



# Most still found wanting

SPORTS REPORTER



In order to raise the fitness levels of domestic cricketers, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) set a minimum score of 11 in the beep test to participate in the upcoming National Cricket League.

The raised bar has caused a few problems for some of the more experienced cricketers, who are now seeking special consideration from the selection panel after falling short of the mark in their second attempt.

Beep test scores loomed large among Bangladeshi cricketers yesterday as at least 30 cricketers of different divisions lined up for the test after falling short in the first try.

National selector Habibul Bashar however allayed some of the fear by saying that there would be some leniency this season, but that the standard will be strictly adhered to from next season.

Among them were well-known names such as Mohammad Ashraful, Abdur Razzak, Tushar Imran, Nasir Hossain and Elias Sunny. Although the cricketers were able to improve upon their first scores, a majority were unable to reach the BCB's benchmark of 11.

Ashraful and Razzak were two who were found wanting with scores of 10 and 10.1 respectively, each having scored less than 10 previously. Top-order batsman Imrul Kayes and right-arm pacer Al Amin Hossain were the only two players to have donned national colours to pass the Test with 12 and 12.2 respectively.

The likes of Ashraful and Razzak, who are illustrious names in domestic cricket, failing has raised the argument that performance and age should also be factors in selection, and not just a fitness mark.

"Performance should be considered first. A performer should have a minimum consideration but it does not mean that the fitness level will be poor. There has to be a minimum level of fitness too, if not the player should not be considered for selection," Razzak told reporters.

Bashar admitted that some players would be considered for other factors such as age and performance.

"It [other factors] will be considered for this season only. We will strictly follow the fitness test from next season. We have an ambition to set a minimum standard for the NCL, and fitness is a main aspect," Bashar told reporters yesterday.



(From L-R) Imrul Kayes, Mohammad Ashraful and Abdur Razzak were among cricketers who took a second shot at the beep test in order to qualify for the upcoming National Cricket League. Of the trio, only Imrul passed.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Joy ton helps U-19s seal series

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Mahmudul Hasan Joy's unbeaten hundred helped the high-flying Bangladesh Under-19 team continue their brilliant run as they romped to a series-clinching eight-wicket win over their New Zealand counterparts in the third youth ODI at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln yesterday. The win gave the visitors an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

After missing out on a century by just one run in the previous game where, Mahmudul made sure he reached the mark, that too off what turned out to be the last ball of the match as he tonked it for six when Bangladesh required just one to win in the 37th over.

Chasing a modest target of 224,

Bangladesh lost opener Anik Sarker (1) early, but Mahmudul and Tanzid Hassan added 90 runs for the fourth wicket before the latter was dismissed for 65 off 64 balls.

Mahmudul then paired with Towhid Hridoy and added an unbeaten match winning 128 run stand for the third wicket and reached the target with 13.1 overs to spare.

Towhid was not out on 51 while Mahmudul was unbeaten on 103 off 95 balls that featured 16 fours and the match-winning six.

Earlier, there was a lack of meaningful partnerships from New Zealand after they were asked to bat, with only Fergus Lellman's unbeaten century lifting them to 224 for 8 in 50 overs.

Tanzim Hasan, Avishek Das and Hasan Murad picked two wickets each for Bangladesh.



MAHMUDUL HASAN JOY... 103 not out

## SL A lead by 64 runs

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The Sri Lanka A team staged a comeback in the second unofficial Test against their visiting Bangladesh counterparts and ended the third day with a 64-run lead and all their second innings wickets intact in Hambantota yesterday.

Openers Pathum Nissanka was unbeaten for 75 and Sangeeth Cooray reached 50 not out. The duo added 126 runs at stumps.

Earlier, Bangladesh took a first innings lead of 62 after resuming the third day on 283 for six. The visitors could add only 47 and folded for 330. Skipper Mominul Haque scored a hundred and opener Shadman Islam contributed 77.

Overnight batsman Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who resumed on six runs, remained not out for 38. His partner, Nurul Hasan, was dismissed after adding just one run to his overnight score of 35.

The hosts' right-arm seamer, Mohamed Shiraz, bagged five wickets and was ably supported by Prabath Jayasuriya, who scalped three.

The first game of the series was drawn.

## New under-15s up for the challenge

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Bangladesh women's football got popularity through a generation comprising players such as Maria Manda, Monica Chakma, Akhi Khatun and Tahura Khatun, but those players are now beyond the under-15 level. Hence the onus is on the new generation of players to maintain the image of country's women's football in the upcoming SAFF U-15 Women's Championship.

The third edition of the regional age-group championship is scheduled to kick off in Thimphu, Bhutan on October 9, with the Bangladesh team set to leave this afternoon with the hope of taking forward the pride earned by their previous generation.

Bangladesh became champions in the inaugural edition in Dhaka two years ago, but they had to be satisfied with a second-place finish in the second edition last year after losing to eventual champions India in the final.

This time the girls in red and green are targeting to regain the title of the four-team event, which will be in round-robin format for the first time. The top two teams will play in the final on October 15.

Coach Golam Rabbani Choton believes participating with fresh players is a new challenge for him, but his charges are ready for the test to be proud successors of Maria, Monica and Akhi.

