



Although yesterday's gloom and rain forced Bangladesh to cancel their training session, opener Tamim Iqbal was in a sunny mood as he gets set to play his 50th Test when the first Test against Australia begins at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur tomorrow.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'Doubted if I could get to 50'

MAZHAR UDDIN

Since scoring fifties in both innings of his Test debut against New Zealand in 2008 there has been no looking back for Tamim Iqbal as the dashing left-hander is all set to appear in his 50th Test against Australia in the first of the two-Test series. Things have changed a lot since then both for Tamim and for Bangladesh as the left hander has reached new heights over the years.

The cricketer from Chittagong however has not expressed any great enthusiasm at reaching the milestone alongside his friend and teammate Shakib Al Hasan who will also step out for his 50th Test tomorrow.

Although playing 50 Tests in the span of nine years seems to be a long time, the 28-year-old informed that he never set any goal for the number of matches he would ideally play in that time.

"Well, there is no extra excitement but obviously playing the 50th Test is a special occasion and I would want to make this special by performing and trying to contribute for the team.

"To be honest, I never set any particular number of matches I am going to play when I started my career and since I played my first Test my aim was to play as long as I can for Bangladesh. At one point, however, with the amount of Test matches we were playing I wondered whether I could play fifty Tests or not. But now we are getting more matches than before and those who

### RAPID FIRE WITH TAMIM

**Most memorable Test knock:** 108 against England in the first innings of the second Test in Manchester, 2010.

**Favourite Aussie batsman:** Michael Hussey

**Favourite Aussie bowler:** Glenn McGrath

**Favourite Australia game:** World Cup 2007 final in Bridgetown, West Indies when they beat Sri Lanka by 53 runs in the Duckworth-Lewis method after posting 281/4.

**Most memorable incident with an Australian player on the field:** When Australia toured Bangladesh right after the 2011 World Cup for three match ODI series, I was batting with Shakib and took a cheeky single towards Ricky Ponting in the inner circle. He came to me after that and said 'give me one more chance'. I replied: "Do you think I am mad?"

will start their career now, it will be easier for them to set a particular target of matches they are going to play," said Tamim to reporters ahead of the training session which was later cancelled due to rain at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

He also added that Bangladesh are going to play six to seven Tests in the upcoming year, which will definitely help the team improve as a Test unit.

When asked whether there will be a battle between the Australian opener David Warner and Tamim Iqbal in the two-Test

series the left-hander said that he never thought in that fashion, adding that it will be good if the home side can dismiss the hard-hitting Aussie batsman early.

There has been a lot of talk over the role of spinners in the series, but Tamim opined that pacers will also play a big role and emphasised on the need for performance in all aspects of the game, not just spin.

"I think if we want the 2-0 result we have to do the small things right as you just can't say we are going to win 2-0 and that will happen. As I said before, every session will be crucial and it needs to be implemented by those on the field. We will definitely go to the ground to win on August 27 but one should also not forget that it's a five day game and it won't be finished in an hour. The result will come only after playing well every minute of the match," he said.

Meanwhile Tamim was named in the World XI squad and is set to play a three-match T20 series in Pakistan and according to the experienced cricketer it's a great initiative to bring cricket back to the embattled country.

"First of all, it's an ICC-approved tournament and the games will get international status and secondly, it's a big honour to represent the World XI and I am proud of this. I think all the 10 cricketing nations are a family and someone has to take the initiative to help bring cricket back in Pakistan. I think it's a fantastic arrangement and after this I hope many international teams will start visiting Pakistan," said Tamim.

## Sarfraz to lead Pak XI

AGENCIES, Lahore

Pakistan Cricket Board announced a 16-member squad for the three Twenty20 Internationals against World XI on Friday.

Sarfraz Ahmed will lead the side that includes youngsters like Fahim Ashraf, Ruman Raees, Usman Shinwari and Aamer Yamin. Fast bowler Sohail Khan, who last made an appearance for the national team in October 2016, has also been included in the squad.

"The team has been selected keeping in mind the conditions and the recent performances of some players in the domestic and international tours. The players' consists of a combination of the fine blend of youth and senior players," Inzamamul Haq, the chief selector, said.

"It would be good for the young players to get a chance to play on the home ground and perform in front of the local public."

**Squad:** Sarfraz Ahmed (cap & wk), Fakhar Zaman, Ahmed Shehzad, Babar Azam, Shoaib Malik, Umer Amin, Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Faheem Ashraf, Hassan Ali, Amir Yamin, Mohammad Amir, Rumman Raees, Usman Shinwari, Sohail Khan.

