



TIGERS EYE SERIES WIN AGAINST REINVIGORATED KIWIS

Mushfiqur Rahim plays a shot during Bangladesh's optional training session yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium and the wicketkeeper-batsman will be eager to turn things around in today's third game following a disappointing duck in the second match against New Zealand.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SPORTS REPORTER

The control that the Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah Riyad showed while coming down the track to Kiwi pacer Doug Bracewell for a gorgeous cover drive in the 15th over of the second T20I is something the Tigers' think-tank would want in the batting department when they take on a spirited New Zealand in the third of the five match T20I series today.

Despite the fact that experienced campaigners Mushfiqur Rahim and Shakib Al Hasan missed out with the bat, Mahmudullah once again stepped up and set the tone. That led to Bangladesh's 12th T20I win under Mahmudullah Riyad, eight of which came this year, making him the most successful Bangladeshi

captain in the shortest format of the game.

The 35-year-old will also reach a major milestone in the third T20I, which will mark his 100th T20I appearance for the Tigers.

Shakib, who will lead the spin department, will also be chasing history in the third game. He needs just two more wickets to overtake Lasith Malinga's 107 and become the leading wicket-taker in T20Is.

More importantly, Shakib will also have to guide spinners Mahedi Hasan and Nasum Ahmed in handling pressure situation and the competitiveness of the ongoing series will surely help Bangladesh to prepare better for the upcoming mega-event.

While the visitors bounced back strongly after being bundled out for their joint-ever lowest total of

60 in the first T20I, with skipper Tom Latham almost snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, they ultimately fell four runs short in chase of 142 in the second game.

The Mirpur pitch also curbed its recent reputation of low-scoring encounters on slow and low tracks, allowing the ongoing series to emerge as a great platform for the Bangladesh think-tank to assess the batting department, which remains the biggest area of concern ahead of next month's T20 World Cup.

Russell Domingo and his troops will now aim to secure a maiden T20I series win over the Kiwis in the third game of the five-match series today and it will be interesting to see whether the Tigers once again take up the challenge like they did in the second T20I after

Mahmudullah won the toss and elected to bat.

After experienced Tamim Iqbal opted out of the upcoming T20 World Cup, a sense of relief that their places would be secure was reflected in the performances of Naim Sheikh and Liton Das in the second game.

The duo showed great maturity and, interestingly, it was the first time in seven T20Is in Bangladesh that a team completed the Powerplay without losing a wicket. Naim and Liton added 59 for the first wicket, Bangladesh's highest opening stand in their past nine T20Is, with the previous best of 42 coming against Australia last month.

Onus will be on two openers to continue their form and give the team management some comfort ahead of the World Cup.

BRAZIL-ARGENTINA CLASH TONIGHT

The upcoming Matchday of the South American World Cup Qualifiers will witness Brazil host Argentina in a mouthwatering clash at the Neo Quimica Arena in Sao Paulo on Monday at 1:00 am Bangladesh time. With both teams unbeaten and occupying the top two spots in group table, Brazil will look to continue their winning streak and also avenge Copa America final defeat while Argentina will be keen to maintain their unbeaten status and further solidify their place in the standings. Neymar and co. will be without some of their key players, the likes of Thiago Silva, Ederson and Richarlison, due to travel restrictions imposed by the players' respective clubs. Lionel Messi's camp, on the other hand, have no such issue... Agencies.



'A question of whether we'd take an extra seamer'

SPORTS REPORTER



Since the deadline to announce the squad for the upcoming ICC World T20 set by the International Cricket Council (ICC) is on September 10, the Bangladesh Cricket Board and the selectors have almost chalked out the squad and are expected to announce the 15-member Bangladesh team within the next couple of days.

"We will sit for a final selection meeting tomorrow (today) and we are expected to announce the squad by September 6 or 7. We can actually tell you the exact date of announcing the squad tomorrow (today)," former Bangladesh captain and member of the selection committee Habibul Bashar told the media during a programme in the capital yesterday.

