35-year-old, who last represented India in 2012, was backdated so that it ends on January 14.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India said the explosive batsman was routinely tested during domestic Twenty20 competition last year and a sample showed traces of Terbutaline.

But the board said it was satisfied with Pathan's explanation that the substance entered his body through medication while taking a cough syrup and "not as a performance-enhancing drug".

He is only the second Indian cricketer to fail a dope test. In 2013 Delhi left-arm pacer Pradeep Sangwan was banned for 18 months.

Guptill blitzes Pakistan

AFP, Nelson

Martin Guptill was at his belligerent best as New Zealand thrashed Pakistan by eight wickets in Nelson on Tuesday, although captain Kane Williamson admitted a rain delay had done the hosts a favour.

The second one-day international was evenly poised when rain forced the players from the field for more than two hours with New Zealand 64 for two after 14 overs in reply to Pakistan's 246 for nine.

When play resumed under the Duckworth-Lewis system New Zealand's target was revised to 151 in 25 overs meaning they had 11 overs left to make 87.

But the New Zealand skipper also hailed the "brilliant" partnership involving Guptill and Ross Taylor to get New Zealand home with seven balls to spare.

Guptill, 31 off 40 at the break, was 86 not out off 71 deliveries at the end. Taylor advanced from 14 in as many balls to 45 off 43.

It left Pakistan winless after two rain-affected matches in New Zealand with both decided under the Duckworth-Lewis method.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PAKISTAN: 246 for 9 in 50 overs (Hafeez 60, Malik 27, Shadab 52, Hasan 51; Southee 2-57, Ferguson 3-39, Astle 2-50)
NEW ZEALAND: 151 for 2 in 23.5 overs (Guptill 86 not out 86, Williamson 19, Taylor 45 not out; Amir 1-18)

Result: New Zealand won by eight wickets and led 5-match series 2-0.

Player-of-the-match: Martin Guptill.

SA call up Olivier, Ngidi for 2nd Test

AFP, Cape Town

Fast bowlers Duanne Olivier and Lungi Ngidi have been added to the South African squad for the second Test against India, starting in Centurion on Saturday, following the injury which has ruled Dale Steyn out of the rest of the series.

Olivier, 25, has played in five Test matches with moderate success, while Ngidi, 21, is regarded as one of South Africa's most promising young bowlers. **Squad:** Faf du Plessis (captain), Hashim Amla, Temba Bavuma, Theunis de Bruyn, Quinton de Kock (wkt), AB de Villiers, Dean Elgar, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Morne Morkel, Chris Morris, Lungi Ngidi, Duanne Olivier, Andile Phehlukwayo, Vernon Philander, Kagiso Rabada.

Mathews regains captaincy

Sri Lanka name squad for tri-series

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka on Tuesday announced Angelo Mathews would return as skipper for limited-overs cricket ahead of the 2019 World Cup, just six months after the all-rounder stepped down from the post.

The move comes as a surprise after Mathews, 30, quit last July as captain in all three formats of the game following repeated bouts of injury.

Sri Lanka Cricket president Thilanga Sumathipala said the board asked Mathews to reconsider following close consultations with new coach Chandika Hathurusingha and team selectors.

Mathews said he took a few days to decide before accepting the captaincy of Sri Lanka's one-day and Twenty20 teams.

"It is a national duty, and we need stability moving into a World Cup in 18 months," said Mathews.

Dinesh Chandimal remains Sri Lanka's Test captain.

Sumathipala said Mathews was expected to prepare the squad ahead of the World Cup in England and Wales in 2019.



Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews (R) and coach Chandika Hathurusingha address a press conference in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

The returning captain will face his first test this month when Sri Lanka travel to Bangladesh for a tri-nation ODI tournament.

The all-rounder bore the brunt of criticism after Sri Lanka's embarrassing loss to lowly-ranked Zimbabwe in a home Test series last year.

Mathews at the time described the shock defeat to Zimbabwe as the lowest point in his career and a "hard pill

to swallow".

Squad: Angelo Mathews (captain), Upul Tharanga, Danushka Gunathilaka, Kusal Mendis, Dinesh Chandimal, Kusal Janith Perera, Thisara Perera, Asela Gunaratne, Niroshan Dickwella, Suranga Lakmal, Nuwan Pradeep, Dushmantha Chameera, Shehan Madushanka, Akila Dananjaya, Lakshan Sandakan and Wanidu Hasaranga.