

## Who included Shamim?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Things happened as if in a frenzy yesterday evening. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday issued a press release relaying that Shamim Hossain Patwari was added to the squad for just the second ODI against England, slated to be played today.

But, who made that selection call? Of course, if someone is to be added to the squad, it is strictly under the jurisdiction of the selection panel and chief selector. But things happen differently in Bangladesh cricket.

When The Daily Star asked chief selector Minhajul Abedin Nannu regarding the selection just a few minutes after the press release was posted in BCB's WhatsApp media group, the chief selector was befuddled.

When this reporter asked why Shamim had been added to the squad, the chief selector inquired: "Where has he been added?"

The reporter then read out the first few lines of the press release and Minhajul appeared puzzled. "Who gave this?" the chief selector asked again. "Let me ask first."

A matter of minutes after the telephone conversation with The Daily Star concluded, the press release was deleted. Funnily enough, the press release was re-posted again after another few minutes had gone by, perhaps following a bit of damage control among BCB officials.

Question however remain about exactly on whose authority the decision was made, especially since the chief selector was left in the dark.

It could have been Chandika Hathurusingha's choice, but the selection panel not knowing about it portrays the lack of a proper process and the coordination that often happens between various departments.

According to sources, pacer Taskin Ahmed is doubtful for the second ODI against England. In case there is an issue that renders him unable to be field, Shamim, who is yet to make his ODI debut, could be used as a back-up option.

Taskin has a slight hamstring injury issue and that could be a big blow to Bangladesh after he had bowled with a lot of fire in the first ODI against England.



Bangladesh speedster Taskin Ahmed produced a brilliant display of fast bowling in the first ODI against England on Wednesday in Mirpur. He picked up the crucial wicket of England skipper Jos Buttler and kept things tight, giving away just 26 runs. The pacer, however, remains doubtful for the series decider today due to hamstring issue.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Home series win streak under threat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will play England in the second ODI today knowing that only victory will do if they are to avoid losing their first series at home since 2016. The Tigers have won seven consecutive ODI series at home since then, but the last time they lost at home was against England in a series that finished 2-1 in the visitors' favour.

Given that backdrop, the onus will be on the batters to come up with something special after a lacklustre batting display in the first ODI on Wednesday.

Bangladesh managed to post just 209 runs despite a decently constructed innings. The openers had started brightly in good batting conditions and Bangladesh had in fact batted on a better wicket before the dew factor later on in the evening rendered things difficult for the likes of Taskin Ahmed, Shakib Al Hasan and others in defence of a small total.

Najmul Hossain Shanto top scored with 58 but although he had started his innings fluently, he looked slightly uncomfortable after reaching his fifty, not quite finding the timing in his shots. He ultimately threw his wicket after an unnecessary stroke. More importantly, there was no one else who could wrestle the initiative and set England a more challenging task.

Yet, the bowlers did incredibly, which is where

Bangladesh will find hope in order to beat the current world champions in the second ODI.

Taskin Ahmed bowled with a lot of pride during an enormous effort in the first ODI but whether he will be fully fit for the second game remains another matter. Mushfiqur Rahim has an injury issue as well.

The strategy to employ three spinners worked well for the Tigers given that all three of Taijul Islam, Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz got some extra bounce compared to England's spinners, but Bangladesh's main concern was the performance of Mustafizur Rahman.

The left-armed conceded 42 runs without bagging a wicket. He beat the bat against right-handed batters on a few occasions but was not able to get the ball to swing into the left handers, especially Dawid Malan, who single handedly carried England. When Fizz tried those in-dippers, it almost inevitably drifted towards the pads.

"The batters may not have been able to carry on but in the past our batters won us games with big knocks. I am hoping that whoever makes runs, gets a big score," Shanto said.

The Tigers will be hoping that the batters can put in a collective effort as they aim to stage a comeback in the second ODI.



## 'Risky' tie's rematch delayed

REUTERS, Jakarta

The rematch of an Indonesian football game that ended in one of the sport's worst stadium stampedes has been postponed due to the risk of further crowd trouble, police said on Thursday.

The October 2022 derby match in Malang, East Java, between Arema FC and Persebaya Surabaya saw 135 spectators killed, many crushed as they fled for exits after police fired tear gas into the crowd. Home side Arema lost the match 3-2.

Although their next league meeting was due to be played behind closed doors on Sunday, Dirmanto, a spokesperson for East Java police, said it was deemed high risk as the clubs "have a history of rivalry".

Yahya Alkatiri, manager of home side Persebaya said the game was due to be held in nearby Gresik, but police permission to host it was denied. They could not play in Surabaya because of ongoing stadium upgrades for the Under-20 World Cup in May.

"This was a match fraught with risks," Yahya told Reuters, adding scuffles could happen outside the stadium.

## Lyon roars to give Aussies hope

AGENCIES

Two jaw-dropping catches and one of Nathan Lyon's finest bowling performances have put Australia on the brink of a rare Test victory in India and seen them take prime position to seal a spot in the World Test Championship (WTC) final.

