



BANGLADESH NAME T20I SQUAD

More questions than answers

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan will be leading the Bangladesh squad in the upcoming tri-nation Nidahas Trophy starting from March 6 in Sri Lanka despite doubts persisting over his participation in the first few games as he was yet to fully recover from his injury when the selectors announced the 16-member squad for the series yesterday.

According to sources, Shakib is expected to travel to either Thailand or Australia for treatment between now and the start of the series, and may even join the team in Sri Lanka after the start of the triangular. According to Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan, Mahmudullah Riyad will lead the side in Shakib's absence.

Chief selector Minhajul Abedin had to face a lot of questions over selection as they included pacer Taskin Ahmed, Imrul Kayes

reason behind the left-hander's inclusion, Minhajul came up with an inexplicable answer.

ON IMRUL

"Imrul is the third opener and as he opens in Test cricket we are looking for someone who can play fast bowlers well. The Sri Lankan conditions are likely to assist the seamers where India also plays with quite a few pacers in the side," said Minhajul.

He went on to add that the selectors are banking on Imrul's experience, keeping the recent disappointing home series against Sri Lanka in mind.

There were many questions over Taskin's inclusion as the fast bowler has not performed notably recently. Minhajul informed that Taskin's inclusion was skipper Shakib's choice and later added that it was also the decision of the team management.

ON TASKIN

"The captain said that since we are playing at the Premadasa where the ground is large and



BCB president Nazmul Hassan (C) speaks to reporters as chief selector Minhajul Abedin (L) and board director Jalal Yunus look on during a press conference at SBNS in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



SHAKIB AL HASAN

and Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who was included as the 16th member as the cover for Shakib.

From the squad that played the two T20Is against Sri Lanka, Zakir Hasan, Afif Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Mahedi Hasan and Mohammad Saifuddin were left out and among the newcomers left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam, pacer Abu Jayed and all-rounder Ariful Haque were retained.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan celebrated his comeback to the national team for the first time since the New Zealand tour in December 2016 with a hundred against Prime Doleshwar yesterday as the right-hander was rewarded for his magnificent run in the ongoing Dhaka Premier League for Sheikh Jamal.

Imrul, meanwhile, averages 9.15 in 14 T20Is over eight years and when asked the

SQUAD

Shakib Al Hasan (C), Mahmudullah (VC), Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarker, Imrul Kayes, Mushfiqur Rahim, Sabbir Rahman, Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Abu Haider, Abu Jayed, Ariful Haque, Mehedi Hassan Miraz, Nurul Hasan, Nazmul Islam.

we need someone quick, we picked Taskin who has the ability to bowl yorkers and bouncers. Among all the fast bowlers in Bangladesh, Taskin is the fastest. The team management has a plan for him," Minhajul said.

The chief selector also had to contend with a volley of questions about Sabbir Rahman, who has managed to score just 10, 2, 0, 1 and 1 in his last five international outings.

ON SABBIR

"If you look at his record of the last year he was the highest run getter in T20Is among the Bangladeshi batsmen," Minhajul said. "He has the experience and we have considered him because we are playing against two experienced sides away from home. I am hopeful because he was also picked in the PSL."

According to Minhajul the decision to try out youngsters was in line for preparing a set of cricketers for the next World T20.

Mash stands firm amid BCB chaos

Courtney walsh named interim coach

SPORTS REPORTER



A press release from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on the previous day confirmed that a press conference would announce the squad for the tri-nation T20I Nidahas Trophy in Sri Lanka on Monday at 12.30pm. The venue was mentioned as the media centre area of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

But it was only at 3.30pm that a media boy informed reporters, who were watching the Abahani-Mohammedan clash in the Dhaka Premier League at the country's premier venue and eagerly awaiting the press conference, that BCB president Nazmul Hassan will hold the press meet at the reception zone of the BCB headquarters.

Hassan, flanked by chief selector Minhajul Abedin and other board officials, announced that they have appointed West Indies legend Courtney Walsh, the current bowling coach of the team, as head coach for the tour of Sri Lanka and explained the reason behind the decision.

He then informed that Khaled Mahmud, who was in charge in the last series at home, will act as manager, talked about Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's unwillingness to make a comeback in T20Is, the pending decisions on the batting coach and Mahmudullah Riyad's role as captain in the possible absence of regular skipper Shakib Al Hasan.

After Hassan, it was Minhajul's turn to explain the reasons behind the exclusions and inclusions in the 16-member squad.

But if the delay of the press conference without any explanation was the first sign of the chaos of the day then Hassan's comments on his involvement in team affairs and a few odd explanations from Minhajul, including one about the return of off-colour pacer Taskin Ahmed, only proved that the governance of cricket in the country has not been professional and that the team management is still clueless regarding their planning, much like the recent home series against Sri Lanka. If the delay was because of a long chat regarding Shakib's uncertain fitness it could easily have been done previously and the date and time of the press conference

announced only after the decision was taken.

"I didn't pay much thought on player selection in the previous series because the responsibility was on everybody. What we did is decide on the squad and what can be the eleven... we almost made it final... so there is the involvement," he responded to a question about his involvement. "This time we named the head coach and secondly, I will stay in Sri Lanka to look after everything. I will accompany them all the time," he added.

It could sound like a voice of a passionate supporter of the game but in no way can it be healthy for a team that a board president is involved in all affairs. This indeed depicts that the right men were not in the right places to run the show.

In all that chaos and confusion surrounding Bangladesh cricket, ODI skipper Mashrafe stood firm on his decision to stay retired from T20Is and not give in to the whims of the board.

Turning down all requests and diffusing all the pressure, Mashrafe depicted the characteristics of a true professional player. If only the BCB boss and his officials could take a cue.

Another Fizz effort in vain

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman's stingy run in the Pakistan Super League continued in their game against Karachi Kings last night, but it was not enough to avert a third successive defeat for Lahore Qalandars as they succumbed to a 27-run defeat.

Mustafizur picked up one wicket for 22 in four overs, one of them a wicket-keeper, maintaining a record of conceding less than six an over in his third straight match this season. It helped keep Karachi to 159 for seven, but Shahid Afridi's three for 19 ensured that Qalandars could only reach 132 before being bundled out in 18.1 overs.

Electing to bat, Karachi lost wickets in quick succession early on with England's Joe Denly being the first casualty in the third over. Mustafiz then picked up his solitary but valuable wicket of the day when he trapped Babar Azam leg before in the fourth over for nought.

In reply, Lahore lost Sunil Narine for a golden duck in the first over, but rode back into the game through a 30-ball 44 from skipper Brendon McCullum. He added 50 for the second wicket with Fakhar Zaman, who was Shahid Afridi's first wicket in the seventh over with the score on 70. McCullum departed two runs later, trapped leg-before by Karachi skipper Imad Wasim. Afridi then picked up two more crucial wickets of Umar Akmal and Sohail Tanvir, and Usman Khan choked the life out of the chase with three for 26 off his four.



Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's (L) all-round show propelled Abahani to a 112-run victory against archrivals Mohammedan in their DPL fixture at the SBNS in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Morkel plans to retire

AFP, Durban



South African fast bowler Morne Morkel announced on Monday that he would retire from international cricket after the four-Test series against Australia which starts at Kingsmead on Thursday.

The tall paceman, who has played in 83 Tests, 117 one-day internationals and 44 Twenty20 internationals, blamed the burden of the international schedule for his decision.

Morkel, 33, has taken 294 Test wickets and his tally across all formats is 529.

Morkel said: "It was an extremely tough decision but I feel the time is right to start a new chapter."

Morkel's decision means he will not be

available for the World Cup in England next year.

There were reports last year that Morkel was contemplating playing county cricket in England under the Kolpak regulation, which would make him ineligible for national selection.

Morkel's international career has spanned 12 years in which he formed a deadly new-ball partnership with Dale Steyn, who is currently sidelined with injury.

"I have a young family and a foreign wife, and the current demanding international schedule has put a lot of strain on us. I have to put them first and this decision will only benefit us going forward," Morkel added.

Cricket South Africa acting chief executive Thabang Moroe praised Morkel's contribution towards South African cricket.



