



Amid the rigorous demands of the ongoing strength and conditioning camp, the younger members of the Bangladesh preliminary squad enjoy a light moment in the midst of some stretching exercises at the gymnasium of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: BCB

Afridi to miss World XI-WI charity match

AGENCIES, Lahore

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi is set to miss the charity match at Lord's between World XI and Windies on May 31. The 38-year-old, who was expected to make a brief one-off comeback to international cricket, via the T20 game, is recovering from a knee injury.

Afridi, on Twitter, claimed that he will be needing another three-four weeks to recover completely. With the charity match, that is being held to raise funds for the reconstruction of the venues in the Caribbean islands that were damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria last year, scheduled to be held two weeks from now, Afridi looks certain to miss the clash.

The beard's here to stay: Kohli

AFP, Bangalore

India cricket captain Virat Kohli insisted Thursday he will not be shaving off his famous beard any time soon.

The 29-year-old batsman, who said he still cleans his own cricket shoes despite being one of the world's highest paid athletes, has in recent years become a style icon because of the beard.

A fan asked Kohli at a promotional event whether he would ever get rid of his carefully trimmed bristles. "I don't think so, I really like it," replied Kohli.

"I think it suits me. So I don't want to get rid of it. Looking after it is not that difficult because the beard oils have come in and it's very easy. A little bit of beard oil and it's in place. But when it gets too big and thick then obviously I have to trim it. That's the only thing. But no, I would not get rid of it."

Beards became almost ubiquitous in the Indian team until last year when a small group of players including Hardik Pandya and Rohit Sharma said they would shave to break the stranglehold.

Kohli's then-girlfriend, and now wife, Bollywood actor Anushka Sharma went onto social media to declare "you cannot" when questions were asked about the Indian captain's style.

Taking calculated risks will be crucial: Riyad

SPORTS REPORTER



Mahmudullah Riyad underlined the importance of Bangladesh's batting depth in the endeavour to overcome the Afghan challenge in the coming three-match T20I series in Dehradun. As the series draws near and the Tigers settle into their training camp ahead of the new season, the focus has gradually shifted to Afghanistan's bowling strength and Mahmudullah, who has transformed himself into a fantastic T20 batsman since 2015, joined the chorus but exuded confidence in their batting.

"We already saw the video footage. Although I am yet to face Mujeeb [Ur Rahman] but I played against Rashid [Khan]. But once again I want to say that our batting depth is very much capable of facing their bowling variety. We just need to apply ourselves in the right way but it will be a challenging series," the elegant right-hander told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"We must focus on our batting strength. Our bowling is also good and we have some variety as we have Shakib [Al Hasan], [Nazmul Islam] Apu and [Mehedi Hasan] Miraz but it's different from them. I don't think



there is any point talking too much about it and instead focus on our strengths so that we can perform like we did in the Nidahas Trophy. If we can take all the calculated risks that we took in the Nidahas Trophy then the

positive results will come," he added.

Riyad emphasised upon the importance of playing good cricket regardless of the opposition. "I personally believe that there is no big or small team in T20 cricket because on a given day a team can beat any team no matter what their rankings are. The main thing is we have to play good cricket regardless of whether the opponents are Afghanistan, India or Australia. It is a format where there is little chance of comebacks, so a good start is important," he said.

After the three-match T20I series in Dehradun the Tigers will fly for West Indies to play two Tests, three ODIs and three T20I matches. The schedule has already been released and Riyad admitted that the series was also on their minds. "Of course, West Indies series are at the back of our minds but at this moment we are focusing on the white-ball challenge against Afghanistan because it's a very important series for us in terms of stepping up in the rankings," said Riyad.

RCB stay alive

STAR SPORT DESK



Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) pulled off a nervy 14-run win against leaders Sunrisers Hyderabad to stay alive for a qualification in the Indian Premier League Qualifiers at the M Chinnaswami Stadium in Bangalore yesterday.

In a high-scoring entertainer, RCB bowlers especially, Tim Southee, who conceded just six runs in the 17th over, hold their nerves to defend a commanding 218 for six. Sunrisers captain Kane Williamson threatened to take the game away with a sublime 81 off 42 balls. But once the New Zealand right-hander was holed out in the deep off the first ball in the final over with his side needing 20 runs, the game was irrevocably tilted to RCB's way. Sunrisers eventually finished on 204 for three with Manish Pandey hitting an unbeaten 62. But he was also responsible for not allowing much of the strike to Williamson in the last five overs.

Earlier, RCB rode on half centuries by AB de Villiers (69) and Moen Ali (65) to post a commanding total. Colin de Grandhomme with a 17-ball 40 provided the late flourish in a game where so many catches were dropped. However, amidst those let offs, two stunning catches were taken. Sunrisers Rashid Khan, who took three wickets for 27 runs in his four overs, took a one-handed catch at long-on. But it was De Villiers's stunner at deep mid-wicket that dismissed a menacing Alex Hales that would surely go down as one of the best catches in the IPL.

Hales stepped out and muscled Moen Ali's length ball and thought he had cleared it. But AB leapt high and realizing that the ball was swirling away instinctively puts his right hand out and pulled off a one-handed stunner even as it continued to curl away.

Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan bowled a decent spell for Sunrisers, conceding 35 runs in his four overs.

RCB are now in fifth position with 12 points, leveled with Mumbai Indians, Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI. Their game on Saturday against Royals in Jaipur will be a knock-out shootout.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Royal Challengers Bangalore: 218 for six in 20 overs (De Villiers 69, Moen Ali 65, Grandhomme 40; Rashid 3-27)

Sunrisers Hyderabad: 204 for three in 20 overs (Hales 37, Williamson 81, M Pandey 62 not out; Chahal 1-28)

Result: Royal Challengers Bangalore won by 14 runs
Player-of-the-match: AB de Villiers

Warner set for club return

AFP, Sydney

Disgraced former Australian vice-captain David Warner will start his road to redemption by playing club cricket with Sydney's Randwick Petersham, officials said.

The opener is serving a year-long ban from state and international cricket for his part in a plan to use sandpaper to tamper with the ball during the third Test in South Africa in March.

But he is free to play at club level and is set to make a return to the field in September.

Randwick Petersham club president Mike Whitney, a former Test fast bowler, said Warner will play in at least three of the first four matches of the season.

"We're delighted to have him. He's one of the best players Australia has had since World War II," he told the local Southern Courier newspaper on Wednesday.

"He's been speaking to one of our club officials and he has committed to the first three or four rounds of the season. Why it is only three or four rounds at this stage I don't know."

Warner has also been linked with playing in the Northern Territory's limited-overs Strike League.

Abahani clinch record win

SPORTS REPORTER



Krishna Kumar scored his second hattrick in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League to help propel title

contenders Abahani to a massive 13-0 win over Dhaka Wanderers Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With an eighth straight win from as many matches Abahani topped the the 12-team table on 24 points, three more than closest competitors Dhaka Mariners Youngs Club and Mohammedan SC, who however have played a match less than the leaders.

It now seems though that the Club Cup champions, Abahani, have made it a habit of winning every match by big margins, seeing as they notched identical 10-0 wins over Azad SC, Bangladesh Police and Bangladesh SC. Yesterday's triumph also ranked as the highest margin for victory, eclipsing Dhaka Wanderers' 3-13 defeat to Mohammedan last Tuesday.

Fresh from a 5-0 win over Wari Club in the previous fixture, Abahani opened their account through Sohanur Rahman Sabuj as he converted a penalty corner in the 12th minute. After that, Malaysian Ahmed Tajuddin, Arshad Hossain, Musa Mia and Ashraf Islam scored one goal apiece to hand the Dhanmondi-based outfit a comfortable 5-0 lead by the end of the first-half.

After resumption, Abahani turned up the pressure and added eight more goals, courtesy of Krishna's second hattrick in the tournament.

Dawn of a new Day

SPORTS REPORTER



Former Arsenal player Jamie Day has been appointed as the head coach of the Bangladesh national football team for one year, confirmed the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday, ending the hunt for a new manager approximately six weeks after English-born Australian Andrew Ord suddenly left the position.

Although Day represented England at the U-16, U-17 and U-18 levels and earned a professional contract with Arsenal, he did not play any matches with the English Premier League giants. Only after moving to Bournemouth was he able to make his debut in England's top-flight against Northampton Town in 1999.

Day's ambitions to be a professional player may have ended early due to injuries but he carried on in the sport by coaching the youth teams of Arsenal and Charlton Athletic and later obtained a UEFA A license.

Day also worked with a few other clubs such as Welling United FC, Ebbsfleet United Football Club, Braintree Town Football Club and Gillingham FC, all of whom participate in the fifth tier of English football with the exception of Welling United FC, a sixth tier club, and Gillingham FC, who feature in the third tier.

Before accepting the offer from Bangladesh, Day also worked as an assistant

coach to fifth-tier side Barrow Association FC. However, the 38-year-old coach has no experience of guiding a national team.

Day will be the 21st foreign coach of the Bangladesh national team and the tenth to occupy the position under the regime of Kazi Salahuddin in last 10 years.

"He was involved with some good clubs in England during his playing and coaching career though he had been engaged with a small club before accepting our offer. He is academically qualified, so we have chosen him as the head coach of the national team after being recommended by a few officials of English clubs," explained BFF Teams' committee chairman and vice president Kazi Nabil Ahmed over the phone.

Nabil also informed that the one-year contract had been already signed via email and that neither party would be afforded the option to part ways until November.

"Yes, he has no experience of working in Asia but he will get enough time to understand the concept of Bangladesh football by gathering information, watching matches, consulting with local coaches and doing his homework before the SAFF Championship," said Nabil, adding that Day is expected to arrive in Bangladesh in the first week of June.

Meanwhile, the national team's fitness training will get underway from Sunday at the BKSP under the guidance of BFF coaching staff.



JAMIE DAY

Tigresses fall short in opener

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh women's cricket team's losing-streak continued on their tour of South Africa as they suffered a 17-run defeat to the home side in the first T20I at the Diamond Oval in Kimberley yesterday.

Chasing a 128 to win, Bangladesh lost openers Sanjida Islam and Shamima Sultana with just 14 runs on the board in 4.2 overs. Rumana Ahmed and Fargana Hoque repaired the damage, putting on 72 runs for the third wicket, but their efforts were not good enough as the team lacked the hard-hitting ability needed to materialise 48 runs from the last five overs, even with eight wickets in hand.

Rumana scored 36 off 41 balls with three boundaries while Fargana struck four boundaries while scoring 35 off 37.

Earlier, Lizelle Lee's 38-ball 46 and Laura Wolvaardt's 20-ball 30 during their 77-run opening stand helped South Africa post 127 for six in 20 overs.

Spinner Khadija Tul Kubra claimed three wickets for 23 runs in four overs.

The last two T20Is of the three-match series will be held at the Mangaung Oval in Bloemfontein on May 19 and 20 respectively.

SCORES IN BRIEF

South Africa: 127 for 6 in 20 overs (Lee 46, Wolvaardt 30, Luus 28 not out; Khadija 3-23)

Bangladesh: 110 for 5 in 20 overs (Rumana 36, Fargana 35; Ismail 3-19)

Result: South Africa women won by 17 runs.

Mathews, Lakmal fit for WI tour

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's former skipper Angelo Mathews and medium pacer Suranga Lakmal have been declared fit for the three-match Test series against the West Indies, the cricket board said Thursday.

The 30-year-old all-rounder and Lakmal were doubtful after a spate of injuries. They were, however, included in a 17-man squad for the tournament which begins on May 30 with a three-day warm-up match.

"A fitness test was carried out this week and the duo has been given the clearance to go ahead with the tour," Sri Lanka Cricket said in a statement.

Sri Lanka will miss opener Dimuth Karunaratne who fractured a finger while batting in the nets earlier this month as he prepared for a limited-overs domestic tournament.



Abahani's Krishna Kumar (L) celebrates his second hattrick with teammates during their massive 13-0 win over Dhaka Wanderers Club in a Premier Division Hockey League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

The Sky Blues seemed to be just toying with the Wanderers backline, scoring one goal after the other on the minnows without facing almost any resistance. National striker Krishna completed his triple, the 23rd hattrick of the league, by scoring in the 55th and 67th minutes respectively.

Indian Gunashekar Malayalan and Mohammad Moshin scored twice before Tajuddin and Arashed scored one goal each in the second half to inflict the Wanderers' seventh defeat in eight matches.

"In the previous match, there was a slight lack of combination after three foreign players were drafted in the

playing eleven but today, they had no such issue and played accordingly. We allowed the Wanderers' players to come forward in the second half and then launched quick counterattacks to score more goals," said Abahani coach Mahbub Harun.

"We are on the right tract in the title race till now, the eighth match, but the big matches are ahead and we are now looking forward to carrying on this performance into the upcoming encounters against Mohammedan SC and Mariners Young's Club," said Harun while adding that former Indian national player, Bikash Pillai, will feature against Mohammedan on May 21.