

# SPORT

## Can seniors make the difference again?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh team will be a relieved outfit, having gained some confidence through a 48-run win in the first ODI after the heavy defeat in the two-match Test series. Another positive will be that Guyana has been a happy hunting ground for the Tigers so far as they have won the two games played at this venue. The previous one was the 67-run win over South Africa in the Super Eight round of the 2007 ICC World Cup.

So the Tigers will be looking to seal the three-match ODI series when they lock horns with the West Indies in the second ODI at the Providence Stadium at 12:30 am Bangladesh time. Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan said the pitch in Guyana suits the team.

"Obviously the team will try to win every game. But we have to give more effort tomorrow [Wednesday] as I know that West Indies will look to come back strongly and if we can win this game, we don't have to think about St Kitts. Obviously we would want to win that



After skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's (L) four-for, Tamim Iqbal's (C) century and Shakib Al Hasan's 97 won the first ODI on Sunday, Bangladesh will be looking for more of the same from the experienced trio as they try to clinch the three-match series against West Indies in the second ODI in Guyana today.

PHOTO: AFP FILE

game too but tomorrow's game is very important for us.

"But I don't think there will be much difference at St Kitts as it will be a good batting wicket and the boundaries are short too and that may be to their advantage," said Shakib ahead of the training session yesterday.

Bangladesh have so far won two ODI series against West Indies -- the most recent came at home in 2012 with the Tigers clinching the five-match series 3-2 while the first one came in 2009 against a rather

weak West Indies side in the Caribbean.

Bangladesh rode on two of their most experienced cricketers, Tamim Iqbal and Shakib, who registered a 207-run partnership -- the country's highest for the second wicket and the second-highest for any wicket on a slow Guyana pitch.

Tamim registered his 10th ODI ton off 146 balls and although it was the slowest century by a Bangladeshi batsman in the fifty-over format, the left-hander compensated later in the innings to remain unbeaten on 130 off

160 balls with 10 fours and three sixes.

Shakib also played his part but missed his eighth hundred by just three runs. Another experienced campaigner, wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim provided the late launch and smashed a cameo that realised 30 runs off 11 balls.

It was another veteran with the ball as skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza mixed his cutters and slower deliveries brilliantly to take the sting out of West Indies' chase with figures of four for 37 from 10 overs.

"We have to give more effort tomorrow [Wednesday] as I know that West Indies will look to come back strongly and if we can win this game, we don't have to think about St Kitts."

SHAKIB AL HASAN

## A shift to youth?

### Transfer window opens today

SPORTS REPORTER



While the European football transfer market has well and truly heated up, with Cristiano Ronaldo's move from Spanish giants Real Madrid to Italian champions Juventus shaking the club football order, there will be a transfer window opening on our shores today, but one that will probably hardly make headlines.

Local football and its transfers have long lost their sheen even though players ensure a hefty paycheck by courting clubs beforehand as the teams are all but formed ahead of the official transfer window.

Hence the window that opens today -- and concludes on August 31 for local footballers but is extended till October 15 for foreign recruits -- is but a mere formality.

However, at least it will generate a bit of buzz in the football arena, which is going through a lengthy break so as to avoid a clash with the monsoon season and to accommodate the national team's assignments.

The upcoming season, which is expected to get underway through the Federation Cup at the latter stage of October, will likely be more competitive than before, thanks to the two new outfits joining in and as most teams will go for promising youngsters instead of offloading buckets of money on veterans.

Maruful Haque's Arambagh Krira Chakra Shanga won the Independence Cup last season with a very young squad, which could be a reason why more teams are interested in signing up and playing youngsters.

Among the established teams, seven-time premier league champions Abahani are expected to continue their trend of not tinkering with the league-winning squad and will rely on their proven stars to deliver the goods yet again. They are hoping to bring back some of their former stars such as Mamunul Islam, Jewel Rana and Topu Barman, which would definitely make them the team to beat once more.

Three-time champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, who missed the title by five points, are likely to retain 60 per cent of their players from last season, while also roping in the likes of Shakhawat Hossain Ronny and Mesbabul Haque Manik apart from some quality foreign booters to bolster their chances this time.

With some good new recruits, Chittagong Abahani can once again give contenders a run for their money, if not go all the way, after being knocked off the perch of the league table at the fag end of last season.

Saif Sporting Club, another big spender and the early pace setters of last season, will look to take lessons from their previous mistakes and build a more balanced side with quality foreign players this time around.