The selectors are likely to announce the squad from the current 19-member squad for the New Zealand series where Tamim Iqbal would have been considered as the only player from outside the squad but the experienced left-hander had opted to exclude himself out of the selection.

With Tamim unavailable, it is expected that all three existing openers -- Naim Sheikh, Liton Das, and Soumya Sarkar -- will make it to the team for the mega event.

"Definitely we are a bit disappointed as it would've been great for us if we had Tamim considering his wealth of experience that we could have utilised well in this world cup. He has already cleared his position and we all should respect his decision. At the moment we're only thinking about the combination of the team from the existing players and we want to have faith in these players and hope they do well," Bashar

added.

Keeping the conditions of Oman and the UAE in mind, Bashar informed that they will take the final decision on whether to include an extra seamer in the squad by today. It is going to be a tough competition among the five pacers in the squad, the likes of -- Rubel Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Mohammad Saifuddin and Shoriful Islam.

"Look, we know what conditions are waiting in Oman and the UAE as we have played there in the past. If you look at the current squad we have got the balance in both departments. We have three spinners and four fast bowlers and there might be a question of whether we'd take an extra seamer in the world cup where the pacers can get some assistance in Oman and UAE.

"So these are the areas we will discuss and apart from that there is less chance to make any changes from the existing batting department. We will take the final decision regarding all the aspects tomorrow (today)," the former captain said.

Bangladesh will begin their world cup mission from the qualifying round 1 in Oman on September 17 against Scotland. The Tigers will have to qualify for the Super 12 stage from group B with hosts Oman and Papua New Guinea being the two other teams in their group.

According to Bashar, there is still enough time for the batters to get into the groove since there were talks over the lack of preparation from the batsmen ahead of the flagship event. He also added that the current winning momentum will help Bangladesh to gain confidence and other teams in the World Cup will be wary about the success of the Tigers in leading up to it.



TEENS SHOCK Osaka, Tsitsipas

AFF, NEW YORK

Defending champion Naomi Osaka of Japan and Greek third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas were both ousted from the US Open by 18-year-olds in epic stunners on Friday at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Osaka was shocked by Canadian left-hander Leylah Fernandez 5-7, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 after Spain's Carlos Alcaraz upset French Open runner-up Tsitsipas 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 0-6, 7-6 (7/5).

"Honestly the Alcaraz match gave me motivation and gave me the energy to do the same," Fernandez said.

"I saw his match and I saw the way he won and I'm like 'I'm going to do that

next now."

After the upset, defending champion Osaka announced she was taking a break from playing tennis. "I honestly don't know when I'm going to play my next tennis match," Osaka said, wiping away tears. "I think I'm going to take a break from playing for a while."

Alcaraz is the youngest man in the US Open fourth round since 17-year-old American Michael Chang in 1989, and at any Slam since Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev in the 1992 French Open. "Incredible. Incredible feeling for me," Alcaraz said.

"This victory means a lot to me. It's the best match of my career, the best win. To beat Stefanos Tsitsipas is a dream come true and to win here is even more special for me."

