



The two-day practice match between Bangladesh Red and Bangladesh Green, which concluded yesterday, saw impressive performances from the pacers. Taskin Ahmed claimed four wickets and Ebadot Hossain and Abu Jayed scalped three each over the two days in Mirpur.

PHOTO: BCB

Tigers leave for Chattogram

SPORTS REPORTER

A 15-member Bangladesh team will travel to Chattogram today for the one-off Test against Afghanistan, starting November 5.

The Tigers concluded their training camp with a two-day practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The experienced Mahmudullah Riyad shone bright for Bangladesh Red. First, he smashed a patient hundred with the bat before returning with the ball to scalp three wickets as Bangladesh Green were bundled out for just 125 runs on the second and final day of the game.

After Taskin Ahmed and Ebadot Hossain sparked Bangladesh Red with four and three wickets respectively, the third seamer in Bangladesh's squad, Abu Jayed, impressed with the ball. He bagged three wickets for Bangladesh Green while conceding just 22 runs from his ten overs.

Mosaddek Hossain's fifty was the highest scorer for the Green team as none of the batsmen were able to score significantly.

No worries about weather: Nabi

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It is usually tough for outsiders to adjust to the hot and humid conditions in Chattogram, especially during this time of the year.

Teams such as Australia, New Zealand and

England, who are used to cooler climates, find it difficult to acclimatise to the port city but for Afghanistan -- a team from the sub-continent -- the weather was not at all an issue.

The Afghans are currently in Chattogram preparing for their one-off Test against the

hosts, scheduled to begin from September 5 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS).

"The weather is good here. We just came from Abu Dhabi where it was 45 degrees celsius. We spent 10 days there," Afghanistan all-rounder Mohammad Nabi told reporters after practice at yesterday.

"There is a little bit of humidity [in Chattogram] but hopefully we will adjust in the 4-5 days here. I think for the past 5-6 years we have been regularly coming to Bangladesh. Most of the guys are used to this kind of weather. We will try our best to play positive cricket in the Test matches."

When it comes to home fixtures, Bangladesh usually bank on spinners to produce a positive result. This time too, the Tigers have four front-line spinners in their ranks. However, just as the weather was not an issue for the visitors, Nabi did not appear too worried about facing a spin-heavy Bangladesh side.

"I think the plus point is both the teams are used to Asian conditions and have Asian players. They are good with the spin as well and also with fast bowlers. The pitch, I think, does not have enough bounce. Most of the time Chattogram pitches are batting pitches and we have some quality batsmen and some quality spinners as well," concluded a confident Nabi.



Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi said that his side were comfortable with the conditions in Chattogram, not just in terms of weather but with the pitch as well.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

U-18 CLUB FOOTBALL

Bashundhara, MSC, Abahani in same group

SPORTS REPORTER



Two-time champions Mohammedan and defending champions Abahani were pitted against new powerhouse Bashundhara Kings in what is believed to be the Group of Death of the Walton U-18 Football Tournament, which

will begin at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on September 12.

The draw for the youth tournament, featuring 12 sides from the 2018-19 Bangladesh Premier League clubs, was held at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) house yesterday in presence of all the club representatives except for Abahani.

Although the event will be held for the fourth time, the game's local governing body will again hold it in a tournament format instead of much-demanded league format.

"We pledge to hold it in league format from next year. Due to a lot of local and international engagements, we are having to hold it in tournament format this time too," BFF senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy told the media following the draw and logo unveiling.

"Team BJMC [the 13th team in the Premier League of the 2017-18 season] have opted to not participate in the tournament," Murshedy added.

The preparation from the clubs' perspective has been a mixed one, with Saif Sporting Club and Bashundhara Kings having taken long-term preparation while most of the other teams have had only a weeks' training so far.

Mohammedan team manager Zahid Hasan Emily, a former captain of the national team, said his side have had minimal preparation.

"Mohammedan have always been strong in age-group football. However, the reality is that two weeks' training is not good enough for a tournament like this. We are in a strong group, but if we can win a game in the group stage, it will get easier to move into the final," Emily said.

Minhazul Islam, general secretary of Bashundhara Kings, said his side have selected around 45 players from around 5000 for a 45-day camp for this tournament. "We have chosen players from a previous trial earlier in the year. Our plan is long-term, to develop these players for the senior club teams."

Himel, Manik, Faisal miss the cut

SPORTS REPORTER



Arambagh's veteran goalkeeper Mazharul Islam Himel, Bashundhara Kings' defender Nurun Nayeem Faisal and Sheikh Jamal defender Manjurur Rahman Manik were left out of the 26-member preliminary squad as Bangladesh national football team head coach Jamie Day yesterday announced the final 23-man list for the September 10 World Cup qualifier against Afghanistan.

The coach said he felt he chose the right ones for the job against Afghanistan. The team will fly off to Dushanbe, Tajikistan this morning for the September 10 match.

