

Under-19s look to build on success

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team are looking not only to carry their impressive run of form into the tri-nation series in Sri Lanka but have also set a target of getting their batting in shape ahead of the World Cup.

The series, also involving hosts Sri Lanka Under-19s and Pakistan Under-19s, is the last opportunity for preparation for the youth team ahead of the ICC Under 19 Cricket World Cup in New Zealand in January next year. Bangladesh have been drafted in a group along with Papua New Guinea, West Indies and Pakistan.

"I am satisfied with the progress of the team. We have achieved seventy percent and hope the rest will be achieved during the tri-nation compe-

tion. Our bowling and fielding is ok but still we have to make some improvement in our batting, specially we need consistency in the middle order," opined head coach Minhazul Abedin before the departure of the team last night.

Bangladesh Under-19s go into the tri-nation tournament on the back of four consecutive one-day series victories over Zimbabwe 5-0 (at home), England 5-2 (at home) and 2-1 (away) and Sri Lanka 4-1 (at home).

"I should say that our preparations for the World Cup is on right track. We have continued to gel as a unit. The team is more balanced right now. The key is to keep winning games which would put us in a very confident frame of mind when we play the World Cup. Nothing boosts confidence more than winning," said captain Mahmudul Hasan while speaking at a press conference at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The all-rounder also believes that the tri-series gives them a chance to look into their World Cup opponents Pakistan. "We are in a tough group with two Test playing nations (Pakistan and the West Indies) and we also have Papua New Guinea. Pakistan, as we have heard are also in fine form and have recently defeated Zimbabwe 4-1. In Sri Lanka, we'll get an idea about their strength which could be quite significant."

Question was raised whether too much cricket may backfire in the tournament proper as Bangladesh Under 19 teams have always performed well in the lead up to World Cups but have never made it to the last four in the main tournament, and some believe the reason is the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

ITINERARY

November 29: Bangladesh Under-19s v Pakistan Under-19s at Palakkad.

November 30: Bangladesh Under-19s v Sri Lanka Under-19s at Dambulla.

December 2: Sri Lanka Under-19s v Pakistan Under-19s at Dambulla.

December 3: Bangladesh Under-19s v Pakistan Under-19s at Dambulla.

December 5: Pakistan Under-19s v Sri Lanka Under-19s at CCC.

December 6: Bangladesh Under-19s v Sri Lanka Under-19s at P. Sara.

December 8: Final at P. Sara.



Bangladesh football team's player Shahedul Islam (L) tries to outwit a BFF XI defender during a warm-up match at BKSP yesterday.

Shantoo still not impressed

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The national football team put behind their disappointment of the first practice match when they won the second game against BFF XI 2-0 at the BKSP in Savar yesterday.

Having lost the first match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, where the national team will launch the 11th SAFF Championship campaign next month, by a solitary goal against top tier side Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra, the boys of interim coach Shahidur Rahman Shantoo fared better in the second practice game at the country's lone complete sports facilities.

For records' sake, young striker Mithun Chowdhury put the national team ahead in the 70th minute before another young forward Abdul Baten Komol sealed the fate of the game 10 minutes from time.

The national team won the match but hardly impressed Shantoo, who took the hot seat after the sacking of Brazilian coach Edson Dido Silva following a dispute over the selection of a young side for the biggest football event of this region.

Shantoo said that his side upped their performance compared to the first match against Sheikh Russel. But he was still bothered with the mistakes committed in every department

ahead of the final test against Ulsan Hyundai FC of South Korea tomorrow.

The match against the Korean giants, who however did not send a full-strength side, will take place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Shantoo said that the match would be very important for the players as the performance in that game would play a part on the declaration of the 20-member final squad after the match.

In yesterday's match, Shantoo tried all his players dividing them into two groups. Seven young players were replaced in the second half with Mithun and Komol taking opportunities to score two good goals.

He also observed that his side appeared more organised in the second half compared to the first 45 minutes.

"Compared to the first match, the boys played better today (Tuesday) though there are still some problems in all departments -- forward, midfield and defence and we have to overcome those problems quickly despite the fact that we have got little time before the championship," said Shantoo.

"I am satisfied with the way the boys have played," Shantoo said. "The positive from this match was that the players found the target that they desperately missed in the first warm-up match."

The coach thinks the players reflected only 50 to 60 percent of his tactics, technique and strategy.

Dr. Faruque laid to rest

SPORTS REPORTER

Dr. Omar Faruque was laid to rest at the Banani graveyard yesterday.

Faruque, a popular figure in sports arena, died of cardiac arrest on Monday night at city's Apollo Hospital at the age of 55.

His first namaj-e-janaja was held at his working place, Suhrawardi Hospital, in the morning before he was taken to the Bangabandhu National Stadium where a good number of sportsmen, organisers including sports minister Ahad Ali Sarkar and Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin MP were present.

His third and final janaja was held at the Banani Bazar Mosque before he was buried.

He was the chairman of the medical committee of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), member of AFC doping control committee and former chairman of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) medical committee.

National Sports Council, Bangladesh Olympic Association, Bangladesh Sports Journalist Association and other sports bodies expressed deep shock at the death of a noted physician, whose love for the game and selfless care for the athletes will remain as an example in the sports arena.

Warne wants results

INTERNET, undated

Legendary leg-spinner Shane Warne has called for Australia's fresh-faced Test side to reach their potential and put an end to the transitional phase that has seen Ricky Ponting's men slip to fourth in the Test rankings.

The retirement of Warne, Glenn McGrath, Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer over the last three years has seen Australia's dominance in world cricket halted, with England, South Africa and India all notching Test series wins.

And Warne thinks the rebuilding phase must come to an end now, saying: "You have to say the Australian side has been in a transition phase but there has to be a line -- when does that transition phase stop?"

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



Neo Cricket & SuperSport2

India v Sri Lanka

Second Test, Day 2

Live from 11:00am

TEN Sports

New Zealand v Pakistan

First Test, Day 2

Live from 6:00am

UEFA Champions League

Moscow v Wolfsburg

Live from 12:30am (Thursday)

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Sports News

Live at 9:30pm

English Premier League

Hull City v Everton

Live from 2:45am (Thursday)

STAR Sports

ATP World Tour Finals

Round Robin

Live from 9:15pm

SuperSport3

UEFA Champions League

Man United v Besiktas

Live from 2:45am (Thursday)

SuperSport6

UEFA Champions League

FC Porto v Chelsea

Live from 2:45am (Thursday)



India opens Virender Sehwag (R) and Gautam Gambhir run between wickets on the first day of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the Green Park Stadium in Kanpur yesterday. Both scored hundreds.

Ponting expects Gayle ready

INTERNET, undated

Australia captain Ricky Ponting has predicted Chris Gayle's hurried preparation for the opening Test will have minimal impact on how the West Indies captain performs at the Gabba.

Gayle rushed home to Jamaica last week on the eve of the Windies' four-day tour match against Queensland to be with his sick mother. Her condition has since improved and Gayle is now expected to take his place at the top of the order when the first Test gets under way on Thursday.

"It'd be hard, but Chris finds a way not to get out of first gear too much," Ponting said after Australia's first training session in Brisbane. "He's a dynamic player, but he's pretty relaxed in the way he goes about things, so I don't think there will be any muscle strains or hammys blowing off the bone."

He added: "He's an experienced player, he's been around the world and played a lot ... so he should be able to handle it pretty well."

"Being their captain he might have missed out on a little bit of stuff over the last week, but they'll manage as well as they can."

Gayle, who has not been a part of the West Indian XI since July due to the infamous contract dispute, has been unable to stamp his leadership style on what is an inexperienced squad.

Leg-spinning great Shane Warne was one who took the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Veeru, Gambhir plunder SL

Cricket

AFP, Kanpur

Opener Gautam Gambhir top-scored with 167 as India piled up a record 417-2 on the first day of the second cricket Test against Sri Lanka here on Tuesday.

Gambhir shared 233 runs for the opening wicket with Virender Sehwag (131) and another 137 for the second with Rahul Dravid to help the home side score their highest Test total in a day's play.

India's previous best score in a day's play was 386-1 against South Africa in Chennai in March 2008.

Dravid was unbeaten on 85 while Sachin Tendulkar was batting on 20 when stumps were drawn for the day.

Spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran (2-100) dismissed both Gambhir and Sehwag on an otherwise disappointing day for the Sri Lankans, seeking their first Test win on Indian soil.

India's opening pair set the home side

up for a big first-innings total on a track that offered little assistance to the bowlers, after captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni won the toss and elected to bat.

Sehwag reached his 16th Test century with a fine-leg boundary off Muralidaran and then hit the off-spinner for three fours in a row.

But Muralidaran got his revenge soon after by having Sehwag caught by Tillakaratne Dilshan at short cover. Sehwag's 122-ball knock was studded with 18 fours and two sixes.

Gambhir, 28, also completed his eighth Test century in style, dancing down the track to Rangana Herath for a four to the long-off fence.

His 215-ball innings containing 15 fours came to an end when he was caught and bowled by Muralidaran in the final session of the day.

The Indian openers did well to negotiate challenging early-morning conditions and avoid a repeat of events at the drawn first Test in Ahmedabad, which saw the hosts reduced to 32-4 early in the first

session. Sehwag, dropped in the slips while yet to get off the mark, overcame a subdued start to hit his trademark shots against both the quicks and the spinners on the way to his 20th Test 50.

