

# SPORT



After a fine performance in the first ODI, Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) was left to rue familiar errors in Wednesday's second match, which included the non-performance of juniors Sabbir Rahman and Mosaddek Hossain (R). PHOTO: AFP

## Another turnaround needed

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite regaining some confidence by winning the first ODI after the disastrous Test series defeat against West Indies, the visitors will once again feel the pressure after Bangladesh snatched a three-run defeat from the jaws of victory in the second game to level the series.

Bangladesh will have to overcome the mental barrier to seal their third ODI series win against the West Indies -- and the second in West Indies -- as the two sides face off in the third and series deciding ODI at Warner Park in St Kitts today. The day game is scheduled to start from 7:30pm Bangladesh time.

There were contrasting performances in the first and second ODIs as, despite remaining on top of the game and needing just eight off the last six balls to successfully chase West Indies' 271 all out, Bangladesh fell prey to the errors that have haunted the Tigers quite often in the past and ended up on the losing side.

It was the seniors once again who provided the platform with first-ODI centurion Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan taking charge after

Anamul Haque smashed a quick 23 off nine balls as the Tigers reached 71 for one after the first seven overs.

Both Tamim and Shakib scored fifties but were guilty of throwing their wickets away in quick succession at a crucial moment when the batting side required some stability.

Mahmudullah Riyad will be cursing himself over his run-out when he, along with Mushfiqur Rahim, had done all the hard work to bring the equation down to 40 off the last five overs.

Mushfiqur once again departed in the last over when Bangladesh required eight runs after the former captain had scored a sensible 67-ball 68.

But the biggest concern for the Tigers is the performance of the junior members of the side, who are yet to step up. Sabbir Rahman once again failed to prove his worth -- the hard-hitting batsman offered a catch at deep mid-wicket from a Keemo Paul full toss after missing out on dispatching two similar deliveries earlier in the innings.

Mosaddek Hossain also could not grab the opportunity. Wafting at thin air and playing out two dot balls after Mushfiqur's departure does not reflect his ability as a batsman.

Bangladesh also need to work on the bowling

and fielding department which cost the Tigers badly. Shakib dropped centurion Shimron Hetmyer on 79 and the Tigers were made to pay as the youngster struck 46 runs off the next 21 balls he faced.

Pacer Rubel Hossain did pick up three wickets but was the most expensive, giving away 61 runs from his nine overs. The experienced bowler went for 22 runs in his last over -- reminiscent of the infamous penultimate over in the Nidahas Trophy final against India in March.

West Indies on the other hand will be much more confident after the win, with skipper Jason Holder's bowling in the last over when he managed to defend seven runs sure to pump up his charges.

Left-hander Hetmyer has been in terrific form, following up his excellent half-century from the first match with a 93-ball 125 -- the second ODI hundred for the 21-year-old.

Another positive for the home side would be the pitch at St Kitts which is expected to provide assistance to West Indies seamers and their big hitters. Bangladesh are aware of that as Shakib stated before the second game that they would ideally want to ensure the series in Guyana.

## Did Sabbir threaten a fan again?

SAKEB SUBHAN



Bangladesh batsman Sabbir Rahman may have landed himself in disciplinary trouble yet again after screenshots emerged of abusive language used and threats issued towards a fan from a Facebook account bearing his name and one he used in conversation with media personnel in the past.

It is known upon good authority that the account 'Shabbir Rahaman Roman' was Sabbir's personal account as he often interacted with the media through the account, which also boasted more than 90,000 followers.

"Players, especially national players, are given definitive guidelines on how to behave with fans and on social media," Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday. "They have been told that they must be very careful when interacting with the public on social media. Since it is out in the public and when it has come to the board's knowledge, if such a breach has occurred it will be referred to the disciplinary committee and appropriate action taken."

A Facebook user, professing himself to be a Bangladesh fan and a Sabbir admirer, posted a sarcastic message about the batsman after he was dismissed for 12 in the penultimate over of Bangladesh's loss against West Indies in the second ODI in Guyana on Wednesday, or Thursday morning Bangladesh time.

The user, a Dhaka University student, poked fun at Sabbir saying that the improvement of 'Sir Donald Sabbir Rahman Bradman' was quite mysterious. Sabbir's account was not mentioned in that remark, but another user replying to his post mentioned the aforementioned account, which is presumably how 'Shabbir Rahaman Roman' came to know about it.

About three hours later, both users got identical private messages from the unverified account, filled with expletives and ending with a threat about how they would regret their words once he, presumably Sabbir, returned to the country. And then both users were blocked.

"I can't understand why he would block me," the user who prefers to remain anonymous told The Daily Star on Friday night.

