

SPORT



Sabbir set for six-month international ban

SPORTS REPORTER

Sabbir Rahman is all set to be out of international cricket for the next six months after the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) disciplinary committee recommended that as punishment for the batsman yesterday for abusing a fan on social media and keeping in mind all his past indiscretions.

There is only one formality left before the decision comes into immediate effect, which is the approval of BCB president Nazmul Hassan.

The disciplinary committee has also warned the 26-year old cricketer that another offence would result in a long-term or life ban.

Sabbir's omission from the Asia Cup squad and the BCB boss's comments that his disciplinary issues had an impact on that decision all but confirmed that he was going to face harsh punishment.

"We have recommended to the board president that Sabbir Rahman be suspended from international cricket for six months. We also issued a warning to Mosaddek Hossain. There was no hearing for Nasir Hossain but he may be called in future," BCB director Ismail Haider Mallick informed reporters.

"He [Sabbir] repented. He promised that he would never do such things again. He also admitted to a lot of things," he added.

"We made it clear to him that if there was a repeat of such incidents

and he failed to rectify himself, then he would be serving longer suspensions. He had a loss of nearly Tk 1.5 crore from previous punishments. Some people get their act together, some don't. The board president has made it clear that we will be strict on discipline," he continued.

There were questions about whether

time for a recent incident on Facebook but he said that his account was hacked but we also took other incidents into consideration," explained Mallick.

The immediate effect of the punishment means Sabbir will be out of the national team until the end of February and will be unavailable for the home series against Zimbabwe and West Indies,

TIMELINE OF SHAME

In 2016, Sabbir was fined 30 per cent of his contract money of the BPL for a serious disciplinary breach after taking a female guest into his hotel room.

In September 2016, Sabbir was fined 30 per cent of his match fee and received two demerit points for 'using language or a gesture that is obscene, offensive or insulting' in and ODI against Afghanistan.

In 2017's BPL, Sabbir featured for the Sylhet Sixers and was fined 40 per cent of his match fee after he verbally abused an umpire.

In December 2017, the batsman assaulted a fan during a domestic match and menacingly told match officials to keep it quiet. For this incident, he received a six-month ban from domestic cricket and lost his central contract and was fined Tk 20 lakh.

Sabbir also made headlines for hitting teammate Mehedi Hasan Miraz during a T20I against Afghanistan in June 2018.

