



In and out Bangladesh opener Imrul Kayes plays a forward defensive shot during a practice game in Mirpur yesterday. He struck a compact half century.

PHOTO STAR

The case for Kayes

SPORTS REPORTER



For Imrul Kayes the West Indies tour later this month could well be the series that seals him a spot in the national side; a sweet reward for the numerous comebacks he attempted over the last two years.

After nearly a three-year of hiatus from international cricket he stormed back with a century against Sri Lanka in Chittagong in February this year. In the Asia Cup he just played one game, in which he scored a half-century against Pakistan, before getting injuring.

However, despite his promising performances he was not a regular in the side. The Asia Cup saw selectors prefer Shamsur Rahman and Anamul Haque ahead of him. Tamim Iqbal's return in the India series meant that there was no room for him.

This time though, Imrul is on a different mission. He is not competing with the openers in the side, but for the crucial number three spot.

"I had a discussion with the coach (Chandika Hathurusingha) and he told me that he wants me to play at number three and asked me to be mentally ready for that," Kayes told reporters at Mirpur yesterday during the innings break of the practice match.

The one-down position has been a problem for the Tigers in the recent past. The last three years have seen Bangladesh play five players in that position with young Mominul Haque churning out the most impressive stats. Mominul scored 375 runs in 13 games at an average of 29 -- by far the best figures in that position. However, the left-hander's recent form has been a concern.

Yesterday's practice game at Mirpur saw Mominul chase a wide delivery and get caught at slip for a duck. Kayes on the other hand, scored a steady 59 off 79 balls, an innings which saw him score five fours and two sixes.

Kayes's impressive run during Bangladesh's A tour in the West Indies earlier this year is another aspect that puts him ahead of both Mithun and Mominul for the upcoming series. He scored a century and seemed like the only confident batsman there.

"We trained hard before these practice matches. Although our overall performances in both the games may not have been up to the mark, we needed to play," said Kayes.

Kayes's observation was accurate. His side was bundled out for just 201 on a flat track in the first innings yesterday. Rubel Hossain, who seemed to be bowling in the high 130s, was one of the chief destroyers finishing with figures of three for 45. National skipper Mushfiqur Rahim also appeared to hurt his hand while keeping, but he did not seem to be in much trouble after a visit from the physio.

Quiet transfer for once marquee league

SPORTS REPORTER



"Oh, I almost forgot; yes, the players' transfer is tomorrow," was the somewhat surprised reply from the cricket official when asked about the inter-club players' transfers for the upcoming Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League, starting today (3pm-8pm) at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

One cannot blame him as long gone are the days when the country's most coveted competition was at the centre of attention. The amount of interest, drama and anxiety surrounding the players' transfer is now a long lost memory.

This is still the country's oldest and only recognised 50-over competition and its importance has not diminished, only the fanfare has lessened; perhaps due to Bangladesh's emergence as a major force in world cricket.

Everything remained quiet even on the eve of this season's players' transfer, which will be conducted in two phases.

In the first phase, the centrally-contracted players and those who will be travelling to the West Indies in August will take part today and tomorrow while the second phase, set to take place on August 27 and 28, will involve the remaining players. The league is scheduled to begin on October 10.

Currently interest surrounds the pool players. Due to his six-month suspension Shakib Al Hasan was not included in the pool but defending champions Gazi Tank left the door open for the all-rounder in case BCB reduces his suspension.

"We confirmed Tamim from the pool and it's mandatory to take a pacer so we confirmed Rubel Hossain. If the board allows Shakib, then definitely he will play for us," Gazi Tank owner Lutfur Rahman Badal told the Daily Star Sport over phone yesterday.

The board this time made two categories for the pool players -- category A for batsmen, spin bowlers and all-rounders and category B for the pace bowlers. One club can rope in a maximum of two players from the category A and one from category B.

"The board may have considered the matter of pace bowlers but due to this policy nine players like Abdur Razzak, Arafat Sunny and Shohag Gazi are yet to get any team as far as I know," said Badal.

