

SPORT



Bangladesh A team players (from L-R) Imrul Kayes, Marshall Ayub and Naeem Islam wind down after a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, ahead of their tour of England starting from August 6. PHOTO: STAR

Tour of opportunity

SPORTS REPORTER



The high priority that Bangladesh's team management have given to the A team's tour of England, which begins on August 6, is reflected in their selection policy. 13 out of the 15 players selected have played international cricket and they will be accompanied by most of the national team's top support staff, with the exception of head coach Shane Jurgensen, who the BCB was initially planning to send as well.

With the country's domestic cricket at a standstill for almost half a year, the players' performances on this tour could perhaps be their only opportunity to impress the selectors before the series against New Zealand in October.

All four openers will vie for the opportunity to partner Tamim Iqbal at the top in the senior side. Anamul Haque, who missed the last series due to his HSC exams leads the pack and is likely to return to the national fold. Captain Jahurul Islam will also be in contention and so will Shamsur Rahman, who will want to progress from opening in T20 Internationals. The opportunity however would mean most to Imrul Kayes, who was once a regular fixture in the national side but last played against Pakistan in 2011.

"I haven't played for a long time, so my main target will be to get used to playing and to come back to form as soon as possible. My aim is to find a spot in the national

team in the top three positions," Kayes told The Daily Star.

The other player looking to make a comeback would be Naeem Islam. The allrounder had a string of good performances with the A team last year and also scored his maiden Test century against the West Indies. However, an injury in the second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League and the selectors' tilt towards young Mominul Haque led to him missing out on the two away tours.

Also travelling with the squad is top-order batsman Marshall Ayub, one of the two non-internationals in the team. Despite a terrific run in the domestic competition last season, he failed to win a national cap, but the exit of Mohammad Ashraful will increase possibilities of an international debut.

"There's this tour and then there's the Dhaka Premier League in September. My aim is to firstly perform well in both the competitions. Whether I'll be selected for the national team will depend on them [selectors]," Marshall told The Daily Star.

The players, who leave for England on Saturday morning, will play eight matches at seven venues over the next three weeks against their English counterparts, an aspect of the tour which the captain feels will have a toll on the players. "The England Lions won't have to travel so much, but we do, so that might be a bit tiring. However, we have a strong team. All we need to do is adjust to the conditions and get a good start on the tour," said Jahurul.

Shakib's Tridents beat Tamim's Zouks

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan's Barbados Tridents beat Tamim Iqbal's St Lucia Zouks by 17 runs in the opening match of the Caribbean Premier League at the Kensington Oval yesterday. While Shakib had a disappointing day with both the bat and the ball -- scoring just 5 and being taken for a wicketless 29 from two overs -- Tamim scored four boundaries in his 14-ball 22. Batting first Barbados rode on Shoaib Malik's 78 to post 169. In reply, St Lucia were bundled out for 152 in 19.4 overs. Tamim faced Shakib for just one delivery in the fifth over of the game, which was tucked away to the leg side for a single.

India-Zim 4th ODI today

PTI, Bulawayo

Having already clinched the series with an unassailable 3-0 lead, a dominant India may look to test their bench strength when they take on minnows Zimbabwe in the fourth cricket one-day international here on Thursday. The convincing seven-wicket win in the third ODI gave India the series title, reducing the remaining two ODIs to academic interest and that could prompt the team management to experiment with the combination.

Booters lose to Thai club

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team's preparation for the SAFF Championship got off to a losing start as they went down 2-1 against Thai Premier League side Osotspa Saraburi, in Bangkok yesterday.

Saraburi forward Narong struck for the Thai club in either side of the break before Bangladesh pulled one back through substitute striker Shakhawat Hossain Rony. Coach Lodewijk de Kruij made as many as seven changes during the game while two of his key players -- midfielder Mamunul Islam and winger Zahid Hossain -- missed the match due to injuries they picked up on the previous day.

The Thai Premier League side, boasting five national players and six foreign recruits, survived two attacks from Bangladesh early in the game before snatching two goals. Bangladesh's young striker Wahed Ahmed squandered two early chances -- failing to connect to a well-judged cross in front of the goal before missing from a one-on-one situation with the goalkeeper top beat in the 15th minute.

The first goal that Bangladesh conceded came against the run of play and from a counter attack in the 24th minute. Chamana whipped in a cross from the right flank for Narong, who found the back of the net with a drive. Narong seemed to have handled the ball before beating Bangladesh goalkeeper Mamun Khan, but the referee ignored it, according to a report sent by Bangladesh Football Federation.

Bangladesh came close to levelling the margin with a Wahed header that beat Osotspa Saraburi goalkeeper but defender Yamanoto made a goalline save to clear the danger.

After resumption, Bangladesh took control of the midfield with crisp passing between Shohel Rana, Jamal Bhuiyan and Mithun Chowdhury, but they conceded another goal from a counter attack in the 66th minute, with Narong giving Mamun Khan no chance to react with a powerful drive.

Bangladesh however pulled one back five minutes from time when Rony converted a spot-kick. Substitute goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Shohel then denied a powerful shot from Saubert to keep the margin of defeat to the slimmest one.

After the match, De Kruij said that he would have to do a lot of work, especially in the areas the players made the mistakes.

"We will have to work on our weak areas and have to learn to deal with a matured team like Osotspa Saraburi," said De Kruij.

Aussies undecided on Warner

Crucial Old Trafford Test starts today

AFP, Manchester



Australia are pondering whether to recall controversial batsman David Warner for their must-win third Ashes Test against England at Old Trafford starting on Thursday.

Top-order batting has long been Australia's Achilles heel and so it proved in a crushing 347-run second Test defeat at Lord's, where the tourists were skittled out for just 128 in their first innings.