"Everyone has worked extremely hard the last seven days and the boys not making the squad will be disappointed, but I have selected a squad

23-MAN SQUAD
Goalkeepers: Ashraful Islam Rana, Shahidul Alam Sohel, Anisur Rahman Zico
Defenders: Tutul Hossain Badsha, Shushanto Tripura, Rahmat Mia, Yeasin Khan, Bishwanath Ghosh, Yeasin Arafat, Riyadul Hasan
Midfielders and strikers: Mashuk Miah Johnny, Jamal Bhuiyan, Mamunul Islam, Sohel Rana, Rabiul Hasan, Biplo Ahmed, Arifur Rahman, Mohammad Ibrahim, Nabib Newaz Jibon, Mahbubur Rahman Sufil, Matin Miah, Saad Uddin, Jewel Rana

that I think is best suited to get a positive result in Tajikistan against Afghanistan," the coach said about his selection.

Prior to the squad announcement, the team had their final training at home yesterday, where they played a practice match against the national under-19 team with Jamie Day's side winning 3-1.

BCB announces squad for today's practice match

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the BCB XI squad which will play a two-day practice match against Afghanistan at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram, which will begin today.

None of the national team players named in the 15-member squad for the upcoming one-off Test against Afghanistan, set to get underway on September 5 in Chattogram, will feature in the two-day match, where wicketkeeper batsman Nurul Hasan Sohan will act as captain for BCB XI. **BCB XI Squad:** Fardin Ani, Sabbir Hossain, Al Amin (Jr.), Md. Naeem Islam, Anamul Haque Bijoy, Qazi Nurul Hasan Sohan, Fazle Mahmud Rabbi, Manik Khan, Sumon Khan, Sala Uddin Shakil, Jubaer Hossain Likhon, Mehidy Hasan Rana, Asadullah Galib, Irfan Sukkur.

'It is up to Shakib'

Langeveldt says of pace strategy

SPORTS REPORTER



The Tigers' pace bowling strategy in Tests, especially at home, has always been an area of concern and the case is no different ahead of the one-off Test against Afghanistan which starts from September 5 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS) in Chattogram.

Compared to spinners, who have bagged 161 wickets over the last ten Test matches at home, seamers have managed to scalp just 15 wickets. That has naturally raised questions about whether the Tigers will bank on yet another spin heavy line-up.

There were talks that the think tank were wondering whether to go with a green top to limit Afghanistan's spinners while the selectors inclusion of three seamers in the form of Taskin Ahmed, Abu Jayed and Ebadot Hossain in the 15-member squad also augured well for pacers. According to Bangladesh's new fast bowling coach Charl Langeveldt, however, the final call over the team combination will come from Test captain Shakib Al Hasan.

"I am a fast bowler so I would like to see fast bowlers playing. But at the end of the day you must understand the conditions and play accordingly. If the captain feels that the ball is going to turn, I cannot suggest playing three seamers. It is up to Shakib," Langeveldt told reporters in Mirpur yesterday.

The lack of belief in pacers at home, especially in the longest format of the game, has often led to the Bangladeshi pacers being toothless in foreign conditions. Langeveldt insisted that 'conditions' played a big role in team selection and admitted spinners often play huge roles on sub-continental pitches.

"I have come here and played. It is difficult for seamers. Our [South Africa's] seamers struggled when they played the last time they were here. It is up to the captain [Shakib]. If he says he is going to play one seamer, it is his decision. For me it is just about preparing the seamers so that they are ready to play, if they play," Langeveldt explained.

After completing his tenth day with the Tigers, Langeveldt was excited by how quickly the pacers learn. It is widely reported that Bangladeshi seamers tend to shy away from coaches due to the language barrier but Langeveldt said that so far, all the pacers willingly communicated with him.

"I am a very laid-back guy so they can come to me and I make them feel comfortable. I don't want a bowler to be shy; he must ask. If you don't ask you are not going to learn. Ebadot probably asks questions the most; Fizz [Mustafizur Rahman] at the beginning was quiet but then asked different questions and Taskin asks questions as well," he said.

According to Langeveldt, missing Mustafizur is a big loss, but he added it was a precautionary measure as the left-armer was already carrying a niggle and was rested given the Tigers' tight upcoming schedule.



India 336 at lunch

AFP, Kingston



Hanuma Vihari was grinding his way towards an elusive maiden Test hundred as India reached 336 for seven at lunch on the second day of the second and final

Test against the West Indies at Sabina Park on Saturday.

Dismissed for 93 on the last day of the first Test a week earlier in Antigua, the 25-year-old right-hander was on 84 at the interval, doubling his overnight score on another sultry morning where he needed more than just a little

luck to survive the constant probing of the West Indies on a challenging pitch.

He will resume in the afternoon session in partnership with Ishant Sharma after home captain Jason Holder and debutant off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall offered the Caribbean side hope of limiting India's total.

Following on from an outstanding first day's work when his figures of three for 39 off 20 overs stood out in the West Indies effort in the field, Holder struck with the very first ball of day two, breaching the defence of Rishabh Pant to give the hosts an immediate boost.

SCORES IN BRIEF

India: 336 for 7 (Vihari 84 not out, Kohli 76, Agarwal 55; Holder 4-62, Cornwall 2-97)



Pacer Lasith Malinga will return to lead Sri Lanka in their three-match T20I series against New Zealand starting from today.

PHOTO: AFP