The Daily Star also verified that the

screenshot was authentic by seeing it first hand on the user's phone. "I am a fan of his and if he plays well in the next match, we will all be chanting his name. Also, I never used a bad word when I posted that message on my Facebook, but he abused me in unspeakable language. I am sorry if I offended him but it was not right to threaten me; he could have just pointed out my mistake instead."

It may also be mentioned here that the account of 'Shabbir Rahaman Roman' was either deactivated or deleted around eight or nine hours after the offensive message was sent and about an hour or two after some media outlets, including The Daily Star, attempted to get Sabbir's side of the story through the team manager in West Indies.

As mentioned, it is fairly well known that this account is Sabbir's personal account. It is common practice for players to have a verified Facebook page to interact with fans and a personal account for friends and family. If true, it is all the more damning because while verified pages are usually left to an appointed social media manager, personal accounts are normally maintained by the players themselves -- which means that it is unlikely that someone other than Sabbir penned the threat.

When asked if there are provisions for harsher sanctions against a repeat offender like Sabbir, Chowdhury said that was an internal matter and not to be discussed with the media.

Sabbir is no stranger to disciplinary breaches and abusive behaviour. In November last year, during a National Cricket League match for Rajshahi in Rajshahi, Sabbir had physically assaulted a young fan during a break in play because the fan allegedly made cat noises as a humorous allusion to Sabbir's cat-like eyes. He had also threatened the match officials with dire consequences if they reported the incident.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan had announced on the first day of 2018 that Sabbir would be banned from domestic cricket for six months, and levied a hefty fine. However, he was allowed to continue playing for the national team -- which to many eyes drastically reduced the punitive effect of the ban as national appearances are the main currency for young cricketers. The six-month ban would also not have affected Sabbir's participation in the most lucrative domestic competition, the Bangladesh Premier League, which was then slated for November 2018.

## BD A to fly for Ireland today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh A team will fly for Ireland today to take on the hosts in a five-match one-day series and a three-match T20 series.

Mominul Haque will captain the one-day squad, with the first match set to get underway on August 1 at the OAK Hill Country Club.

Earlier, the national team selectors informed that they are considering Mominul, who has been labelled as a 'Test Specialist', for the number three position in the Tigers' one-day team.

Soumya Sarkar will lead Bangladesh A for the T20 series, which begins on August 13, and will join the team alongside Nazmul Hossain Shanto after they complete their current assignments with the national team in West Indies.

Wicket-keeper Nurul Hasan Sohan and pacer Taskin Ahmed were also named in the A team and both cricketers will surely be looking to utilise this opportunity to cement a place in the national team.

## Gunathilaka banned

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket board Friday slapped a six-match ban on batsman Danushka Gunathilaka for breaching player rules as police investigated the alleged rape of a Norwegian woman in his hotel room.

Gunathilaka, 27, was questioned by police on Tuesday after his associate Sandeep Jude Selliah, 26, was accused of raping one of two Norwegian women with them in a room at the team hotel.

## Ashwin injury a worry

AGENCIES, London



India's woes with injuries seem to be compounding in England. If it started with Jasprit Bumrah suffering a fractured thumb,

Bhuvneshwar Kumar aggravating his back injury followed soon after. And the latest to join the list of injuries is Ravichandran Ashwin.

The off-spinner has played no part -- with just one day remaining on Friday -- in the ongoing warm-up game against Essex after taking a knock on the right hand during practice. The spinner has been in the news in recent times with pundits calling for the inclusion of the young duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal

even in the longer format of the game. While Yadav is in the squad for the England series, Chahal is yet to break into the Test squad.

However, former India captain Sourav Ganguly has supported Ashwin and said that the spinner cannot be allowed to fade away so easily. Ganguly believes that Ashwin's Test record is really good and he "deserves a lot more opportunities".

"You can't let Ashwin fade away so quickly, because 300 wickets is not a matter of joke," Ganguly told.

"Ashwin has a place in the side. He will reinvent himself because he feels challenged, he knows Kuldeep is up for his Test spot. You saw the leg spin in the IPL, he will get better and he deserves a lot more opportunities."

## Rashid hits back at Vaughan

AFP, London



England leg-spinner Adil Rashid has hit back at Michael Vaughan after the former captain described his selection for the first Test against India as "ridiculous".

Rashid was included in a 13-man squad even though he has opted out of playing first-class County Championship cricket for Yorkshire this season.

His selection for next week's first Test on the back of his one-day form has not gone down well with Vaughan, an ex-teammate of Rashid's for Yorkshire, who described his selection as "stab in the back for county cricket".

Writing in the Telegraph newspaper, he added: "It basically says our county game, the finishing school for our cricketers, does not matter any more and that it is irrelevant."

