



Milk for Good



After the team notched a record 12th successive T20I win, Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan would know that his team are the favourites as the T20I tri-series moved to Chattogram for its second leg yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Much at stake as action moves to port city

SPORTS REPORTER



The ongoing T20I tri-series featuring hosts Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, has now moved to Chattogram's Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, where all three second-leg matches will be played starting with the Bangladesh-Zimbabwe encounter tomorrow.

Bangladesh and Afghanistan reached the port city yesterday in the evening while Zimbabwe, who played their last fixture against Afghanistan in Dhaka on Saturday, had reached on Sunday.

Bangladesh have not had a smooth ride in the tournament so far as the Tigers sit in second position in the points table with one win from two matches. The Tigers suffered a 25-run defeat against Afghanistan in their second match on Sunday after a hard-fought three-wicket victory against Zimbabwe in the tournament opener on Friday.

While a victory against Zimbabwe in the Chattogram leg will be enough for the Tigers to book a place in the final -- which will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka on September

24 -- the main challenge for Bangladesh in Chattogram would be to overcome the mental block against an Afghan side who have been in fine fettle lately.

After humiliating Bangladesh in their one-off Test in Chattogram prior to the tri-series, Afghanistan got the better of both the hosts and Zimbabwe in the ongoing tournament and sit atop the points table and would need just one win from their last two matches to seal a spot in the final.

Zimbabwe, who are yet to win a game, will have to win both their matches against Bangladesh and Afghanistan to have a

### CHATTOGRAM-LEG FIXTURE

September 18: Bangladesh v Zimbabwe

September 20: Afghanistan v Zimbabwe

September 21: Bangladesh v Afghanistan

chance of making it to the final.

For Bangladesh, the Chattogram leg will however be about much more than just sealing a place in the final as the Shakib Al Hasan-led side will be desperate to end Afghanistan's dominance on their tour so far.

## U-23s leave for India today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 15-member squad for the Under 23 team's tour of India yesterday.

During the tour, the Bangladesh U-23 side will play five one-day matches against their Indian counterparts on September 19, 21, 23, 25 and 27 at Lucknow's Ekana Cricket Stadium.

BCB selector Habibul Bashar mentioned that it would not be an easy tour.

"India Under-23 side is very strong. The tour will be very helpful for our boys. We have included Ariful Haque in the squad from the A team to strengthen our batting. We also made two changes. Fardeen Hasan and Mahidul Islam also made the cut," said Bashar, who will be traveling with the side.

The squad were scheduled to leave for India today morning.

### SQUAD

Saif Hassan (captain), Fardeen Hasan, Mahidul Islam, Yasir Ali, Al Amin, Zakir Hassan, Jaker Ali, Ariful Haque, Tanvir Islam, Mahedi Hasan, Manik Khan, Shafiqul Islam, Sumon Khan, Robiul Haque, Sabbir Hossain.

# BCB's panic showing

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI



The lack of clarity in the selection process of the Bangladesh national cricket team has become a recurring theme. For some time now, a yo-yo selection process has led to panic-stricken decision-making which seeped onto the field of play and what we are seeing from the Tigers now, as evidenced by their recent ODI-Test-T20 outings, is what a panic-ridden team is supposed to look like.

What we are seeing from the Tigers, for instance sending Mushfiqur Rahim to open the innings alongside Liton Das to chase Afghanistan's 164 during the T20I tri-series match on Sunday, is not innovation but panic-induced decision making with the selection process culpable of propagating such a scenario for the national team.

Soumya Sarkar's steady progress in the domestic circuit led to him returning to the national team last year. The opener overcame his deficiencies against seam and swing movement to some extent but his issues against spin is well known.

When they picked him for the tri-series, did the selectors not know about his weaknesses and that he will be facing a fine Afghanistan spin attack? It is hard to argue against Soumya's exclusion given his form but why would the decision be made in the midst of a series? BCB higher-ups have always gone on and on about their plans for the T20 side but that planning has not been evident, especially here.

Curiously, Soumya has now been



Poor results for Bangladesh may mean opportunities for uncapped youngsters like leg-spinner Aminul Islam (C) and batsman Naim Sheikh as the selectors ring in the changes heading into the second leg of the T20I tri-series.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

replaced in the side by 21-year-old Nazmul Hossain Shanto, whose poor form had led to Soumya returning to the Tigers' outfit last year in the Asia Cup. Nazmul is yet to make his T20I debut.

This decision has also come at a time when Bangladesh cricket is at its lowest point in the last five-six years. While talking to The Daily Star today, chief selector Minhajul Abedin cited 'poor form' for Soumya's exclusion. If that is the basis for exclusion then it is also curious how Sabbir Rahman or for that matter one of the stalwarts in the side

in Mahmudullah Riyad have kept their place despite only showing occasional form.

The BCB's panic regarding such matters is an oft-repeated one. Taskin Ahmed and Sabbir had been added to the World Cup previously without any hint of improvement from either. When there was room for experimentation, the BCB selected whatever established names they had available to make up the squad for the ODI series in late July in Sri Lanka, which was lost 3-0.