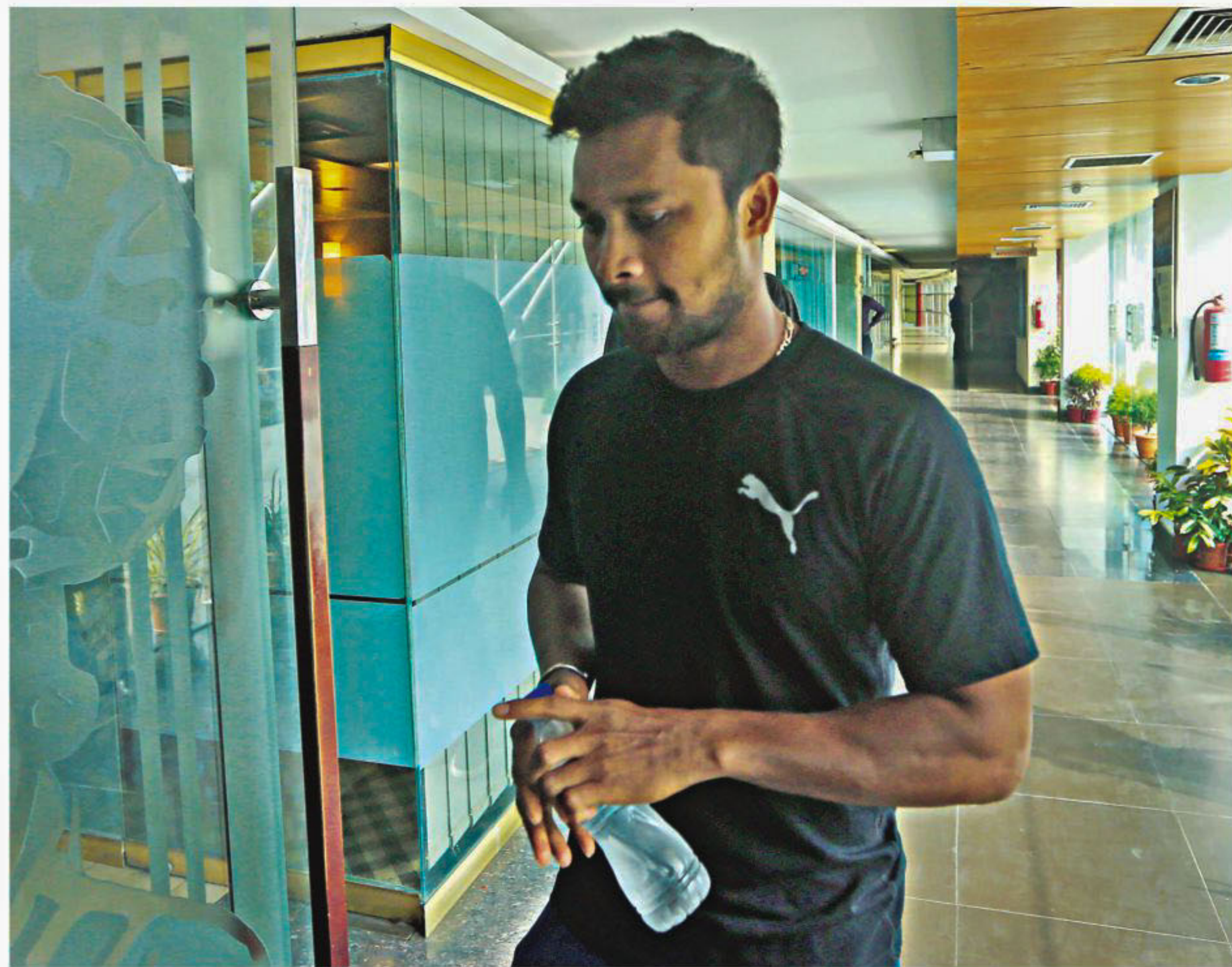
In July 2018, Sabbir threatened a Facebook user who had criticised him during the tour of West Indies. This resulted in the latest ban.

the punishment was not enough for Sabbir, who has made headlines one after another for disciplinary issues.

"How it can be a lesser punishment? This is by no means a lesser punishment. Every player has a dream to represent the country. He was banned from domestic cricket because of his previous offence. We called him this

as well as part of their New Zealand tour. He will also have to fight hard to play the 2019 World Cup, to be held in England.

Sabbir had just finished serving a ban from domestic cricket for physically assaulting a fan during a first-class match last December for which he was fined Tk 20 lakh and consequently lost his central contract.



A visibly sombre Sabbir Rahman is set to appear at the disciplinary committee hearing at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday. He came out with a six-month international ban hanging over his head. PHOTO: STAR

Chayan leaves with no regrets

SPORTS REPORTER from Jakarta

Bangladesh's veteran hockey player Mamunur Rahman Chayan was overwhelmed with emotions after being given a warm and hearty send-off by his teammates, opposition players, and federation officials at the end of his last international match yesterday.

The 30-year-old defender and penalty corner specialist was given a symbolic send-off as he walked through a cordon of sticks made by the Bangladesh and South Korea players. Then he was handed over a crest by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation's general secretary Abdus Sadeque.

A former instructor of Chayan, who is in charge of the logistics of the hockey event here, came and hugged him, urging him to change his mind anytime he wants.

But Chayan is adamant this is the best time to hang up his sticks. A veteran of four Asian Games, the 30-year-old defender chose the Jakarta-Palembang Asian Games as his last act and he feels he is satisfied with whatever he achieved from the game.

"I am satisfied with whatever I have achieved from hockey," Chayan told reporters after yesterday's match. "I have received many phone calls yesterday from my BKSP classmates such as Mushfiqur (Rahim), (Abdullah Hel) Baki and others. Everyone asks me why I am retiring from the international game but I think the time is right. I need to give more time to my family and my three-year-old son," he said.

