



Even though the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) teams are yet to start their official practice, the likes of Tamim Iqbal, Mominul Haque and Ariful Haque are not wasting any time as they practised individually in Mirpur yesterday to get themselves tuned up ahead of the seventh edition of the biggest domestic T20 league, which is scheduled to begin from December 11.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Why players are excited by the BPL

MAZHAR UDDIN

The dismal performance in the recent Test series in India has caused a lot of criticism of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the cricketers, who were unable to display the requisite mental and technical skills against a high-quality opposition.

With the players' draft of the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) taking place earlier this month, the enthusiasm among the players and the officials has already caught the eye. This season, the tournament will be a special edition with the BCB staging it on their own without the involvement of the franchises and naming it the Bangabandhu BPL in celebration of the 100th birth anniversary of father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

But there is an old complaint against the cricketers from board members and selectors, who say that the players tend to place the greatest priority on the glamorous T20 tournament, even more than playing first-class competitions.

Many have adopted a mocking tone while talking of the failure of the Bangladesh team in India, saying that it won't take long for the players and the board to forget the dismal performance as they will be busy with the BPL, overlooking the need

of the hour -- improving the health of Bangladesh cricket.

Therefore, the question remains about why cricketers are so much keener to play the BPL than any other domestic tournament? According to chief selector Minhajul Abedin there is a need for change in the system and also said that the onus is on the cricketers to prepare themselves individually.

"There is a need for some change in the system and I will give a proper plan to the board within the next two days on what should be done like I had given a plan two years ago. When it comes to more interest in the BPL from the players than other domestic competitions, I think it is also because of the huge exposure they get in BPL. But it is also important for players to prepare themselves individually to meet the challenges in the international circuit," Minhajul told The Daily Star yesterday.

But from the cricketers' point of view, apart from the financial issue they also get a flavour of international cricket in the BPL.

Whether it is the five-star hotel accommodation, top-class net facilities and a totally different environment -- the BPL offers conditions that local cricketers rarely encounter in first-class or club competitions.

Out-of-favour national cricketer

Shamsur Rahman, who made his international debut back in 2013 after he finished among the top run-getters in the BPL for Rangpur Riders, informed that there are reasons for the players to give more importance to the cash-rich tournament.

"Look, cricket is our bread and butter and we always have the hunger to play, no matter what. You just can't blame the cricketers and accuse us of a lack of hunger.

"Take India... they are telecasting their Ranji Trophy or any other first-class competitions on TV, which motivates players a lot. If he performs well, there would be high chances for a player to be picked in the national team as it has a huge impact on the fans too," said Shamsur, who was the highest run-scorer in Tier 2 of the recently concluded National Cricket League for Dhaka Metro.

According to Shamsur, cricketers also do not practise with the ball that is used in matches in other domestic competitions.

"We play NCL with SG balls, the Dhaka League with Kookaburra, which we also played with in the BCL [Bangladesh Cricket League] in the previous season.

"But in the net sessions, we often get low-quality balls, so how do you expect us to enhance our skills properly?" Shamsur said.

## BCB names strong squad for SA Games

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 15-member squad for the men's T20 event of the upcoming 13th South Asian Games to be held in Nepal from December 1.

The official announcement of the squad was made as late as 8:30 pm last night, although the team are supposed to leave for Nepal tomorrow. BCB selector Habibul Bashar, who will also accompany the team on the tour as their manager, said that the selectors had already submitted their choice of players to the board.

Bashar also mentioned that the squad remains quite similar to the one that played in the recently concluded ACC Emerging Asia Cup, where Bangladesh lost to Pakistan in the final.

"The squad will be announced today [Friday]. Actually, we had submitted the team beforehand but maybe for some reason the official announcement took some time. It is almost the same team that played in the Emerging Cup as the concept of the SA Games and that of Emerging Cup are very similar, so we did not change the squad too much. Also, these players have been playing together for a long time now for the Emerging team and

we did not want to change that," Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

Nazmul Hossain Shanto, who captained Bangladesh in the Emerging Cup, will also be leading the squad in the SA Games. However, leg-spinner Aminul Islam, who injured his right hand while fielding during Bangladesh's opening Emerging Cup game against Hong Kong, has been left out of the squad.

Meanwhile, opener Saif Hassan, who toured with the Tigers in their recent India tour, has been included in the squad and Soumya Sarkar has been retained after featuring in the Emerging Cup. Bangladesh will start by playing against Maldives in Kathmandu on December 4.

Meanwhile, the 15-member Women's Squad for the SA Games travelled to Nepal yesterday. The Salma Khatun-led team will be playing their opening game against their Sri Lankan counterparts in Pokhara on December 3.

Squad: Nazmul Hossain Shanto (captain), Saif Hassan, Mohammad Naim, Afif Hossain, Zakir Hasan, Yasir Ali, Syed Minhajul Abedin Afridi, Sumon Khan, Mahidul Islam, Tanvir Islam, Manik Khan, Mehedi Hasan Rana, Soumya Sarkar, Mahadi Hasan, Hasan Mahmud.



Bangladesh national women's cricket team players and officials pose for a group photograph at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu yesterday. The team will fly to Pokhara today, where they will take part in the cricket event of the 13th South Asian Games, scheduled for December 1 to 10.

PHOTO: STAR

## West Indies crush Afghanistan

AFP, Lucknow



Giant spinner Rakheem Cornwall starred as the West Indies thrashed Afghanistan by nine wickets early on day three of their one-off Test on Friday.

