



(L-R) Batsman Shahriar Nafees, spinner Elias Sunny and pace duo Rubel Hossain and Shahadat Hossain jog during Tigers' practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, two days ahead of their first Test against the West Indies.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shakib wins award, misses practice

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan was supposed to train with the team yesterday ahead of the first Test, starting from tomorrow, against West Indies but the inspirational Tigers all-rounder had to skip it to attend a reception organised by the youth wing of the ruling party.

While Bangladesh Awami Jubo League honoured eight youths, Shakib being one of them, during its 40th founding anniversary at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday for their achievements in respective fields.

"He (Shakib Al Hasan) took permission from the board to attend this programme and because of that missed the training in the morning session but later practiced individually after returning from the function," informed team operations manager Tanjeeb Ahsan Saad.

There is nothing wrong in attending such a programme, especially when the Prime Minister graced it and handed over the crests to the achievers, but the question was raised with the timing. It happened with just two days to go to a very important assignment, which is why everybody was surprised to see that Shakib was

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Joy's fine waived

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation has decided to waive the 50,000 taka fine slapped on Team BJMC director and BFF's senior vice-president Arif Khan Joy following his appeal for waiver. The appeal committee of football's governing body took the decision in its meeting on Saturday but retained the suspended ban of one year.

'Not playing is no excuse'

SPORTS REPORTER

Shahriar Nafees hasn't represented Bangladesh for almost a year. The former national vice-captain spent most of his time playing for the A team in various tournaments this season. His return to the Test side for this series was based mainly on his performance in the last Test series that Bangladesh played against Pakistan.

While Bangladesh did go on to lose that game by seven wickets, Nafees's 97 provided some respectability to the home side's total. However, ever since then, the left-handed batsman's career took a U-

turn for the worse. He wasn't selected for the Asia Cup squad, neither was he a member of the World Twenty20 squad. Despite the long gap from international cricket, Nafees was confident of making a good comeback.

"Not playing cricket for over a year is frustrating no doubt. But I don't want that to be an excuse. If I don't play well now, people won't notice that I didn't play for a year. If I do perform they'll praise me and that's what matters. We just have to play well in this series and make use of this series," said Nafees. The batsman further stated that the fact that he has had to fight his way into the team and there's competition, is in itself a 'positive sign' for

Bangladeshi cricket.

He however acknowledged that Bangladesh could have made a lot more progress if the team was more involved in the longer version of the game. "We played well against the West Indies last year and against Pakistan a bunch of us had good individual performances. It obviously would have been great if we played more, but unfortunately, we don't control the FTP (Future Tours Programme)."

The batsman recently hit the headlines when he came under the board's scrutiny for behavioural misconduct while he was on tour with the A team in India in August. What followed was a

warning from the board for the left-hander. Nafees however believed that bygones were bygones and merely wanted to focus on the present.

"I have crossed that phase long ago. The issue was resolved and I have played for Bangladesh A after that. What matters is that I am playing for Bangladesh once again and I hope to do well," said Nafees.

Acknowledging the West Indies team's strength, the batsman stated that there wasn't any scope for targeting 'any one player'. "The entire West Indian team is doing well. We can't individually identify them and underestimate the others. We have to take everyone seriously and keep our focus."

Hockey team leave for India tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national hockey team will leave here for India tomorrow to take part in two separate tournaments in New Delhi as part of their preparation for next February's World Hockey League (Round-2) which will also be held in the same city. Striker Pushkor Khisa Mimo has returned to the 18-member fold while young striker Moinul Islam Kaushik, the highest scorer of last season, has been excluded from the team, which will first play in the Nehru Cup (Nov 14-25) and then Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey Tournament (Nov 25-) as Bangladesh have been given direct entry from the second round in both tournaments.

Coach Mahbub Haroon wants to ascertain the right combination and identify the loopholes before the World Hockey League through experimenting in these tournaments even though he wants to put up a good performance.

"Even though the club sides are taking part in these tournaments, it will be tough to become champions because those club sides are almost as good as the national team of

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'Short stuff an option'

SPORTS REPORTER

Playing cricket in Bangladesh is nothing new for West Indies pacer Ravi Rampaul. His tryst with Dhaka began in the early 2000s when he first arrived here for an under-19 stint. He was also a member of the team that defeated Bangladesh last year.

While his performance in that series didn't throw up too many talking points -- he took one wicket in the first match and was replaced by Kemar Roach in the second -- the bowler's potential to change the scenario of the game has never been doubted.

Competing against the likes of Roach, Tino Best and Fidel Edwards kept Rampaul in and out of the Test side in the last few games, but his knack of adjusting to the slow conditions here in Mirpur gives him an edge over the other pacers. Roach's unavailability through injury places a greater onus on Rampaul to lead the attack.

"It's too early to tell how the wicket will play, but from my past experience, I can say that it might be slow and that it will help the spinners. It's basically a wicket where you will have to use your variations to pick wickets," said Rampaul during a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The bowler also stated the importance of sticking to the basics and bowling the right line in such conditions. "It's too early to tell how the wicket will play, we have some good, quick fast bowlers who can bowl 90 miles an hour, and if we put the ball in the right areas we will do well," added the bowler.

Rampaul's bowling career has a page from Bangladesh pacer Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's life story. The West Indian



RAVI RAMPAL



Premier Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (R) receives his memento from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as one of the eight young achievers at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Metro win in a canter

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Metro won their first game of the National Cricket League (NCL) as they romped past Barisal by seven wickets yesterday at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong on the third day of the third round of the NCL. A poor reply by Barisal in their second innings and an aggressive half-century by Metro's Shamsur Rahman led to the quick finish. The rest of the games in this round, unlike the previous two rounds, are headed for results.

At the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in

Bogra, the day finished with Khulna holding the upper hand against Chittagong, who ended the day on 40

for 3 in pursuit of 453. The day belonged to Khulna's Anamul Haque

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SCORES IN BRIEF

BARISAL: First innings 242 and second innings 138 all out in 52 overs (Salman 42; Ashraful 3-12, Sunny 3-29)

DHAKA METRO: First innings 241 all out in 82.2 overs and second innings 145 for 3 in 23.2 overs. (Shamsur 71; Fazle 1-10)

Result: Dhaka Metro won by 7 wickets.

DHAKA: First innings 84 all out in 32.1 overs and second innings 289 for 8 in 104 overs (Mosharraf 68, Shuvagata 57; Enamul 3-39).

SYLHET: First innings 390 all out in 118 overs.

KHULNA: First innings 416 all out in 87.3 overs and second innings 343 for 5 in 81.5 overs. (Anamul 127, Imrul 64; Faisal 3-77)

CHITTAGONG: First innings 307 all out in 78.3 overs and second innings 40 for 3 in 10.5 overs (Nafees 15*; Razzak 2-4)

RAJSHAHI: First innings 232 and second innings 297 for 9 in 108 overs (Forhad 100 not out, Jahurul 46; Sajedul 4-48)

RANGPUR: First innings 171 all out in 57.1

Law set to be new Oz batting coach

Former Bangladesh coach and Queensland cricket star Stuart Law is set to be appointed the Australian batting coach for the rest of the South African Test series and may retain the position permanently.

Law is poised to take over from current Australian batting coach Justin Langer, who will start a new job as WA (Western Australia) coach. "It was a dream playing cricket at the highest level and if I was offered this job on a long-term basis, it would be the next best thing,"

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Div I football

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