Chayan made his debut in 2006 and had



been an integral part of the Bangladesh hockey team. However, a dip in form and the arrival of Ashrafal Islam had put this penalty corner specialist's position in the side under pressure.

"I have played four Asian Games and it's not easy to achieve that. I have scored close to 80 goals in 120 international matches. The end could have been a bit better, but I leave with no regrets," Chayan added.

Meanwhile, it was decided by the Bangladesh Olympic Association yesterday that Chayan would carry the national flag in the closing ceremony march-past, which made him even more delighted.

"It's a big honour for me. I am really grateful to everyone -- to my teammates, to my federation and to everyone else," Chayan said.

BPL confirms DRS, foreign umpire

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) will introduce the Decision Review System (DRS) and add a foreign umpire to each game in the sixth edition of the T20 competition; which is likely to kick off from January 5 next year.

BPL governing council member secretary IH Mallick disclosed the additions yesterday after a meeting with the franchise owners at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

He also informed that the players' draft would take place on October 25.

"We sat in on the meeting with the franchise owners today and finalised some decisions. The players' draft will take place on October 25, we will introduce the review system and each team will get one review per innings, one foreign umpire will stand behind the stumps in every match, each team can retain four players and the franchisee must inform the names by September this year," informed Mallick.

"The franchisee can also take two foreign players from outside the registered players but must take the rest from the list. Those foreign players who played in the last edition will also be included in the draft," he added.

Mallick also explained the reason behind their decision of allowing two unregistered foreign players.

"Due to the upcoming elections we have had to shift this season's tournament to January next year and during this time the other leagues around the world will take place. So to fulfil the demand of foreign players we have decided to allow two unregistered foreign players," he said.

Mallick said that the tournament was likely to start from January 5 but if the national elections were held early then it may start from January 4.

Meanwhile, BCB director Sheikh Sohel was named as acting chairman of the BPL governing council. The post was vacant after the demise of Afzalur Rahman Sinha on August 8.

Test on a knife's edge

AFP, Southampton



Jos Buttler's well-judged 69 helped to leave India facing a record run-chase if they were to win the fourth Test against England at Southampton and so level the series.

England were 260 for eight in their second innings, a lead of 233 runs, at stumps on Saturday's third day.

The most India have made to win in the fourth innings of a Test in England is 174 at The Oval in 1971. That match also saw them achieve their first Test win on English soil.

Sam Curran, fresh from his Test-best 78 in the first innings, was 37 not out after adding 55 for the seventh wicket with Buttler.

Adil Rashid (11) was caught behind off a Mohammed Shami leg-cutter off what became the last ball of the day.

The paceman led India's attack with three wickets for 53 runs from 13.5 overs.

Last week saw Buttler display a well-judged mixture of aggression and defence during his maiden Test century, albeit one made with India well on the way to a 203-run victory that left them 2-1 down in this five-match series.

Those same qualities were on display in Southampton, where Buttler made 85 on his Test debut, also against India, four years ago.

They were needed after England slumped to 92 for four -- the 33rd time in 64 Test innings they had been four wickets down for 100 or fewer runs.

Shami took two wickets in two balls separated by the lunch break before running out England captain Joe Root for 48 with a direct hit.

SCORES IN BRIEF

England: First Innings 246 all out
India: First Innings 273 all out
England: Second Innings 260 for 8 (Jennings 36, Root 48, Buttler 69, Curran 37 not out; Shami 2-53, Ishant 2-36)



India captain Virat Kohli (C) celebrates the departure of his England counterpart Joe Root on the third day of the fourth Test in Southampton yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Nine juniors in 20-man squad?

SPORTS REPORTER

Coach Jamie Day ultimately pinned hopes on experienced campaigners by picking 11 senior players in his 20-member Bangladesh squad for SAFF Championship.

Day chose all 11 players who started in the playing eleven in the Asian Games -- which featured three seniors. In the remaining nine slots he included only one more youngster -- Rabiul Hasan -- while excluding the young players like Abdullah, Jafar and Rahmat confirmed a source within the squad last night.