He twice drove fast bowler Angelo Mathews to mid-off for fours before smashing a full toss from unorthodox spinner Ajantha Mendis to the deep mid-wicket fence for the first six of the match.

Gambhir was equally aggressive in his shot-making, forcing Herath off the attack after he hit the left-arm spinner for three fours in his opening over.

Mendis, who had picked up 26 wickets in Sri Lanka's 2-1 Test victory over India at home last year, looked particularly out-of-sorts, conceding 87 runs off his 19 overs.

First-Test centurions Dravid and Tendulkar seemed to carry their form into the match and looked solid during their unbeaten stints at the wicket.

Dravid, who made 177 at Ahmedabad,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Asif returns and scores

Cricket

AFP, Dunedin

Pakistan paceman Mohammad Asif celebrated his international cricket recall with three vital wickets to have New Zealand at 276-6 at stumps on the first day of the first Test here Tuesday.

Only a fielding lapse denied him a fourth wicket as New Zealand struggled through the first day after being sent into bat in reasonable conditions.

Daniel Vettori escaped a golden duck in one of three dropped catches that proved costly for Pakistan and allowed New Zealand to build two solid partnerships and recover from a first-ball dismissal.

Ross Taylor and Martin Guptill staged a 117-run rescue stand for the third wicket, while Vettori and Brendon McCullum had put on an unbroken 65 for the seventh wicket.

At stumps Vettori was on 40 and McCullum on 25 after successfully appealing against an lbw dismissal on the penultimate ball of the day.

But around them the New Zealand batting had a familiar air of frailty as Asif posted three for 76 off 24 overs. Mohammad Amir had two for 62 and Umar Gul, although wicketless, bowled seven maidens in his first nine overs.

Asif, who arrived in New Zealand vowing to repair a promising career that had been stalled by injury and drug scandals, took wickets in the first and last sessions of the day.

But it was the 17-year-old Mohammad Amir who took

the early plaudits after Mohammad Yousuf won the toss and put New Zealand into bat.

Aamir justified the decision with the opening delivery when he yorked Tim McIntosh with a ball that ricocheted from the toe of the bat to the leg stump.

Asif followed in the sixth over with the wicket of Daniel

Flynn who, on eight from two boundaries, played down the wrong line and sent an inside edge to wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal to leave New Zealand on two for 27.

Taylor and Guptill dragged New Zealand out of the mire in a defiant 44-over stand that ended when Guptill fell for 60, his maiden Test half-century.

He survived two chances

on 26, with Imran Farhat missing a regulation catch at first slip off Umar Gul, and then Gul misjudged a chance on the fine-leg boundary that landed just over the rope for six.

Guptill was eventually undone when he top-edged Aamir to Fawad Alam running backwards at square leg.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Soderling strikes Nadal

Tennis

AFP, London

Rafael Nadal was beaten in straight sets by Robin Soderling in his opening match at the ATP World Tour Finals on Monday, the Swede repeating his shock French Open win over the Spaniard.

Soderling saw off Nadal 6-4, 6-4 at London's O2 Arena in their Group B match at the season-ending tournament of the world's top eight players.

Four-time French Open defending champion Nadal had had his 31-match winning streak there broken in May by Soderling, who in becoming the only man ever to beat Nadal at Roland Garros, went on to reach the final.

And the Swede repeated the upset with a tidy performance at the former Millennium Dome, at times giving the Australian Open champion the run-around on the medium-paced court.

"I was very nervous at the start but I got off to a great start," Soderling said.

"I managed to play really well on the important points and I really served well when I needed to."

"Winning against the world number two is not bad."

"It's tough to keep on playing long rallies every time, because he's a great fighter, and he's moving really well. So I tried to keep the points short, and it worked."

Nadal said he did not go into the clash looking to get Soderling back for the French Open defeat.

"I don't believe in revenge," the 23-

year-old said.

"Every match is a different match. I went on court, tried my best as I did all my life. I didn't think, not one second, on the Roland Garros match."

"I didn't play really bad. But in the important moments, I didn't have this calm, this necessary calm, to win these matches against the best players of the world."

In-form Soderling, the world number nine, broke into the top 10 just over a month ago and was the first reserve for this tournament. He was called up after US Wimbledon finalist Andy Roddick withdrew due to a lingering knee injury.

The 25-year-old has won only one tournament this year, the Bastad clay court title in his homeland.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



Back after a two-year hiatus Pakistan speedster Mohammad Asif (L) celebrates one of his three wickets with wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal on the first day of the Dunedin Test on Tuesday.