A mismatch, a hat-trick and two centuries

SPORTS REPORTER



The so called Dhaka Premier Cricket League derby turned into a total mismatch yesterday when Abahani handed their bitter rivals Mohammedan a massive 112-run defeat at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Defending a fighting 259 on a rain-soaked pitch, Abahani, led by their inspirational captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, bundled Mohammedan out for 147 in 30.4 overs for their sixth straight win. Despite all the hype ahead of the game, the stands were almost empty and the quality of cricket out in the middle was utterly disappointing.

Mohammedan raced to 100 for 3 by the end of the 15th over, showing signs of making it a contest. But then they lost their last seven wickets for 47 runs and

some of the shots their batsmen played questioned their very eligibility to be a part of the country's List A competition.

As it has been the case in the league so far, Mashrafe made the early in-roads. The experienced pace bowler removed the top three batsmen, including Mohammedan captain Shamsur Rahman (3), to finish with 3 for 37.

Off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz picked up three wickets for 28 runs and also dismissed Irfan Sukkur, who scored a team high 40 in Mohammedan's hopeless total.

On a wicket that experienced an early morning shower, Abahani rode on a solid 63 from opener Anamul Haque and a fluent 67 by Nasir Hossain to post a fighting total. Anamul hit four fours and a

SCORES IN BRIEF	
ABAHANI V MOHAMMEDAN	(Hasanzaman 36, Nurul 100, Sunny 31; Reza 4-56, Arafat 2-51)
ABAHANI: 259 all out in 49.4 overs (Anamul 63, Nazmul 26, Mithun 47, Nasir 67, Mashrafe 26; Azim 3-26)	Result: Prime Doleshwar won by 56 runs.
MOHAMMEDAN SC: 147 all out in 30.4 overs (Rony 35, Sukkur 40, Raqibul 28; Mashrafe 3-37, Gony 2-25, Mehedi 3-38)	Result: Abahani won by 112 runs.
PRIME DOLESHWAR V SHEIKH JAMAL	
PRIME DOLESHWAR SC: 293 for 6 in 50 overs (Imtiaz 33, Liton 69, Mahmud 120 not out, Zohaib 38; Robiul 2-36)	
SHEIKH JAMAL DC: 237 all out in 45 overs	



NURUL... 100



SHARIF... 6 for 33



MAHMUD... 120 not out

couple of sixes in his 81-ball knock. Nasir's first score of substance after a lull period contained seven boundaries. Wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Mithun also hit a fine 47.

Away at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, Prime Doleshwar thrived on a fine century from Fazole Mahmud to record a 56-run win against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

Mahmud struck 120 off 101 balls studded with six sixes and five fours as Doleshwar, sent into bat, raced to 293 for 6 in their share of 50 overs. Liton Das also struck a fluent 69. He shared 82 runs for the second wicket with

Mahmud, who also shared a vital 71 runs for the fourth wicket with Zohaib Khan (38).

Sheikh Jamal, in their chase, were all out for 237 in 45 overs despite a valiant 100 by Nurul Hasan Sohan. The tall wicketkeeper-batsman kept his side afloat after they were reduced to 82-6, putting on 123 runs for the seventh wicket with Elias Sunny (31). But the gangling right-hander ran out of partner and eventually departed as the ninth batsman with the score reading at 231-9.

It was Hasan's fourth fifty-plus knock in five games. His consistency with the bat earned him a

call-up in the Sri Lanka-bound Bangladesh team for the T20I tri-series next month.

At the BKSP in Savar, veteran pace bowler Mohammad Sharif picked up six wickets, including a hat-trick, to guide Legends of Ruppangji to a five-wicket win against holders Gazi Group.

The right-arm pacer picked up the wickets of Rajibul Islam (5), Nadeef Chowdhury (75) and Ruhel Ahmed (0) in the last over of the 33-over-a-side contest as Gazi were bowled out for 190 in 32.4 overs. Sharif finished with 6-33 and won the player-of-the-match award.

But the Legends needed a fantastic 102-run stand for the fifth wicket between Parvez Rasool to topple Gazi's total with five balls to spare. Tushar scored a 46-ball 38. Rasool, the right-hand batsman from India, hit an unbeaten 61 off 57 balls that contained five fours and a couple of sixes. Skipper Naaem Islam scored 39 and Mushfiqur Rahim made 22.