



PHOTO: BCB

Tigers enjoy first team practice in 'heavenly Queenstown'



SPORTS REPORTER

Situated in the foothills of the stunning mountain range aptly called The Remarkables, John Davies Oval in Queenstown is considered one of the most beautiful cricket venues in the world.

And hence, it was not an overstatement by Bangladesh opening batsman Liton Das when he described it as "Heavenly Queenstown" when posting a selfie with his teammates after their first practice session at the picturesque ground.

Bangladesh practised as a team for the first time yesterday since arriving in New Zealand on February 24. The 20-member squad took part in a four-hour practice session in Queenstown.

Things were however not so bright and scenic for the Tigers initially as they had to undergo a 14-day mandatory managed isolation and quarantine period in Christchurch before they left for Queenstown on Wednesday for a five-day conditioning camp. And the mandatory quarantine period took its toll on many as the visitors had to stay inside their hotel rooms for the first six days,

HIGHLIGHTS

Wicketkeeper-batsman Tom Latham will captain New Zealand in the absence of injured regular skipper Kane Williamson for the one-day international series against Bangladesh. Latham leads a squad featuring three potential debutants in Devon Conway, Will Young and Daryl Mitchell for the three-game series which starts in Dunedin on March 20.

SQUAD: Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Martin Guptill, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham (captain), Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor and Will Young.



prompting Mehedi Hasan Miraz to even describe it as time spent in jail. They were only allowed to roam around inside the hotel premises for 30 minutes each day after having spent the first 48 hours after arrival in complete self-isolation.

They could only use the gym and practise in small groups of seven for the final seven days of their mandatory quarantine and that too after testing negative for coronavirus thrice within the first six days of self-isolation.

They also tested negative in their fourth and final round of coronavirus tests in New Zealand before leaving Christchurch. With no more coronavirus tests scheduled and having completed the mandatory quarantine period, the Tigers can now roam freely around the country without having to adhere to any bio-bubble or other complex health protocols, thanks to there being very few new cases in New Zealand.

And the freed Tigers' delight was certainly apparent in their social media posts yesterday.

"This is one of the most beautiful places with the most beautiful field I have ever seen in my life till now," wrote young left-arm pacer Shoriful Islam, sharing



"Spin can play a big part. You can see how successful [New Zealand spinners] Mitchell Santner and Ish Sodhi have been in the recent series against Australia. Even Ashton Agar and Adam Zampa [of Australia], they all played a role. I think everyone knows that spin is such an important part of white-ball cricket and with [Mehedi Hasan] Miraz in particular, how experienced he is, how successful he was in the recent series against West Indies, he can bring a lot to the table. And backed up by Mahedi [Hasan] and Nasum [Ahmed], I think they can really find a place in the team and then contribute with performances."

DANIEL VETTORI
Bangladesh spin bowling consultant said after joining Tigers in Queenstown.

a picture of himself with Liton and another youngster Mahedi Hasan.

"Alhamdulillah, Ma Shah Allah what a place to play cricket," is how both Mushfiqur Rahim and Mohammad Saifuddin expressed their feelings after yesterday's practice session.

The likes of Hasan Mahmud, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed posted pictures of themselves enjoying the scenic views of Lake Wakatipu, near the Queenstown ground, where they went sightseeing after practice.

All-rounder Afif Hossain was left reminiscing memories from his Under-19 World Cup in 2018.

"Lots of memories in this ground while we played U19 World Cup in 2018. Time flies but memories last forever," wrote Afif along with his picture at the ground.

"Just beautiful," is how Bangladesh Cricket Board's media committee chairman Mohammed Jalal Yunus, who is currently with the team in New Zealand, described the beautiful place when contacted over the phone by The Daily Star yesterday.

"Even during their practice session, all the players really enjoyed the natural beauty of this place," added Jalal Yunus.

PSG, LIVERPOOL THROUGH TO QUARTERFINALS

'We missed big chances'

Agencies



Paris St Germain looked shaky as they completed a 5-2 aggregate victory against Barcelona and reach the Champions League quarter-finals, but they buried the ghosts of their embarrassing 2017 exit and keeper Keylor Navas kept them afloat when their demons resurfaced.

Barca's exit ensured it will be the first time since 2005 that neither Messi nor Cristiano Ronaldo will be in the Champions League quarter-finals after Juventus were also knocked out in the last 16, on Tuesday.

On the stroke of halftime on Wednesday, Barca had a penalty that could have put them 2-1 up and two goals away from forcing extra time after a 4-1 defeat in the first leg at the Nou Camp.

A repeat of the 2017 "remontada", when Barca beat PSG 6-1 to overturn a 4-0 first-leg defeat in the last 16, seemed more than just a pipe dream.

"Really, we deserved more for that effort. It should at least have been 2-1 to us at half time. If we'd led at the break, the second half would have been a whole different affair," said Barca coach Ronald Koeman.

"We knew it'd be vital to take our chances," Pedri said post-game. "We produced a really good game but we missed big chances. We believed we could produce another big fightback and qualify



PHOTO: REUTERS

but the penalty just before half-time was a big blow to miss."

"We kept on fighting and you can't define a result or a game looking just at a missed penalty. We had many chances and didn't take them."

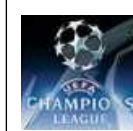
But Navas deflected Lionel Messi's spot kick onto his crossbar and out, leaving the visitors needing to score three goals in the second half.

Costa Rica's Navas won three consecutive Champions League titles with Real Madrid from 2016-18 and he showed again he was the keeper PSG needed when he denied Ousmane Dembele twice in the opening 25 minutes, making nine stops in the whole game.

"Their keeper was player of the match," Koeman said.

'We will see what is possible for Liverpool'

REUTERS



Juergen Klopp said every club left in the Champions League will have designs on winning it but despite Liverpool cruising into the quarter-finals the German downplayed his own team's chances as they struggle for form on the domestic front.

Liverpool advanced after Wednesday's 2-0 win over RB Leipzig completed a 4-0 aggregate victory, moving the 2019 winners into the quarters for the third time in four seasons.

With the Merseyside club languishing in eighth spot in the Premier League, seven points behind fourth-placed Chelsea, winning the Champions League appears their best shot at qualifying for Europe's elite club competition next season.

"The only reason you play in this competition is because you want to win it," Klopp said. "I am not silly, we know so far this is not a season which looks like we will win the Champions League, but that doesn't mean we don't want to go as far as possible and then we will see what is possible for us. Now we have to wait for the draw; it will be extremely tough whoever we get, but we don't really think



PHOTO: REUTERS

that far, we don't have to."

Mohamed Salah, who opened the scoring in the 70th minute on Wednesday before Sadio Mane made it 2-0, said it was important to focus game by game.

"The team is not in the best shape but we want to fight in the Champions League and in each game in the Premier League," he said. "We don't have to look to the big picture because sometimes when you do, we see too much pressure carried on to the pitch. We just need to leave the pressure off the field and play."

Booters to fly to Nepal on Mar 18

Jamal Bhuiyan to join team before start of the tournament

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national football team will fly for Nepal on March 18 for the tri-nation tournament, Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) general secretary Abu Nayem Shohag informed yesterday.

The BFF official also said that captain Jamal Bhuiyan will join the squad three or four days after being released by Kolkata Mohammedan Sporting Club on March 18.

"Even though commercial flight

operations with Nepal have not started yet due to the pandemic, we have been assured by Biman Bangladesh Airlines that flights will start operating in the middle of this month. So the team will fly for Nepal on March 18," Shohag told reporters at the BFF office.

"Following our letter, Kolkata Mohammedan have informed us that Jamal Bhuiyan will be released on March 18. So he might reach Nepal on March 21 or 22, depending on flight availability, either straight from Kolkata or via Dhaka," Shohag added. The three group matches of the tri-nation tournament involving Bangladesh, Nepal and Kyrgyzstan

U-23 team will be held at the Dasarath Stadium in Kathmandu on March 23, 25 and 27. The top two teams will meet in the final on March 29. The BFF spokesman informed that given possession of negative Covid certificates from Dhaka, the squad members will be allowed to start training immediately upon reaching Kathmandu with no quarantine requirements.

He also informed that Ivan Razlog will join the team camp in Dhaka as fitness trainer and Les Cleveley will fly from UK to Nepal to join as goalkeeping coach for this particular assignment.



SHAHIDI BECOMES FIRST AFGHAN TO SCORE A TEST DOUBLE HUNDRED

Hashmatullah Shahidi became the first Afghanistan player to smash a Test double hundred while his team notched up several batting records on a memorable Day Two of their second and final match against Zimbabwe in Abu Dhabi yesterday. Shahidi faced 443 balls for his 200 not out, which included 21 fours and a six. Playing their sixth Test match, the Afghans racked up 545-4, their highest total ever, before captain Asghar Afghan declared their first innings. Their previous highest total was 342 when they beat Bangladesh in 2019. The skipper himself hit 164, which was briefly the highest Test total by an Afghan batsman until Shahidi eclipsed it. The 307-run fourth-wicket stand between them was also the biggest partnership for Afghanistan who played their first Test against India in 2018.

PHOTO: TWITTER

DHAKA OIC YOUTH CAPITAL 2020-21
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4 Individual Grand Award
24 Regional Winners

SCAN FOR INFORMATION

Registration & Submission Date:
01-31 March, 2021

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