



Bangladesh women's cricket team players pose for a selfie at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday after congregating for four days of training there. The 20-member squad, which will move to Sylhet for two more weeks of training and practice matches following the Dhaka-leg, will take part in ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe in November-December.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'The idea is to play as freely as possible'

The upcoming T20 World Cup in Oman and UAE will present Bangladesh's dashing opener Liton Das with a chance to play his first-ever T20 World Cup, and given his sheer ability to play fluently all around the wicket, he may well become the X-factor the Tigers will be looking at to provide the necessary afterburners at the top of the order. The Tigers' opener discussed his expectations for the upcoming tournament and on batting without adherence to any particular ploy during an interview with The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi.

**The Daily Star (DS): Your role and responsibility as the Tigers' main opener?**

**Liton Das (LD):** You have to see that T20 is a game of very limited time frame. The team wants its opener to give a good start and I feel that my role is to give a good start to the team.

**DS: Will there be an anchor role or aggressive intent from both openers at the World Cup?**

**LD:** The thing is that everyone plays according to the options that the match situation presents. There is no strict framework here or script here on how one will play today or tomorrow. We play according to the situation and it's just not me but anyone else in the team.

**DS: What are your remarks on batting coach Ashwell Prince saying you can be a top 10 batter in the**



world in all formats?

**LD:** It's very difficult to define that actually since my career has just begun a while back. It's not even that I am a very good and very successful player. What he said, it's something that will come much later [in my career]. To prove something like that,

I will have to put up a lot of good performances. There is no alternative to performances so there is no point in me thinking like that about what others are saying because at the end of the day it's me who will have to perform and I will have to do all the work required to do that.

**DS: Would it be difficult to adjust to livelier wickets at WC after playing in Mirpur?**

**LD:** We are going there seven or eight days in advance and we will be doing a camp there so I think by that time we will have adjusted. Also, we have played at Abu Dhabi before. So I don't think we will have that much problem in terms of being able to adjust.

**DS: What are the expectations and challenges at T20 WC?**

**LD:** International cricket is all about challenges. There is no time

to relax. As per as expectations go, there is nothing better than giving your team something good. There is nothing bigger than the team winning and the target will be to perform in a way which helps the team and contributes to the team winning matches.

**DS: Are you more aware now of your past mistakes?**

**LD:** Every player makes mistakes. No player can go out there and say that I will score 10 runs tomorrow or play a faultless innings. Someday a batsman will keep making mistakes on his way to a hundred while another batsman, who has been batting really well, will get out. Cricket is that kind of a game that doing too much research on it or thinking too much on these aspects can be foolhardy. The idea is to play as freely as possible.

## 'We all love you'



SPORTS REPORTER

"He left me alone."

Veteran coach Osman Khan could not hold back tears as he struggled to utter those few words about his long-term comrade Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, who breathed his last on Tuesday at the age of 74.

Osman Khan could add only a few more words in tribute after Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury's body was brought to Bangabandhu National Stadium in the afternoon. Borrowing those words, many in the cricket fraternity who were close to Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury or fans of his lucid writing could easily say he left us alone.

How can one imagine a life in the cricket arena without the lyrical descriptions from this versatile personality! Will we not miss his captivating mini-previews on Facebook ahead of matches? It will be equally hard to believe that we will not read anything charming after any cricket match, regardless of whether Bangladesh suffered a heavy defeat.

His richness of Bengali words amused many generations and alas we will not be surprised any more by an unfamiliar use of words and ask ourselves where he got it from. Without a doubt, our cricket literature will be poorer without his words.

But cricket and Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury cannot be separated.

He was a former cricketer, coach and organiser in addition to being an eminent sports writer. Renowned sports journalist Utpal Shuvro rightly added another category to his profile, that of 'cricket philosopher'. When someone could not think of life without cricket and did everything for the game, sacrificing material achievements out of pure love for the game, he is undoubtedly a cricket philosopher.

That is why former pacer Golam

Newshter wrote on Facebook: "Today I lost one of my most important personalities, whose contribution to every step in my life is undeniable. Jalal Bhai, you will be remembered. We all love you."

Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury started in the Dhaka League for Udiity Club in the mid-1960s and went on to play for Young Pegasus, Town Club and Dhanmondi Club and represented Bangladesh Railway in the National Championship competition. He was a member of the first Bangladesh side in post-independence Bangladesh (Tour of MCC in 1977).

Then he coached prominent Dhaka League teams including Abahani and Mohammedan and had been associated with the national team on a number of occasions. He was one of the coaches of the Bangladesh 1979 and 1997 ICC Trophy squads. He was the head coach of Bangladesh in the ICC U19 World Cup in 2002.

However, all that information hardly reflected Chowdhury's life because his influence on many generations of cricketers and cricket writers is immeasurable.

"I made a hundred against Wari Club in 1978 and suddenly received an envelope while I was watching a football match. It contained a one hundred taka note and a few encouraging words. It was from Jalal Bhai, who left for Patiala to do his diploma in cricket coaching. He was a fatherly figure in our cricket," former Bangladesh captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain said.

This was the true character of Chowdhury. He tried to appreciate even a small contribution towards cricket, but always in a silent manner which embodied the spirit of the gentleman's game.

Cricketing life will be a little less bright without him.

