



Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim performs a few mandatory stretches ahead of the start of Bangladesh's training camp for the Australia series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Tigers unchanged

SPORTS REPORTER

A hopeful Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced an unchanged 14-member squad yesterday for the first Test of the two-match series against Australia expected to begin on October 9 in Chittagong. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the series following Cricket Australia's decision to delay the team's scheduled departure due to security concerns, the BCB declared the team and the Tigers took part in their first training session after the Eid vacation.

Faruque Ahmed-led selection panel understandably retained the same squad that played in the last series against South Africa, putting behind any uncertainty regarding Tajjul Islam, the left-arter who has recovered in time from jaundice and joined the camp yesterday.

The camp began with seven players. Six players from the squad are currently touring India with Bangladesh's second-stringed side while opener Tamim Iqbal is expected to join today after an extended break.

There was no surprise inclusion in the squad. However, one can raise questions regarding the exclusion of Shuvagata Hom.

Considering that the think-tank is likely to prepare a slow-and-low track, more likely to favour the spinners, Shuvagata's off-spinners could have come good against Australia. The turner, after all, did impress the selectors a number of times in the past and could have found a spot in the side in place of, say a Soumya Sarkar, who is likely to bat at number eight even if he gets a chance in the playing

eleven. The only other option for Soumya would be to replace Nasir Hossain at seven.

Hom's recent performance with the Bangladesh A team in India, where he was among the wickets and score a series of half-centuries, could have been considered.

Soumya, who was taken in to the Test side considering his one-day form, hasn't had a good outing in his last few Tests. He also misfired in India.

The selectors, however, thought otherwise. "We found no reason to bring any changes in the team. One can say that Shuvagata could have been an option but we want Soumya to continue as he is very young and has got the potential," chief selector Faruque Ahmed told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

"Shuvagata is always in our consideration and you know it's our home series so we will always get a chance to add someone in the team," he added.

Pacer Rubel Hossain, who is touring with the A team, has also been included in the team despite suffering from pain in his calf muscle. "Rubel has some pain in his calf muscle while Shafiqul (Islam) has a hamstring issue. Their final assessment will be held in Dhaka. We included Rubel, but if he fails to recover then we will go for a replacement," informed Faruque.

SQUAD FOR THE FIRST TEST

Mushfiqur Rahim (captain), Tamim Iqbal (vice-captain), Imrul Kayes, Jubair Hossain, Liton Das, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mohammad Shahid, Mominul Haque, Mustafizur Rahman, Nasir Hossain, Rubel Hossain, Shakib Al Hasan, Soumya Sarkar and Tajjul Islam.

Female shooters disappoint

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi female shooters put up a dismal show in the 8th Asian Airgun Shooting Championship in New Delhi yesterday as none of them managed to qualify for the final round of their respective events. Sharmin Akter Ratna, the Commonwealth Shooting Championship gold medalist, finished 12th among 15 participants in the women's (senior) 10m air rifle event, with a score of 405.8 points. Ratna's younger teammates, namely Sharmin Akter Jr, Jui Chakma and Syeda Atkiya Hasan, also frustrated by failing to qualify for the final round of their respective events while finishing at the bottom in the team event.

Sharmin (403.8 points) finished 13th, Atkiya (399.9 points) finished 14th and Jui (396.9) finished 15th among 16 participants in the qualification round of 10m air rifle women's (youth) event. The three shooters then finished fourth among four teams in the team event with an aggregate score of 1200.6 points.

Earlier on Sunday, Abdullahel Baki and Robiul Islam had finished seventh in their respective events of the men's 10m air rifle. Shakil Ahmed of Bangladesh will take part in the 10m air pistol event for the junior men today.

Spieth's \$10m jackpot

AFP, Atlanta

Jordan Spieth capped an epic season with a Tour Championship victory Sunday that boosted him back to number one in the world and earned him the 10-million-dollar FedEx Cup playoff bonus.

The 22-year-old Texan, whose five wins this season included the Masters and US Open, fired a final round 69 for 271 and a four-shot win over Sweden's Henrik Stenson, New Zealand's Danny Lee and England's Justin Rose.

With the win -- and Jason Day's 10th-place finish -- Spieth will recapture the number one ranking Day had held for a week.

BD A stare at defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's second string side face an uphill battle as they are in danger of losing the three-day encounter against their Indian counterparts in Bangalore.

After the visitors got bundled out for just 228 in the first innings, hosts India A posted a mammoth 411 for five before declaring just before tea yesterday. By the end of Day Two, the visitors were struggling at 36 for two, with both Anamul Haque and Soumya Sarkar back in the pavilion.

Skipper Shikhar Dhawan, who had reached his century the day before, stroked his way to a 150 before eventually getting trapped in front by slow left-arter Saqlain Sajib. Dhawan had played 146 deliveries and hit 18 fours and three sixes in his fluent knock.

Bangladesh removed Shreyas Iyer a couple of overs after Dhawan's fall. However, any hopes of a possible comeback into the game for the visitors were quashed by Vijay Shankar and Karun Nair, who shared a century stand for the fourth wicket. Karun scored a steady 71 off 97 deliveries before getting bowled by Jubair Hossain. His partner Vijay shared another long stand with Naman Ojha, before being bowled by Jubair for 86.

Bangladesh's prospects were also severely

dentured because of injuries to pacers Rubel Hossain and Shafiqul Islam, who did not bowl a single over yesterday. They bowled just 6.1 overs on aggregate.

At 411 for 5, Dhawan and Co declared the innings and decided to have a go at the visitors with around 40 overs left in the day.

The plan worked out fine as both Anamul and Soumya were sent back within the first seven overs. While Anamul displayed a cautious approach, Soumya went out all guns blazing, smacking 19 off 23 deliveries. Bad light stopped play as the Indians could only bowl eleven overs.

Having lost the first three-dayer against Ranji Trophy champions Karnataka, Bangladesh A would have wanted to put in a better performance against their Indian counterparts. However, the top-order problem continued for the visitors and today they face a difficult task of saving the game. Bangladesh team will return home on September 30.

SCORES IN BRIEF	
BANGLADESH A: 228 and 36 for 2 (Soumya 19, Mominul 9 not out, Liton 7 not out, Anamul 0; Pandey 1-4, Yadav 1-8)	
INDIA A: 411 for 5 dec (Dhawan 150, Shankar 86, Nair 71; Jubair 2-76, Nasir 1-67, Shuvagata 1-106, Saqlain 1-121)	

Blatter defends payments to Platini

AFP, Geneva

FIFA President Sepp Blatter told Swiss investigators that a two-million Swiss franc payment to UEFA boss Michel Platini was legitimate, despite a claim from prosecutors that the payment was "disloyal" to FIFA, Blatter's lawyer said Monday.

"On the Platini matter, President Blatter on Friday shared with the Swiss authorities the fact that Mr. Platini had a valuable employment relationship with FIFA serving as an advisor to the president beginning in 1998," Blatter's lawyer Richard Cullen said in a statement. "He explained to the prosecutors that the payments were valid compensation and nothing more and were properly accounted for within FIFA."

Aussies may fly tonight

AFP, Sydney

Australia are booked on a flight to Bangladesh late Tuesday but will await security briefings over fears militants could target Australians before deciding whether to go ahead with the tour.

Three Cricket Australia officials were to meet with top security and intelligence figures in Dhaka on Monday, the governing body's website said.

Sunday's planned team departure for Bangladesh was blocked after the foreign affairs ministry in Canberra warned "militants may be planning to target Australian interests."

"This is not one of the ones you want to get wrong," Australia's team performance manager Pat Howard said Monday.

"Today is a big day, we have a lot of meetings, a lot of people on the ground. We want to make sure we are not under-reacting, but also not over-reacting."

Howard told commercial radio that flights had been booked for the team to depart late Tuesday night.

"The advice we got was pretty direct against Australians and we want to make sure we're doing our due diligence."

"We've bought ourselves 72 hours, but Cricket Australia is not going to put the players at risk."

He added that there was no specific threat against the Australian side.

CA's anti-corruption and security manager Sean Carroll has already met with Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan.

PSL pay starts from \$25k

AGENCIES, Islamabad

Chairman Pakistan Super League (PSL) Governing Council Najam Sethi said emerging talent taking part in the tournament will enjoy contracts starting from \$25,000.

Expressing optimism, Sethi said that the league would boost Pakistan's cricket by providing players an opportunity to play alongside top international cricketers.

"Each of the five teams participating in the event would have to include four foreign and two local emerging players in the squad," Sethi said while talking to a local TV channel. "The emerging players will get at least \$25,000 each."

He added that the PSL would also help make the PCB financially independent. "The money earned through the league will be directed to a central pool, with the franchises getting a 75 per cent share. The earnings by the board will be utilised to develop cricket in the country."

Sethi said each PSL franchise would be required to pay players' fee to the PCB in advance and it would be disbursed to the cricketers by the board.

Sethi said the PSL would be the second biggest Twenty20 competition after the IPL.

Fresh injury blow for Sharapova

AFP, Wuhan

Maria Sharapova's comeback from a leg injury lasted less than three sets on Monday before she retired with a left arm problem against unseeded Barbora Strycova at the Wuhan Open.

The world number three had been out with a persistent leg injury since July, when she lost a Wimbledon semi-final to Serena Williams, and pulled out of three events including the US Open.

But the Russian's long-awaited return proved short-lived as she was pushed to two tie-breaks by the Czech Republic's Strycova before withdrawing when 2-1 up in the third.

Sharapova's retirement leaves a question mark over the rest of her season.

SK KAMAL INT'L CLUB CUP Asmayee, Kolkata MSC show interest

SPORTS REPORTER

Afghanistan Premier League champions Shaheen Asmayee have given their written confirmation while Kolkata Mohammedan have expressed willingness to participate in the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup as the organisers keep juggling with a number of local and foreign clubs.

While sticking to an eight-team event, scheduled to start from October 20 at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong, the organisers have been put into a bit of a spot due to the unwillingness of Bangladesh Premier League champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club. The organisers are contemplating increasing the number of foreign clubs to five in case Sheikh Jamal do not participate while the participation of Dhaka Mohammedan SC and Abahani alongside hosts' Chittagong Abahani seems all but certain.

"We are keeping as many options open as possible regarding foreign clubs. The participation of Solid FC of Sri Lanka and East Bengal of India have been confirmed while Nepal's football federation is also expected to send one of its clubs. Apart from these three teams, we have got confirmation from Shaheen Asmayee of Afghanistan while Kolkata Mohammedan SC today (Monday) corresponded to our invitation with interest," said tournament coordinator Shakil Ahmed yesterday.

"We will not reduce the number of teams even if any of the local teams pull out at the last moment. We have contingency plans for that as we have a number of foreign clubs lined up," added Shakil.

The Chittagong Abahani official also informed that they have arranged four grounds in Chittagong as practice venues while the accommodation and other facilities for the participating teams are being arranged for.



Bangladesh women's cricket team players are all smiles after landing in Karachi yesterday. They will play two T20Is and two ODIs against their Pakistan counterparts starting from tomorrow.

SA bank on IPL skills for India tour

AFP, New Delhi

Ten members of their Twenty20 squad turn out for various franchises in the glitzy cash-rich IPL, and Domingo said that will benefit his wards.

"We are fortunate to have quite a few players who know Indian conditions because of the IPL," Domingo told reporters in New Delhi. "They understand what is required to play in these conditions."

South Africa hope their players' experience in the Indian Premier League will enable them to turn the tables on their hosts at the start of a gruelling 10-week tour of India, coach Russell Domingo said Monday.

The tourists are due to play three Twenty20 internationals and five one-day matches up until October 25, before starting a four-Test series on November 5.

"South Africa is not for sissies. We enjoy different cultures. We enjoy meeting and mixing with new and different people."

Du Plessis insisted the arrangement worked perfectly for the Proteas.

"The three of us play all formats and when one is not the captain, we can enjoy cricket without the extra responsibility. This way we are always fresh."

"It has worked really well for us. It's never been an issue, we continue to learn from each other and support each other."