## Sana blitzes way to gold

SPORTS REPORTER



Archer Ruman Sana bagged his second individual international gold medal as he beat Russia's Alex Nikolayev in the Recurve Bow event final in the International Archery Tournament in the Kyrgyzstan capital of Bishkek yesterday.

Sana, who had first won a gold in the same event in 2015 Asian Archery Grand Prix tournament in Thailand, mauled his superior opponent 27-20, 26-25 and 29-28 in all three sets to secure the maximum six points.

It was Sana's fourth international gold overall. The 23-year-old has also won golds in the men's team event and mixed team event in the Islamic Solidarity Archery Championships in Dhaka last year.

"It was a tough challenge for me to beat

Nikolayev, who is a member of the Russian main team and I was a bit nervous from the outset. But I gained in confidence when he shot only six in one of three arrows for each set. And I took the lead and never looked back," said Sana over the phone from Tajikistan yesterday, adding that he had also played good in the last set amid cold and windy conditions to ensure the gold medal.

"I am really happy to have done something for the nation. I think it will help me do well in the upcoming Asian Archery Championship in November in Dhaka," concluded Sana, who started his archery career in 2011. Bangladesh will host the Asian Archery Championships in November.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh mixed team, comprising of Sana and Beauty Roy, lost to Kazakhstan in the bronze-medal deciding match on the same day.



Bangladesh archer Ruman Sana defeated Russia's Alex Nikolayev to bag his second individual gold at international level at the International Archery Tournament in Kyrgyzstan yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## '2-0 is a big statement'

SPORTS REPORTER



Even before reaching Bangladesh all eyes were on Australia off-spinner Nathan Lyon after his performance in India, which spectacularly catapulted him into the position of Australia's number one spinner.

With tails up after the success against England last year, the Tigers have already started to play mind games with the team that brought the phrase 'mental disintegration' to cricket as Shakib Al Hasan, along with coach Chandika Hathurusingha and captain Mushfiqur Rahim, have already said that they are looking for a 2-0 result in the two-Test series.

However, according to Lyon it's a big statement to make from the home side and he informed that time will tell what is going to happen in the coming days.

"I think we are going to have to wait and see. Both teams haven't come up against each other so it is a big statement to come out and say that. But everyone's entitled to their own opinions. We are just worried about what we are doing, to be honest. They can come out and say whatever they want. We are training and preparing well. We are looking forward to the challenge that lies ahead," said a confident Lyon to the media after the training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The 29-year-old picked up 19 wickets at an average of 25.26 in the four Tests against India recently, including an eight-wicket haul in Bengaluru which has perhaps given Lyon a much-needed confidence boost.



Australia's top spinner Nathan Lyon (R) was unimpressed by all the talk of a series whitewash emanating from the Bangladesh camp.

PHOTO: STAR

I've had a look at the wicket and I'm not really sure what to expect. I was talking to the Bangladesh coach last night 'Chandi' [Chandika Hathurusingha], who was coach of NSW boys, and he didn't even tell us what wicket we're playing on. It's going to be interesting, we're just

"I think as a team we have grown a lot. We had a decent tour of India. It was disappointing not to get over the line with the series win but to win a game in those conditions, in Pune, was pretty special. The team has got a lot of belief out of that; it is pretty much the same squad here in Bangladesh. We are quietly confident in our own processes to get the job done here in Bangladesh. Personally, I am very happy with the

way I am bowling," he said.

The cricketer from New South Wales was spotted when he was a net bowler in Adelaide before working as a ground staff, is just a wicket away from equaling late Australian legendary leg-spinner Richie Benaud on 247 Test scalps. Lyon however said that he is not thinking of personal glories but focusing more on contributing to the team.

Meanwhile, Lyon told Cricket Australia's website that they were yet unsure about which pitch would be used for the first Test.

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## Something for Pak's starved fans: Flower

AFP, Leeds



World XI coach Andy Flower is looking forward to being involved in a series that enables Pakistan fans to "see their heroes" after

years of being "starved" of international cricket, he told AFP on Friday.

The former Zimbabwe batsman and ex-England coach was named Thursday as the man who will oversee a World XI that will play three Twenty20 internationals in Lahore next month.

Pakistan, a short series against Zimbabwe two years ago apart, has effectively been a 'no-go area for top-flight international cricket since an attack by armed militants on Sri Lanka's team bus in Lahore in 2009.

of their 'home' games in the UAE.

