



Fizz rested, Taskin recalled

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Mustafizur Rahman will not be turning out for Bangladesh in the one-off Test against Afghanistan as the left-arm pacer was not included in the 15-member Bangladesh squad announced by the selectors yesterday. Regular Test skipper Shakib Al Hasan and pacer Taskin Ahmed, who missed the last Test series in New Zealand earlier this year due to injuries, returned to the side while Mosaddek Hossain also made a comeback to the Test team after 18 months.

“Mustafizur sustained a slight injury during the conditioning camp and we observed that yesterday [Thursday]. As we have quite a lot of Test matches in the coming days, including the India tour, and the T20 tri-nation series we decided to rest him,” chief selector Minhajul Abedin told reporters yesterday.

The 23-year-old had experienced some discomfort in his ankle and pain in his back during the camp.

Mustafizur, experienced opener Tamim Iqbal, who was granted a leave by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), and pacer Khaled Ahmed were the three previous squad members who were absent from the current one.

With Taskin's inclusion there are three pacers in the squad, with Abu Jayed and

Ebadot Hossain retaining their places after they impressed with the red ball against the Kiwis.

Taskin played his last Test in October 2017 against South Africa. The tall seamer impressed the selectors when he made a comeback to the longer version for BCB XI in Bengaluru earlier this year.

It will be interesting to see whether the new team management, led by head coach Russell Domingo, would continue Bangladesh's traditional reliance on spin as

SQUAD

Shakib Al Hasan (captain), Soumya Sarkar, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Liton Das, Mahmudullah, Mohammad Mithun, Mosaddek Hossain, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Abu Jayed, Taskin Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain.

the 15-member squad have four genuine spinners in Shakib, Taijul Islam, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Nayeem Hasan.

Bangladesh have fielded four spinners and only one seamer in the last three Tests in Chattogram, where the Tigers clinched a 64-run win over West Indies in November

last year.

“Following a discussion with the team management we have formed the squad keeping their planning in mind. It will be decided whether we have a pace dominant side or spin-heavy side only after reaching Chattogram. As things have gone in the past, we have always been a spin-heavy side, but we kept few seamers as well,” he said.

According to Minhajul the inclusion of Mosaddek is to have a back-up batting option in the squad, but the think tank are yet to decide on Shadman Islam's opening partner in Tamim's absence.



Bangladesh Red team batsman Mahmudullah Riyad (L) struck a ton in their two-day practice match against the Bangladesh Green team at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The national side was divided into two halves for match practice during their ongoing training camp.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mahmudullah warms up with ton

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Mahmudullah Riyad was the only significant performer with the bat for Bangladesh Red as the experienced right-hander before they were bundled out for 268 on the first day of a two-day practice match against Bangladesh Green at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The match was played as part of the team's preparations for a one-off Test against Afghanistan starting on Thursday.

The 33-year-old scored 107 off 189 balls with the help of 10 boundaries before medium-pace Anifur Haque dismissed him. Pacer Taskin Ahmed, who made a comeback to the Test side against Afghanistan, was the pick of the bowlers for the Green team as the right-arm seamer bagged four wickets for 45 runs from 12.1 overs.

Electing to bat first, the Red team were in a spot of bother when Mohammad Mithun, who opened the innings, was

bowled by pacer Ebadot Hossain for one and Taskin had his partner Jahurul Islam caught behind for 13.

Bangladesh Test skipper Shakib Al Hasan was bowled by Taskin for a first-ball duck while Liton Kumar, despite getting a start, was dismissed for 25 to leave his side struggling on 63 for four inside 29 overs.

It was then Mahmudullah and Sabbir Rahman who steadied the ship and added 65 runs for the fourth wicket before the latter became Ebadot's second victim after scoring 37 runs.

Shakib tried his luck, coming in to bat for a second time, but once again failed and was trapped leg-before for nine off the bowling of Taijul Islam.

Mahmudullah, who unlike his recent ODI form has been in good touch in Tests with two hundreds in his last three matches, reached his hundred off 181 balls. Pacer Abu Hider's 69-ball 40 was the second highest score for the batting side.

Apart from Taskin's four-wicket haul, Ebadot also bagged three wickets for 42 runs from his 14 overs.

HP team draw first four-day match

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As expected, the first four-day match between the Bangladesh High Performance (HP) team and their Sri Lankan counterparts ended in a draw at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday. Rain had marred the third day's play and allowed for only 49 overs to be played, leading to the stalemate.

On the fourth and final day, Sri Lanka HP were bundled out on 244 for 10 in 103.4 overs, having added just 54 runs to their overnight tally. However, this is mostly due to an impressive bowling display from Bangladesh HP's right-arm spinner Nayeem Hasan. Nayeem, who remained wicketless on the previous day, took three of the four wickets that fell yesterday to return impressive figures of seven for 93. The 18-year-old is now set to join the national team for their upcoming Test against Afghanistan.

