



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal was in fine touch as he smashed 136 to propel Bangladesh to 391 against Sri Lanka Board President XI's on the first day of a two-day warm-up match in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'Happy to spend time at the crease'

SPORTS REPORTER



Tamim Iqbal had a target of spending some time at the crease and he was happy that he could achieve that on the opening day of the two-day practice match against Sri Lanka Cricket President's XI at the De Zoysa Stadium in Moratuwa yesterday.

It would be unfair to say that Tamim returned to form after making a hundred against Sri Lanka Cricket President's XI. While it is true that he has only one half-century in the two Tests against New Zealand and one against India, the south-paw opener contributed heavily in trying conditions in the preceding series -- the two-match Test series against England at home in October last year when he not only scored a hundred but also essayed a classy 78 in the first Test at Chittagong.

Still, a century in a tour opener provided enough confidence to the batsman. Tamim scored 136 off 182 with nine fours and seven sixes but more than the score it was

the time he spent at the crease that gave him pleasure ahead of the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka.

"It was an important century for me ahead of the two-match Test series. It's always good if you score some runs prior to a new series. My target was to spend a good amount of time in the middle and I could manage it. I am happy that I could bat at least 50 to 60 overs," Tamim told the Daily Star over phone yesterday.

"I tried to score some runs and I was successful. That's it," he added.

"Initially it was a bit difficult but all through I enjoyed my batting as the wicket was good to bat on. It's always better to score runs in a match rather than practice, no matter against whom you are playing or what the conditions are," he said.

Tamim was also happy that other batsmen got runs ahead of the two-match Test series which will kick off from March 7 at the Galle International Stadium.

"It's good that everybody scored some runs ahead of the series and it's good practice for us," he observed.

## Decision on Anamul's PSL trip pending

SPORTS REPORTER

Out-of-favour national opener Anamul Haque expressed his desire to play in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) final as he considered it a good opportunity for him.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) however did not take a decision regarding his participation till the time this report was filed. "This decision is still pending and we hope we will reach a decision by tomorrow morning," said BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus last night.

The PSL final is scheduled to take place in Lahore on Sunday. Several international players, including Nathan McCullum and Kevin Pietersen, have backed out from playing in the final, which is expected to be a fly-in, fly-out affair due to security concerns.

"I got the offer when I was in Chittagong for the BCL [Bangladesh Cricket League]. I am interested to play as it's an opportunity for me but the BCB is my guardian and I must comply with the decision of the board because whatever decision they take they will take it for my interest," Anamul told The Daily Star over phone.

Speaking to The Daily Star, BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said: "We are yet to take a decision. We have to consider a number of aspects here. We have to see whether any other international player is going to Pakistan."

"One has to understand that we are also Anamul's guardians and we have to think of what's good for him."

## India will fight back hard: Sachin

AFP, Bangalore

Sachin Tendulkar expects India to hit back hard in the second Test against Australia beginning Saturday in Bangalore after their shock defeat in the opening encounter.

"It was a tough Test match for us but it is part and parcel of the game ... Knowing the spirit of the Indian team I know that they will fight back hard," said Tendulkar, who is Test cricket's record run-scorer.

"There are good moments and there are tough moments but it is all about how you stand back on your feet again and start competing. That is what makes the sport interesting."

## Batsmen start in fine fettle

SPORTS REPORTER



Initially the bowlers got some swing but Tamim Iqbal and Mominul Haque played sensibly; they took time to settle down in the middle after Soumya Sarkar was out fishing outside off stump. Tamim then got out from his shell to punish the bowlers as the wicket became easy for batting. The batting approach was really good and one could not expect a much better start ahead of a series than the way our team started in the practice match.

This was how Bangladesh team manager and former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud described the Tigers' performance on the opening day of the two-day practice match against Sri Lanka Board President's XI at the De Zoysa Stadium in Moratuwa yesterday.

"Tamim batted brilliantly and the other top batsmen also scored some runs. Liton Das looked good down the order, so it was a good outing on the first day," said Mahmud.

When asked whether it was the ideal combination which was batting in the match, Mahmud said: "Yes, you can say more or less it's the combination which we are looking for in the two-match Test series."

Despite a late storm and cloudy conditions, Bangladesh got the chance to bat 90 overs and amassed 391 for seven at stumps thanks to opener Tamim Iqbal, who hit

a fine century, and young wicket-keeper batsman Liton Das who scored an unbeaten half-century.

The home side will come out to bat today in a game where each side is allowed to bat for 90 overs.

Tamim and Soumya opened the innings after President's XI captain Dinesh Chandimal won the toss and elected to field. The visitors lost Soumya for nine and it was certainly a disappointing start for the young left-hander who has been picked ahead of the injured Imrul Kayes.

Tamim scored 136 off 182 balls before retiring after tea. The left-hander, who has not scored big since his hundred against England in October last year, shared 143 runs for the second wicket with Mominul Haque. Mominul struck a fluent, unbeaten 73 off 103 balls with 10 fours before retiring.

Tamim reached lunch on a sedate 38 off 93 balls with four boundaries, but opened up thereafter as he scored a further 98 off 89 balls and added five more boundaries and seven sixes.

The other highlight of the Bangladesh innings was wicketkeeper batsman Liton's unbeaten 57, skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, batting at number four instead of number six and perhaps hinting at a promotion up the order for the first Test, scored 21 before being bowled by Chamika Karunaratne, the most successful President's XI bowler with three for 61.

Shakib Al Hasan also batted briefly and scored 30. Mahmudullah Riyad, batting at number six, chipped in with a useful 43.

SCOREBOARD				
BLANDESH: First Innings	R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim retired out	136/182	9/7		
Soumya c Chandraguptha b Samarakon	9/22	2/0		
Mominul retired out	73/103	10/0		
Mushfiqur b Karunaratne	21/37	2/0		
Shakib lbw b Ambuldeniya	30/46	3/0		
Mahmudullah c Chandimal b Karunaratne	43/73	3/2		
Liton not out	43/52	7/0		
Mehedi c Chandimal b Karunaratne	1/6	0/0		
Tajjir not out	0/4	0/0		
Extras: (b-5, lb-6, w-1, nb-5)		17		
Total: (for 7 wks in 86.4 overs)		373		
To bat: Subashis, Mustafizur, Taskin.				
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-169, 3-244, 4-264, 5-302, 6-361, 7-365.				
BOWLER				
Karunaratne	16	2	54	3
Samarakon	13.4	2	61	1
Buddika	18	0	68	0
Jayawickrama	7	0	51	0
Samarasooriya	7	1	20	0
Ambuldeniya	11	1	57	1
De Silva	14	1	51	0
SL BOARD PRESIDENT'S XI: Chandimal, Chandraguptha, Fransisco, de Silva, Karunaratne, Ambuldeniya, Fernando, Silva, Samarasooriya, Buddika, Samarakon, Jayawickrama.				

## Stage set for thrilling finale

Pocheon Citizen take on TC Sports Club today

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



TC Sports Club and Pocheon Citizen FC will both be looking to add a maiden international trophy to their cabinets when they face off in the final of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong today.

The final will get underway at 6:30pm with private satellite channel Maasranga broadcasting live from the venue.

Neither Maldivian side TC Sports nor Pocheon Citizen -- a third-tier side from South Korea -- were earmarked as candidates for the title, but they made their presence felt from the beginning and ultimately outshone all the other teams -- including defending champions Chittagong Abahani -- to reach the final unbeaten.

No one would disagree that the two best sides of the tournament will be challenging for the trophy after they put up much better showings than any

ROAD TO FINAL		
TC SPORTS CLUB		
Group Stage	TC Sports Club	1 - 0 Dhaka Abahani
	TC Sports Club	2 - 1 FC Alga
	TC Sports Club	1 - 1 Pocheon Citizen FC
Semifinal	TC Sports Club	1 - 0 Manang Marshyangdi Club
POCHEON CITIZEN FC		
Group Stage	Pocheon Citizen FC	2 - 0 FC Alga
	Pocheon Citizen FC	0 - 0 Dhaka Abahani
	Pocheon Citizen FC	1 - 1 TC Sports Club
Semifinal	Pocheon Citizen FC	2 - 1 Chittagong Abahani

of the other clubs. The players from Maldives and South Korea were comparatively ahead of the other players in terms of skills, technique and tactics and today's final will be a mouth-watering clash.

"I want to say it is going to be a very tough game one and it won't be easy for us. Our only focus is to win the match and prepare the boys to win the game," said TC Sports coach Mohammad Nizam. "We don't want to talk about favourites and underdog. In



Pocheon Citizen players (L) and their TC Sports Club counterparts are pictured gearing up ahead of today's Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup final at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong.

PHOTOS: ANURUP KANT DAS

## Kumble urges his team to move on

AGENCIES, Bengaluru



India coach Anil Kumble urged his team to move on from the debacle in the opening Test against Australia as the hosts seek a series-levelling victory in the second match starting on Saturday.

On a raging turner in Pune, Australia triumphed by 333 runs inside three days, snapping India's 19-Test unbeaten run stretching back to their tour to Sri Lanka in 2015.

While Virat Kohli's men won in Sri Lanka and West Indies, they also vanquished South Africa, New Zealand, England and Bangladesh for six straight series victories.

"You can't keep winning every game. It has to come to an end at some point of time," Kumble, 46, told reporters on Thursday.

"Twenty games in current scenario of Test cricket, it's quite challenging for an international side to keep going out there and winning. That's what this team has been able to do across conditions."

"We have adapted to various condi-

tions and various situations and that's what we didn't do in the last game. That's why the result didn't go our way."

The former spinner, also India's highest wicket-taker in Tests, said Pune was just a blip in an otherwise bumper home season.

"I don't want to look back. We are



here to look ahead. As a coach it's more important for me to look ahead," said Kumble, who took over the coaching reins last year.

"It was one of those games where things didn't go our way and we just need to move on. Another three test matches in the series and we are really looking forward to that."

"We have had a fantastic home season and it's just one of those games where things didn't go our way."

Kumble said Australia were a quality opposition but India did not play to their potential.

Asked about the nature of pitch to be used for the second Test, the Bengaluru native said: "It's generally been a good batting surface and I'm sure it's going to be a result wicket."

"That's exactly what we want in a Test match."

Australia pacer Mitchell Starc meanwhile was looking forward to some reverse swing.

"If it's not going to spin as much in Bangalore, we're going to have to make sure we're using that reverse swing," said Starc, who is on a high after bowling Kohli for a duck in Pune.

"We've got a great chance in Bangalore to go 2-0 up and make sure we retain that trophy."

"We need to keep improving. Try and create a few more collapses in the Indian line-up but we know it's going to be a better wicket in Bangalore," added Starc.

## Brathwaite, Stokes face off again

West Indies-England first ODI today

REUTERS, North Sound



Carlos Brathwaite and Ben Stokes face off on Friday for the first time since the giant West Indian clubbed four successive sixes off the fiery Englishman to help win last year's World Twenty20.

The pair play against each other in the first of three One Day Internationals as both the West Indies and England prepare for the Champions Trophy in June with a brief series in Antigua and Barbados.

Brathwaite's demolition job in the final in Kolkata last April left Stokes humiliated and bereft. But while the Englishman has gone on to be named vice-captain of his team and become the expensive foreign signing in the Indian Premier League, Brathwaite has been struggling with form.

The 28-year-old from Barbados, who stands two metres (6'6") ft tall, has in 39 innings since the World Twenty20 final he has scored just 423 runs at an average of 12, with a solitary half-century.

"Unfortunately, it went downhill quickly.

Because of what happened that night, people expected things and I guess, for a brief period, I expected them as well. It became a negative."

"Obviously, four sixes shot me to prominence, but people forget that my Test average is 45 and I have three Test 50s in three matches," he told reporters in the build-up to the first ODI at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

"I'm in a better space now than when I was at the end of last year. I'm just looking forward to ripping the page out and starting afresh. I just want to get back the love I had for the game as a young boy, running around in the backyard. That's my main goal. There are big things to come from Carlos Brathwaite," he told reporters.

Stokes insisted their previous encounter had been expunged from his memory. "You try and put good performances behind you as much as you put bad ones behind you. Success is great and you don't want to start thinking too far ahead when you do well because it comes under the same bracket when things don't go your way as well," he told a press conference on Wednesday.