They are seemingly picking players

for different formats on a whim. Abu Jayed, picked for the World Cup but unable to get a single game due to presence of more experienced seamers in the side, was then excluded from the tour of Sri Lanka, while Shafiqul Islam was given the nod. That decision only made BCB's logic of including Jayed in the World Cup squad more fallacious as he could not even get into the squad for a tour where Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was injured.

Abu Hider Rony was included in the squad for the T20I tri-series on September 14 -- reportedly after a side strain to Yasir Arafat Mishu, a day before Bangladesh's match against Afghanistan on September 15. Today, the BCB dropped both with neither given an opportunity to prove themselves.

Shafiqul Islam has now been included for the next two matches of the series along with Rubel Hossain. Hider has specifically featured in the T20 format for some time now while Rubel last played T20s in August 2018 and Shafiqul back in 2017.

Minhajul also told this paper yesterday that 'the newly-arrived head coach wanted to look at a few players' while talking about the revamped squad for the upcoming matches. He argued that the likes of Mahedi Hasan and Hider were not being dropped.

"No, they are not being dropped, they are within our system and will tour with the HP [High Performance] team," the chief selector said.

The burning question for fans and cricket lovers of the country is whether

there is any coherent logic behind such decisions. Having talked up the need to unearth youngsters especially in the shortest format, discarding inexperienced players without giving them opportunities is not reflective of those words. Surely they are not prioritising HP commitments during an international tournament.

With the domestic leagues already suffering from various issues -- Test and T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan recently posing the question of whether playing there does any good -- the

### BANGLADESH SQUAD FOR 3RD AND 4TH MATCH

Shakib Al Hasan (captain), Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Sabbir Rahman, Mosaddek Hossain, Liton Kumar, Afif Hossain, Tajjul Islam, Rubel Hossain, Shafiqul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Mohammad Saifuddin, Nayeem Sheikh, Aminul Biplob and Nazmul Hossain.

BCB are struggling to find a basis for good governance regarding the whole cricketing structure.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan has already diverted the culpability of the recent run of disastrous results to the players, especially after losing the one-off Test against Afghanistan. With the selectors jumbling up their priorities for some time now, the panic-ridden selection is not helping and even if something is gained in the form of short-term results now, it will only cause issues for the future.

# Way back for franchises? Warner let Broad get into his head: Langer

SPORTS REPORTER



Khulna Titans managing director and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director Kazi Inam said that BCB could still reconsider its stance about arranging Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) on its own as cutting loose the franchises will see the tournament lose its charm.

"I think there is still time for the board president [Nazmul Hasan] to rethink his decision. He has the option to sit with the franchises. I strongly believe the franchises played a big role in creating excitement throughout the country. Losing that charm now will be a big loss to not only the franchises but the value of the tournament itself," Inam told reporters in Dhaka

yesterday.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan informed last Wednesday that the nation's biggest T20 league will be arranged by the board without involving the franchises for the first time in this year's seventh edition.

Inam also mentioned that Khulna had to work hard to sign Shane Watson for the upcoming BPL. And according to Inam, even if the board sticks with their plan of arranging BPL by themselves, they should take these matters into consideration.

"The reliability and value of the tournament should not be hampered at any point. I believe the board understands these issues well and if they still stick to the decision of running the tournament on their own, I will hope that they will take these [signed overseas cricketers] into consideration," concluded Inam.

AFP, London



Australia's cricket coach Justin Langer said David Warner allowed England pacer Stuart Broad to "get into his head" during a miserable Ashes series for the opener.

Warner ended with the unwanted record of the fewest runs scored by a Test opener across 10 innings of a series.

The 32-year-old, who registered a cumulative total of just 95, was dismissed seven times by Broad during the drawn contest and encountered jeers from home crowds following his role in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal.

Langer plans to persist with the experienced batsman heading into the Australian summer but expressed some doubt that he would fully recover from a dismal Ashes display.

"I've learned over a long period you never write off champion players, it doesn't matter what sport, you never write off champion players," said Langer, whose side retained the urn following the 2-2 draw.

"He had this series, it didn't go to plan, but he's seen how successful he's been and the impact he can have on Australian cricket teams winning, so I'm confident he'll come good.

"Actually, I'm hopeful he comes



England pacer Stuart Broad dismissed Australia opener David Warner for the seventh time in 10 innings during the fourth day of the fifth Ashes Test at the Oval on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

good. Talking frankly, I thought he let Stuart Broad get into his head and I think he thought way too much about it."

Langer feels Warner, who was

the second-highest run scorer at the World Cup, will be pleased to be returning home.

"In this instance I don't think David solved the puzzle, and he'll be

the first to admit that," said Langer.

"He'll probably be very relieved (when) he gets on the Qantas flight knowing he doesn't have to face Stuart Broad for a while, I reckon."



After winning a gold medal in the men's recurve singles of the Asia Cup World Ranking Archery Tournament, Bangladesh archer Ruman Sana is given a hero's welcome at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED