



Bangladesh team celebrate their 5-0 win over Singapore in the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'No experiments against Afghans'

SPORTS REPORTER



Ever since the Afghanistan tour got confirmed on Sunday, the question that has been doing the rounds is whether Bangladesh will experiment against the visitors during the three-match ODI series next month.

The Chandika Hathurusingha-led management had made several changes during the Zimbabwe series earlier this year in order to prepare for the World Twenty20. With the crucial series against England due, it won't be a surprise if a similar strategy is followed.

However, the initial signs suggest that there will be no room for any experiments.

Chief selector Minhajul Abedin dismissed the notion yesterday. "There is no scope to make any experiment. We will field our best team against Afghanistan. We have been out of international cricket for a long time and there's no room for luxury. We have to give our top players as much opportunity as possible," he said.

He was also confident that Tamim Iqbal, who sustained a finger injury on Saturday and is likely to be out of action for three weeks, would be able to take part in the three-match series.

Bangladesh were initially supposed to announce a 15-member ODI squad by October 2. However, Minhajul yesterday informed that they now plan to announce the team after observing the players in two practice matches set to take place on October 3 and 6.

Afghanistan will arrive in Dhaka on September 21 to play three ODIs scheduled to take place on September 25, 28 and October 1 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. England, on the other hand, will arrive on September 30 to play three ODIs and two Tests in Dhaka and Chittagong, starting from October 7.

Another easy win for hosts

SPORTS REPORTER



It was almost an action replay of the first game against Iran. Bangladesh played with the same attacking mindset and practically pinned Singapore down to their own half with waves of attacks in their second game of the AFC Under-16 Women's Championship's Group C Qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The only difference was that they scored almost double in a game where the home girls got more fans to cheer them. Their emphatic 5-0 win over the Singapore lightweights could have been bigger had the forwards been more accurate against an extremely defensive side with a very shaky goalkeeper under the bar.

Captain Krishna Rani and substitute Anuching Mogini struck a brace each while Mousumi Jahan netted the other in a one-way traffic. They now share the lead with Chinese Taipei, who handed a 5-0 defeat to United Arab Emirates in one of the other two fixtures of the day. Iran put behind the Bangladesh defeat to win the other game 9-0 against Kyrgyzstan.

The unchanged home side dominated from the get-go and the charges of Golam Rabbani Choton created numerous scoring chances but failed to cash in on the early opportunities as Singapore 'parked the bus', keeping the home team at bay for nearly 40 minutes.

However, winger Sanjida Akter posed a constant threat as the girl from Kalsindhur School exposed weak spots down the right flank time and again with her precise crosses to the forwards.

Sanjida repeatedly sent crosses in from the right flank until forward Krishna, who earlier squandered two open opportunities, broke the deadlock by heading a Sanjida cross home in the 39th minute.

Bangladesh then doubled the margin two minutes into the second half as Krishna received a cross from left-back Shamsunnahar inside the box and tapped it in to make it 2-0. Soon Choton sent on U-14 striker Anuching Mogini and Tahura to further strengthen the attacks.

Despite this, Singapore fought bravely to keep the margin 2-0 for the better part of the duration before conceding three successive goals in the last nine minutes.

Anuching made no mistake as she clipped in the third during the 83th minute after the Singapore goalkeeper failed to grip a powerful shot from Tahura while Mousumi found the back of the net with a well placed shot in the 86th minute.

Anuching then hammered in the last nail on coffin in the stoppage time as the girl from Rangamati again tapped one in from the goal-line after a Tahura header was parried.

"We have crossed another hurdle on way to our target. The positive thing of the match was we dominated Singapore from the first to last minute and I am happy with the performance of the girls though the margin could have been bigger," said Choton at the post match briefing.

"We are creating many chances but we can't not avail those - it is a problem for us and we have to work on it. If we could have availed the chance we created in the very second minute, the girls could have played in a more relaxed mood and score more than what they had," added Choton.

Nevertheless, Singapore coach Chen Cai Ying was pleased with the performance of her charges as they tried their best against Bangladesh and are improving match by match.

Sunny stays focused

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Bangladesh slow left-arter Arafat Sunny is confident that his modified action will get the green signal and will allow him to bowl in international cricket once again.

Sunny will leave for Brisbane along with pace bowler Taskin Ahmed this week to undergo a bowling test in an ICC-accredited center over there.

The bowling actions of both Taskin and Sunny were called during the ICC World Twenty20 in India and they were eventually banned from bowling before the World Cup was over.

The 29-year-old, who recently lost his father, has admitted that while he is yet to recover completely on an emotional level, he is completely focused on his bowling.

"Nobody can do anything about this. When one has to go, he has to go. It's all in the hands of Allah. Obviously I have been

sad. But I have to continue doing my work. I am focusing on my test right now and I am working on that," Sunny told reporters.

"My main problem has been with my landing and I am working on that. I used to have a straight landing, but now it's parallel. If I can hold on to this, my action will be alright," he added.

After getting banned from bowling in international cricket, Sunny had a number of sessions with Bangladesh's former Assistant coach Ruwan Kalpage. In Kalpage's absence he was supported by coach Mohammad Salahuddin and many others.

He also took part in a number of in-house tests in front of six cameras and the reports, according to him, provide a positive picture.

"My coaching staff has said that my action is a lot better than before. Obviously, since it's a new action it will have its weak points. But once I get used to it I will be able to overcome those issues," said a confident Sunny.



42ND CHESS OLYMPIAD Men's team target best-ever finish

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's chess team will leave here for Azerbaijan in the early hours of Friday to take part in the 42nd Chess Olympiad with the hope of producing best-ever results.

Bangladesh had produced it's best-ever results in the 40th Chess Olympiad in 2012 by finishing 33rd, but they failed miserably in the following edition in 2014 where they ended up in 64th position.

"We are hoping that the team comprising four Grand Masters and one International Master will do better than the last edition and will try to do even better than the 2012 edition," hoped Bangladesh Chess Federation's general secretary Shahabuddin Shamim at a press conference at the NSC Tower yesterday.

After being elected general secretary two-and-a-half months ago, Shamim promised to appoint a foreign coach for the national team ahead of the Olympiad, but the newly-elected committee has failed to do so. However, the committee arranged a month-long camp where the players shared their ideas, experiences and knowledge as preparation for the biggest event of chess.

"Considering international ratings, we are currently in 50th position. If we could finish among top 40, it will be a good

result for us. However, it is possible to produce even better results if we give our best," opined GM Niaz Murshed, who emphasised on creating opportunities of taking part in a number of international tournaments on the year of the Olympiad year instead of looking for a foreign coach.

Explaining the poor results of last edition, GM Enamul Hossain Razib said: "Actually we put in a similar performance in the last two editions, but the results of the 2014 edition were poor due to the defeat in the final round."

"Definitely training under a coach is better than individual preparation, but I think the month-long camp will help us as we shared our thoughts, experiences and knowledge," said Razib, who trained the women's team comprising IM Rani Hamid, FIDE master Shamima Sharmin, FIDE master Jakia Sultana and FIDE master Nazrana Khan Iva. IM Shamima Akter Liza, the fifth member of the team, will join the others from Lisbon.

The men's team features four Grand Masters - Niaz, Razib, Ziaur Rahman, Abdullah Al Rakib and International master Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagor.

The 42nd Chess Olympiad will be held in Baku from September 1 to 14.

NATIONAL SHOOTING Shakil outguns Shahadat

SPORTS REPORTER

South Asian Games gold medalist Shakil Ahmed grabbed his first gold medal in domestic circuit as the 21-year-old shooter from Bangladesh Army won the men's 10m air pistol event of the Beximco 28th National Shooting Championship at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

Shakil, who had won gold medal in the 50m air pistol event in the SA Games earlier this year, outshone teammate and defending champion Shahadat Ahmed with a score of 192.3 points. Shahadat scored 3.5 points less to settle for the silver in the eight-shooter final round.

"After winning gold in the SA Games, I have always been under pressure to produce good scores and yesterday I started poorly, but later on I recovered it to win my first gold medal in national championships," Shakil said over phone adding that his main target is to win gold in his favourite 50m air pistol event which will be held on August 31.

In the junior event of 10m air pistol, Anwar Hossain and Sabbir Alamin won gold and silver respectively while Rawnak Chowdhury, son of celebrated shooter Saiful Alam Rinki and Sabrina Sultana, finished 15th among 18 shooters.

In the 50m rifle three position, Towfiq Shahriar won gold scoring 1143 points while Abdullah Hel Baki and Yousuf Ali won silver and bronze scoring 1123 points and 1121 points respectively.

A pitch in despair

EAM ASADUZZAMAN from Nilphamari



Cricket lovers in Nilphamari were left in shock as a week-long fair organised at the district's 'Boro Math', one of the main playing fields of the town, left the cricket pitch in tatters.

The fair, which took place from August 11 to 18 and was organised by the forest department, left holes on the cricket pitch that the local sports organisers laid with lot of effort and care.

"Our plan was to make a cricket ground here and as a first step we had made this pitch which met the national standards. Now all our plans have gone haywire," said a disappointed Nilphamari District Sports Association General Secretary, Arif Hossain Moon.

According to the secretary of the district cricket umpire's association, Arifuzzaman Milu, specialised groundsmen were called from Chittagong and the soil was brought from Bogra in order to create this pitch. "We worked really hard for making this pitch. It came at a very high cost and it took us two months," exclaimed Milu.

The fair, inaugurated by Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor, not only heavily damaged the pitch but also left the ground ridden with garbage and bricks.

While the fair was successful, the end result was an anti-climax, especially because it was

an environmental programme. It dealt with the saplings of fruity, woody and medicinal trees.

When enquired about the issue, Nilphamari's municipality councillor, Anisur Rahman, who was in-charge of a sub-committee responsible for the ground's decoration said that protecting the pitch was never a concern for them.

"The district authority chose the site including the cricket pitch for arranging the saplings fair and accordingly we encircled the area with corrugated iron sheets and made around 100 makeshift stalls. There were also different amusement rides for children," said Anisur.

"Owners of nurseries, shops or rides can dig the surface as per

their needs, be it the ground or the cricket pitch, in order to make their stalls. It's up to them. It is not my headache to safeguard the pitch as the authorities have selected it," he added.

However, the convenor of the fair arrangement committee, Ershad Habib, who is also the ADC of district collectorate, admitted that they had committed a mistake.

"It was a big mistake by us. We shouldn't have harmed the cricket pitch. I assure you that all the repairs will be made soon," he said.

Furthermore he said that they lacked information regarding the event and that that was due to a failure of the forest department.



A fair organised by the district's forest department last week destroyed Nilphamari's top cricket pitch, which took more than two months to build, and has left the region's cricket lovers in dismay.

PHOTO: STAR

SA take huge lead on day 3

AFP, Centurion

South Africa's three-pronged pace attack put their team in a strong position with a first innings lead of 267 runs on the third day of the second Test against New Zealand on Monday.

New Zealand were bowled out for 214 shortly before tea. South Africa decided not to enforce the follow on and batted.

South Africa however, lost six wickets for just 105 runs on the board and ended the third day 372 runs ahead. Quinton de Kock smashed a 50 off 43 balls and led the attack.

Earlier, Dale Steyn and Kagiso Rabada took three wickets each and Vernon Philander claimed two.

Only captain Kane Williamson was able to provide sustained resistance for New Zealand. He was last man out for 77.

Williamson and Nicholls put on 60 for the fourth wicket and enabled New Zealand to make an encouraging start to the day after resuming at 38 for three.

New Zealand's resistance crumbled after the breakthrough.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 481 for 8 and 105 for 6 (De Kock 50; Steyn 2-27, Philander 2-38)
NEW ZEALAND: 214 all out in 58.3 overs (Williamson 77, Nicholls 36, Bracewell 18, Wagner 31; Steyn 3-66, Rabada 3-62)