## 'Want others to challenge me'

SPORTS REPORTER



With the current term of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) set to end this month, the BCB board of directors arranged its 12th and final meeting at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday.

The major issue approved in the meeting was the voters' list for the upcoming board of directors' election 2021.

"Today's major issue was regarding the voters' list. We have received 171 forms out of 174 councillors. So in this election, there will be 171 voters from different categories and the list includes a number of new faces. We have seen the voters' list and we have already handed it to the election commission," BCB president Nazmul Hassan said after the meeting.

However, the date and other details of the upcoming election were not announced after the meeting. Hassan mentioned that the details would be announced once the meeting of the five-member election commission, formed by the board on September 1 in order to conduct the upcoming election, concludes. The meeting of the election commission commenced soon after the directors' meeting ended yesterday but no updates from that meeting had arrived at the time of writing this report.

Although there is a provision allowing the election to be held within 45 days after the current term ends, the BCB had earlier mentioned that it will not wait that long and will likely hold the election before the T20 World Cup next month.

Meanwhile, Hassan, who is will be the board president for a third successive term if elected, said he would like to see other candidates step forward and run for presidency.

"As long as I am in the BCB, I feel like no one will come forward and stand for this position [presidency] until I die. I want others to challenge me. I want other candidates to step up and run for the presidency. But no one expresses their willingness. This is not a good sign," said Hassan.

The BCB president also mentioned that he has not formed a panel for this election to encourage others to step up.

"I do not have any panel. Anyone can stand for the presidency. Every time we create a panel and no one else steps up. Nothing of that sort exists this time and no one can say that he is my candidate. I hope that this election will be held," reiterated Hassan, who had earlier said that he had been advised by doctors 'to stay away from cricket'.



## Bruzon only for SAFF Championship

SPORTS REPORTER



Oscar Bruzon will guide the national team only in the upcoming SAFF Championship and not in three tournaments as previously stated, National Teams Committee (NTC) chairman and Bangladesh Football Federation vice-president Kazi Nabil Ahmed confirmed yesterday.

The Spaniard was supposed to take charge and start preparations for the SAFF Championship yesterday, but that did not happen. Instead, he will conduct his first training session ahead of the regional tournament today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium after an introduction to the media at the BFF House.

After attending a meeting with BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and Bruzon, Nabil said: "We discussed future work plans with the coach as the SAFF Championship is scheduled to get underway from October 1. We will introduce the coach to the



media at the BFF house tomorrow [Wednesday].

"I can't disclose the clauses of the agreement at the moment. However, everything has been finalised and Bashundhara Kings will release him and he will work with us. There was no discussion about a long-term contract. He will only work for the SAFF Championship," Nabil added.

"We don't have any problem if he goes back to Bashundhara Kings. We want to thank Bashundhara for

allowing their coach to work with the national team. We believe he will be a good coach for the national team in this interim period because he knows every player and has been in Bangladesh for the past three years."

Nabil also informed that they would appoint the coaching staff according to Bruzon's requirements and added: "Jamie, who is a bit ill, will fly home tomorrow [Wednesday] along with goalkeeping coach Les Clevely."

## Mariners steal the show on third day

SPORTS REPORTER



2016 Premier Division Hockey League champions Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club stole the show on the third day of the five-day transfer window by signing national players Biplob Kujur, Sohanur Rahman Sabuz, Fazle Rabbi and Milon Hossain alongside former national captain and penalty corner specialist Mamunur Rahman Chayan.

"We formed a good team with the inclusion of young players. Our team's average is 21, but we are hopeful of regaining the league title. We have already selected 15



foreign players, and I will choose seven players from that list," said Chayan.

"Abahani and Mohammedan formed good teams on paper but, hockey is not played on paper. If so, Mariner Youngs wouldn't have been champions in 2016 and Mohammedan wouldn't have been champions in 2018. Keep judgments on paper aside. Let's see which team performs better on the ground."

Chayan was also happy to get a transfer after a three-year gap.

"The players were happy to be part of the league after three years, but we want the federation to hold the league regularly because the football and cricket leagues are held every year but hockey is not.

Squad: Biplob Kujur, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Sadikul Islam Meraj, Parvez Hossain Pappu, Ashikur Jaman Limon, Sohanur Rahman Sabuz, Irfanul Haque, Milon Hossain, Saijuddin, Rohan Sabbir, Tasin Ali, Shahrukh Ahmed Shah, Sahidur Rahman Sajju, Khalilur Rahman, Fazle Rabbi.

## 'Not the Barca of eight years ago'

REUTERS



Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman defended his team's style of play in Monday's 1-1 La Liga draw with Granada, saying his depleted side did not have the players who could execute their trademark tiki-taka passing game.

Ronald Araujo's last-minute header rescued a point for Barcelona as they limped to their second draw in four games, which left them in seventh place on eight points, five behind leaders Real Madrid who have played



a game more. Koeman said his team, who were without a host of players due to injuries, could not play their short passing game because they failed to find space.

"We had to sacrifice our style of play a little bit to try and get the result, by putting crosses in rather than playing down the middle," Koeman told reporters. "If you look at the squad list for the game, it's the only thing we could do.

"We can't play tiki-taka if there aren't any spaces. So that means we have to try and find another way to play. For me that's what has to be talked about, the fact that we tried everything to get a point. "We know it's maybe not Barcelona's football, but this Barcelona is not that of eight years ago."