

## Zimbabwe; SL to arrive today

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After deferring their arrival for two days the Zimbabwe cricket team finally landed in Dhaka yesterday, in four separate groups, for the upcoming tri-nation ODI series.

Grame Cremer's side, who were earlier scheduled to take part in a tour game against a BCB XI today until it was cancelled, will now participate in a training session at the National Academy ground in Mirpur.

The other tri-series participant, Sri Lanka are scheduled to arrive today. The Tigers will face Zimbabwe in the opening match on Monday at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur.

The hosts will then play a two Test and two T20I series against Sri Lanka. The first Test begins on January 31 in Chittagong while the second will start from February 8 in Mirpur.

The first of the two match T20I series will take place on February 15 in Mirpur and the second will be in Sylhet on February 18.



Zimbabwe batsmen Brendan Taylor and Sikandar Raza get off the bus at the team hotel after arriving in Dhaka last night for the ODI tri-series.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Wages to fall in 2018 DPL

SPORTS REPORTER



The wages for cricketers participating in the upcoming Dhaka Premier League (DPL) saw a dip, with the highest paid cricketer for this season set to get Tk 10 lakh lower than the corresponding figure in the previous season.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) yesterday announced the grading list of 227 cricketers in the DPL players' draft with the top five icon players Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur Rahim set to receive Tk 35 lakh each.

Interestingly despite there being 12 players in the icon grade, aside from the five aforementioned cricketers, the remaining seven players -- Imrul Kayes, Mustafizur Rahman, Nasir Hossain, Mehedi Hasan, Liton Das, Anamul Haque and Rubel Hossain -- will receive Tk 25 lakh each.

This discrepancy was also evident in the A-plus category which features 13 cricketers. Mominul Haque, who was named in the A-plus category, will receive Tk 23 lakh but Saifuddin, Mohammad Mithun and Mosaddek Hossain will get Tk 22 lakh. The other nine cricketers of the category are to be paid Tk 20 lakh.

Similarly among 27 players in the A category nine will receive Tk 18 lakh, followed by payments of Tk 17, 16 and 15 lakh to the respectively selected cricketers.

B-plus category cricketers will get between Tk 12 to 14 lakh, grade B is set at Tk 8 lakh, C-plus is Tk 5 lakh and C category players are to receive Tk 3.5 lakh.

Earlier, CCDM chairman Kazi Inam Ahmed informed that each club can retain five players from the previous season and that the players by choice draft is set to take place on January 20. The players who get selected in the draft will have to be paid 50 per cent of their remuneration before the tournament begins. 25 per cent of the remainder will then have to be paid during the competition while the final 25 per cent will be paid once the tournament ends.

It was learnt though that the players are not happy with the players by choice system as the previous season's players' transfer allowed cricketers to freely chose their respective clubs and bargain their wages.

## A legacy of unprofessionalism?

SAKEB SUBHAN

Chandika Hathurusingha did not submit a coach's report, a standard practice, after the tour of South Africa. That is one of two things that fans of Bangladesh cricket know for certain about the premature exit of the coach under whom Bangladesh has had most success. The other came from the horse's mouth when, in a recent interview, the Sri Lankan said that he quit his Bangladesh post because he could not take the team any further.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had wanted a formal report from the coach, but they confirmed that all they got was a verbal one when Hathurusingha came to complete the final rites in the second week of December 2017. Additionally, Hathurusingha's temporary successor and current technical director of the team Khaled Mahmud said that he did not know about any formal report on the previous tour, the contents of which would have been helpful in guiding the team ahead of their next assignment. The next assignment, coincidentally, is an ODI tri-series and Test and T20I series that involve Sri Lanka, the team currently coached by Hathurusingha.

Since Hathurusingha's resignation midway through the South Africa tour in September-October last year, the reasons for his exit have been shrouded in conjecture chiefly from BCB president Nazmul Hassan. The speculation ranged from current Test captain Shakib Al Hasan asking for a break from Test cricket before the South Africa tour to the players being too intimate with the media.

However, the facts paint a clearer picture of a coach who quit after serving just one year of a three-year contract -- which was renewed mid-2016 -- before failing to submit a report after being at the helm for Bangladesh's worst tour in a decade.

Hathurusingha insisted, in the interview he gave to Cricbuzz on December 29, that he quit because he needed enough time to coach Sri Lanka -- his long-cherished ambition -- before he reached an age when he would want to spend more time with family, and that he had taken Bangladesh 'to the best position' he could, which evidently means seven comprehensive hammerings on a tour of South Africa. If his words are taken at face value, it begs the question of why he signed on for a three-year contract in the first place if he was in a hurry to coach Sri Lanka.

Hathurusingha returns to Bangladesh today as coach of the Sri Lanka team, and he may wonder about the legacy he has left after a three-year coaching stint in this country.

He is a coach feted for his planning and professionalism, but on the evidence of his exit, only the former can be true, and that too when it comes to his own coaching career. Sri Lanka had offered him the position numerous times, but he chose to take it up and desert his post in Bangladesh at a time when the team was at its lowest since the time Hathurusingha took charge in mid-2015. He also left his post without furnishing his employers with a formal report on the South Africa debacle, which can only have hamstrung his former charges for matches against his current charges.

While he has been an integral part of Bangladesh cricket's most successful phase, it will be hard to argue that the manner of his exit has not harmed the team he was in charge of.



CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA

## 'We can now read Chandika's mind'

After Chandika Hathurusingha's departure, the position of head coach for the national team is still unclear who will officially coach the Tigers for the upcoming tri-series and series against Sri Lanka, it appears that technical director Khaled Mahmud has taken the reins. The former Bangladesh captain spoke about the upcoming challenges, Hathurusingha's departure and criticism over having too many roles while speaking to The Daily Star's Bishwajit Roy at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. The following are excerpts from that interview:

### On his challenge as a coach

I am thrilled and obviously this is one of the biggest challenges in my long cricket career. I asked [Ibn Sinha] Jamali a long time ago why we do not have confidence on local coaches. I always searched for an answer to that question. Now, an opportunity has come to me.

[Sarwar] Imran was there as a coach and now our local coaches have proven, notably at the junior level, that they can make plans. I hope you can recall the success of our local coaches with the previous U-19 team. I can say our local coaches are ready to take on bigger challenges.

There was an issue before with execution and planning but I think our coaches are now capable.

Everybody follows international cricket. We have to give the local coaches an opportunity before saying whether they are capable or not. Foreign coaches have gotten enough opportunities in our country. If you speak about real improvement, that only happened during Chandika's tenure.

So you have to be logical when considering a coach's ability based only on success and failure. All foreign coaches are not successful.

If playing against Chandika is being treated as a special challenge

Chandika did really well. A departure always creates some stories, a few true and a few false. But I can tell you the players are taking it as a challenge, especially because they are going against a coach who just left them, so there is something special on the plate, no doubt.

I am really impressed with the way players are training for the tri-series and series against Sri Lanka and they are really pumped up. I saw them earlier but this time I must say they are fully prepared to play the series.

### On his relationship with players

I have a good relationship with all the players. I have seen many of them from an early age, like Tamim [Iqbal]. I emphasise on healthy relationships and always try to support them. I am happy with the way they responded to my responsibilities and planning.

I am a professional and so are the players. That professional relationship is important and in the end it's the players who will deliver in the middle.

Respect is important but I don't think the current national team needs a headmaster coach. Everyone is well aware of what they have to do, their responsibilities.

### On the differences between his strategy and Chandika's

Chandika's strategy was good and that's why we got success under his guidance. But we always felt that there was more we could do and we discussed it but as Chandika had his own plans we could not do much.

In his absence we can now try a few different things to hopefully get better results.

There was a scope for Chandika to fine-tune the team, but it did not happen. So it's a big challenge for me to make it happen now and the players are also ready to do it.

Training individually for an extended period was missing, and it is something we have already implemented. Man management was another big issue. He was technically very good, but perhaps he wasn't that good at man management. Maybe his philosophy was different, he may have liked to impose his methods on the players, but you cannot treat Shakib [Al Hasan] and Mahmudullah [Riyad] the same way. I think we have already moved away from that.

