



## IT'S IMRUL AND SHADMAN AGAIN

STAR SPORTS DESK

**Bangladesh's uncapped opener Saif Hassan's wait for a Test debut is set to continue as the talented youngster has been ruled out of the second Test against India starting in Kolkata tomorrow. With openers Shadman Islam (L) and Imrul Kayes failing in both innings, it was thought that there would be a change in the second Test. The duo will now have another chance to impress the team management. "Saif had split his finger webbing while fielding during the first Test. The injury has not yet healed and the medical team is of the opinion that he will benefit from being rested to full recovery. Taking the state of injury into consideration, Saif has been ruled out of the second Test," the BCB informed yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Kolkata gripped by pink frenzy

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Kolkata

Bangladesh will play their first Day-Night Test when they take on India in the second Test at Kolkata from November 22. The Tigers practiced during the morning yesterday with India's practice scheduled for the afternoon and ahead of the Test at the City of Joy, the Eden Gardens began its pink transformation.

There is a lot of attention on this Test match, not only because it is a day-night Test match but particularly because it is the first one that India and Bangladesh will play.

A flurry of activities had already marked the build-up to the historic Test at the Eden Gardens. Landmark sites in Kolkata such as The 42, Shaheed Minar and some KMC parks were already illuminated by pink lights.

It was a festive atmosphere in Kolkata and preparation-wise, things were fast rolling towards the pink celebration. One can even enjoy the cozy pink even while floating along the Ganges on a launch between the Howrah Bridge and Vidyasagar Setu, both of which will be lighting up the waters till matchday. It was not all



**A Kolkata landmark -- the city's tallest building 'The 42' -- was illuminated by pink lights yesterday.**

PHOTO: EKUSH TAPADER

pink though, and the Kolkata streets with their blue tones added a nice aura to the pink revolution.

Inside the stadium, art students worked on graffiti -- an idea reportedly given by BCCI president Sourav Ganguly himself -- near the clubhouse of the stadium premises.

It depicted a boy who started his journey from street cricket and reached the India national team. 'Pinku', one of the official mascots the Test, was also attracting the attention of a crowd which gathered to watch players from both teams.

The BCCI president came to have a look at the centre pitches before

going into his office yesterday. Asked what the plans for the Test match were, the busy Sourav reiterated that lots of activities were planned for the historic Test.

"There will be a lot of arrangements. The first day will be full of cricket and functions. There will be paratroopers coming down from planes to hand over balls to the prime minister, chief minister and captains," he told reporters.

"There is the bell ringing ceremony," he said of the ceremony where Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee will ring the Eden Gardens bell to

commemorate the occasion.

Bangladesh's contingent of players who played in Bangladesh's debut Test have all been invited for the occasion. The likes of Naimur Rahman, Akram Khan, Khaled Mashud and Hasibul Hossain are set to be present alongside India stalwarts such as Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid. Musicians will also light up the occasion at cricket's answer to the Colosseum.

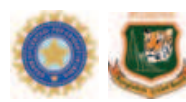
"Star [Sports] will be doing a show with Sachin [Tendulkar], Kapil [Dev], [Sunil] Gavaskar and Rahul [Dravid]. At tea time, a cart will take former captains around the ground. There will also be a musical performance. There will be felicitations with both the team's former captains, [Bangladesh's] prime minister and [West Bengal's] chief minister. Runa Laila and Jeet Ganguly will be performing and Sourendro-Soumyojit too. So, a whole lot of functions," Ganguly said.

The pink ball Test has gripped the locality as far as public response is concerned and Ganguly was ecstatic.

"Just see the excitement. Four days are already sold out. When have you last seen a Test match where four days were sold out?" he questioned. "The tickets are gone."

## Spinners' test to begin at sunset

SPORTS REPORTER



Both Bangladesh and India will embrace a new challenge come November 22 as the two sides embark on their maiden pink-ball Test at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata and the historic occasion might just hold some surprises for the players.

The players who practiced with the pink ball have opined that the extra lacquer on the ball affords a bit of extra swing to fast bowlers. Add to that the fact that the ball naturally gets more movement under lights, it is expected that the Day-Night fixture will see quicks enjoy their time on the field.

Aside from this, there are a number of factors that remains fairly unknown to players and team management, which they can only figure out over the course of the five-day long game. The issue of visibility, batsmen's technique, adjustments required to negotiate the extra movement on offer and the captains' tactical changes at times -- all these are to be observed in the Kolkata Test.

This also brings to the fore the question of how spinners are going to fare and what impact they will have in the big game. Bangladesh spin consultant Daniel Vettori said that while an idea of how spinners

would do during the daytime could be made, it was still uncertain what new scenes and challenges would unfold once the sun sets.

The Tigers practiced yesterday morning in Kolkata and, according to Vettori, everything was normal at that time of the day.

"The pink ball plays relatively normal at this time of the day. The challenge will be how much of the Test match is under lights. The sun sets quite early here. That will be the time we will see the pink ball come into play. My experiences are only from watching TV. So, the twilight hours and dusk seem to do a little bit more. I think that's going to be the exciting period of the Test match. That will be the period where tactically teams might try out a few different things," Vettori said after yesterday's practice session.

Although there might be a different challenge awaiting the spinners with the pink ball under lights, Vettori said that Bangladesh spinners did not do anything out of the ordinary during their practice session.

"Spinners can still play a big part in a pink-ball Test. It's slightly different here because of the early sunset. So, a significant part of the match will be played under normal conditions. A spinner won't become redundant in pink-ball Test matches. We haven't done anything differently [in practice sessions]."



**Bangladesh spin consultant Daniel Vettori was of the opinion that even though the pink ball is said to aid the pacers more, spinners like Taijul Islam and others will still have a role to play in the Kolkata Test.**

PHOTO: BCB



**Pakistan Emerging team celebrate their three-run victory over their Indian counterparts as (inset) Bangladesh watch from the sidelines in Mirpur yesterday.**

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Pakistan hold nerve in thriller

SPORTS REPORTER



Pakistan sealed a scintillating three-run win over archrivals India to reach the final of the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Needing eight runs to win in the last over to eclipse Pakistan's 267 for seven, India were denied a place in the final by Pakistani pacer Amad Butt, who conceded just four runs and picked up a wicket to restrict their opponents to 264 for eight after 50 overs.

India had made a steady start with skipper BR Sharath scoring 47 off 43 balls with the help of six fours and a six. Sanvir Singh then paired up with Armaan Jaffer and added 83 runs for the third wicket and at one point India were cruising on 179 for two, eyeing an easy win.

But since top scorer Sanvir was run out for 76 off 90 balls with five fours and a six and Armaan also departed for 46, the chase started to unravel.

Pakistan's bowlers kept mounting the pressure and picked wickets at regular intervals. Chinmay Sutar's unbeaten 28 off 37 balls was not enough at the end as some fine death-overs bowling denied India to clinch a win in the end. Mohammad Hasnain and Saif Badar picked up two wickets each for Pakistan.

Earlier, Pakistan too made a solid start after electing to bat. Omair Yousuf and Haider Ali added 90 for the first wicket. Haider was dismissed after scoring 44 while Omair top-scored with 66 off 97 balls with three fours and two sixes.

Pakistan's batsmen made valuable contributions in the middle order, with skipper Rohail Nazir adding 35 and Saif Badar remaining unbeaten on 47 off 48 balls with one four and a six to help post a fighting total. Shivam Mavi, Saurabh Dubey and Hrithik Shokeen picked up two wickets each for India.

Pakistan will take on the winners of today's second semifinal between hosts Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The final is scheduled for November 23 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

## Lively pitch on the cards

SPORTS REPORTER from Kolkata



There has been a lot of speculation about the pink ball in both Bangladesh and India as the two countries gear up for their first Day-Night Test. With the pitch set to play a big part in the historic encounter, Sujan Mukherjee, chief curator of the Eden Gardens, spoke to reporters and reiterated that the pitch was the same for all types of balls but that there would be a lot of life in it to entertain the crowd.

The red ball gets its colour from leather but the pink-ball is a coloured ball and has a glossy outer layer. That

My wickets have bounce and the pink ball will bounce too. It's going to be a lively wicket. It is going to be a good wicket for pacers but also for batsmen. It's not like someone will come and bowl fast and then expect wickets.

**SUJAN MUKHERJEE**  
EDEN GARDENS CHIEF CURATOR

means good grass cover is important and a good surface reduces wear and tear on the ball.

"There was no separate preparation for the pink ball. Players who have played pink-ball matches have told me that it's better when there is more grass and the wicket is hard. Also, it's better if we keep the grass on the outfield short," Sujan told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The ball will move around a bit and the wicket will be very good. The fielders will feel comfortable too," he added.



**The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly talks with the chief pitch curator Sujan Mukherjee (R), who expected the Kolkata Test to be an entertaining affair for the fans.**

PHOTO: AFP

### WHAT THEY SAID

This is a magnificent Indian team which can find a way to win even if they are playing on the snow in Iceland or sand in the Sahara desert. So it does not matter whether any of the players have played earlier with the pink-ball or not. When Day/Night cricket started not many thought it would be successful but look at the huge following it has now, so there's no reason to believe that day-night Test cricket won't be successful too.

--Sunil Gavaskar

It is not the only solution to rejuvenate Test cricket, but it is one of the things we need to do. If only we are able to control dew, the pink-ball Test can become an annual feature in India. You make it tough for the bowlers when the ball gets wet and takes the swing away... it (pink ball) is a novelty that will attract people to the stadium and must be tried.

--Rahul Dravid

We are yet to see the movement of the pink ball. But the colour of the ball won't matter with the current form of Indian pacers.

--Wriddhiman Saha

A pink-ball Test is like officiating five back-to-back ODIs. So your preparation should be such that you think that you're standing in five ODIs back-to-back.

--Umpire S Ravi