



'Have formed the basic structure'

Squad announcement expected on April 18

SPORTS REPORTER

 With less than two months to go for the ICC World Cup in England, some participating teams have already announced their final and preliminary squads for the mega event and for the rest, there has been a lot of talk about the cricketers who may make it to the 15-member team.

Bangladesh national selectors are busy with last-moment discussions as they also have kept a close eye on the ongoing Dhaka Premier League and, according to chief selector Minhajul Abedin, they are going to announce the 15-member World Cup squad along with the lineup for the tri-nation series in Ireland on April 18, five days before the ICC deadline of April 23.

"We are going to sit officially with the World Cup squad tomorrow [Tuesday]. We have already formed a basic structure of the main squad as there are one or two slots that we will decide upon over the next few days and we are expected to announce the squad on April 18," Minhajul told The Daily Star yesterday.

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Keeping UK conditions in mind, it is likely that Bangladesh will name five pacers in the squad. ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Rubel Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman and pacebowling all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin all range

between certainties and strong possibilities. And for the fifth option, names of pacer Abu Jayed and Taskin Ahmed are being discussed.

Taskin injured his ankle towards the end of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) 2019 in February. He was even named for the ODI series in New Zealand and was set for a comeback after picking 22 wickets from just 12 games in the group stage.

The 24-year-old has already started bowling in the nets and is eyeing a return to action through the ongoing DPL.

"Shaon bhai [physio] was there during my bowling session and I later spoke to [BCB chief physician Dr] Debasish [Chowdhury]. They are overall happy with my fitness at this point. I am working as per their plan. I look forward to being back on the field soon," an optimistic Taskin told the media yesterday.

Meanwhile, there was also talk about a surprise inclusion in the World Cup squad as batsman Yasir Ali's name was heard following his consistent performances in the BPL and then in the DPL.

Another young cricketer, Mosaddek Hossain, is also under consideration for the probable World Cup squad, mainly for his off-spin and batting in the lower middle order.

However, the remaining slots of the squads are almost confirmed with the likes of Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar set to be the probable partners of Tamim Iqbal in the opening position.

The Tigers are expected to hold a five-day training camp from April 22 in Dhaka before departing for Ireland for the tri-nation series involving West Indies and the hosts starting from May 7.

Bangladesh will then travel to England and have a five-day conditioning camp at Leicester before the mega event starts from May 30.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

With an eye on the upcoming World Cup in England and Wales, both Mahmudullah Riyad (C) and Taskin Ahmed (R) began rehabilitation for their injuries at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.



Pacer Mustafizur Rahman returned to the DPL all guns blazing, scalping three wickets for just 23 runs in Shinepukur in a match against Gazi Group in Mirpur yesterday. However, on a day when all three fixtures were marred by rain (inset), his heroics went in vain as Gazi triumphed by 21 runs by virtue of DLS method.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fizz's sparkling return in vain

SPORTS REPORTER

The 10th round of the ongoing Dhaka Premier League (DPL) closed out yesterday with all three matches of the day being decided through the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method after rain interruptions. Mohammedan Sporting Club kept hopes of reaching the Super League stage alive with a whopping 133-run victory -- courtesy of a Raqibul Hasan century -- over Prime Bank Cricket Club at BKSP-4.

It was a special day for the fans of DPL as the nation's ace left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman featured for Shinepukur Cricket Club against Gazi Group -- his first DPL match in four years. However, despite the 23-year-old's skills with the ball -- taking two wickets in his very first over -- Gazi Group came prevailed by 21 runs through the DLS method at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

At the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, despite a century from Fazle Mahmud, Brothers Union prevailed by 21 runs through the DLS method at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

It was once again a familiar performer in Raqibul who scored a magnificent 102 runs off 104 balls to help Mohammedan to their fifth win. After being asked to bat first, Mohammedan lost opener Irfan Sukkur in the very first over of the game and were reeling on 88 for five at one stage. However, a resilient Raqibul struck a 146-run sixth-wicket stand with Rajat Bhatia to help his side recover from the early hiccup. After Bhatia was dismissed for 66, a quickfire 14-ball 33 from

SCORES IN BRIEF

SHINEPUKUR v GAZI GROUP
Shinepukur: 177 for 9 in 48 overs (Delwar 40 not out, Shadman 40; Sanjib 4-25, Nasum 2-33)
Gazi: 106 for 4 in 21.5 overs (Shamsur 53 not out, Rony 16, Mahedi 13; Mustafizur 3-23)
Result: Gazi Group won by 21 runs (D/L method).
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH: Fazle Mahmud.

MOHAMMEDAN v PRIME BANK
Mohammedan: 296 for 9 in 50 overs (Raquibul 102, Bhatia 66; Monir 2-37, Al-Amin 2-54)
Prime Bank: 150 for 9 in 39.1 overs (Nahidul 28, Anamul 26; Sohag 4-21, Ashraful 3-37)
Result: Mohammedan won by 133 runs (D/L method).
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH: Raqibul Hasan.



Mohammedan's Raqibul Hasan (L) hit 102 in a 133-run win over Prime Bank in a DPL encounter in Savar yesterday. In Fatullah, Fazle Mahmud's 103 for Brothers Union could not avert a 12-run defeat against Khelaghbar.

PHOTO: STAR FILE/FIROZ AHMED

Shohag Gazi and Raqibul's century ensured Mohammedan posted a challenging 296 for nine.

After the exchange, it was again Gazi -- this time with the ball -- who returned match-winning figures of four for 21 as Prime Bank could only manage 150 for nine while chasing a reduced target of 284 runs in 39.1 overs.

In Mirpur, Shinepukur's Mustafizur marked his return brilliantly as he started off with the wickets of Waliul Karim and Gazi skipper Imrul Kayes in the very first over during Gazi Group's chase of Shinepukur's 177 for nine. Mustafizur went on to dismiss Mahedi Hasan but Shamsur Rahman's unbeaten 53 ensured a Gazi win through DLS.

Elsewhere, Brothers rode on Fazle's brilliant 116-ball 103 and posted a challenging 267 for six. However, Khelaghbar's 84 for one in 20 overs saw them win the game via DLS method.

POINTS TABLE

Team	Mat	W	L	T	Pts	NRR
Rupganj	10	9	1	0	18	0.62
Abahani	10	8	2	0	16	0.693
Prime Bank	10	7	3	0	14	0.489
Doleswar	10	7	3	0	14	0.184
Mohammedan	10	5	5	0	10	0.322
Gazi Group	10	5	5	0	10	-0.006
Sheikh Jamal	10	5	5	0	10	-0.086
Shinepukur	10	4	5	1	9	0.241
Khelaghbar	10	3	7	0	6	-0.396
BKSP	10	2	7	1	5	-0.722
Brothers Union	10	2	8	0	4	-0.113
Uttara Sporting	10	2	8	0	4	-1.073

World Cup Woakes's first choice

ICC

Given a choice between winning the ICC World Cup 2019 or the Ashes, Chris Woakes, the England pacer, said he'd grab the opportunity to do the former.

England have won every Ashes series at home since 2005. Woakes himself was part of the side that won the 2013 series. However, the 30-year-old believes the chance to lift the World Cup trophy at home doesn't come around too often and when it does, they have to make it count.

"If it was a matter of life or death and I had to choose one, it would probably be the World Cup," Woakes told The Daily Mail. "Just because World Cups at home don't come around too often and we're not often in a position like this as a team."

"I've only played one home Test against Australia, in my debut series in 2013, but we won the Ashes that summer. To potentially lift the World Cup at Lord's, the home of cricket -- that doesn't come around very often. The opportunity to do that is too big to turn down."

Woakes determination to lift the World Cup has been boosted by the misfortune he faced at the last ICC tournament the England men's side were part of. In the Champions Trophy 2017 opener, he had sustained a side strain within two overs of their clash against Bangladesh. England were then eliminated against Pakistan, the eventual champions, in the semifinals.



There is a determination to avoid that eventuality this time. "If you need any more motivation for a home World Cup, that's mine, having missed out on the Champions Trophy," he said. "We'd marked that tournament as a stepping stone in our development and had a chance to win it on home soil."

"For me to bow out in the second over was really frustrating. I'd done some really hard yards to make sure I was part of that team. With a home World Cup, and the form we've shown over the past couple of years, you're desperate to be a part of that."

England begin their World Cup campaign against South Africa at The Oval on 30 May.

'Hot English summer to aid subcontinent teams'

REUTERS, Mumbai

The English weather will play a major role during the World Cup and teams from the Indian subcontinent stand to gain if hot and dry conditions prevail during the May 30-July 14 tournament, former captain Kevin Pietersen has said.

England, which last hosted the quadrennial showpiece in 1999, has witnessed more batsmen-friendly conditions in recent past with scores of 300 regularly posted in one-day internationals held in the country.

A hot English summer will translate into dry pitches on which the batsmen and spinners from the subcontinent teams are expected to thrive.

"It is going to be weather dependent," Pietersen told.

"Last year was one of the most beautiful English summers since 1976. It was the hottest summer recorded in the UK with hardly any rain at all, conditions were extremely dry."

"If the conditions are like they were last summer, then I think the subcontinent teams are going to have a massive role to play in the World Cup."

"If they are not and it's horrible and green and seaming, then it's going to play in England's favour and the team that copes best in those circumstances."

While many see it as England's best chance to win their maiden 50-overs World Cup, India will also be among the favourites.

Led by Virat Kohli, the two-time champions have more or less a settled batting line-up even though they continue to search for a reliable number four in the batting order.

Opener Rohit Sharma agreed the English conditions could have a big say on their team selection.

Masakadza, Taylor out of UAE ODIs

ICC

Zimbabwe have announced a 16-strong squad to take on United Arab Emirates at home in the first two games of a four-match one-day international series which starts on Wednesday.

They will have to make do without two of their most experienced players in regular captain Hamilton Masakadza and wicketkeeper Brendan Taylor, who have both been ruled out. The former sustained a thumb injury while playing domestic cricket in February, while the latter hurt his hamstring playing in the Pakistan Super League.

Vice-captain Peter Moor will lead the side in Masakadza's absence.

Both are close to a return, having taken part in a training camp that preceded the series, but have not recovered in time to take part. Elsewhere, two uncapped players have been included: Ainsley Ndlovu, a 23-year-old left-arm spinner, and Tony Munyonga, a 20-year-old off-spinning all-rounder.

Timycen Naruma and Regis Chakabva have each been recalled after lengthy absences from the ODI set-up. The former is a batsman and part-time leg-spinner, who last represented his country in 2016, and has shot back to prominence in Zimbabwe domestic cricket. He finished fifth in the run-scorers charts in the Pro50 Championship, and top in charts for the first-class Logan Cup.

Zimbabwe and UAE will play four ODIs between 10-16 April, with all proceeds from the third ODI going towards Cyclone Idai relief efforts.