There is some curiosity though regarding how much of an impression Bashundhara Kings and NoEL Sporting -- the top two finishers of the Championship League last season -- will make in the transfer market and then on the pitch.

The foreigners' quota was increased by one spot for this season -- four eligible for registration including one in the Asian quota, with three eligible to be fielded in a game -- which will likely reverse the trend of the diminishing impact of foreign booters.

## Soumya, Ariful depart for Windies

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batsman Soumya Sarkar and all-rounder Ariful Haque departed for the West Indies yesterday to join the Bangladesh squad for the three-match T20I series, which begins on July 31.

Soumya was also included in the Bangladesh A team for their tour of Ireland and is set to lead the T20 squad later on the tour. The left-hander will join the A team in Ireland, after completing the T20I series against West Indies, and will act as deputy to Mominul Haque for the one-day series in Ireland, which gets underway from August 1.

After the completion of the third ODI against West Indies on July 28, captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will return to Bangladesh while Nazmul Hossain Shanto will join the A team. Bangladesh A will depart for Ireland on July 28 and will participate in a five-match one-day series followed by a three-match T20I series.

The upcoming T20I series in West Indies and the A team series in Ireland will be another chance for Soumya to regain some form as the left-hander has been suffering through a prolonged lean patch.

## ASIA CUP 2018 Tigers grouped with SL and Afg

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will take on Sri Lanka in the opening match of the 50-over Asia Cup on September 15 this year at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. The schedule of the biennial tournament, which will take place in the United Arab Emirates, was released by broadcasters Star Sports yesterday.

Five teams -- India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bangladesh -- have earned direct entries while one of Hong Kong, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Singapore and UAE will fight for the remaining spot.

Group A consists of defending champions India, Pakistan and the qualifier while Group B has Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the Super 4 stage where all four sides will face each other once and two teams with the most points will play the final on September 28 in Dubai.

### SCHEDULE

#### GROUP STAGE

- 15th September: Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka (Dubai)
- 16th September: Pakistan vs Qualifier (Dubai)
- 17th September: Afghanistan vs Sri Lanka (Abu Dhabi)
- 18th September: India vs Qualifier (Dubai)
- 19th September: India vs Pakistan (Dubai)
- 20th September: Bangladesh vs Afghanistan (Abu Dhabi)

#### SUPER FOUR

- 21st September: Group A Winner vs Group B Runner-up (Dubai)
- 21st September: Group B Winner vs Group A Runner-up (Abu Dhabi)
- 23rd September: Group A Winner vs Group A Runner-up (Dubai)
- 23rd September: Group B Winner vs Group B Runner-up (Abu Dhabi)
- 25th September: Group A Winner vs Group B Winner (Dubai)
- 26th September: Group A Runner-up vs Group B Runner-up (Abu Dhabi)
- 28th September: Final (Dubai)

## Mathews returns to captain SL

AGENCIES, Colombo

Sri Lanka's limited-overs skipper Angelo Mathews is back to lead the team in the upcoming ODI series against South Africa, with the selectors naming a 15-member squad on Tuesday.

Uncapped left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya is the lone newcomer in the squad.

Mathews, who was re-appointed as Sri Lanka's ODI and T20I skipper in January this year, led the team in only one game since his reinstatement as a hamstring injury had cut short his captaincy assignment during the tri-series in Bangladesh at the start of the year.

Dinesh Chandimal, who's serving a six-match ban (two Tests and four ODIs), and Danushka Gunathilaka, who has been handed a suspension by the SLC, pending inquiry, for a code of conduct violation, are among the players to miss out from the squad that featured in the tri-series in Bangladesh. Asela Gunaratne, Dushmantha Chameera, Nuwan Pradeep, Shehan Madushanka and Wandu Hasaranga are the other exclusions.

## Faraaz Inter-University football starts today

SPORTS REPORTER



The second edition of the Shahjalal Islami Bank Faraaz Gold Cup Inter-University Football Tournament will get underway today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

A total of 20 teams, split into eight groups, will play in round-robin format in the group stages of the competition. Fareast University and ULAB will face off at 4:00pm after the tournament is officially inaugurated by State Minister for Youth and Sports Biren Sikder while Deputy Minister Arif Khan Joy, and late Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain's elder brother Zaraif Ayaat Hossain, and Shahjalal Islami Bank's chairman Akkas Uddin Mollah will also be present.

The first match of the tournament will, however, take place between State University and IUB at 8:00am, followed by

Bangladesh University and Otish Dipankar University -- both at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

The champion will receive prize money worth Tk two lakhs while the runners-up team will get Tk one lakh. Besides, there will be rewards for the best player, best goalkeeper and top scorer of the tournament.

All this information were revealed at a press conference at the NSC Tower yesterday, where Bangladesh Awami League's sports secretary Harun-or-Rashid, former national team captain Golam Sarwar Tipu, tournament committee's member secretary Sheikh Mohammad Aslam and Zaraif Hossain were present among others.

The tournament is being held in order to encourage youngsters to make selfless and courageous acts, following the footsteps of Faraaz, who gave away his life trying to save others in the Holey Artisan Bakery attack in 2016.



Veteran sports organiser Harun-or-Rashid speaks as Zaraif Ayaat Hossain and others look on during a press conference regarding the Faraaz Gold Cup Inter-University Football Tournament at the NSC Tower yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Federer pulls out of Rogers Cup

AFP, Los Angeles

Eight-time Wimbledon champion Roger Federer has pulled out of next month's ATP Rogers Cup tournament in Toronto due to scheduling concerns.

The 36-year-old Federer said he needs to be prudent about how many tournaments he plays in a season.

"I'm so disappointed not to play at the Rogers Cup this summer," said world number two Federer.

"I had a fantastic time in Montreal last year and always enjoy playing in front of the Canadian fans."

"But unfortunately with scheduling being the key to my longevity moving forward, I have regrettably decided to withdraw from Toronto this year."

Jeremy Chardy of France will take Federer's place in the main draw.

Organizers said the event, which takes place August 4-12 at Toronto's York University, will feature 19 of the top 20 players in the world including reigning Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic and world number one Rafael Nadal.

"It's unfortunate that we won't have Roger in Toronto this summer," said tournament spokesman Karl Hale.

## 'Kohli desperate to score runs'

ICC



Virat Kohli has said that his own form in the England Tests is less important than how India do, but James Anderson isn't buying it.

Prior to the limited-overs series in England -- India won the Twenty20 Internationals 2-1, while England won the one-day internationals by the same margin -- Kohli addressed a media conference, saying, "It doesn't matter whether I get runs or don't get runs, what I want is the team to play well and the team to win."

Anderson, who was given time off from his county cricket assignments to get himself fit for the five-Test series against India, expressed incredulity when asked about Kohli's statement.

"Virat will be desperate to score runs for his team, as you would expect from the captain and one of the best players in the world."

"It doesn't matter if he gets runs or not? I think he is telling lies there," Anderson said light-heartedly when speaking to the Press Trust of India.

Kohli had a horror Test series in England in 2014, the only time he has played the long format in the

country, aggregating 134 runs in five Tests as India lost 3-1. Anderson had his number four times in that series.

"For India to win here, of course it matters. Virat will be desperate to score runs for his team, as you would expect from the captain and one of the best players in the world," said Anderson.

One of the top batters in the world, the India captain had expressed a desire to play for Surrey in June to prepare for the upcoming Test series, suggesting an intention to improve his numbers in England.

"Today, cricketers learn from not only watching match footage but

also from past experiences. So I would expect a batsman of Kohli's quality to have learnt from that last series here," said Anderson, the all-time highest wicket-taker for England in Tests.

"I am sure he is practising hard at certain aspects of his game and that will make the battle between him and not just myself, but him and the rest of our bowlers, a really exciting one."

The deal with Surrey didn't work out because of an injury, but Kohli has shown good form since India reached England. He had scores of 20\*, 47 and 43 in the T20Is and 75, 45 and 71 in the ODIs.

## 2019 WC return for Bravo, Narine?

AGENCIES, Port of Spain



Four big names could make a return to the Windies' ODI setup ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019, according to the CEO of Cricket West Indies (CWI).

Dwayne and Darren Bravo, Kieron Pollard and Sunil Narine have all been asked to take part in the domestic Super50 competition starting in October and prove their worth ahead of next year's Cricket World Cup.

Narine, Pollard and Darren Bravo last made an ODI appearance for the Windies in

2016, while Dwayne Bravo has been out of the frame even longer, last playing the 50-over format almost four years ago.

CWI CEO Johnny Grave told ESPNcricinfo: "The overall message to Pollard, the Bravo brothers and Narine was 'come and play in the Super50 Cup', so that Courtney [Browne] and his selection panel will have all the players in system playing."

The Super50 competition has been moved to October to avoid clashes with various T20 competitions early next year, and Grave stressed the importance of a strong competition if the Windies are going to enjoy a successful Cricket World Cup 2019.