Now the hope is that the World XI fixtures will act as the forerunner to the resumption of full international cricket in Pakistan.

"This is important both for Pakistan cricket and for Pakistan as a country as a whole," Flower told AFP.

"Pakistan is a major cricket nation and it's very important for cricket there that the fans can see their heroes at home.

"It's something they've been starved of in recent years."

Flower added he was looking forward to overseeing a World XI squad imbued with a "special spirit".

"Of course they are professionals who will be getting paid.

"But beyond the narrow confines of playing, I sense they are keen to do something for Pakistan cricket.

"I think there will be a special spirit in the team," explained Flower.

## Tickets on sale from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Tickets for the much-anticipated first Test between Bangladesh and Australia starting from Sunday in Mirpur will go on sale from today.

The tickets can be purchased from the ticket booth at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur from 9am to 4pm everyday including on match days.

**Ticket price are as below:**  
**Southern Entry (Gate-4):** Shahid Mushtaque Stand - Tk 200.00, VIP Stand - Tk 300.00, Southern Stand - Tk 80.00, BCB Directors' Lounge - Tk 1000.00.

**Eastern Entry (Gate-5):** Eastern Stand - Tk 50.00  
**Northern Entry (Gate-1):** Northern Stand - Tk 80.00, Shahid Jewel Stand - Tk 200.00, BCB Hospitality Lounge (North) - Tk 1000.00

**Western Entry (Gate-3):** Grand Stand South - Tk 500.00, Grand Stand North - Tk 500.00, Directors' Enclosure - Tk 500.00, BCB Dignitaries - Tk 500.00.

## Stokes ton revives Eng

AFP, Leeds



England's Ben Stokes made the most of being dropped twice to score a hundred that took the shine off an improved bowling display by the West Indies on the first day of the second Test at Headingley on Friday.

Stokes's score of exactly 100 was the cornerstone of England's modest 258 all out. Both Stokes and England captain Joe Root, who made 59 after winning the toss, were dropped in the slips in single figures.

Stokes was missed again on 98, with the three errors effectively costing the West Indies some 142 runs.

Shannon Gabriel led the attack with four for 51 runs and new-ball partner Kemar Roach took four for 71.

Conditions looked set fair for batting when Root won the toss on a straw-coloured pitch beneath blue skies. Alastair Cook fell for 11 when he edged Gabriel low to Kyle Hope at third slip. Both Tom Westley and Mark Stoneman were dismissed cheaply by Roach to leave England at 37 for three.

They should have been 44 for four when Root nicked Gabriel only for Kieran Powell to drop the routine chance at first slip.

When Dawid Malan played on to West

Indies captain Jason Holder for eight, England were 71 for four. But with England on 100 for four, second slip Kraigg Brathwaite dropped Stokes off Roach.

### ROOT EQUALS DE VILLIERS

Root equalled South Africa star AB de Villiers's all-time record of fifties in 12 consecutive Tests when he swept recalled leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo for four. But he was out toe-ending a sweep off Bishoo to Jermaine Blackwood at slip.

Jonny Bairstow was caught at slip off Gabriel for just two to leave the hosts 152 for six. Stokes, two runs shy of a century, mistimed a drive off Roach only for Gabriel to drop a simple chance at mid-on. He took two off the next ball to complete his sixth hundred in 28 Tests.

But soon afterwards he was eighth out on 258, caught behind trying to pull Gabriel as England lost their last three wickets on 258.

That left West Indies with a tricky 12 overs to bat but they lost just one wicket before stumps, with Powell caught by Cook at first slip off James Anderson.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**ENGLAND:** First innings 258 (Stokes 100, Root 59, Woakes 23; Gabriel 4-51, Roach 4-71)  
**WEST INDIES:** First innings 19 for 1 (Brathwaite 13 not out; Anderson 1-5)

## Niblett wishes BD, Aus teams

SPORTS REPORTER

Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Ms Julia Niblett hoped that the upcoming Test series between Australia and Bangladesh will celebrate the enduring friendship between the two countries.

"The forthcoming Test series would celebrate the enduring friendship between Australia and Bangladesh," she said. She also noted that cricket was a significant part of both countries' national identities and remained essential to their people-to-people ties.

She was speaking during a reception to the two teams at her residence on Thursday. The reception was also attended by the officials of the two countries' cricket boards, representatives of the Bangladesh Government, diplomatic officials and business representatives.