SQUAD: Ashrafal Islam and Shahidul Islam, Tapu Barman, Tutul Hossain, Biswanath Gosh, Sushanta Tripathy, Nasir Chowdhury, Wali Faisal, Faisal Mahmud, Jamal Bhuiyan, Atiqur Rahman, Masuk Mia, Mahabubur Rahman, Biplu Ahmed, Mamunul Islam, Emon Mahmud, Sohel Rana, Rabiul Hasan, Saad Uddin, Shakhawat Hossain.

Hosts get Philippines and Laos

SPORTS REPORTER



With the SAFF Championship set to get underway in the capital from Tuesday, the preparations for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup have also started and the draw for the fifth edition of the international football tournament was completed during a colourful ceremony at a city hotel yesterday.

The Bangabandhu Gold Cup, an

GROUPING	
Group A	Group B
Palestine	Philippines
Nepal	Bangladesh
Tajikistan	Laos

irregular fixture in the game's local governing body's calendar, will be a 12-day event starting from October 1, just half-a-month after the completion of the seven-nation SAFF Championship. The last edition of the Gold Cup was held in 2016, when Nepal U-23 defeated Bahrain



Officials pose for a photo during the draw ceremony of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup at a local hotel yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

U-23 in the final.

Bangladesh were placed in the comparatively easier Group B alongside Philippines and Laos, although both opponents are ahead of the hosts in terms of FIFA Rankings. Group A will feature Palestine, Tajikistan and defending champions Nepal.

Palestine are the top-ranked side in the six-team tournament with 99th position in the FIFA Rankings followed by Philippines (115th). It is mentionable here that both Palestine and Philippines will be playing the 24-team final round of the Asia Cup next year.

Interestingly, hosts Bangladesh are the lowest ranked side in the tournament as they are 194th in the world, behind Tajikistan (120), Nepal (161) and Laos (178).

It has been decided that two venues -- one each in Sylhet and Dhaka -- will host the tournament with six group matches to be held at the Sylhet District Stadium and the rest at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. However, organisers are mulling the inclusion of a third venue -- either Rangpur or Nilphamari -- to host both semifinal matches.

Although it is unclear whether the participating teams will send

their first teams to the tournament, the nations are stronger than those who took part in the previous two editions -- which featured teams like the U-23 squads from Malaysia, Bahrain, Singapore, Thailand, Maldives and Nepal alongside the first teams of Cambodia, Sri Lanka and a Malaysian club named Felda United.

"We have requested them to send their senior teams and also try to bring stronger squads to the tournament," said Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin.

"All the participating teams are stronger this time because we have brought a team from each of the five zones of the Asian Football Confederation. There is nothing to be ashamed of [to lose against stronger opponents] because the Bangabandhu Gold Cup is a learning stage for Bangladesh," said the former national footballer, adding that the BFF were very proud to host the fifth edition of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup as such a tournament is not being held in other countries due to the busy schedules of national teams.

India rest Kohli for Asia Cup

AFP, New Delhi

India's selectors Saturday rested prolific skipper Virat Kohli for the upcoming Asia Cup one-day cricket tournament in the UAE where arch-rivals Pakistan are also competing.

Batsman Rohit Sharma will lead the 16-member squad in Kohli's absence during the regional six-team competition to be held from September 15-28.

"Considering the workload, we have given him (Kohli) rest," chairman of selectors MSK Prasad told reporters in Mumbai.

"He has been playing continuously for quite some time. He's on the road since the IPL (Indian Premier League)... we need to preserve some of the precious players, who are playing in all three formats."

Kohli, 29, is currently leading the Indian side in a five-Test series in England where he has scored 486 runs so far including two centuries.

The England series ends on September 11, four days before the start of the Asia Cup.

The selectors also picked 20-year-old uncapped left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed who has impressed in the shorter formats of the game.

SQUAD

Rohit Sharma (capt), Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Ambati Rayudu, Manish Pandey, Kedar Jadhav, MS Dhoni, Dinesh Karthik, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Khaleel Ahmed, Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah.