



Bangladesh players warm up at the ANFA Academy Ground in Kathmandu yesterday, ahead of their SAFF U-19 Championship fixture against Bhutan today.

PHOTO: BFF

BD start against Bhutan today

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh under-19 football team will be looking to grab the first opportunity to ensure their semifinal berth in the SAFF U-19 Championship as they take on Bhutan in their opening Group A fixture at the All Nepal Football Association Complex ground in Kathmandu today.

The Bhutanese team lost the opening match of the competition by 1-3 goals against the hosts on Thursday, leaving Bangladesh with the opportunity to snatch the last-four berth with a win in today's match.

However, the Bangladesh think-tank is not taking the opposition lightly, having watched the Bhutanese put on quite a fight with pressing football which destroyed the build-up game of the Nepalese for much of the encounter.

"The pressing football of Bhutan may destroy our build-up game and in that case, I have briefed the boys what they have to do in such situation. I think if we can utilise both flanks properly, we can produce a

good result," said Bangladesh coach Saiful Bari Titu yesterday.

The former national booter plans to play Mohammedan's Mohammad Ibrahim and BFF Academy's Rohit Sarker in left and right wings respectively while Rahmatganj striker Mannaf Rabbi is likely to play as lone centre-forward. Skipper Masuk Mia Johnny, Biplu Ahmed and Shahriar Bappy are likely to feature as the three players in midfield.

"We have the chance to ensure the semifinals if we can beat Bhutan, but to be honest, there are no easy opponents here. Bhutan lost against the brilliance of Nepal forward Bimol Gharti Magar, who scored all the three goals. But Bhutan are not a bad side," said Titu.

The Bangladesh coach however wants to pin his hopes on the forwards, despite them not making full use of their chances in the many practice matches at home.

"If the forwards repeat their performance of the practice matches, it will be tough for us. If they can avail the most of the chances, then it will be easy," said Titu.

Zahid, Meshu in for Australia fixture

SPORTS REPORTER



Winger Zahid Hossain and defender Atiqur Rahman Meshu are among six players who have returned to the 23-member national squad, announced yesterday by head coach Lodewijk de Kruif for the World Cup and Asian Cup Joint Qualifier fixture against Australia.

Apart from Zahid and Meshu – who were out with injuries for quite a while -- goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel, midfielder Emon Mahmud, strikers Enamul Haque and Toklish Ahmed have also made a comeback. Those who made way for these six players are: goalkeeper Mazharul Islam Himel, defender Kesto Kumar Bose, midfielder Shahedul Alam Shahed, strikers Wahed Ahmed, Aminur Rahman Sajib and Towhidul Alam Sabuz.

Sohel, Zahid, Emon and Meshu have been given room as all of them have played a few matches of the Bangladesh Premier League recently having recovered from their injuries. These four players had missed the first two qualifiers against Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Enamul, who had played the match against Kyrgyzstan but was dropped for the one against Tajikistan, has been given another chance while Toklish returned for the first time since the Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

"Four players returned to the fold following the recovery of their injuries while Enamul was with the group already," said de Kruif. "It is only Toklish. There is always option to select a young guy. Toklish is ahead of Wahed (Ahmed) because he always wants to fight on the pitch and wants to give his hundred per cent. He also played some minutes for his club and scored a goal," de Kruif explained.

The 23 players have been asked to report to

SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Shahidul Alam Sohel, Rasel Mahmud Liton, Ashraf Haque Rana.

DEFENDERS: Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, Raihan Hasan, Yeasin Khan, Yeamin Ahmed Chowdhury Munna, Mohammad Linkon, Tapu Barman, Atiqur Rahman Meshu, Nasirul Islam.

MIDFIELDERS: Mamunul Islam, Jamal Bhuiyan, Hemanta Vincent Biswas, Sohel Rana, Monaem Khan Raju, Emon Mahmud.

FORWARDS: Zahid Hasan Emily, Enamul Haque, Zahid Hossain, Jewel Rana, Abdul Baten Komol, Toklish Ahmed.

manager Amirul Islam Babu on August 23 at the BFF House where they will reside before leaving for Malaysia on August 27.

The same squad will also play a friendly match against Malaysia on August 29 in Kuala Lumpur on their way to Perth where they will take on the Socceroos at the NIB Stadium on September 3.

Tigers back after break

SPORTS REPORTER



The official three-week break, the longest for the Tigers since they began their preparations in Brisbane for the World Cup this year, comes to an end today as the conditioning camp for the upcoming series against Australia begins at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

After the end of the South Africa series, the Tigers got their longest break this year. While some spent time with their family in their respective hometown or village, some took the opportunity to travel abroad. However, many from the long-list that was announced for the camp started their training long before the official break ended.

Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is in Singapore for family commitments, ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is in USA for a vacation, head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, bowling coach Heath Streak and fielding coach Richard Halsall are also on vacation. The training camp for the upcoming two-match Test series against

SQUAD

Tamim Iqbal, Tajjul Islam, Imrul Kayes, Arafat Sunny, Mominul Haque, Jubair Hossain, Anamul Haque, Shohag Gazi, Rony Talukdar, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mohammad Mithun, Taskin Ahmed, Liton Das, Rubel Hossain, Soumya Sarkar, Mustafizur Rahman, Mahmudullah Riyad, Abul Hassan, Shakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Shahid, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shafiqul Islam, Shuvagata Hom, Robiul Islam, Nasir Hossain, Al-Amin Hossain and Sabbir Rahman.

Australia gets underway under the guidance of trainer Mario Villavarayan. The camp, with the players who have been included in the elite players' list, will run till September 22. Australia will arrive in Dhaka on September 28 to play one Test each in Chittagong and Mirpur.

The focus will only be on fitness for the first two weeks, which will be followed by individual skill and fitness training after the head coach's return in the first week of September.

A total of 27 players have been drafted in the list, while the selectors will also pick some players from here for the Bangladesh A team as well, who will be touring South Africa and Zimbabwe in October-November. The preparation camp for these two series is likely to kick off on September 3.

Bangladesh A will fly for South Africa on October 14 to play two one-day matches and a three-day game. After that they will visit Zimbabwe to play two four-day and three one-day games during their tour from October 28 to November 18. Rony Talukdar, Anamul Haque, Mohammad Mithun, Shafiqul Islam, Robiul Islam, Al-Amin Hossain, Shohag Gazi and Shuvagata Hom have a good chance of touring with the A team.

The tournament committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to give the players match practice ahead of the two Tests as the National Cricket League (NCL) is most likely to kick-off from mid-September.

Sanga's wife unworried

AGENCIES, Colombo

Fans around the world may be sad to see Kumar Sangakkara bid farewell to the sport, but wife Yehali isn't complaining, since she feels that her husband has been preparing for his retirement for a considerable period of time.

In an interview on Sony Six, Yehali revealed some unknown facts about the iconic cricketer and how he is at home.

"He is an extremely messy person, the messiest on earth," she said with a smile on her face.

"But he loves to cook and absolutely loves making pasta at home."

Sangakkara will have all the time to pursue his culinary ambitions now that he is bringing an end to a career spanning 15 years.

However, the transition from the cricket field to a full-time family man hardly intimidates Yehali.

"We never discussed cricket at home and always made sure there was life away from the sport at home," she said.

"At home, the conversation revolves around the kids and away from cricket." Still, Yehali feels Sangakkara will take some time adjusting to being at home.

"Kumar is a very relaxed, open sort of person. He has never demanded much. [But] He will have to get used to our routine now," she said. "He will of course still play some cricket for a year or two."

Lankans put up a fight

AFP, Colombo



Kumar Sangakkara contributed to a Sri Lankan revival in his final Test as India found wickets hard to come by in the second Test in Colombo on Friday.

The hosts recovered from an early setback to close the second day at 140-3 in their first innings, still 253 runs behind India's total of 393 with seven wickets in hand.

Sangakkara survived a torrid start to make 32, adding 74 for the second wicket with Kaushal Silva after Dimuth Karunaratne was leg-before to Umesh Yadav in the second over of the innings.

Silva, who had been caught behind off Stuart Binny on 14 before replays indicated a no-ball, scored 51.

At stumps, Lahiru Thirimanne was unbeaten on 28 and skipper Angelo Mathews was on 19.

India, seeking a series-levelling win after losing the first Test in Galle by 63 runs, were all out in the third over after lunch with wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha making 56.

Sangakkara, the fifth-highest run-getter in Test history who will quit international cricket after the match, walked on to warm applause from some 4,000 home fans and a guard of honour by the Indian fielders.

But the left-hander endured a tough time in the middle after keeping out a first-ball yorker from Yadav. He remained scoreless for 13 deliveries before steering Ishant Sharma to third man for two to get off the mark.

Sangakkara drove Yadav to the point fence for his first boundary, but escaped narrowly on 24 when Ajinkya Rahane failed to grasp a sharp chance in the slips after the batsman slashed at Ravichandran Ashwin.

Sangakkara managed to add only eight more runs before the same Ashwin-Rahane combination got rid of him after tea with the fielder completing a low catch in the slips.

Silva, who made five and zero in the first Test, defied the Indian bowlers for more than three hours before top-edging a sweep off Amit Mishra to Ashwin at fine-leg.

Earlier, Saha followed his 60 in the first innings at Galle with another gutsy half-century before he was ninth out, leg-before to left-arm spinner Rangana Herath after lunch.

Saha and Amit Mishra put on 46 for the eighth wicket to frustrate the hosts' bid to wrap up the innings quickly after India resumed the day at 319-6.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 393 (Rahul 108, Kohli 78, Sharma 79, Saha 56, Mishra 24; Prasad 2-84, Mathews 2-24, Chameera 2-72, Herath 4-81)

SRI LANKA: First innings 140 for 3 (Silva 51, Sangakkara 32, Thirimanne 28 not out; Yadav 1-34, Mishra 1-9)



PHOTO: AFP

India players line up to show their respect for retiring Sri Lanka legend Kumar Sangakkara (L) as he arrives to bat in his penultimate Test innings on the second day of the second Test at the P Sara Oval in Colombo yesterday.

Follow-on looms for England

REUTERS, London



England crumbled meekly to 107 for eight in reply to Australia's 481 to put the touring side firmly on course for victory in the final

Ashes test after a dramatic second day at The Oval on Friday.

Steve Smith's patient 143 guided Australia to a formidable total and the bowlers rammed home the advantage in the last session to boost their side's bid for a consolation win after relinquishing the Ashes by losing the fourth test in Nottingham.

England's collapse was not quite as abject as when Australia were bowled out for 60 on the first morning at Trent

Bridge but it was quite remarkable on a sun-kissed afternoon in south London.

Australia had resumed in the morning on 287 for three and Smith waited until his 24th delivery to add to his overnight 78 while Voges played more freely.

Smith flashed hard at the very next delivery from Steven Finn and keeper Buttler took the catch, but the bowler immediately returned to the crease to check his footmark and replays confirmed that he had overstepped by several inches.

Smith clipped Moeen for a single to bring up his 11th test century, a patient effort spanning more than five hours at the crease.

Nevill fell for 18, feathering a catch

to Buttler down the leg-side off Moeen and the spinner bowled Johnson for a second-ball duck just before lunch.

Smith's long vigil ended when he dragged a ball from Finn on to his stumps and he departed to a standing ovation having hit two sixes and 17 fours.

Starc struck a six and nine fours in a breezy 58 off 52 balls before he was lbw to Stokes and Siddle was caught by a diving Lyth at gully off Finn to end the innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 481 (Warner 85, Smith 143, Voges 76, Starc 58; Stokes 3-133, Finn 3-90)

ENGLAND: First innings 107 for 8 (Lyth 19, Cook 22, Wood 8 no; Marsh 3-18, Siddle 2-18)

Tremlett calls it a day

REUTERS, London

Former England fast bowler Chris Tremlett has retired from all forms of cricket due to injury problems, he said on Friday.

The towering 33-year-old, who was plagued by fitness issues during his career, took 17 wickets to help England win the 2010-11 Ashes series in Australia.

"After 16 enjoyable years I feel that now is the right moment to call time on my playing career," Tremlett said on Twitter.

"Unfortunately, injury has hampered me throughout my career and now plays the leading role in my decision to retire," he added.

Tremlett, who started his county career at Hampshire before moving to Surrey, took 53 wickets in 12 Tests.

Early return of Pak trio ruled out

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan on Friday ruled out an early return to international cricket for the disgraced trio of Salman Butt, Mohammad Amir and Mohammad Asif ahead of the imminent expiry of their spot-fixing bans.

The players are eligible to return to the sport on September 2 after serving five-year bans.

But the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) chief selector Haroon Rasheed effectively ruled out their return against England in October or in a proposed series with India, both in the UAE.