



Bangladesh all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin attempts a scoop shot during practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The Tigers are gearing up for an upcoming tour of Sri Lanka, where they will certainly hope for some fireworks from the young all-rounder in the death overs.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

HOCKEY ASIA CUP BD suffer 3rd defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh suffered a 3-1 defeat to hosts Thailand in their fourth and final pool match of the Indoor Hockey Asia Cup in Chonburi, Thailand yesterday.

Fresh from a 9-0 win over Philippines in their previous match, Bangladesh conceded the lead in the third minute, though Boonpea Warun, who scored a field goal before Kampanthong Thanop scored twice in the fourth and 34th minute to all but confirm victory for hosts Thailand.

Moinul Islam Koushik, who struck six goals against Philippines, reduced the margin four minutes ahead of the final whistle.

If Bangladesh can finish fourth in five-team group with three points from four matches, the boys in red and green could face the Pool B fourth-place finisher, Chinese Taipei, in the 7th-8th position-deciding match on July 20.

'Will do whatever the team needs'

SPORTS REPORTER

Players making promising starts but then suddenly losing momentum or not being able to carry their form is a very common scenario in cricket. Bangladesh all-rounder Mosaddek Hossain displayed glimpses of his ability in the recently concluded World Cup in England, where the Tigers finished in eighth position. However, with the Sri Lanka tour -- Bangladesh's first series following a bleak World Cup -- coming up, the question remains, will Mosaddek be able to carry on and flourish or will he just fall by the way side?

With Bangladesh's preparations for the Sri Lanka tour underway in Mirpur, Mosaddek was seen participating in all batting, bowling and fielding drills yesterday, the second day of the camp. Mosaddek later told reporters that he is currently trying to improve certain aspects of his batting.

"I am batting exactly the same way I batted in the World Cup. Strike rate is always a concern for me. I am working on my feet



In my opinion, I would say we had a very average World Cup. If we think too much then it's a lot but a World Cup is not everything. We have to play cricket at the end of the day. A World Cup is not the end of the world.

MOSADDEK HOSSAIN
BANGLADESH ALL-ROUNDER

disappoint in that regard but rather added that he would be ready to play anywhere the team want.

"I batted on top of the order in domestic cricket but when I saw I had to bat in the number seven slot in the national side, I tried to practice batting in the number seven position in the domestic league as well. I might have the opportunity to score big runs batting on top of the order but I am ready to do whatever the team requires of me," he said.

With Shakib Al Hasan unavailable for the series while Mahmudullah Riyad was not considered for bowling due to a shoulder injury, Mosaddek might need to put in some extra effort in the series. The youngster did however say he would grab any opportunity that comes his way.

"There will be no Shakib bhai this time so I might get more chances in the bowling department. I might have to come to bowl early and bowl more overs too. If that is the case then, I am prepared. I definitely have a plan if I have to bowl more overs. So, right now, I am focusing on the opportunities that come my way, be it in batting or bowling."

Rangpur, Thakurgaon reach finals

SPORTS REPORTER

Thakurgaon and Rangpur set up a final clash in the JFA Cup U-14 National Women's Football Championship by beating their respective semifinal opponents at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Thakurgaon saw off defending champions Mymensingh with an 3-2 win in tiebreakers after regulation time ended in a 1-1 draw. Interestingly, Thakurgaon lost 3-0 to Mymensingh in the last edition's final in 2017.

Shanti Akter gave Thakurgaon a 33-minute lead but Ranjana equalized the margin in the 44th minute, forcing the match to be decided through a penalty shootout, where the three-time champions ultimately came up short.

In the day's other match, Rangpur beat Magura 1-0 with Liza Begum scoring the all-important goal in the ninth minute to set up Friday's final against Thakurgaon.

Shohidul, Taskin set the pace

SPORTS REPORTER

Two BCB XI pacers -- Taskin Ahmed and Shohidul Islam -- brought the side back into the game with some brilliant bowling after Dr. DY Patil Cricket Academy succumbed to 306 all out in 88 overs on the third day of their four-day match in the ongoing Dr (Capt) K. Thimmappiah Memorial tournament at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in India yesterday.

BCB XI started the day poorly as, after starting the day on 261 for five, they lost their five remaining wickets for just 45 runs. After that however, Taskin scalped three of their top order batsmen while Shohidul claimed another to leave Dr. DY Patil Cricket Academy reeling on four for 42 in 13 overs.

Taskin's figures of four for 69 alongside Shohidul's economical figures of one for 45 in 16 overs helped restrict their opponents to 274 for eight.

'World Cup triumph will inspire England'

AFP, London

Sam Curran believes England's historic World Cup triumph will inspire the Ashes team as attention turns towards their attempt to regain the urn.

Sunday's dramatic end to the 50-over tournament has overshadowed the build-up to the five-Test showdown against Australia, which gets under way on August 1 at Edgbaston.

Curran feels the Ashes remains the pinnacle of the cricketing calendar but said the Test team would be galvanised by the World Cup, irrespective of whether they featured or not in the one-day triumph.

"I don't think I'm alone in saying that it's probably the greatest cricket match ever and for that to be the World Cup final was incredible," said the 21-year-old all-rounder. "That will provide a buzz for everyone across Eng-lish cricket going into the Ashes."

"Days like Sunday get everyone, whether they were involved or not, more excited and desperate to do well so I'm sure it will rub off as we head into the Test part of the summer."

"The Ashes are the biggest thing you can play in as an England cricketer, that's what I've always felt. Hopefully we can be lifting the urn at the Oval in September."

Curran, whose older brother Tom was an unused squad member during the World Cup, has been drafted into England's groups for the one-off Test against Ireland next week and a pre-Ashes training camp.

The left armer was England Lions' standout performer against an Australian XI earlier this week, taking six for 95 and contributing a pair of half-centuries in a drawn first-class match at Canterbury.

Women's A team set to fly to SA

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the Bangladesh Emerging Women's (A Team) squad is set to leave for South Africa on July 20 for a three-match one-day and three-match T20 series against their South African counterparts.

Bangladesh will play their first one-dayer against the hosts on July 23 at the Groenkloof Oval in Pretoria. The team will then play the following two one-dayers on July 25 and July 28 at the same venue.

The three T20 matches will be held on July 31, August 1 and August 4 respectively at the Mandela Oval in Hammanskraal.

Five Bangladesh Women's national team players -- Salma Khatun, Rumana Ahmed, Shamima Sultana, Lata Mandol and Ayesha Rahman -- will accompany the A team for this tour.

Zimbabwe suspended by ICC

AFP, London

Zimbabwe Cricket was suspended by the International Cricket Council on Thursday over a failure to provide a process for free elections and to ensure there was no political interference.

"As a consequence of suspension, ICC funding to Zimbabwe Cricket will be frozen and representative teams from Zimbabwe will not be allowed to participate in any ICC events," the ICC said in a statement.



SAM CURRAN

'Sorry we let you down'

AGENCIES, Auckland



Cricket hero Trent Boult has apologised to New Zealand fans for "letting everyone down" as the first group of Black Caps touched down in Auckland following their heartbreaking World Cup final defeat to England.

Boult was one of a handful of players to return to the country after Monday's final, during which scores were twice tied and the Black Caps were beaten to a first World Cup triumph on a boundary countback.

Boult bowled both the final over of the 50-over match and the Super Over in which England scored 15 runs, after earlier taking a catch on the boundary, only to stand on the boundary cushion.

The left-arm seamer, who was one of the leading wicket-takers in the tournament with 17 scalps, admitted it would take some time for the players to get over the final result.

"It's been a long flight home but it [the defeat] probably hasn't sunk in yet. I wish it would, so we can all get over it but it's one of those things that we probably won't get over for a long time."

Boult said the final over - in which the Black Caps conceded a controversial six runs after a throw from Martin Guptill struck a diving Ben Stokes' bat and sped to the boundary, effectively sending the final into a Super Over - continued to haunt him.

"It's natural to nitpick, to wonder about all those little things and how it could have been a totally different game. I've been living that last over in my mind a lot - somehow I got hit for six along the ground which has never happened before. To see the scores level [after the Super Over] and still lose, yeah, that was a pretty unique situation."

Talking about his catch of Stokes, that ended up going for six runs, Boult revealed that Guptill (who was running it to his left) tried to warn him that the boundary rope was close.



New Zealand pacer Trent Boult (R) takes a selfie with a fan after arriving at the Auckland Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: TWITTER