



The current members of the national team, most of whom were in their infancy when Gordon Greenidge (C) led Bangladesh to the famous 1997 ICC Trophy Triumph, enjoy a photo session with the West Indian legend at the home of Bangladesh cricket in Mirpur yesterday.

'Relieved & hoping to improve'

SPORTS REPORTER



Off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who was one of a long list of injured national cricketers heading into the ongoing preliminary camp for the Afghanistan series and the tour of West Indies, informed that he is recovering well from his shoulder injury and that he is not facing any problem while bowling at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Mehedi has a labral tear on his right shoulder similar to the one pacer Mustafizur Rahman suffered and underwent surgery for in late 2016. Unlike Mustafizur, Mehedi does not require surgery, which was a source of great relief for the 20-year-old.

"I was worried about whether I would need surgery but luckily there is no need of surgery for my injury. I am trying to become 100 per cent fit as [BCB fitness trainer] Mario [Villavarayan], [BCB physio] Bayjidul [Islam] bhai and [BCB chief physician] Debashish [Chowdhury] bhai are helping me a lot," Mehedi told reporters.

The off-spinner, who first sustained the injury during his Under-19 days, had since been experiencing pain while throwing and bowling.

"I have started throwing but I am still not putting my 100 per cent effort behind it; I am trying to get the balance right first. There is no problem while bowling, which I was previously experiencing, and my throwing from 25 metres is fine. I will have to improve further that by working in the gym and through rehabilitation," he added.



MEHEDI HASAN

The former Bangladesh youth captain, who was also named the player-of-the-tournament in the 2016 Under-19 World Cup at home, burst into the record books on his Test debut in the same year by picking up 19 wickets in the two-Test series against England, but the youngster has since been unable to match or even approach that early brilliance.

With 48 wickets in 12 Tests, Mehedi is still considered one of the lethal weapons for the Tigers along with Shakib Al Hasan in Test cricket, but he is yet to prove his worth in the limited-overs format, having bagged just bagged seven and three wickets respectively in eight ODIs and as many T20Is.

"I am working hard on my bowling and looking to prepare myself for all three formats. Obviously the expectation is high after my debut and I will try to improve myself as a

Remembering Kuala Lumpur '97

SPORTS REPORTER

In 2018, Bangladesh cricket fans wait to celebrate series wins against other top-ranked sides and deep runs in international tournaments. But fans of a slightly older vintage remember when it all began, with expectations much lower and celebrations more spirited. Younger fans look back upon the time as the genesis of the successes they now enjoy. So it is no surprise that the fan community as a whole jump at the opportunity to reminisce upon the 1997 ICC Trophy win, a tournament during which Bangladesh qualified for the 1999 World Cup, which in turn paved the way to the granting of Test status in 2000.

Association made use of such an opportunity by organising a function in honour of Gordon Greenidge, the coach at the helm during Bangladesh's most important step up. Greenidge is a genuine legend as he formed a vital cog of the supremely dominant West Indies lineups of the 1980s and it was a treat to hear him fondly remember the time when, under his guidance, Bangladesh qualified for the tournament that he had twice won as a player.

The programme started with clips of that famous win over Kenya in Kuala Lumpur, and Greenidge started his short speech with a joke about the then Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president.

"As you saw in the clip, it was the first time that our president Saber Hossain Chowdhury moved so quickly," the 67-year-old, looking like he would still happily murder the world's best bowlers, said

with a wry smile. "As a matter of fact we once thought he was going to get on the field and play the shot himself to get the runs.

"But the occasion was a grand one for Bangladesh and we all know what happened after that. Bangladesh has taken new flight. It's just a pity that I could not have been with you for that time as well."

Greenidge identified the players' belief in their own abilities, and not a sudden uptick in skill, as the turning point that delivered that seminal success.

"I am happy to be part of an association that I suppose at the time was sceptical and hesitant about their own ability. But I think the players themselves knew they had qualities that only needed to be exposed and this was done in Kuala Lumpur," Greenidge told a captivated audience. "A good bunch of guys," Greenidge

started saying, and then a glint of mischief flashed in his eyes as he saw an opportunity to poke fun at his former charges.

"Some not so good. Personally, they were good at playing but their behaviour wasn't good," he said to general laughter. "But we managed to pull through."

After the programme Greenidge, having relived the 21-year-old success, was kind enough to pose for selfies and answer a few questions. Just before getting into the car to get to Mirpur to speak to the current generation of Bangladesh cricketers who he hoped would continue to capitalise on 1997, the Barbadian showed that his heart still beats to the West Indian rhythm.

"In one term, it's very disappointing," he said when asked about West Indies cricket's current decline and added with a rueful smile. "If I had the remedy, I wouldn't be here; I would be there."

Abahani join MSC on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Abahani joined archrivals Mohammedan on top of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League table with an emphatic 5-0 win over Wari Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With seven straight wins, Abahani and Mohammedan have 21 points each while Wari Club have six points following their fifth defeat.

Club Cup champions Abahani took the lead in the 11th minute when Ashraf Islam converted the first penalty corner of the match before Malaysia's Gunashekar doubled the lead in the 23rd minute.

Abahani earned three PCs after the break, but failed to capitalise on those before Ashraf Islam converted the fifth PC of the match to make it 3-0. The promising defender completed his hat-trick two minutes later converting another penalty corner.

Malaysian striker Ahmed Tajuddin wrapped up the victory by scoring the team's fifth goal seven minutes from time.

In the day's first match, Shadharan Bima handed a 6-1 defeat to Azad SC, with Joga Singh slamming a hat-trick while Abdullah Al Mamun, Faisal Hossain and Jogajit Singh netting one goal apiece.

Meanwhile, Mariner Young's Club later beat Sonali Bank by 8-0 goals in the third match of the day to go level with Mohammedan and Abahani on top of the table. Moinul Islam Koushik scored two goals while six other players scored a goal apiece for the defending champions.

Shakib picks rest over World XI



SPORTS REPORTER

The International Cricket Council website yesterday revealed that ace Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has withdrawn from the World XI squad citing personal reasons.

Shakib confirmed the news to The Daily Star over phone yesterday, saying that he is skipping the match because he needed rest as there is lot of cricket coming up with the Afghanistan and West Indies series looming on the horizon.

"As there's too much cricket ahead, and after completing my IPL stint [for Sunrisers Hyderabad], I have decided to take rest and skip the World XI match," Shakib said about the match scheduled to be held at Lord's on May 31 between a World XI and a West Indies.

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal is however still set to feature in the match as the lone star from Bangladesh.

The cricket match is being organised to raise funds for stadia in the Caribbean which were damaged due to hurricanes Irma and Maria last year.

Nepal wrist-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane has been added to the squad while ICC will announce Shakib's replacement in due time.

The Tigers will travel to Dehradun on May 29 for a three-match T20I series against Afghanistan, before embarking on the tour of West Indies in late June. Tamim is expected to join the squad in Dehradun after the World XI match.

Bangladesh celebrates F4F Day

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh, one of the 211 participating countries in the Gazprom Football for Friendship (F4F) programme to be staged in Moscow ahead of the FIFA World Cup, recently celebrated the International Day of Football and Friendship.

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) observed the day for the second time with participation of budding booter Golam Rafi Khan and young journalist Rafat Shams, the two young ambassadors selected to represent the country at the F4F programme in Russia.

Around the world, children, adults, personalities and football enthusiasts gathered to celebrate the day on April 25 by conducting friendly matches, football tournaments, open trainings with star footballers, city holidays, sports events, media events and TV shows.

Ireland open to touring Pakistan

AFP, Dublin

Ireland are open to touring Pakistan if "all the stars align," the chief executive of men's Test cricket's newest nation has said.

The fast bowler took three wickets in miserly spell, conceding only 15 runs as Kings XI Punjab managed to make 183, falling three short of Mumbai's total of 186 for eight. The defence came after opener KL Rahul had threatened to knock Mumbai out with a 60-ball 94, which featured three sixes and 10 fours. One-down Aaron Finch had scored a 35-ball 46, but none of the other batsman managed to give enough support to Rahul in the steep chase.

"We haven't received an official invitation," Deutrom told AFP at Malahide following the end of the Test match.