After the exchange, Bangladesh HP managed to score 102 for four in the remaining 43 overs to be played on the day. Opener Saif Hasan remained unbeaten on a 113-ball 40 while Nazmul Hossain Shanto scored a 38-ball 25. Nishan Peiris was the pick of the bowlers for Sri Lanka HP, returning figures of three for 43.

Bangladesh HP will take on the visitors in the second and final four-dayer from September 3 in Cox's Bazar.



Mustafizur Rahman, who was not picked for the one-off Test against Afghanistan due to some niggles, was reduced to watching his fellow national players play a practice game in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'Will try to win at least one medal'

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Ruman Sana and five other top level Bangladeshi archers are all set to compete in the Asia Cup: Stage-3, which will begin on September 8 in the Philippines. In hopes of securing at least one medal from the tournament, where they had won two in the past, the six-member Bangladesh team is scheduled to depart on September 7.

Sana, Tamimul Islam and Hakim Ahmed Rubel will vie for glory in the men's recurve team and individual events while Beauty Roy will feature in the women's recurve individual and mixed events.

“Our target is to showcase the consistency with which we participated in the last few meets and subsequently win at least a medal from this tournament, where

we won a team bronze medal in the 2019 edition in Thailand,” said Sana, who won a gold medal in the Asia Cup: Stage-1 in Thailand in 2014.

However, Sana is not all too sure about whether he can compete at the same calibre he showed in the World Archery Championship in the Netherlands, where he won a bronze medal to earn direct entry to the 2022 Tokyo Olympics.

“I have been on vacation for a few days now and only recently started practicing again. I need at least one month to recover from the gap. In addition, I am using new instruments which I am yet to get familiarised with. I know it will not be easy to repeat my performance at the World Archery Championship but I will try to win at least one medal,” explained Sana, who hopes to win a bronze medal in the team event.

Tigresses to tour Pakistan

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The Bangladesh women's cricket team is set to tour Pakistan for the second time in four years to play a three-match T20I and two-match ODI series against the hosts at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium from October 26 to November 4, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced yesterday.

The Tigresses last toured Pakistan in 2015 and were whitewashed by the home side in both the ODI and T20 series during their stay.

The upcoming tour is a part of a reciprocal arrangement between the two cricket boards. The Pakistan women's team toured Bangladesh last year for a four-match T20I series and a solitary ODI match in Cox's Bazar. The visitors won the T20I series 3-0 while Bangladesh won the solitary ODI by six wickets.

FIXTURES

26 Oct – 1st T20I, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
28 Oct – 2nd T20I, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
30 Oct – 3rd T20I, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
2 Nov – 1st ODI, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
4 Nov – 2nd ODI, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

Women begin qualifying run

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Bangladesh will face Papua New Guinea in their opening match of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier at Dundee in Scotland today. The match is set to begin at 3:00pm Bangladesh time (10:00am local time).

Bangladesh made decent preparations ahead of the tournament with the Tigresses having registered a whopping 10-wicket win in their solitary warm-up match against the Netherlands on August 29. Prior to that, the women in red and green played two T20Is against Thailand and one T20 against the Netherlands' under-17 boys team during their 10-day preparation camp in the Netherlands. Fans will be pleased to hear though that the Tigresses won all three of those fixtures.



The Afghanistan team, led by skipper Rashid Khan (R), are pictured upon their arrival at the team hotel in Chattogram yesterday. The visitors will begin their one-off Test against Bangladesh on September 5.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Afghans upbeat for first Test

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The Afghanistan team, led by Rashid Khan, arrived at the Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram yesterday. The visitors are set to take on Bangladesh in a one-off Test, which will begin on September 5 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

Afghanistan reached Dhaka at 9:30am yesterday and had to wait for about two hours for their flight to the port city. Upon their arrival, skipper Rashid, who was named captain of the side across all three formats following the World Cup in July, said that his team is ready to flourish in the longer format of the game.

“It is different. You need to have different kind of mentality for that [Tests]. You have more time and you need more patience in Test cricket. But as a player you know you need to switch on, switch

off playing in like ODI or Test cricket. And we are ready for that. We have worked on that -- how to play four-day or five-day cricket. We had a good camp before coming here. So in Shah Allah we will try to be positive and do well,” said Rashid, who was excited about his new role as captain, to reporters in Chattogram.

Afghanistan, who received Test status as recently as June 2017, will be playing Bangladesh for the first time in the format. Although Rashid seems to hold the Tigers in high regard, he remained confident about his team's chances.

“We see every team similarly. We see Bangladesh like India, Pakistan or Australia. They have been a top side for the last three or four years with the way they have been playing. Especially in the World Cup, the way they performed was unbelievable. Their cricket is improving day by day. As a team we need to take every team positively and prepare well for each and every team. In Shah Allah it will be a good series for us.”



India's Mayank Agarwal (L) and skipper Virat Kohli walk off the field at lunch during the first day of the second Test against West Indies in Kingston yesterday. Agarwal was unbeaten on 41 while Kohli added five to help the side reach 72 for two after 30 overs.

PHOTO: AFP