Cornwall took a match haul of 10 wickets as the West Indies bowled out Afghanistan for 120 on day three and reached their target of 31 to seal the win in just over an hour of the first

session in Lucknow.

It was a reality check for Afghanistan, who were awarded Test status in 2017 and won their first two victories in the five-day format earlier this year.

Skipper Jason Holder claimed all three Afghan wickets to fall in the morning as the Windies needed just 7.1 overs to see off Afghanistan after they resumed the day on 109 for seven.

"Really important win. We had a tough series against India. Was

important to finish the year well," said Holder, whose team suffered a 2-0 whitewash against India at home in August and September.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN: First innings 187 and second innings 120 all out (Ibrahim 23, Javed 62; Holder 3-20, Cornwall 3-46, Chase 3-10)

WEST INDIES: First innings 277 and second innings 33 for 1.

Result: West Indies won by 9 wickets. Player-of-the-match: Rakheem Cornwall.

### SHORT CORNER

#### Pollard to lead WI for India tour

The West Indies on Thursday announced their ODI and T20 squads for the upcoming tour of India, beginning next month.

Kieron Pollard will continue to lead both the ODI and T20 squads with Nicholas Pooran as his deputy in the shorter format and Shai Hope taking over the role of the vice-captain in the ODIs.

The selectors decided to keep faith with the players who recently played against Afghanistan in Lucknow.

West Indies, the reigning ICC World T20 champions, will begin their tour with the three-match T20 series, starting with the opening match in Hyderabad on December 6.

It will be followed by the second T20 in Thiruvananthapuram on December 8 and the third match is scheduled to be held in Mumbai on December 11.

The two teams will then meet in three ODIs in Chennai (December 15), Vizag (December 18) and Cuttack (December 22).

Lord's where he produced one of his most memorable spells, claiming 5/13 to help bundle England for 85.

"A Test match at Lord's against England is a great way to finish my international career and a game I will always cherish," Murtagh said. "I wish the lads all the best for the winter tours and very much hope to help out and be involved in some capacity in the future."

He made his Ireland debut in 2012 and went on to become one of the team's most reliable players. He missed playing the 2015 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup due to injury but played in three ICC Men's T20 World Cups -- in the 2012, 2014 and 2016 editions.

The 38-year-old Murtagh, who will continue to play county cricket for Middlesex at least for another two seasons, reflected on his time as an Ireland player. "I've had eight great years playing international cricket and loved every minute of it," he said. "It's sad that it has come to an end but a decision that I have made my peace with."

-- ICC



#### Murtagh calls time

Tim Murtagh, who played 75 games for Ireland across formats, announced his decision to call time on his international career on Friday.

He finishes with an exact 100 international wickets. His last match for Ireland will remain the Test at

## Latham leads NZ charge

AFP, Hamilton



Tom Latham's unbeaten hundred and his century stand with Ross Taylor laid a solid foundation for New Zealand before rain brought an early end to day one of the second Test against England in Hamilton on Friday.

Latham was on 101 when the rain swept in, just three deliveries after the tea break with New Zealand 173 for three.

While Latham played down his 11th Test century as "nice", England were left to regret dropping the left-hander on 66 and not meeting expectations after winning the toss and bowling first.

"On day one of a Test match if you get a team six or seven down by the close you've probably had a pretty good day," said Chris Woakes who took two of the three wickets to fall.

Woakes was added to the England line up to give them five seamers on a wicket renowned to assist the side bowling first.

Instead England toiled for little reward, saw Ross Taylor benefit from a dubious decision during a century partnership with Latham and lost the use of Ben Stokes as a bowling weapon.

Stokes, who was also responsible for dropping Latham, felt pain in his left knee after bowling two overs and will be assessed overnight to see whether he can bowl again during the innings.



New Zealand's Tom Latham celebrates his century on the first day of the second Test against England in Hamilton yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Latham has now scored five centuries in the last 10 Test innings but preferred to talk about "a reasonably good day" for New Zealand rather than focus on himself.

"Hopefully we can keep going and put a good score on the board," he added, mindful that he had failed in the first Test when New Zealand posted 615 for nine declared to beat England by an innings.

His 11th century lifted him to

equal sixth on the New Zealand century-makers list headed by Kane Williamson with 20.

Williamson, however, was off his best this innings when he was dismissed for four in a rocky start for New Zealand after Jeet Raval was removed for five.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 173 for 3 (Latham 101 not out, Taylor 53; Woakes 2-41)

## Chandimal called back for Pak Tests

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka on Friday gave former skipper Dinesh Chandimal a new chance to fight his way back into the national team by naming him in the squad for a landmark two-match Test series in Pakistan.

The matches will be the first Tests played in Pakistan for more than a decade because of security fears.

The 30-yr-old Chandimal, who played his last Test in Australia in February, will be in a squad now led by Dimuth Karunaratne, the cricket board said. He was in a squad that played New Zealand in August but did not play a match.

Half of the 16-man squad refused to go on a tour of Pakistan in October citing security fears. New skipper Karunaratne was one of the eight players who stayed away from the tour.

Pakistan's last home Test match was against Sri Lanka in March 2009. The tour was halted by a militant attack on the Sri Lankan team bus. The first Test of this series will be in Rawalpindi from December 11. Sri Lanka leave for Pakistan three days earlier.