



Players of Chittagong Abahani (L), who trained at Bandar Stadium, and their East Bengal counterparts, who practised at the Police Lines Ground, were having their last warm-up ahead of today's grand final of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup.



PHOTOS: ANURUP KANTI DAS

BD A struggle for first win

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh A's batting woes continued as they trudged along to their first win on the tour of South Africa in the final one-dayer yesterday. The Bangladesh bowlers put in a fantastic display to reduce the home side to just 100 runs, but even that proved a formidable target for Bangladesh's misfiring batsmen.

Soumya Sarkar (20), Mosaddek Hossain Saikat (26) and Sabbir Rahman (12) were the only batsmen who got into double digits, before Shadman Islam Anik (15 not out) led the side home.

Although the batting performance was morbid, Bangladesh's bowlers were a joy to behold. Al-Amin Hossain took the first wicket, before Kamrul Islam Rabbi wreaked havoc in the middle-order, taking four wickets. In his eight overs, Kamrul gave away just 14 runs.

But he wasn't the only one to take four wickets. Jubair Hossain finished with incredible figures, scalping four wickets for just five runs as he ran through the lower-order. Even Soumya joined in on the fun and took a wicket.

"We are happy that we won one match before leaving for Zimbabwe. However, the way we chased 100 runs was disappointing. The wicket wasn't that bad, there were just a few up and downs, but we should have batted better," said selector Habibul Bashar, who is travelling with the team as manager.

The A-team will now travel to Zimbabwe to play three one-day and two four-day matches.

SA women to arrive on November 5

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa women's cricket team will arrive in Dhaka on November 3 to play three ODIs and four T20Is against their Bangladeshi counterparts. All the matches will be played at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon informed on October 16 that Cricket South Africa (CSA) had agreed to send its women's team for the Bangladesh tour, which was deferred on security grounds on October 5.

South Africa women's cricket team will travel to Cox's Bazar soon after their arrival at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on November 3 and will play their first ODI match on November 6.

The second and third ODIs will be held on November 8 and 10.

The T20Is are scheduled for November 12, 13, 15 and 16.

'Sachin should have played like Sehwag'

AGENCIES, Dubai

Former India captain Kapil Dev says the iconic Sachin Tendulkar "did not know how to make double hundreds, triple hundreds and 400 though he had the ability" to scale such peaks and was "stuck in the Mumbai school of cricket".

"Don't get me wrong, but I think Sachin didn't do justice to his talent. I always thought he could have done much more than what he did," Dev was quoted as saying by the 'Khaleej Times'.

"He [Sachin] got stuck with Bombay cricket. He didn't apply himself to the ruthless international cricket. I think he should have spent more time with Vivian Richards than some of the Bombay guys who played just neat and straight cricket."

"Sachin was a much better cricketer but somewhere along the line he just knew how to score hundreds. He didn't know how to make it a double hundred, or a triple" added the 1983 World Cup winning India captain.

The all-rounder, said he would have advised Tendulkar to play like Virender Sehwag.

"He [Sachin] had the ability. He was technically sound but I felt he was there to get his hundred and that's it. Unlike Richards, Sachin wasn't ruthless, he was more of a perfect, or rather correct cricketer. Had I spent more time with him I would have told him 'go enjoy yourself, play like Virender Sehwag'. You will be a much better cricketer."

Home glory beckons Abahani

Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup final today

ANISUR RAHMAN from Chittagong



Will the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong turn blue or red & gold today? We will get the answers after the grand final of the inaugural Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup involving hosts Chittagong Abahani and Kolkata giants East Bengal that kicks off at 7:40pm today. But whoever wins the title of the eight-team event, it will be their first on Bangladesh soil.

While hosts Chittagong Abahani, sporting the famed sky blue shirt and understandably backed by a packed home crowd, will look to win their first major silverware, the red and gold brigade from across the border will want to make the Bangladesh sojourn a memorable one with another memento in an already decorated trophy cabinet.

Although East Bengal have previously won three overseas trophies -- WAI WAI Cup in Nepal (1993), LG Asean Club Cup (2003) and San Miguel Cup (2004) -- they probably have got the best chance to make amends to their previous aborting attempts in Bangladesh which included the BTC Cup in Dhaka in 1994.

East Bengal are not carrying a full-strength team as most of their leading players are now featuring in the lucrative ISL, but they still look like the team to beat in the competition with their strong reserves engaged in a healthy competition to prove a point.

However, they will be up against a team hungry to create a small piece of history in their own backyard.

Never having been reckoned a force in domestic football and having only returned to the top-flight in 2013, Chittagong Abahani's performances in the competition has so far have been fantastic. Abahani did lose their opening game against East Bengal 2-1, but since then they beat their more illustrious namesake 1-0 before a 4-2 win against Karachi Electric paved their way to the last four. Their 3-1 win against De Spin Ghar Bazan was testimony to their improvement with every passing game.

"We said before that we want to stay till the last day of the tournament and we are still here and want to sign off with the trophy," said Chittagong Abahani coach Shafiqul Islam Manik at a pre-match conference yesterday.

"The players are fully focused and committed to deliver their best to achieve the target," added a confident

Manik, who will once again rely on winger Zahid Hossain, Nigerian striker Eleta Kingsley, Cameroonian midfielder Yoko Samnick and Mithun Chowdhury to reverse the first round result.

"East Bengal are a strong side who have experience of playing such tournament against a full-house crowd but our players have also the experience of playing the big clubs of Bangladesh," said the former Bangladesh international.

East Bengal, the only unbeaten team of the tournament, gave a demonstration of their strength by dispatching Dhaka Mohammedan 3-0 in the second semifinal.

Manik's counterpart Biswajit Bhattacharye said though they beat Chittagong Abahani in the first match the hosts are now a more matured side after winning three matches to reach the final.

"We were under pressure to perform well because the club officials and the journalists back home had no hope on this squad. But we have proved them wrong after qualifying for the final. I think we have satisfied you with our performance and I am hopeful that my boys will satisfy you more tomorrow [Friday]," said Biswajit.

Taskin says he is 'fully-fit'

SPORTS REPORTER



Young pacer Taskin Ahmed declared himself available from the start of the Zimbabwe series yesterday, saying that he was fully-fit. The Bangladesh-Zimbabwe three-match ODI and two-match T20I series will get underway with the first one-day international on November 7 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"I bowled today and I felt no problem with regards to my pace and I didn't have any reason to complain to the physio either. I am now fully-fit. If I get the chance, then I will be available from the first match of the series," said a confident Taskin -- who suffered a side-strain during the Bangladesh A team's tour to India last month -- after the first day of training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur

yesterday. The national selectors had an eye on giving Taskin some matches in the upcoming series which is why he was included in the 18-member preliminary squad, which began training yesterday without all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan -- who is expected to return from the United States of America tomorrow -- and six other players who are currently touring with Bangladesh A in South Africa.

"I bowled with 100 per cent effort in the last two days and faced no problems. I think within the next two days I will get full confidence when I bowl in the nets. I am looking forward to returning to international cricket and I am confident I will do well if I am given the chance," said Taskin.

"The last time when I was out of international cricket was during the home series against India. I was in a bit of a hurry to finish my rehabilitation programme and that may be the

reason why I suffered the side-strain. But this time I am satisfied with my five-week rehab and I have also got back my rhythm," he added.

Taskin also said that he was looking forward to bowling with new pace bowling sensation Mustafizur Rahman.

"We are two youngest guys in the team at the moment and we have a desire to take the responsibility of the Bangladesh bowling attack in the future. I am looking forward to bowling alongside him and if I get the chance to bowl with him in the series against Zimbabwe, I will try to give my best," he said.

The young pacer expressed his happiness as they are going to play international cricket at home after Australia postponed their tour citing security concerns. Taskin also was not ready to take Zimbabwe lightly despite their recent poor showing against Afghanistan at home.



When it comes to battling injuries Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) perhaps got a perfect understudy in Taskin Ahmed. Both the pacers are now sweating to be fit ahead of next month's Zimbabwe series.

PHOTO: STAR

School cricket to be revitalised

SPORTS REPORTER

The days of enthusiasm in school cricket are gone, but the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), in association with their new development partner Prime Bank, expressed their optimism in bringing it back with a nationwide school cricket tournament which will be named 'Prime Bank Young Tigers National School Cricket Competition'.

BCB has parted ways with Standard Chartered Bank after eight years as they look to start a new journey with Prime Bank and this tournament will be just the first step, promised BCB officials and sponsors Prime Bank during a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The tournament will kick-off from the second week of January next year.

At a time when the Bangladesh national team has been gradually taking the country's cricket to new heights, one of its major grassroots tournaments has been losing importance day by day.

However, Khaled Mahmud, former national skipper and BCB's game development committee chairman, Tanjil Chowdhury, chairman of Prime Bank, as well as BCB's age-group tournament committee chairman and BCB's national game development manager Nazmul Abedin Fahim have expressed their hopes

of a turnaround.

"I think proper monitoring can change the whole scenario. Once, school cricket was the centre of attraction and, like me, many former and current national players were the product of this tournament. Unfortunately this tournament lost its zeal

and now our main focus will be to bring back that enthusiasm," said Khaled Mahmud.

Tanjil echoed those sentiments and added, "If we can give the players proper facilities like good grounds and quality balls and bats, then I believe it will have a huge

impact. We want to make it a festival for the school students. We don't want to finish our job after providing money as sponsors, instead we want to improve the tournament."

FACTS	
Total Schools: 540	Total Players' Registration: 13500
Total Matches: 959	Sponsorship money: Tk 6.94 crore over six years
Venues: 70	

Technical School and College of Meherpur, the champions of the 2012 seasons of the competition, are still reigning champions since the board failed to complete the last two seasons' tournaments.

"We could not finish the last two tournaments because of political unrest in the country but we are hopeful that it will be a different story this time," said Nazmul Abedin.

"The pathway is through our age-group tournaments. The school tournament can be an entry point to age-group cricket. The school tournament's importance lies in its social impact," he added.

He also informed that the 50-over competition would be played on mat pitches and the district champions will play in the divisional championship. The eight divisional champions will then play the final round.



Tinga, a Tiger cub, is the mascot of the Young Tigers National School Cricket Competition. It was unveiled during a ceremony at BCB's Mirpur headquarters yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Duminy fighting for fitness

PII, New Delhi

South Africa are still fretting over the fitness of their key battering all rounder Jean-Paul Duminy ahead of their opening Test against hosts India commencing at Mohali on November 5.

Duminy, who split the webbing on his right hand while going for a hard return catch in the third One-Day International of the five-game series at Rajkot on October 18, will know on November 1 how much it has healed when the bandage comes off.

"His chances of playing at Mohali [in the opening Test] are 50:50 at present," the team's media manager Lerato Malekutu told reporters after the team's practice extended training session at the Brabourne stadium.

The 31-year-old left-handed batsman and right arm off break bowler from Cape Town did not play in the last two ODIs at Chennai and Mumbai.