Florida confirmed as venue for Tigers' T20Is

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will play the first Test of their upcoming tour of West Indies at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in Antigua and the second Test at Jamaica's Sabina Park after 14 years, according to the tour schedule announced by Cricket West Indies yesterday.

The series will start with a two-day practice match at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua from June 28 and end with the third T20I at Central Broward Regional Park in Florida on August 5.

The tour comprises two Tests, three ODIs and three T20Is, with the last two matches to be held in Florida.

This is Bangladesh's fourth tour of the West Indies, the most recent being in 2014 when they failed to win a single game in any format. Bangladesh played their first bilateral series in West Indies in 2004 and began with a draw in the first Test, riding on centuries from Habibul Bashar, Mohammad Rafique and Khaled Masud at the newly named Darren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in Gros Islet, St Lucia, but suffered an innings defeat in the second Test in Jamaica. The next tour was a much happier one as the Tigers won both Tests and three ODIs against a depleted

ITINERARY	
Jun 28-29:	Tour Match at Coolidge Cricket Ground, Antigua.
Jul 4-8:	1st Test at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground, Antigua.
Jul 12-16:	2nd Test at the Sabina Park, Jamaica.
Jul 19:	Tour Match at UWI Vice Chancellor's XI vs Bangladeshis, Sabina Park.
Jul 22:	1st ODI at Guyana National Stadium, Guyana.
Jul 25:	2nd ODI at Guyana National Stadium.
Jul 28:	3rd ODI at Warner Park, St. Kitts.
Jul 31:	1st Twenty20i at Warner Park
Aug 4:	2nd Twenty20i at Central Broward Regional Park, Florida.
Aug 5:	3rd Twenty20i at Central Broward Regional Park, Florida

West Indies in 2009, when the home side won just a T20I, while the other T20I abandoned because of rain.

Cricket West Indies are excited about the two T20Is in Florida. "We are delighted to include the matches in Fort Lauderdale on the schedule for the Bangladesh tour," said CWI CEO Johnny Grave. "Both matches are scheduled for the weekend and will be played under lights, so it's a great opportunity for Windies fans in North America to see the team play against a very competitive Bangladesh side."

Mumbai stay alive

STAR SPORT DESK



Jasprit Bumrah bowled an inspiring spell as Mumbai Indians defended 186 to keep their chances of qualification for the Indian Premier League qualifiers alive with a three-run win over Kings XI Punjab in Mumbai yesterday.

The defence came after opener KL Rahul had threatened to knock Mumbai out with a 60-ball 94, which featured three sixes and 10 fours. One-down Aaron Finch had scored a 35-ball 46, but none of the other batsman managed to give enough support to Rahul in the steep chase.

Earlier, Mumbai Indians posted 186, thanks to a 50-run knock from middle-order batsman Kieron Pollard, who hammered three sixes and five fours in his 23-ball innings. Andrew Tye, the top wicket-taker of the season, was yet again instrumental as he took four wickets for only 16 runs.

The win took pushed Mumbai Indians up to fourth position with 12 points from 13 matches, level on points with Kings XI Punjab and Rajasthan Royals, but ahead on run-rate.

SCORES IN BRIEF
MUMBAI INDIANS: 186 for 8 in 20 overs (Pollard 50, yadav 27, Kishan 23; tye 4-16)
KINGS XI PUNJAB: 183 for 5 in 20 overs (Rahul 94, Finch 46; Bumrah 3-15, McGlenaghan 2-37)
Result: Mumbai Indians won by 3 runs
Player-of-the-match: Jasprit Bumrah

Jamal wins Gemcon title

SPORTS REPORTER

Jamal Hossain Mollah clinched the Gemcon Professional Golf Tournament, which concluded at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

The 33-year-old golfer, who finished tied for fourth in the recently held AB Bank Bangladesh Open, claimed the top prize with an aggregate score of 13-under-par (275). Badal Hossain finished second with a score of two-under-par (286).

A total of 90 Bangladeshis golfers including 12 amateurs took part in the 11-lakh-taka competition, organised by the Bangladesh Professional Golfers' Association.

State minister for Youth and Sports Biren Sikder was present as chief guest in the closing ceremony. Saeed Ahmed, chief human resource officer of Gemcon Group and BPGA president Asif Ibrahim were also present at the occasion.