England lead the five-match series 2-0 and Australia need to win in Manchester if their hopes of regaining the Ashes are not to be extinguished -- a drawn series would see holders England retain the urn.

Australia, following a 4-0 series reverse in India earlier this year, have suffered six successive Tests defeats for the first time since 1984 -- they last lost seven in a row in the 19th Century.

Warner missed the first two Tests of the current series having been suspended in the run-up to the Ashes for punching England's Joe Root in a



ALASTAIR COOK



MICHAEL CLARKE

Birmingham bar after Australia lost a Champions Trophy match to their arch-rivals last month.

Instead the 26-year-old opener joined up with Australia A for whom he made 193 against South Africa A in Pretoria last week before becoming embroiled in a sledging row with the home side's wicketkeeper.

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell is adamant that, if selected, Warner must open as that would give him the best chance of imposing his game on England's bowlers.

But that would mean Australia coach Darren

Lehmann having to give up on at least half of his chosen first-wicket duo of Shane Watson and Chris Rogers.

A middle order berth could be found for Warner if Australia drop Phil Hughes or Steven Smith fails to recover in time from a back injury that saw him miss training Tuesday.

Australia's batsmen, none of whom including world class strokeplayer and captain Michael Clarke, have yet made a hundred this Ashes, are assailed by conflicting advice, be it "play your natural game" or "bat time".

For Rogers, who has scored just 89 runs in four innings this series, the example of former Australia opener Justin Langer, a team-mate at Western Australia, is one he hopes to follow in Manchester.

"It's just to fight," Rogers said Tuesday. "There were times playing at WA, and we weren't doing so well, and that was Justin Langer's motto."

Rogers added: "You've got to fight as hard as you can, try to stay out there and not surrender your wicket -- which we've probably been doing a little bit too easily."

SL take series 4-1

INTERNET



Tillakaratne Dilshan narrowly missed a second successive century as Sri Lanka whipped South Africa by 128 runs in Colombo on Wednesday to wrap up the one-day series 4-1.

The hosts piled up 307-4 after electing to take first strike and then shot the Proteas out for 179 in 43.5 overs in the day-night match at the Premadasa stadium.

AB de Villiers played a captain's knock of 51, but could not prevent South Africa from being condemned to their 13th



defeat in 15 one-dayers on Sri Lankan soil.

Seamer Suranga Lakmal and off-spinner Sachithra Senanayake marked their first appearance in the series by sharing five wickets. Ajantha Mendis claimed three for 36.

Opener Dilshan, who hit an unbeaten 115 in the fourth game in Pallekele on Sunday, plundered 13 boundaries before he was bowled for 99 by McLaren in the 39th over.

Lahiru Thirimanne, promoted to number three, scored 68 and Kumar Sangakkara was unbeaten on 75 off 45 balls as the South African bowlers wilted in steamy conditions.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 307-4 in 50 overs (Dilshan 99, Thirimanne 68, Sangakkara 75 not out, McLaren 1-47, Phasingo 1-48)

SOUTH AFRICA: 179 all out in 43.5 overs (De Villiers 51; Lakmal 3-24, Mendis 3-36)

Result: Sri Lanka won the match by 128 runs and took series 4-1.

Man-of-the-match: TM Dilshan.

Man-of-the-series: Kumar Sangakkara.

Case against banned 5

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) lodged a case against four players and a Mohammedan SC manager at the Palton Police Station yesterday, a day after the game's governing body suspended all five of them from hockey activities for different periods following Monday's incidents at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

Golam Sarwar, officer-in-charge at the Palton Police Station, confirmed that hockey federation's general secretary Khwaza Rahmatullah filed a case against five persons.

The main complain is against Hockey Players' Welfare Association (HPWA) president Rasel Khan Bappi while the others are national team discards Asaduzzaman Chandan, Ashiquzzaman and Shamsuddin Tuhin and former national player and Mohammedan's hockey manager Ariful

Haque Prince.

When asked whether there was any need to file a case against the people who have already been suspended, Rahmatullah said, "The national team players told us that they are feeling insecure at the dormitory after Monday's incidents in which the suspended persons tried to force them out of the camp. They also tried to assault our foreign coach and that's why we have filed a case against them."

In a statement, the HPWA demanded exemption of punishment from its five members, who went to the hockey stadium yesterday to inform of the unanimous decision of the association.

Meanwhile, Mohammedan Sporting Club also echoed the sentiment of HPWA and expressed their concern over such 'one-sided decision' and claimed that the decision was taken to keep Mohammedan away from hockey as some of the suspended players have already signed up for Mohammedan for the upcoming season.



Sri Lanka's master batsman Kumar Sangakkara hammers a square drive on way to a blistering 45-ball 75 in the fifth ODI against South Africa in Colombo yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Zia wins rating chess title

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Ziaur Rahman became champion in the Bishal Trade and Rupahali Sarees International Rating Chess Tournament with a round left.

Zia defeated Sharif Hossain in the penultimate round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday. Zia secured eight points from as many games, 1.5 points ahead of second placed FM Mehdi Hasan Parag, Abdullah Al Saif and FM Rezaul Haque.

Jimmy the best: Wasim

AFP, Manchester

Pakistan great Wasim Akram believes England's James Anderson is the best bowler currently operating in world cricket.

The 31-year-old Anderson has taken 13 wickets in the first two Ashes Tests to help England into a 2-0 lead over Australia ahead of the third Test at the Lancashire pace-man's Old Trafford home ground starting Thursday.

Anderson, whose tally of 320 Test wickets places him third on England's all-time list behind Ian Botham and Bob Willis, is currently only equal fifth with Australia's Peter Siddle in the International Cricket Council's Test bowling rankings.