

## 'Everyone has to give more than 100 per cent'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will look to showcase their ability against Afghanistan today as they resume their World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign at the temperature-controlled Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha today.

The Group E match will get underway at 8:00pm (BST), preceding the hosts' game against India at 11:00pm.

Bangladesh, who are bottom of the five-team group with a single point, have faced significant setbacks. Their home advantage was lost due to the pandemic and the team has lost some key players through injuries or sickness while also getting less preparation time compared to their Group E opponents.

However, Jamie Day's charges take comfort in the fact that they have been in action through the domestic league, which was cancelled in other countries, and have played three or four matches before joining a two-week national camp. Another relief is that they will not have to contend with the scorching temperatures in Doha as stadium will be climate-controlled. The match is likely to be played around temperatures of 25 degrees Celsius.

Day and his players also appear confident that they can play as more than the sum of their parts and deliver a result against 149th-ranked Afghanistan, a team composed of Europe-based players.

"We know we have to play beyond our limits in all the games, including against Afghanistan, so that's the target," Jamie told The



Bangladesh footballers appear in relaxed mood as they pose for a photograph at the team hotel in Doha yesterday ahead of today's World Cup qualifying fixture against Afghanistan.

PHOTO: BFF

Daily Star over phone from Qatar. "It's about doing the best we can in the situation we find ourselves in currently."

Afghanistan's preparation is superior to most everyone else's. They came to Qatar after playing two practice matches against Indonesia (3-2) and Singapore (1-1) and they will definitely be hoping to carry their good form into the match against Bangladesh, whom they beat 1-0 in their home match in Dushanbe in September, 2019.

"They are a good side with some very technical players playing in Asia and around Europe. In my opinion (Afghanistan) had the best preparation, so it's [going to be] an extremely difficult game and tougher than in Dushanbe," said the Brit.

In the absence of experienced players like Bishwanath Ghosh, Nabib Newaj Jibon, Saad Uddin,

Mahbubur Rahaman Sufil and Rabiul Hasan, Jamie Day believes his charges as not as sharp as last time.

"I don't believe we are as sharp as we were going into previous games," the 41-year-old said.

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan was ready to take on the challenge with the young guns.

"I think the team is ready for tomorrow's game. We know it's going to be a hard game because there are a lot of new players in our squad. But at the same time, these players know what the management wants from them and we all have the same aim: to win the match against Afghanistan. I think we have a good chance to get points," Jamal told The Daily Star.

Echoing his coach's sentiments, defender Tapu Barman told The Daily Star: "Everyone knows that all players from the goalkeeper to the forwards have to give more

than 100 per cent if we want to get points from Afghanistan."

With inexperienced forwards up top, the defence has to play a key role and Tapu believes he has to lead the line in stopping Afghanistan's forwards as well keeping options open for Bangladeshi forwards.

"The most important thing is that we all are motivated ahead of tomorrow's match and we are really confident of putting on a good show because we are in good shape. If we can play as a team, I believe we can beat Afghanistan. I also know that I have to play a good role in defence and I will try to lead the defensive organisation and inspire the goalkeeper to keep a sheet clean," Tapu told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh have suffered defeat twice in seven matches against Afghanistan and have not beaten them in the past five matches since a 4-1 win in 1979.



New Zealand batsman Devon Conway flicks one towards the square leg boundary during a sparkling hundred against England in the first Test at Lord's on Wednesday. The debutante was unbeaten on 112 as the visitors reached 194 for three in 62 overs after electing to bat.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## ICC gets more inclusive with global events

AFP, London

The men's Cricket World Cup will once again become a 14-team tournament in 2027 and 2031, the International Cricket Council said Tuesday.

The changes were announced as the ICC, cricket's global governing body, unveiled its global schedule of events from 2024-2031.

Meanwhile, the Champions Trophy, a 'mini' World Cup last staged in 2017, when Pakistan won in England, is to be revived again in 2025 and 2029 as an event for the top-ranked eight one-day international teams.

Only 10 sides contested the 2019 World Cup, won by hosts England, compared to 14 four years earlier. But a statement issued by the ICC board said: "The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup will become a 14 team, 54-match event in 2027 and 2031, whilst the ICC Men's T20 World Cup will be expanded to a 20-team, 55-match event in 2024, 2026, 2028 and 2030."

The board, however, has retained the format for the World Test Championship in the next cycle, with nine teams playing six series each to compete in the final every two years.

India and New Zealand will contest the inaugural WTC final in Southampton, England, later this month. The expanded men's World Cup, which traditionally takes place every four years, will follow the same format used for the 2003 edition when South Africa were the main hosts of a tournament won by Australia. This will

see the 14 teams split into two groups of seven, with the top three in each group progressing to a Super Six stage, followed by semi-finals and final.