"Every nation is taking women's football seriously and conducting



Under-15 women's football team's vice-captain Rupna Chakma (L) and captain Shamsunnahar Jr pose smilingly during a press conference at the BFF house yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

round-the-year training. It is a new challenge for me as well as the new players, most of whom have come through the JFA U-14 Girls' tournament. But this group of players are more matured than the previous ones. There are some talented footballers in the side," Choton said at a press conference at the BFF house yesterday.

The veteran coach informed that they have been nursing this group of players with the senior players since the completion of the second edition in 2018.

Out of the 23 members, only nine were part of last year's squad while only goalkeeper Rupna Chakma and striker Shamsunnahar Jr played in the regular eleven. There are seven players who were part of BKSP women's team which became champions in Subroto Cup in September this year.

"The girls, who are good technically and tactically, have worked hard in the training camp and we are aiming to play in the final and win the title even though the opponents are very strong," said Choton.

## Ashwin joint fastest to 350 Test wickets

AFP, Visakhapatnam

India's spin king Ravichandran Ashwin on Sunday joined Sri Lankan great Muttiah Muralitharan as the fastest bowler to 350 Test wickets in the first match against South Africa in Visakhapatnam.

The off-spinner bowled overnight batsman Theunis de Bruyn for 10 early in the morning session on day five to achieve the milestone in his 66th Test.

Muralitharan also took the same number of matches to claim 350 wickets. The spin legend, now 47, retired in 2010 with 800 wickets.

The 33-year-old Ashwin, who returned to the Indian XI after playing against Australia last year, claimed eight wickets in the first South Africa Test.

He had bagged his 27th five-wicket haul on Friday. In November 2017 Ashwin became the fastest bowler to reach the milestone of 300 Test wickets.

## India 1-0 up after Shami, Jadeja skittle Proteas

AFP, Visakhapatnam



Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja took nine wickets between them as India outplayed South Africa, winning by 203 runs on the final day of the first Test on Sunday.

Set a daunting target of 395, the tourists were bundled out for 191 in the second session, giving India a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Shami returned figures of 5-35 while Jadeja took four wickets to help current leaders India grab 40 points in the World Test Championship.

South Africa were staring down the barrel at 70-8 but Dane Piedt (56) and debutant Senuran Muthusamy (49 not out) put on 91 runs for the ninth wicket to frustrate the Indian bowlers briefly.

Shami got last man Kagiso Rabada caught behind for 18 to trigger celebrations in the Indian camp.

Sharma put India in a commanding position with a century in each innings on his debut as a Test opener -- a first by



India pacer Mohammed Shami took a fiver in the second innings of the first Test to send South Africa packing for just 191 at Visakhapatnam yesterday. India won by a massive 203 runs.

PHOTO: AFP

any batsman in Test history.

"Once you have 500 on the board, it's difficult for the opposition. Mayank and Rohit played brilliantly," India skipper Virat Kohli said.

Shami took three key wickets in the morning session including that of skipper Faf du Plessis for 13 to dim South Africa's hopes of saving

the game.

Jadeja soon joined forces to run through the middle order with three wickets in one over including that of overnight batsman Aiden Markram (39) with a one-handed return catch.

### SIXES GALORE

The match also witnessed the most number of sixes -- 37 from four

I have protected myself with a shield around me for a long time now and all those things outside does not come inside that shield. So what people think of me doesn't really bother me, because eventually I have to play my game and I have to enjoy my game because it was my dream to play cricket. And I am living that dream.

**ROHIT SHARMA**  
INDIA OPENER

innings -- surpassing the 35 that were smashed in a game between Pakistan and New Zealand in 2014-15.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**INDIA:** First innings 502-7 declared and second innings 323 for 4 declared.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 431 and second innings 191 all out (Markram 39, Muthusamy 49 not out, Piedt 56; Jadeja 4-87, Shami 5-35).  
**Result:** India won by 203 runs.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Rohit Sharma.

## Kings sign up Tapu, Fahad

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings signed up veteran defender Tapu Barman and midfielder Atiqur Rahman Fahad from Abahani and promising national midfielder Rabiul Hasan yesterday, a day after the champions roped

in another prolific veteran Yeasin Khan from Sheikh Russel KC to strengthen its vulnerable defence.

Bashundhara Kings were forced to play different players in defence last season due to the lack of quality defenders, but this time the team is emphasising on defence under Spanish coach Oscar Burzon.

It has been learnt that all three players are getting handsome payment of around Tk 50 lakh.

Tapu, however, is recovering from a long-term knee injury while holding midfielder Fahad is nursing an injury which he sustained during an AFC Cup match for Abahani.

"Both Tapu and Fahad are in rehabilitation processes and they are supposed to be back on the pitch in December," said Bashundhara Kings' head of strategy and planning BA Jubair Nipu.

Having retained the services of nine players including Emon Mahmud, Masuk Mia Jonny, Mahbubur Rahman Sufil, Mohammad Ibrahim, Matin Mia, the Bashundhara-based team, on Friday, signed up national midfielder Biplu Ahmed from Sheikh Russel.

Bashundhara Kings will represent Bangladesh in the next AFC Cup as league champions. The new powerhouse of domestic football are determined to sign quality foreign players while retaining Costa Rican forward Daniel Colindres, who played a key role in delivering two titles in the club's top-flight debut.