

SPORT



Members of the Bangladesh national cricket team go through a gym session at the BCB Gymnasium in Mirpur on the first day of their camp for the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka, which will begin with the Test series from March 7.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Camp underway with fitness tests

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh cricket team began their camp for the Sri Lanka series

with a few fitness tests at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The Test team underwent the tests in the morning before attending a number of skill sessions in the afternoon.

According to Bangladesh's strength and conditioning coach Mario Villavarayan, the tests were done in order to assess the individual strengths and weaknesses of players.

"Today, for me, it was just getting to do some fitness tests to see where the players are individually so that I can work with them during the Sri Lanka series and going forward. We don't have time for fitness camps. Whatever I do, it will have to be during the tour," explained Villavarayan following the tests.

"We have been playing a lot of cricket in the last six months. What we needed for the players was to give them a break. The guys who needed a break got that and the guys who did not have a lot of workload, we put them to the Bangladesh Cricket League," he added.

Furthermore he said that he has no problems with left-arm pacer

Mustafizur Rahman's fitness levels.

"There is nothing that stopped Mustafizur from completing the fitness session. I am not concerned about his fitness," said the Sri Lankan.

Outside the 16-member team for the Sri Lanka series, Imrul Kayes is working hard to get fit in time for the second Test. Imrul has to play another Bangladesh Cricket League game before he can be considered for the Sri Lanka series. Villavarayan indicated that if Imrul is deemed fit, there is a good chance for the left-handed opener to join the Tigers.

The Sri Lankan believes that the upcoming series could be quite interesting for Bangladesh.

"The last time Bangladesh were there in 2013, we had a good series. With the experience we have now, I think everyone is very interested in the series.

"Personally if you ask me, I think it's going to be an interesting series and we stand a good chance if we play to our potential," said Villavarayan.

After the fitness sessions, the Tigers took a short break and then resumed training in the afternoon with a series of fielding drills.

Bangladesh's fielding has not been up to the mark lately and that is the reason why Richard Halsall has been working hard with the team.

Ctg Abahani thru' Mohammedan bow out despite win

ANISUR RAHMAN from Chittagong

Defending champions Chittagong Abahani remained the lone team among three local outfits to qualify for the semifinals of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup after a come-from-behind 2-2 draw against Manang Marshyangdi Club while Mohammedan had to quit the race despite posting a 2-1 win over Shaheen Asmayee FC at MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan and Manang Marshyangdi finished with four points each, but the Nepalese outfit qualified thanks to their win over Mohammedan in an earlier group match.

Chittagong Abahani emerged group champions to set their semifinal clash against Pocheon Citizen FC of Korea while Group A champions TC Sports Club of Maldives will play against Manang Marshyangdi in the last four.

Mohammedan took the match with a target of winning with a 3-0 margin, thinking that goal difference will come first in consideration to decide the runners-up position, but the bylaws clearly stated otherwise.

Mohammedan put on a much-improved performance and took a deserved lead in the 33rd minute with Gambian Dawda Ceesay firing from inside the box after availing a cut-back from Towhidul Alam Sabuj.

Dawda doubled the lead with another eye-catching left-footed shot from outside of the box in the 69th minute before Shaheen Asmayee captain Amiruddin Sharifi reduced the margin by converting a penalty kick three minutes from time.

Earlier, Chittagong Abahani fought to hold Manang Marshyangdi to a 2-2 draw. The Nepalese outfit launched their first

attack through the left-flank when Sujal Shrestha whipped in a cross to the far post for Anil Gurung, who headed it to unmarked marksman Olawale Oladipo and the Nigerian striker just headed home from point-blank range in the third minute of the match.

The hosts looked nervous after conceding an early goal as the backline was exposed time and again with Oladipo coming close to doubling the lead in the 3rd minute but his drive inside the box went inches over the crossbar. Oladipo however made no mistake to double the lead in the 22nd minute when he nicely controlled a long ball inside the box to shrug off Nasiruddin Chowdhury and place the ball at the far post.

However, defender Nasir raised hopes with a strike back in the 32nd minute by heading in chip from Jamal Bhuiyan.

After resumption, Abahani looked better in movement and the decision of sending Sohel Rana in place of striker Kingsley Chigozie brought cohesion among the midfielders and they started to put pressure on the opponents.

Sohel darted in from the left flank to provide a nice ball for Augustine Walson, whose drive was handled by Adama Boh Sissoko inside the box as the referee awarded Chittagong Abahani with a penalty in the 62nd minute. Walson converted calmly and brought life to some five-thousand holiday crowd.

Chittagong Abahani then found a great opportunity to take the lead but defender Mufta Lawal rattled the crosspiece in the 68th minute before Manang Marshyangdi came close to restoring the lead in the stoppage time of the second half but Anil Gurung was denied by the woodwork as Abahani marched into the semifinals.

CTG ABAHANI	2 - 2	MANANG
NASIR 32, WALSON 62		OLADIPO 3, 22
ASMAYEE	1 - 2	MOHAMMEDAN
AMIRUDDIN 87		DAWDA 33, 69

All-round Shakib lifts Peshawar

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan put in a man-of-the-match effort to lead Peshawar Zalmi to a 17-run victory over Lahore Qalandars at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

With the bat, Shakib scored 30 off 24 balls with one six and two fours. He arrived at the crease following the departure of the set batsman, Kamran Akmal. Peshawar at that point were 94 for three and needed someone to carry on the innings.

Shakib did exactly that and helped Peshawar post 166.

After the exchange, he removed both Umar Akmal and Grant Elliot in the fifth over, which was also a maiden. He bowled two overs and had figures of two for 14.

After the match Shakib was gifted a traditional cap by the owner of the franchise.

"I will contribute whenever the team needs me. Today was my day. I put the ball in the right areas and there was some help for the spinners," said Shakib.

Tamim Iqbal though was caught and bowled by Aamer Yamin in the second over for five.

O'Keefe bulldozes India

Aus extend lead to 298 after dismissing hosts for 105

AFP, Pune



Australian spinner Steve Keefe Friday said he expected India to come back fighting in the first Test after his career-best haul of 6-35 left the

hosts on the ropes in Pune. An unbeaten half century from Steve Smith helped the visitors reach 143-4 at stumps on day two, which saw a total of 15 wickets fall at Pune's Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium.

O'Keefe, whose six wickets came off just 24 balls, helped Australia bundle India out for 105 in the afternoon session before the visiting batsmen rammed home their advantage against the world's top Test team.

Smith was on 59 and Mitchell Marsh on 21 was also at the crease as Australia stretched their lead to 298 runs by the close on a turning track at India's newest Test venue.

"It's an exciting contest -- even with 300 on the board, it's still gettable. We have seen two guys bat well. Like Steve Smith, you can get runs on it," O'Keefe told reporters.

"I think they are going to get back stronger and better in their second innings and they are going to put up a lot of fight as you would expect from this Indian unit.

"We have had a good day's cricket but that's all that is. We've still got a lot of work to do if we going to win this match," said O'Keefe.

Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin claimed three wickets, including the early scalps of openers David Warner and Shaun Marsh.

Smith, who was dropped three times, went on to register his 21st Test half-century in his 51st match.

First innings top-scorer Matt Renshaw, who did not open the batting after staying off the field with nausea during most of India's innings, hung on with Smith for a 52-run partnership.

Renshaw (31), who also had to temporarily retire ill with a stomach upset during his first innings knock on Thursday, once again found it hard to cope with the heat as he suffered from bouts of dehydration.

But the Indian fielders were also left



Australia's left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe celebrates dismissing India's Ajinkya Rahane, one of his six victims, on the second day of the first Test at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune.

PHOTO: REUTERS

feeling the heat as they dropped four catches.

Shant Sharma finally clung on to a skier at long-off after Renshaw mistimed a hit off Jayant Yadav.

Smith then steadied the innings with Mitchell Marsh as the duo tackled the spinners with aplomb.

But it was O'Keefe who stole the show earlier in the day with a blitz of wickets after lunch that saw India's middle and lower order crumble as the hosts conceded a 155-run first innings lead.

O'Keefe, who remained largely ineffective in the morning session, went well past his previous best of 3-53 against Pakistan at Sydney in just the fifth match of his Test career.

"First six overs was ordinary bowling... I probably went into my comfort zone like I bowl in Australia but then I worked with Sri (Sriram Sridharan, Australia's spin consultant) in the break and it worked," said O'Keefe.

The 32-year-old's stunning exploits put Australia firmly in charge in the opening contest the four-Test series but it was a day to forget for Indian captain Virat Kohli, who was dismissed for a rare duck.

Kohli, who has hit four double

centuries since July last year, walked after just two deliveries for his first duck in a Test since playing against England in August 2014.

Paceman Mitchell Starc, who had already made an impact with his gritty 61 in Australia's first innings score of 260, took two wickets including the prized scalp of Kohli.

"I was more excited than Starkey... Regardless of the conditions this guy is an out-and-out star, so we have to be on our game in the next innings," said O'Keefe.

Indian opener Lokesh Rahul top-scored for the home side with a gritty 64 but hurt his shoulder while going for a mistimed heave at long-off and only took to the field two over before the end of play.

Number-two ranked Australia, who lost their last nine Tests in Asia, are looking for an upset win against the world's top side.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: 260 all out (Renshaw 68, Starc 61, Warner 38; Yadav 4-32, Ashwin 3-63)
INDIA: 105 all out (Rahul 64; O'Keefe 6-35, Starc 2-38)
AUSTRALIA: 143 for 4 (Smith 59 not out, Renshaw 31, March 21 not out; Ashwin 3-68)



Chittagong Abahani centre-back Nasiruddin Chowdhury (C) sets off to celebrate his goal as the Manang Marshyangdi keeper looks haplessly at his teammates during their group match of the Sheikh Kamal International Club at MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

NUMBERS GAME

11

India lost their last seven wickets for 11 runs -- their worst seven-wicket collapse. Their previous worst such collapse was seven for 18 runs in Christchurch in 1989-90.

19

Steve O'Keefe took five wickets in the span of 19 balls, which is the joint-second-fewest balls to take a five-for against India. The shortest was 16 balls by Stuart Broad at Trent Bridge in 2011.

6/35

O'Keefe's figures -- the third-best by a visiting left-arm spinner in India. The best is 7 for 49 by Hedley Verity in Chennai in 1933-34.

2008

The last time India were all out at home for a smaller total than their 105 in this match - 76 against South Africa in Ahmedabad. This is their third-lowest total anywhere in the last ten years.

67

Wickets for R Ashwin in this season -- currently the second most by a bowler in any season. He is 11 wickets away from Dale Steyn's 78 scalps in 12 matches in 2007-08.

104

Number of consecutive innings across all three formats without a duck for Virat Kohli, before Mitchell Starc got him second-ball in this match. His last duck was in an ODI in Cardiff in 2014. This was his fifth duck in Tests and first in a home Test.