Lyon pushed through cramps in Indore's dying light to crack open a gripping Test match played on one of the more vicious surfaces seen in recent times, snagging the second-best figures of his career (8-64, behind only his 8-50 in Bangalore in 2017) in what is shaping as a low-scoring thriller.

With Australia needing a win in either of the last two Tests of this series to seal their spot in the WTC decider later this year, the 35-year-old's tireless spell has set up a tense final-day run chase of 76 for the visitors.

Cheteshwar Pujara top-scored with 59, caught brilliantly at slip by Australia captain Steve Smith, with Lyon taking figures of 8-64 on a treacherous spinning wicket.

Having skittled India for just 109 on day one, Australia resumed on 156-4 but collapsed to 197 all out before lunch, their last six wickets tumbling for just 11 runs.

India sensed their chance and openers Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill survived a tricky 10 minutes before lunch.

But after the break, Gill was

beaten for spin as he tried to go down the track against Lyon and was bowled for five, before the spinner trapped skipper Rohit for 12.

Virat Kohli looked to take on Matthew Kuhnemann, who took five wickets in the first innings, cutting the spinner for a glorious four, only to be dismissed lbw the following ball for 13.

This sent a hush around the



rowdy Indore ground but Pujara gave the home crowd something to cheer about, reducing the deficit by smashing Kuhnemann for a succession of boundaries.

Lyon though proved a handful, particularly for Ravindra Jadeja, who was out lbw for seven just before the break to leave India reeling.

In the final session, Lyon made an entertaining 26 that included two

sixes before an excellent catch by Usman Khawaja at short midwicket off Starc.

Bharat was bowled by Lyon for three and Ashwin fell for 16, lbw to Lyon for his fifth scalp.

Pujara made the Australians work hard before captain Smith took a diving catch to his right at slip off the bowling of Lyon.

The very next ball Umesh was given out lbw off Lyon but was reprieved on review. The ball after that, Umesh slogged to the boundary -- where he was caught just inside the rope by Green.

Soon afterwards, Lyon clean-bowled Mohammed Siraj to give the Australian his eighth scalp, and the hapless Indian number 11 his second duck of the match.

Lyon said his performance was "up there as one of my career highlights" but that he was "more proud about our group".

"Personal success is great to have but after (the second Test defeat in) Delhi we had a couple of really good days off as a team, and really good conversations at training," Lyon said.

He also paid tribute to his "very good mate" Smith, who was captaining the side in place of Pat Cummins who went back to Australia to be with his ill mother.

"(Smith) is one of the best batters in the world, especially over the last decade. The way his brain works with cricket tactics provides me with good conversations," Lyon said.

## 'Fitter' girls aim to stun Iran, Turkmenistan

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh U-16 women's football team aside, no women's team could ever cross the hurdles of any AFC competitions' qualifying round but the SAFF U-20 champion squad are dreaming high to get out of the qualifying stage of the upcoming AFC U-20 Women's Asia Cup at home.

Bangladesh will host the fixtures of Group H, featuring Iran and Turkmenistan, from March 8 with eight group champions advancing to the second round.

Head coach Golam Rabbani Choton said his charges are "ready to take the challenge".

"You all know that we resumed preparation on February 13, four days after clinching the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship. Shamsunnar Jr. and Aklima Khatun recovered from their injuries during this time," Choton said during a presser at the BFF House yesterday.

"I am confident with this group of girls to get out of the qualifying round due to consistent performance since 2018 and their hard work," he added.

Captain Shamsunnar said, "We have taken a fresh preparation for the AFC competition because our target is to go beyond the qualification round with two wins in two matches. Even though the opponents are physically superior, we are fitter than them."

## BFF to field Kingsley 'at own risk'

SPORTS REPORTER

Eleta Kingsley was recalled to the national football team as the Nigerian-born naturalised forward made the cut in Bangladesh's 27-member preliminary squad for the Tri-Nation Cup involving Seychelles and Brunei from March 22 to 28 in Sylhet.

Kingsley was first introduced under interim coach Oscar Bruzon, who however was forced to drop him following the ambiguity regarding FIFA clearance. Kingsley since then did not feature in Bangladesh's next 11 matches, played from November, 2021 to September, 2022.

"We are confident to play him this time. I'm looking forward to seeing him in the training with us and see how he can fit in the team," Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera told reporters during squad announcement at the BFF House yesterday.

The Spaniard also called up three new faces -- defender Alamgir Mollah of Abahani, midfielder Mojibur Rahman Jony of Fortis Academy and goalkeeper Mehedi Hasan Srabon of Muktijoddha Sangsad -- and axed 10 players who were part of Bangladesh's two FIFA friendly encounters against Mongolia and Nepal in September last year.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said, "We will play him [Kingsley] at our own risk because FIFA had previously told us that we could play him in the match but if anyone raises questions, then we have to defend it. I think we are prepared with whatever documents we have regarding Eleta."

Split into two groups, Bangladesh are set to depart for Saudi Arabia on March 5 for a 10-day training camp.

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