### On pace bowling as the area of concern

All of our development over the past few years has been batting-wise, but our pace bowling department was still lacking. I think not spending enough time in the nets was the reason behind that. Now you will

### Soumya and a change of strategy

He [Soumya Sarkar] will be the best player in the future, but he needed a break. It could have come much earlier. With Soumya, Chandika had a specific plan. But now that we have picked Anamul Haque, our plan will be different.

Anamul is a good batsman, but there are some discussions about him. Some say that he is selfish but he has matured and now knows what to do. I don't want to put any pressure on him and nowadays the rule in international cricket is that if you pick a player you have to give him a few opportunities, like Soumya got. The way he batted in the practice match encouraged me.

### Number three position

You have to give a player enough time to settle into the role. I believe an experienced batsman should take responsibility, some-

Annoying. I don't know whether any other coach got the freedom that Chandika did. Everything coming to an end because of the incidents on one tour doesn't feel right. It should not happen that you will stay with the team during the good times and leave when it sours. As far as I know, he is a fighter. So that sudden departure was a bit embarrassing for all of us. I don't know whether he gave any report on the South Africa tour, but what he said during his last visit was nothing new; we all knew that.

I was stunned when he said there was no scope to go forward with this team although he had said different things earlier. He had many opportunities to achieve something even bigger with this team.

### On criticism over his various roles

[BCB president Nazmul Hassan] Papon bhai is our captain and if he instructs me to bowl a long spell I have to obey it. I never take any job because of my own desire; I never request anybody and I never beg for any post.

If you talk about my new role, barring [Sarwar] Imran bhai, I have had the longest association with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). I worked at BCB with a very low salary and never responded to any foreign offers because my only intention was to be involved with the country's cricket.

Unfortunately nobody respects my eagerness to serve our cricket. I am absolutely not the wrong candidate for the position of head coach but people raise many questions, except about whether I am capable of the job.

Coaching is my profession and also my passion and if I have to choose one out of my many roles, it will be coaching and not necessarily the national team.

Among the board members, a few have spoken against me in the media. I raised that issue in the board meeting and asked them to say it then, in the right platform. Only cowards backbite so if someone has any complaint, please come properly.

There are many who love to treat me as a junior, but they should understand that I have spent a long time in cricket. A certain group and the media also campaigned against me, rather than going into the facts. Just tell them to find out whether I am taking any financial benefits as manager or if I am taking any package for my role as technical director. It is easy to say a lot of things when you are sitting in a glass room but the job on the field is not as easy.

### Ultimate target

We have the ability to win the tri-series and the series against Sri Lanka but execution will be important.

We are dreaming of achieving a 2-0 result in the Test series against Sri Lanka and we are planning how to do that. Shakib and I talked about how we can do that. Our plan could totally fail, and we are aware of the criticism we may face if that happens, but we are will-



Tigers' technical director Khaled Mahmud (R) talks to players during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

see a change in our fast bowling. It was really a concern for us and we worked hard for the last few days and I hope you can see the results in the coming series. We had little time but still.

Mustafizur [Rahman] cannot move the ball into the batsman but we are working on a number of technical issues with him. I don't know if he will be able to find his best in the series or how effective he will be but after he learns to execute properly, he will be deadly.

Unfortunately Rubel [Hossain] and other fast bowlers could not develop like our senior batsmen. Despite being in international cricket for a long time, they could not learn much and I think not spending enough time in the nets was the reason behind that.

one who can build an innings and also accelerate when needed. You will see a change this time.

I also want to focus on batting Riyad at number seven, which is a waste of an opportunity and does not do justice to his talent.

### On neutralising the Chandika factor

At most, Chandika could get a psychological advantage if he knows every player. But it's the player who executes the plan. If you have a machine gun, it will not serve the purpose of a tank.

The senior players and I know what kind of plan or strategy Chandika can apply. We have already analysed the team that he announced for Sri Lanka and it gave us an idea of his planning. We now have the ability to read his mind.

### On Chandika's departure