The men's T20 World Cup will consist of four groups of five, with the top two from each group going through to a Super Eights stage, followed by the knockout stages of semi-finals and a final. The Champions Trophy, in keeping with its

➤ 14 teams in 50-over World Cup in 2027, 2031

➤ Eight-team Champions Trophy to return for 2025, 2029

➤ 20-team T20 World Cup in 2024, 2026, 2028, 2030

history as a slimmed-down event, will follow previous editions with two groups of four, semi-finals and a final. Reducing the number of sides involved in the 2011 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand to just 10 was a controversial decision by the ICC, with critics arguing it frustrated the global growth of the game.

Officials defended the move at the time by saying a streamlined format reduced the risk of mismatches and was preferred by broadcasters. But it appears the current ICC hierarchy value the overall benefit of global expansion, with the T20 World Cup now taking place every two years from 2024 and increased to 20 teams from 16.

## Zverev storms into third round

REUTERS, Paris



German sixth seed Alexander Zverev blew hot and cold with his serve but had enough artillery to take down Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin 7-6(4) 6-3 7-6(1) to reach the third round of the French Open on

Wednesday.

Zverev and Safiullin never contested a Tour-level match before Wednesday but met three times as juniors with the German winning all three in straight sets.

But the 182nd-ranked Russian, who mostly plies his trade on the challenger circuit, went toe-to-toe with Zverev in the baseline battle in the opening set before the German got the crucial break in the 11th game.

Serving for the set, Zverev committed two double-faults to give away the advantage and had another in the tie-breaker but he recovered to take the lead with back-to-back aces in the first match of the day on Suzanne Lenglen court.

"First week you play against guys, some of them play first, second, third time of a Grand Slam," Zverev told reporters. "They're very motivated. They're excited to play on the big courts, like I thought today."

"I think he played a fantastic match. I'm happy to be through in three sets. The match definitely wasn't easy."

Double faults continued to haunt the 24-year-old German in the second set as he smashed his racquet on the court in frustration and suffered a service break. But he recovered spectacularly to take the set by winning five games in a row.

Safiullin continued to trouble Zverev in the third set and forced the German, who rallied from two sets down to defeat qualifier Oscar Otte in Sunday's opening round, to dig deep.

Zverev, who served 15 aces against 10 double faults, was once again forced to overcome a 4-1 deficit to take the third set into a tiebreaker.

But the U.S. Open finalist served strongly and outplayed Safiullin in the tiebreaker to set up a clash against Serbia's Laslo Djere, who came back from a two-set deficit to beat countryman Miomir Kecmanovic 4-6 4-6 6-3 6-2 6-3.

"Today, especially last two sets, they could have gone both ways, especially the third. The second I thought I was in control more," said Zverev, who is considered one of the title contenders at Roland Garros this time after his win in Madrid.

"But, yeah, I'm happy to be through in three sets. I'm happy not to have played another five-setter. I think it's going to be important for me during the course of this tournament."



## Mahmudullah guides Gazi Group to victory

SPORTS REPORTER



Captain Mahmudullah Riyad's all-around performance helped Gazi Group Cricketers register their first win in the Bangabandhu Dhaka

Premier League T20 competition as they beat Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club by seven wickets in the day's second game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

After scalping two wickets with the ball, Mahmudullah's unbeaten 62 alongside Bangladesh's Test skipper Mominul Haque's blistering fifty saw Gazi Group chase down the 152-run target with seven balls to spare.

Sheikh Jamal started off well, riding on openers Mohammad Ashraful and Shykat Ali, who added 69 runs in eight overs. Both lashed out at the Gazi pacers and scored 42 off the first four overs.

The runs slowed down after the introduction of the spinners and, after scoring 33 off 30 balls with two sixes and three fours, Shykat was bowled by slow-medium pacer Soumya Sarkar.


At the other end, Ashraful looked in good touch, as exemplified by his four sixes, after scoring 38 in the first game. The right-hander once again looked solid and hit before Ariful Haque dismissed the Bangladesh skipper on 41 off 35 balls.

Mahmudullah then removed Nasir Hossain, who made 20 off 13, and Sheikh Jamal skipper Nurul Hasan as the batting side relinquished the early momentum provided by the openers. Only hard-hitting Ziaur Rahman's 16-ball 21 helped Sheikh Jamal past the 150-run mark while pacer Mukidul Islam bagged two wickets for the bowling side.



Bangladesh's Test captain Mominul Haque (L) and T20I captain Mahmudullah Riyad got half-centuries to guide Gazi Group cricketers to a seven-wicket victory over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in their Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier Division T20 Cricket League fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



21 YEARS OF VALUING RELATIONSHIPS ENABLING THE FUTURE

### আস্থা ও বিশ্বাসের একুশ বছর

প্রতিটি সম্পর্কই আমাদের নতুন করে প্রেরণা দেয় আরো সমৃদ্ধ ভবিষ্যতের। আপনারদের নিরন্তর সমর্থন ও আস্থা ই আমাদের আগামীর পথচলার অনুপ্রেরণা। আমাদের সাথে থাকার জন্য যমুনা ব্যাংকের সকল গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের জানাই কৃতজ্ঞতা ও আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ।

jamunabankbd.com

JAMUNA BANK