Rashid, who won the last of his 10 Test caps in Chennai more than 18 months ago, said Vaughan was "talking nonsense" and said his opinions "did not matter to anybody".

"When I mentioned at the start of the year I will not be playing red-ball cricket, he tweeted something then," he said in an interview with the BBC. "He was being controversial and saying his stupid things then too."

"I don't think he has an agenda against me. I played under and with him but sometimes ex-players come out and start talking nonsense about current players. There will be people out there who are not happy. There will be haters, like the pundits who are saying it is a disgrace. That is not my fault."

Vaughan could not resist another dig at Rashid on Friday, tweeting: "I am stupid for wanting someone to prepare to play the No 1 Test team in the world by playing a 4 day game with the red ball."

## Hockey team lose big

SPORTS REPORTER

After having put up a strong fight against South Korea in the first of their five practice matches, the Bangladesh hockey team yesterday suffered a heavy defeat against the same opposition, losing by 5-2 goals in Incheon.

Bangladesh had lost the first match 3-2, with Milon Hossain and Rasel Mahmud Jimmy scoring the goals for the visitors. The two forwards scored again yesterday, but could not help avoid a morale-shattering defeat.

The men in red and green, who are in Korea as a part of their preparations for next month's Asian Games, went 3-0 down in the second quarter of yesterday's match. Milon and Jimmy reduced the arrears, but two more goals from the hosts ensured a big defeat for Gobinathan Krishnamurthi's men.

The third match of the series will be played tomorrow.



Coach Jamie Day (L) smiles as Jamal Bhuiyan replies to a query during a press conference at the BFF House yesterday, on the eve of their departure for South Korea. The 27-man squad will spend two weeks in Korea where they will play three practice matches before flying to Indonesia for the Asian Games.

PHOTO: BFF

## 'Want to make it memorable' Coach says ahead of Korea tour and Jakarta campaign

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national football team left for South Korea in the early hours of Saturday as a part of their build-up for next month's Asian Games in Indonesia and September's SAFF Championship at home.

The 27-member team, which will have a conditioning camp and practice sessions in South Korea, will play three practice matches -- against Guangju FC on August 1, Shinhan University on August 3 and another team that is yet to be decided on August 6 -- over the next two weeks before flying off for Indonesia for the Asian Games on August 11.

All 27 players will be in Indonesia even though the squad for the Asian Games will be a 20-man one, with three senior players and 17 under-23 players while the remaining seven players will continue their practice under the national team's coaching staff there.

The three senior players for the Asian Games squad are: defender Topu Barman, midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan and goalkeeper Ashraf Islam Rana, informed the team man-

agement during a press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday.

Bangladesh have been pitted in Group B alongside Uzbekistan, Thailand and Qatar, with the three group matches scheduled for August 14, 16 and 20 respectively.

Coach Jamie Day was hopeful that

| SQUAD               |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Goalkeepers:</b> | Ashraf Islam Rana, Anisur Rahman, Mahfuz Hasan Pritom  |
| <b>Defenders:</b>   | Shushanto Tripura, Tutul Hossain Badsha, Bishwanath Ghosh, Topu Barman, Rahmat Mia, Wali Faisal, Atiqur Rahman Fahad, Nasir Uddin Chowdhury  |
| <b>Midfielders:</b> | Jamal Bhuiyan, Mamunul Islam, Faisal Mahmood, Emon Mahmud, Mahbubur Rahman Sufil, Mashuk Mia Johny, Fazle Rabbi, Sohel Rana, Mohammad Abdullah, Biplo Ahmed, Rabiul Hasan, Monjurur Rahman |
| <b>Forwards:</b>    | Matin Miah, Saad Uddin, Jafar Iqbal, Shakawat Hossain Ronny  |

his side could win at least one game in this year's event. "The players improved in training over the last six weeks. We can win at least one of the three games in Indonesia. Whatever the result, we want to make the tour-

agement a memorable one by giving our best performance," the 37-year-old English coach said.

The men in red and green had failed to move out of the group stages in the last edition of the Asian Games, even though they managed to beat South Asian rivals Afghanistan in a decent campaign in Incheon.

Day, however, admitted that there is a lot lacking in the team in terms of physical and mental strength as well as not having a potent striker. "All three teams in our group are tough opponents. If some of the players can't perform on any given day, things will be difficult. We will inspect the players in Korea before picking the 20-member team," Day said.

Jamal Bhuiyan, who was also a part of the team that played in Incheon four years ago, said that the team is better this time around.

"I would keep this team ahead of the one from four years ago. We have had good training and we are playing practice matches. Everyone is committed to doing well in Indonesia," the midfielder said.

They know that a good show in Jakarta will bode well for the team in the SAFF Championship, where Bangladesh were knocked out of the group stages in the last three editions.