



**Nazmul Islam bowls in the nets during a practice session at the BCB Academy ground yesterday as a part of their preparations for the upcoming T20 series against Afghanistan in India.**

PHOTO: STAR

## Nazmul eyes 2nd spot

SPORTS REPORTER



ends for the 27-year-old from Narayanganj.

Nazmul, who made his T20I debut against Sri Lanka during the tri-nation series at home in February this year, has continued to impress with his tight lines and lengths in the shortest format of the game.

Nazmul is now eyeing the second spinner spot on the Bangladesh national team and informed that Shakib Al Hasan is comfortable with the idea of bowling as a pair and that comes as morale boost ahead of the upcoming three-match T20I series against Afghanistan.

"I am hoping to get settled in that [second spinner] spot and more importantly

Shakib bhai told me that he gets more confidence when he gets me as the bowling partner. I am looking to bowl economical spells and Shakib told me to continue doing that as he is there for the breakthroughs and it helps to play as a team. As Shakib is the number one all-rounder I am trying to work according to his suggestions," Nazmul told reporters after a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Although Nazmul has scalped just three wickets from seven T20Is, the left-arm spinner did show his experience of being in crunch situations during the Nidahas Trophy in March, where his 27-run spell from four overs against India impressed the selectors.

Nazmul, who invented the infamous 'snake dance' celebration, also informed that there will be more celebrations as such in the coming days.

"The training is going well and I hope that there will be more such celebrations in the coming days," he said with a smile.

## Wanderers, Azad risk relegation

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Wanderers Club and Azad SC increased their individual risks of being relegated from top-flight hockey as both suffered their eighth straight defeat from nine matches in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League at the Maulna Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Dhaka Wanderers Club succumbed to a 1-2 defeat against Bangladesh Sporting Club, who went ahead in the 15th minute through a strike from Yavinder Singh. Mostafizur Rahman then levelled the margin in the 37th minute but Bangladesh SC's former national forward Iqbal Nadir Price scored the winner in the 39th minute to secure the win, which raised the outfit's points tally to eight points from eight matches and took them out of the red zone while the Wanderers were left to languish at the bottom of the table.

In the day's second match, Wari Club put an end to their four-match long losing streak by posting an easy 5-2 win over Azad SC, after taking a slim 1-0 lead in the first-half.

Billal Hossain stuck twice while Neputi Nitish, Suprojit and Nizam Uddin scored one apiece for Wari, who now have nine points from eight matches. Jisan and Debasish Roy reduced the margin but ultimately could not rescue Azad SC, who are also at the bottom of the table with one draw and eight defeats.

## Is a short-term role worth it?

SPORTS REPORTER



World Cup-winning coach, is as high-profile a name that you can think of and his fact-finding mission through talks with Bangladesh cricket's stakeholders over the past few days seems an encouraging development.

On the other hand, Kirsten left last night after spending barely three days in Dhaka. It has long been known that the high-level South African will not be Bangladesh's coach, but that he would help in the appointment of new coaching staff in a cricketing setup that has been without a head coach since the last man in the job, Chandika Hathurusingha, left the post in November last year.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan said yesterday that Kirsten's role was initially conceptualised as a director of coaches. Hassan had also been promising the arrival of a new coach since the Nidahas Trophy in Sri Lanka in March, when he said that there would be a new head coach by



NAZMUL HASSAN

the first week of April. He then said that a new coach will come at the end of that month.

Around noon yesterday, Kirsten gave new hope. "My task is really to find someone who can help the team quickly. Hopefully in a couple of weeks we'll have someone in place to take the team forward," said Kirsten, and added that there is likely to be a coach before the West Indies tour.

That renewed hope, however, lasted just a couple of hours as in the evening Hassan held a press conference of his own and set a new deadline for coach selection of June 15.

"He [Kirsten] will have to give the



GARY KIRSTEN

decision before the 15th, and then we will interview the coaches. There is also the matter of our own preferences."

The BCB, however, have already spent upwards of five months deciding their preferences. The BCB boss also said, as he had before, that they have a shortlist and that Kirsten has his own shortlist. With their shortlist presumably bearing little fruit, however, it may have been thought that they were deferring to Kirsten's judgement.

However, Kirsten's judgement, gleaned from one and a half days of interviews with senior and junior cricketers, board directors, selectors

and local coaches, will be subject to the board's judgement. Beyond a new shortlist from Kirsten, it is currently hard to see what advantages his nebulous appointment can hold. Neither Hassan nor Kirsten could say with certainty what role he will have beyond the short term, with Kirsten at one point saying yesterday that he will be involved in 'some capacity' through to the World Cup.

Hassan also said that after talks with Kirsten, there is a strong chance that there may be separate coaches for separate formats. "There is a chance that there will be separate coaches for white and red-ball cricket. Or there could be one head coach and specialist format-specific coaches under him."

If his role is indeed limited to making coaching recommendations in the short term, a role unique so far in Bangladesh cricket, should the BCB adopt Kirsten's suggestions wholesale, and if so, is it worth it or wise to make sweeping changes on such a small investment of time? If not, then it has to be asked whether the appointment is at all worth it. These are some of the questions the BCB will have to answer in this new endeavour, which for the time being has a shaky appearance.

## Ganguly against toss abolition

AGENCIES, Kolkata



Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Monday joined Bishan Singh Bedi and Dilip Vengsarkar in opposing the proposal to abolish the toss from Test cricket.

Opinion has been divided among former cricketers since a newly-formed committee of the International Cricket Council (ICC), one that includes ex-international cricketers and coaches, elite panel umpires and match-referees, has mooted the idea of doing away with the toss in Test cricket.

"It remains to be seen whether it is implemented or not. Personally, I am not in favour of toss abolition," Ganguly told reporters here.

If toss is done away with, the game's global

governing body will alter a 140-year old tradition of the game, all in the name of protecting the five-day format's following.

The committee headed by former India captain Anil Kumble will debate whether or not the toss should be removed in an attempt to reduce home advantage held by the host team.

This will be discussed in an ICC meeting in Mumbai later in the month.

Asked about home advantage, Ganguly said, "If the home team loses the toss, the advantage does not stay."

Former Australia captains Ricky Ponting and Steve Waugh have backed a move to scrap the toss, while West Indies pace great Michael Holding and former Pakistan captain Javed Miandad also felt it would encourage an even contest between bat and ball.

## Afridi quashes rumours

AGENCIES, New Delhi

The ICC World XI is set to play a high-profile Twenty20 International against the West Indies at Lord's on May 31. But news came that Shahid Afridi will miss the charity match as the former Pakistan captain is yet to recover fully from a knee injury. But Afridi has confirmed that he will play the game despite the knee issue.

Andy Flower appreciated the commitment shown by the star and wrote: "I would like to express my gratitude and admiration for Shahid's commitment to play against the Windies despite nursing a chronic knee injury. Thanks Shahid" #cricketrelief

## Lack of interest or planning?

BISHWAJIT ROY



It is an encouraging development that Bangladeshi girls are playing various sports in defiance of social pressure and the recent, amazing success story of female age-level footballers has been the most glittering example of a budding women's revolution in sport. The female presence has also been felt in the country's most popular sport, cricket. However, when any sport is played on the international stage, mere participation cannot be a source of glory; instead a team has to demonstrate standard, ability and progress at the highest level. How has Bangladesh women's cricket fared in the face of this reality?

Since making their international debut against Thailand in July 2007 and gaining ODI status in 2011, the Bangladesh women's team has hardly showed any signs of going towards the right direction. The question arises not just because they have just completed a terrible tour of South Africa where they were whitewashed in both the ODI and T20I series, but because their overall performance has not been encouraging.

Many have cast doubts about the ability of female cricketers -- most of whom have braved myriad difficulties in establishing a tradition of women's cricket in Bangladesh -- who have been playing for a long time without any significant improvements, and those in charge love to say that there are not enough female cricketers who can replace them. Sometimes it is also said that a lack of interest among the female cricketers has made things difficult.

Recently, the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) women's cricket wing development manager Nazmul Abedin Fahim also identified the lack of interest and blamed a poor financial structure as reasons for the female cricketers lagging far behind the men at a time when

their counterparts in other countries are progressing by leaps and bounds in terms of skill and fitness, both physical and mental.

"Ever since I have been closely working with them, I felt that the situation is not very encouraging for girls to take the sport up as a profession. Only a few cricketers have been given central contracts and for the rest, there is no scope to earn money, which is why parents are not eager to encourage their daughters to play cricket. Therefore, it's important to look at this issue," Fahim observed.

Interestingly however, local coaches working closely with female cricketers at the grassroots levels to feed the national side do not subscribe to the notion that there a lack of interest among female cricketers is to blame; instead they have identified the lack of long-term planning and proper policies behind the slow progress of female cricketers in the country.

"It's not a lack of interest from female cricketers but a lack of interest from the high-ups in the cricket board that has stopped women's cricket from achieving a

good standard. I have been working with female cricketers for long and Khulna is a hub of female cricketers, as well as Rajshahi, Rangpur and Bogra. There is a lot of interest among girls but there is no proper structure in place," said Khulna coach Imtiaz Hossain, popularly known as Pilu.

"The board has to take feedback from the grassroots level if they want to improve the standard. The District Sports Council currently has no role, no facilities, no grounds and no security and safety measures. The financial issue is a big issue but I think at this moment the main problem lies in the lack of proper planning and sincerity. Just tell me what was the role of Athar Ali Khan as [women's] selector? Did he follow the women's cricket? No doubt he is a respected figure in our country but I have serious doubts about his knowledge of female cricketers. This is just one example about the negligence and how things are going," he continued.

Mohammad Muslemuddin, a coach in Bogra, echoed Imtiaz's view that far from a lack of inter-

est, many have been showing interest in becoming a cricketer. He identified some positives in the current scenario.

"I am not frustrated because it was not long ago that we began our international journey. Yes, we failed to achieve the desired standard but the board are taking initiatives. From my personal experience I can say that there is huge interest but the problem is that we cannot give them a proper platform. We need a long-term policy and must look to other regions to spot some new talents. I also request the board to look into the financial situation. And look, it would not be a big deal for the board to arrange month-long training camps under the BCB Academy for the upcoming players," said Muslemuddin.

"Many female cricketers come but soon lose their interest when they saw no facilities," he added.

So, it is not just a matter of hiring foreign coaches off and on; instead there needs to be concerted effort to improve the standard of women's cricket in the country.



**Bangladesh women's cricket team coach David Capelo (L) instructs his charges during practice at Mirpur.**

PHOTO: STAR FILE

## Faf steers CSK into final

AGENCIES, Mumbai



Faf du Plessis scored a match-winning half-century to help Chennai Super Kings (CSK) reach their seventh Indian Premier League final on Tuesday.

The two-time champions defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by two wickets in a low-scoring thriller at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

It was not a good outing for Bangladesh's ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan as he scored just 12 in Sunrisers' innings and was then taken for 20 off his two overs during Chennai's chase.

CSK will now play the summit clash on Sunday, whereas Sunrisers have to face the winners of the Eliminator between Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals in the Qualifier 2 for the second shot on the final on Friday.

Du Plessis completed the run chase with a six as CSK chased down the 140-run target in 19.1 overs. The South African remained unbeaten on 67 off 42 balls, which included four sixes and five fours, and added unconquered 27 runs off 8 balls with Shardul Thakur (15 off 5 balls).

Earlier, CSK bowling attack utilised lively pitch to the fullest as they restricted Sunrisers to a modest 139/7.

Carlos Brathwaite (43\* off 29 balls), skipper Kane Williamson (24) and Yusuf Pathan (24) were the useful contributors for Sunrisers on a track that offered good bounce.

SCORES IN BRIEF

**Sunrisers Hyderabad:** 139 for 7 in 20 overs (Williamson 24, Pathan 24, Brathwaite 43 not out; Bravo 2-25)

**Chennai Super Kings:** 140 for 8 in 19.1 overs (Du Plessis 67 not out, Raina 22, Thakur 15 not out; Sharma 2-30, Kaul 2-32, Rashid 2-11)

**Result:** Chennai Super Kings won by 2 wickets.



**Opener Faf du Plessis's unbeaten 67 off 42 balls powered Chennai Super Kings to a two-wicket victory against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL Qualifier-1 encounter in Mumbai yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP