



Youths preferred in Jamie Day's squad

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday named a 25-member preliminary squad for the national team's first match of the joint qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup against Afghanistan, with an eye on the future by making a number of changes to the squad from the pre-qualifiers against Laos in June.

Six players including one new face have been added to the squad from the Laos fixtures



YEASIN ARAFAT



JAMIE DAY

with Bashundhara Kings defender Nurun Nayeem Faisal and Sheikh Jamal defender Manjurur Rahman Manik made a return to the squad while Saif Sporting Club defender Yeasin Arafat has been included in the squad for the first time. The four players who have been left out from the previous squad are: Bashundhara Kings defender Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, midfielder Emon Babu, forward Tawhidul Alam Sabuj and Arambagh goalkeeper Mazharul Islam Himel.

It is believed that head coach Jamie Day, who will return from England on August 19 and start the preparation camp a week later, prepared the list after having followed most of the

matches of the second phase of the Bangladesh Premier League on video streaming services.

All four players who have been left out are veterans while five added players except for goalkeeper Shahidul Alam are young ones. It is understood that this squad is part of the coach's plans to add more young blood to the team while phasing out the older ones, who have not been in exceptional form and are not as agile as the younger ones.

The exclusions of Nasiruddin, Emon and Sabuj are a bit of a surprise though as they were all in relatively decent form and have big-match experience. However, the coach is of the opinion that the ones that got

nods ahead of these players have deserved their call-ups.

"Nasir has been a fantastic servant and a player I admire, but he is not getting any younger. The younger ones are the future with experience around them. I still believe Emon can play for the national team again, but at the moment, I feel there are a few players in front of him in his position. I think Sabuj has a future in national team but unfortunately he hasn't played enough games and other players in his position are more match fit," Day told reporters in a social media exchange yesterday.

The 25-man squad is expected to be trimmed to 23 members prior to the team's departure for Tajikistan on September

1, where the qualifying match against Afghanistan will be held on September 10.

Although the preparation camp is expected to begin on either August 25 or 26 in Dhaka, the coach will have all the players at his disposal on August 30 following the completion of the AFC Cup inter-zone playoff semifinal of Abahani, who have seven members in the 25-man squad. Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings also have seven members while Sheikh Russel and Saif Sporting have four players each in the squad. Arambagh have two players while Sheikh Jamal have one player in the 25-man squad.

'Rookies need more work'

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) selectors have been often criticised for not utilising the pipeline while naming replacements for regular players in the Bangladesh squad and usually giving the nod to players past their prime.

Perhaps the selectors keep revisiting the same options because of a lack of new players who have the requisite skills for the national team.

Simon Helmot, head coach of Bangladesh's High Performance (HP) programme, also spoke about how players in the HP team are still lagging miles behind in terms of being considered for national selection.

"Yes, I am [happy with their improvement] but they still need to improve. When they will get more opportunities they will be ready. They need physical preparation, in the fielding, in back-foot play, in concentration on the ball to ensure that when they play for the national side, it will not be new.

"These gentlemen are very inexperienced. [Nazmul Hossain] Shanto played some games, Yasir [Ali] has been around, Afif [Hossain] played a T20I. What these guys need now is to dominate at this level," said Helmot at the BCB Academy ground yesterday.

Helmot will be managing the 15-member HP team which was announced by the BCB yesterday for the three-match one-day series against the Sri Lanka HP team, who arrived in Dhaka yesterday. After the three one-dayers, the visitors will finish the tour with two four-day matches.

The Bangladesh A team struggled against their visiting Afghan counterparts in July, when a lack of consistency from the players saw Bangladesh A lose the two-match four-day series 1-0 and draw the five-match one-day series after a controversial draw in the fourth one-dayer.

Players like Naim Sheikh, Afif, Nazmul, Aminul Islam and a few others who have represented Bangladesh A against Afghanistan A were also included in the 15-member HP squad for the Sri Lanka series. Chief selector Minhajul Abedin has already mentioned that the board will search the HP team to blood new players for the upcoming one-off Test against Afghanistan and the ensuing triangular T20I series involving hosts Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe.

India reappoint Shastri

Beats out Hesson, who is reportedly also in the running to be Bangladesh head coach

What it means for the Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Ravi Shastri's reappointment to the hot seat of Indian cricket means that another candidate, well-respected former New Zealand head coach Mike Hesson, is free to look for a similar position in other countries.

It has been widely reported that Hesson was one of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) favourites to fill the head coach's position that was vacated when Steve Rhodes and the BCB parted ways following a disappointing World Cup campaign.

However, India's decision may not affect Bangladesh's choice as a source close to the BCB said that the decision had already been made.

"It is not like our plan and vision in appointing the new head coach will change after Hesson was not appointed as the Indian coach," a top BCB official told The Daily Star yesterday, requesting anonymity.

It was also learned that BCB president Nazmul Hassan would make an announcement soon, with former South Africa coach Russel Domingo among the favourites.

AFP, New Delhi



Former Indian cricketer Ravi Shastri has been reappointed as head coach of the men's cricket team, a cricket board selection panel announced Friday.

Publicly backed by Indian captain Virat Kohli, 57-year-old Shastri was always the frontrunner.

He saw off competition from former Indian all-rounder Robin Singh, former team manager Lalchand Rajput, former New Zealand coach Mike Hesson, Australian cricket coach Tom Moody and former West Indies coach Phil Simmons.

Simmons had backed out of the interview last minute, news agency PTI reported.

The remaining candidates were interviewed by a three-member cricket advisory committee panel which included World Cup-winning captain Kapil Dev, ex-national coach Anshuman Gaekwad and ex-women's team captain Shantha Rangaswamy.

Dev announced the decision at a Friday press conference.

After missing out on the coach's job to Anil Kumble in 2016, Shastri was selected as the team's head coach a year later for a term extending to the end of the 2019 World Cup.

He was given a 45-day extension for the current West Indies tour.

Shastri coached India to a historic first-ever test series win in Australia earlier this year following Test losses in South Africa and England.

Since he took the job, India have won 13 Tests out of 21, 25 out of 36 T20 matches and 43 out of 60 ODIs.

Shastri was an all-rounder best known as part of the India's World Cup-winning squad in 1983 and his man of the series performance in India's World Championship triumph in Australia in 1985.

He was also team director from 2014 to 2016.

Shastri played 80 Tests and 150 one-day internationals for India before becoming a successful TV commentator.



April 25 SC to arrive today

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North Korean league champions April 25 SC will arrive in Dhaka today for the first leg of the inter-zonal playoff semifinal against Abahani, which will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on August 21.

April 25 are the most successful club in North Korean football, having won 17 national championships thus far, including the one they won last year.

While Abahani emerged champions of Group E, also featuring Chennaiyin FC, Minerva Punjab and Manang Marshiyangdi Club, April 25 got the better of two Hong Kong Clubs and one club from Taiwan in Group I.

The North Korean outfit had reached the inter-zonal playoff final last year where they lost against Altyin Asyr of Turkmenistan on away goals.

Abahani, meanwhile, have reached the knockout stage of this second-tier club competition of Asia for the first time and are looking to make it further.

While April 25 are expected to be tough opponents, one factor that might work in Abahani's favour is that they have four quality foreign players in their squad while their opposition team only features home-grown players.

The second leg of the semifinal will be held on August 28 in Pyongyang.

Archer strikes on debut as Aus stumble

Rain curtails Day 3 of second Ashes Test

AFP, London



England fast bowler Jofra Archer marked his Test debut with a wicket as Australia suffered a top-order collapse before rain cut short play at Lord's on Friday. Australia lost three wickets for 11 runs en route to slumping to 80-4 when rain forced an early lunch on the third day of the second Test.

That left Australia 178 runs behind England's first-innings 258. The 24.1 overs that took place in the morning session represented the only action on Friday, with persistent rain leading the umpires to eventually abandon play for the day at 5:22 pm local time in a match where Wednesday's scheduled first day had already been washed out without a ball bowled.

Archer, on the ground where he bowled the Super Over that saw England seal a World Cup final win over New Zealand last month, had fine figures of one wicket for 18 runs in 13 overs. Stuart Broad led the way with 2-26 in 13 overs, while fellow seamer Chris Woakes chipped in with 1-27 in nine.

But Australia star batsman Steve Smith was still there on 13 not out, with Matthew Wade unbeaten on nought.

Australia, 1-0 up in the five-match series, resumed on 30-1 having seen Broad dismiss David Warner cheaply for the third time in as many innings this series.

Cameron Bancroft was five not out and Usman Khawaja 18 not out following a lively opening spell by Archer, in for the injured James Anderson, late on Thursday.

But England altered the momentum with two wickets for no runs in four balls as Australia's 60-1 became 60-3.



Archer, topping speeds of 90 mph, had his first Test wicket when he nipped one back sharply to have Bancroft leg-before for 13. There were some boos as Smith, fresh from twin hundreds at Edgbaston in his comeback Test following a 12-month ball-tampering ban, came into bat.

He could only watch as Woakes induced an outside edge to wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow that saw the left-hander caught for 36. Australia were 71-4 when Broad had Travis Head lbw for seven.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 258 all out
AUSTRALIA: First innings 81 for 4 at lunch (Khawaja 36, Smith 13 not out; Broad 2-26, Archer 1-18)

Watling half-century puts Kiwis in front

AFP, Galle



A fighting half-century by wicketkeeper-batsman B.J.

Watling helped New Zealand to take a lead of 177 at stumps on Day Three in the first Test match against Sri Lanka in Galle on Friday.

New Zealand, who trailed Sri Lanka by 18 runs in the first innings, finished on 195 for seven and a target around 200 could prove tricky for the hosts.

Spinners have long ruled the roost at Galle and towards the tail end of the game they tend to become even more threatening.

The highest successful run chase in here is 99 by Sri Lanka against Pakistan in 2014 and armed with a three-pronged spin attack, New Zealand should be already feeling comfortable.

It was a thrilling day's Test match with both teams fighting tooth and nail for the initiative and at stumps on Day Three New Zealand emerged on top thanks to the efforts of Watling, who finished unbeaten on 63.

New Zealand had slumped to 25 for three losing top batsmen Ross Taylor (3) and Kane Williamson (4) cheaply and at 124 for six with only a lead of 106 runs and four wickets remaining, they were playing catch up.

But Watling found an ideal partner in Tim Southee as the pair shared a 54-run stand to turn the game in New Zealand's favour.

Sri Lanka were sloppy on the field with Southee dropped three times. Lasith Embuldeniya provided the much-needed breakthrough when Southee gave him the charge and was stumped by Niroshan Dickwella. He made 23.

Earlier, after resuming on 227 for seven, Niroshan Dickwella top scored for Sri Lanka with 61 as they went onto post 267. Dickwella and Suranga Lakmal were involved in a crucial 81 run stand for the eighth wicket that enabled them to take a lead. Lakmal made 40.

Ajaz Patel became the first New Zealander to take five wickets in Galle and he was well backed up by William Somerville and Trent Boult, who shared five wickets between the two of them.

SCORES IN BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 249 and second innings 195 for seven (Watling 63 not out, Latham 45, Nicholls 26; Embuldeniya 4-71, De Silva 2-16)
SRI LANKA: First innings 267 all out (Dickwella 61, Mendis 53, Mathews 50, Lakmal 40, Karunaratne 39; Patel 5-76, Somerville 3-83)



New Zealand wicketkeeper-batsman BJ Watling hit an unbeaten 63 to put his side in a comfortable position on the third day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle yesterday.