According to sources veteran Razzak is likely to make a deal with Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club while many officials revealed on condition of anonymity that national spinner Gazi is struggling to land a team because of his attitude problems. Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim -- who is reportedly set to net the most lucrative deal of Tk 50 lakh, followed by Tamim

and Shakib at Tk 45 lakh -- along with Mominul Haque and pacer Shafiul Islam struck a deal with Prime Doleshwar. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is all set to stay at Mohammedan while Abahani, which had failed to make the Super League phase in the last season, is negotiating with all-rounder Nasir Hossain. Mahmudullah Riyad and promising pace bowler Taskin Ahmed, meanwhile, are heading to Prime Bank.

If the board finishes the league as per their schedule of October 10 to November 25, then the national players will likely get three-five first-round matches at most, which is why national pool players will be paid on a 'pro rata' basis.

While they will be available for the first round of the league, they will however be busy during the Zimbabwe series set to begin on October 24.

This season, a club will be able to register seven foreign players but can only field one in a match. "Can you imagine a transfer is going to take place without the bylaws being approved? So, it's not unlikely that they will change the foreign player quota as per their wish. You cannot expect more when a man living in Chittagong (AJM Nasir) runs a Dhaka league," complained Badal.

Despite repeated attempts Nasir, BCB director and chairman of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM), could not be reached on his mobile phone for comments.

BANGLADESH-INDIA HOCKEY SERIES Naveed finds positives in whitewash

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national hockey team were whitewashed by the visiting second-string India side in the three-match series as they lost the third and final match by 1-3 goals at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan turf yesterday.

The hosts, who lost the first match 1-2 and the second 1-5, showed signs of improvement yesterday, especially in defence, as they thwarted a number of Indian attacks throughout the 70 minutes.

Bangladesh coach Naveed Alam, who rested a number of his key players from the starting eleven including Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Krishna Kumar, Hasan Jubayer Niloy, Sheikh Mohammad Nannu and Pushkor Khisha Mimo, said the target of the series was achieved despite losing all three matches.

"We have achieved our target from the series. The first match was for competitiveness, the second one to find out the mistakes and the third one to show the fighting spirit. The boys fought well today," said Naveed after the match.

The visitors broke the deadlock in the sixth minute through Yuvraj Walmiki, courtesy of a defensive lapse by the hosts. The scoreline remained unchanged in the first half as the visitors failed to capitalise on five penalty corners and a penalty stroke thanks

to some excellent saves by Bangladesh goalie Asim Gop, who was later adjudged the man of the match. Bangladesh's young defence, without the experienced Chayan, played better in the second half but conceded the second goal in the 38th minute when Gurjinder Singh converted a penalty corner. Substitute Mimo reduced the arrears in the 56th minute, but India restored the two-goal advantage in the next minute through Vikram Kumar.

"Both the teams have gained from this series. The hosts played with much confidence at the backline, which will stand them in good stead during the Asian Games," said India coach Tushar Khandaker.

Bangladesh coach Naveed, too, feels that it is always better losing against a strong side than winning against a weak one when it comes to preparatory matches.

"We could have brought in teams like Chinese Taipei and won the series. But that wouldn't have served the purpose. Despite losing to India, we will gain in confidence and we hope to become champions in the World Hockey League (Round-1)," opined Naveed.

Bangladesh, defending champions of the World Hockey League (Rd-1), will host this year's event in early September before flying out to Incheon, Korea to participate in five Asian Games.

First watchful, then flashy

SPORTS REPORTER

In his quest to regain form Tamim Iqbal seems to be ticking all the boxes. In the first practice game on Thursday he scored a watchful, responsible 44 while yesterday in the second game, he seemed back to his belligerent self with a 66-ball 70 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

He hammered four sixes and as many fours during his second innings knock and entertained a sparse crowd. The shot of his innings was a down-the-track punch over long on for six off Muktar Ali.

Chasing a target of 201, he gave his team a flying start through a stand of 117 with Anamul Haque. He was eventually bowled while attempting to cut Nasir Hossain over point.

It was a welcome change for the struggling batsman.

His struggles -- he last scored a Test century in 2010 and an ODI century more than a year ago -- led many of his critics to sharpen their knives, and the upcoming West Indies tour may be a make-or-break assignment for him.

Sublime Sangakkara

AFP, Galle



Veteran Kumar Sangakkara hit a 200-plus score for the 10th time to light up the fourth day's play in the first Test between Sri Lanka and Pakistan in Galle on Saturday.

The prolific left-hander made 221 as the hosts declared their first innings at 533-9 shortly before stumps, a lead of 82 runs over Pakistan's total of 451.

Left-arm spinner Rangana Herath then had opener Khurram Manzoor caught behind for three to reduce the tourists to 4-1 in six overs before the close.

Ahmed Shehzad was on one and nightwatchman Saeed Aijmal had yet to score when stumps were drawn, leaving Pakistan the task of batting out the final day to draw the opening encounter of the two-match series.

Sangakkara, second only behind Australian legend Don Bradman's tally of 12 scores of more than 200, took advantage of the easy-paced wicket to toy with the Pakistan attack for nearly 12 hours.

He fell in the post-tea session, stumped off spinner Abdur Rehman trying to pick up the scoring rate in the company of tailenders.

Pakistan's frontline off-spinner Aijmal, who went wicketless for 46 overs, grabbed five on either side of



TOP FIVE DOUBLE-TONNERS				
Batsman (country)	Span	Mat	Inns	200s
DG Bradman (Aus)	1928-1948	52	80	12
KC Sangakkara (SL)	2000-2014	127*	218	10
BC Lara (ICC/WI)	1990-2006	131	232	9
WR Hammond (Eng)	1927-1947	85	140	7
DPMD Jayawardene (SL)	1997-2014	148*	249	7
(* denotes still playing)				

SCOREBOARD				
PAKISTAN: First innings 451 (Younis 177, Shafiq 75, Sarfraz 55, Rehman 50, Peera 5-137, Herath 3-116)				
SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 252-2)				
Tharanga lbw b Junaid	19			
Silva c Sarfraz b Talha	64			
Sangakkara st Sarfraz b Rehman	221			
Jayawardene lbw b Junaid	59			
Mathews c Younis b Aijmal	91			
Vithanage c Shafiq b Aijmal	5			
Dickwella c Shafiq b Aijmal	5			
Perera c Junaid b Aijmal	5			
Prasad st Sarfraz b Aijmal	31			
Herath not out	6			
Extras: (b-5, lb-11, w-7, nb-4)	27			
Total: (For 9 wkts dec in 163.1				
PAKISTAN: Second innings				
Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-144, 3-257, 4-438, 5-450, 6-458, 7-475, 8-511, 9-533				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Junaid	33	9	104	2
Talha	27	4	104	1
Aijmal	59.1	8	166	5
Rehman	39	2	123	1
Shehzad	5	0	20	0
Manzoor c Dickwella b Herath	3			
Shehzad not out	1			
Aijmal not out	0			
Total: (For 1 wkt in 6 overs)	4			
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Herath	3	2	3	1
Eranga	1	1	0	0

tea to finish with expensive figures of five for 166 from 59.1 overs.

Pakistan paid heavily for letting Sangakkara escape off the first ball of the day when Rehman spilled a chance at point off left-arm seamer Junaid Khan.

Junaid struck three deliveries later as Mahela Jayawardene was adjudged leg-before through the Decision Review System.

Umpire Ian Gould turned down a loud shout from the bowler, but Pakistan earned a positive verdict after appealing for a review from the TV official. Replays showed the ball hitting the top of the off-stump.

Jayawardene, who is due to quit Test cricket after the series ends in Colombo later this month, made 59 in a third-wicket stand of 113 with Sangakkara.

The 36-year-old Sangakkara had on Friday risen to fourth place on the list of century-makers with his 37th hundred, the seventh three-figure knock in his last 14 Tests.

Only the retired trio of India's Sachin Tendulkar, with 51 centuries, Jacques Kallis of South Africa, who had 45, and Ricky Ponting of Australia on 41, have scored more hundreds.

Skipper Angelo Mathews hit 91 during a fourth-wicket stand of 181 with Sangakkara before he was caught in the slips off Aijmal just before tea.

England crush India

AFP, Manchester



Moeen Ali starred in a dramatic England victory for the second time in as many matches as they crushed India by an innings and 54 runs to win the fourth Test at Old Trafford on Saturday with more than two days to spare.

India suffered their second spectacular collapse of the match in losing nine wickets after tea on the third day -- including five for 13 in 21 balls -- as England went 2-1 up in the five-match series ahead of next week's finale at The Oval. Ali, whose Test-best six for 67

sealed England's 266-run win in the third Test at Southampton -- their first victory in 11 Tests -- took four for 13 in 37 balls on the way to innings figures of four for 39 in 13 overs.

At tea, India were 33 for one in their second innings -- with all-rounder Chris Woakes having taken his first wicket of the series to dismiss Murali Vijay.

But this was quickly transformed into 66 for six.

What made this slump all the more extraordinary was England fast-medium bowler Stuart Broad, who took six for 25 in India's first innings 152 all out -- where they had been eight for four early on -- was off the field after being hit on the nose by a

Varon Aaron bouncer after trying to hook the fast bowler for a third six in as many balls.

This latest collapse started when left-handed opener Gautam Gambhir gloved a short ball from James Anderson to wicketkeeper Jos Buttler.

Next ball, the start of a new over, saw 53 for two become 53 for three when Cheteshwar Pujara was given out lbw to Ali as he pushed forward.

Pujara looked unhappy but, with India objections meaning the Decision Review System was not in use this series, he had to go.

But there was no doubt at all when Ajinkya Rahane (one) chipped a tame return catch to

SCOREBOARD				
INDIA: First innings 152 (Dhoni 71; Broad 6-25, Anderson 3-46)				
ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 237-6)				
Cook c Pankaj b Aaron	17			
Robson b Kumar	6			
Ballance lbw b Aaron	37			
Bell c Dhoni b Kumar	58			
Jordan c Aaron b Kumar	13			
Root c Dhoni b Pankaj Singh	77			
Ali b Aaron	70			
Buttler c Pujara b Pankaj	26			
Woakes not out	12			
Broad retired hurt	12			
Anderson lbw b Jadeja	29			
Extras: (b-5, lb-12, w-6, nb-6)				
Total: (All out in 105.3 overs) 367				
Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-36, 3-113, 4-136, 5-140, 6-170, 7-304, 8-325, 9-367				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Kumar	24	7	75	3
Pankaj	28	5	113	2
Aaron	26	4	97	3
Ashwin	14	1	29	0
Jadeja	13.3	1	36	1
INDIA: Second innings				
Vijay lbw b Woakes	18			
Gambhir c Buttler b Anderson	18			
Pujara lbw b Ali	17			
Kohli c Bell b Anderson	7			
Rahane c and b Ali	1			
Dhoni c Ballance b Ali	27			
Jadeja c Jordan b Ali	4			
Ashwin not out	46			
Kumar run out (Ali/Buttler)	10			
Singh b Jordan	9			
Aaron c Buttler b Jordan	0			
Extras (b1, lb1, w1, nb1)	4			
Total (all out in 43 overs)	161			
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-53, 3-53, 4-61, 5-61, 6-66, 7-105, 8-133, 9-161, 10-161				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	9	4	18	2
Woakes	9	2	37	1
Jordan	12	1	65	2
Ali	13	3	39	4
Result: England won by an innings and 54 runs				
Series: England lead five-match series 2-1				

U-23s to take on BFF XI

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national U-23 team, currently preparing for September's Asian Games, will take on BFF XI, a team made up of young and promising players from the professional football league, at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan ground today. The match will start at 4:30pm.

According to sources at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), the coach of the national team Lodewijk de Kruij wanted his U-23 team, which started its camp on Monday with 26 members, to play a number of matches against local players to test his team's personnel and formation and also their fitness levels.

"We had told these boys, 18 professional

players mostly from the U-19 and U23 set-ups, to stay prepared to play against the national U-23 team as part of their preparation for the Asian Games," said BFF's technical director BA Jubaeer Nipu.

Meanwhile, BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag claimed whatever came out in the media recently about de Kruij's allegations about non-payment of salaries and the unhygienic state of BKSP was 'blown out of proportion'.

"I admit that the room that was provided to the coaches initially was not very standard. There were some problems regarding food and other things which have since been taken care of. There should not be an issue regarding the salaries because the coaches have already received the amount they were promised during the discussion with the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin recently," said Shohag.