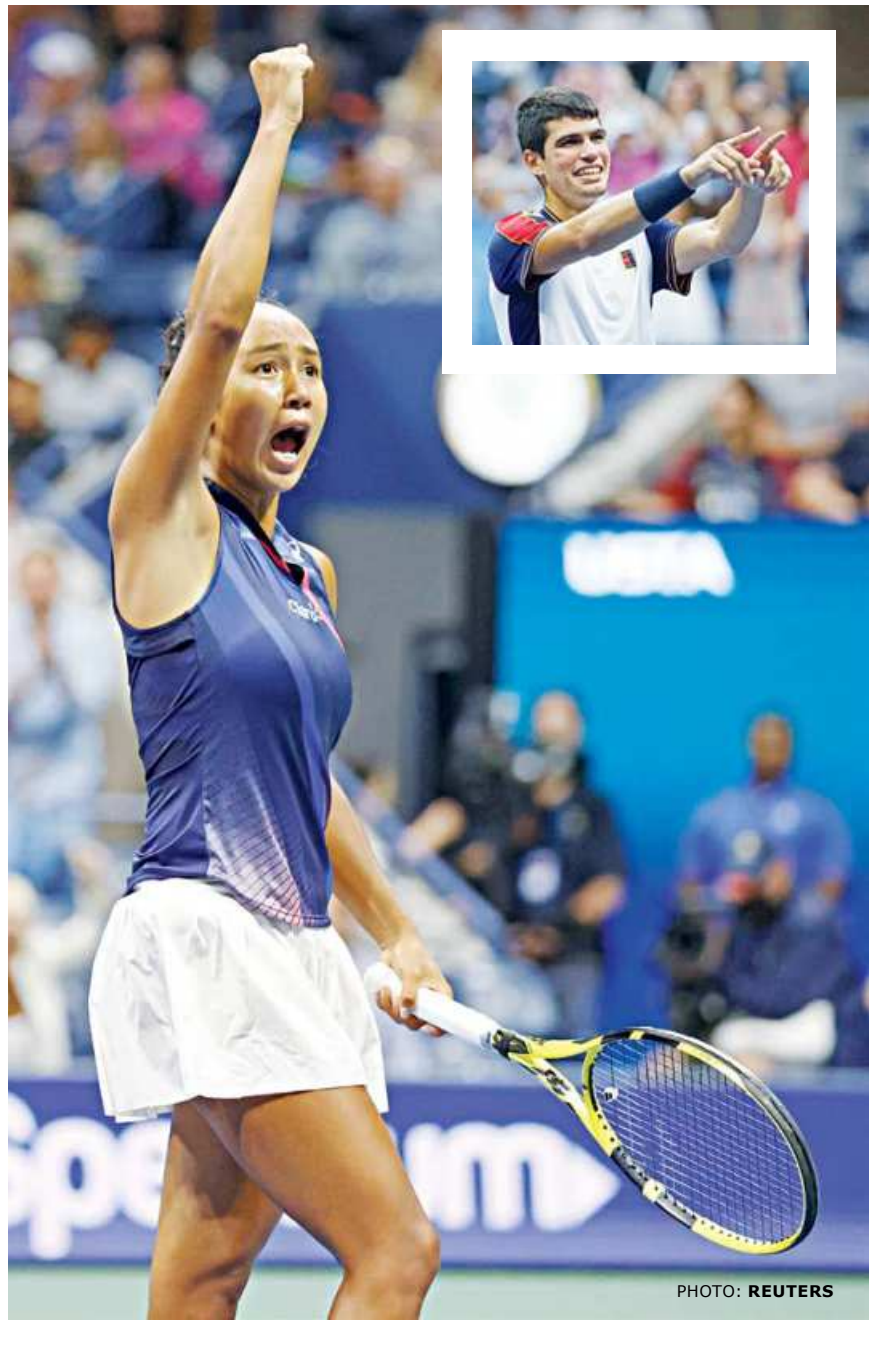


PHOTO: REUTERS

BSPA to felicitate organisers

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Sports Press Association, the oldest organization for sports journalists in the country, has decided to felicitate sports organisers.

The annual event will reward two or three sports organisers or sponsor companies from now on, informed high-ups of the association during a programme at the Dhaka Club yesterday.

The event will be named 'Kayser Sinha Organiser felicitation' after late organiser Afzalur Rahman Sinha, who was also known as Kayser Sinha.

The programme was attended by noted sports personalities from various sporting disciplines, who recalled on the benevolent and far-sighted nature of Sinha and other sports organisers of the country.

Bangladesh Cricket Board's president Nazmul Hassan, Bangladesh Olympic Association's secretary general Syed Shahed Reza, Sinha's son Fahim Sinha, Editors Guild president Mozammel Babu and BSPA's president Sanat Babla delivered speeches at the event.

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangladesh vs New Zealand
Third T20I
Live from 4:00 pm

SONY SIX
England vs India
Fourth Test (Day 4)
Live from 4:00 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & 2
US Open
Round of 16
Live from 9:00 pm & 4:30 am (Monday)

TEN 2
World Cup Qualifiers
England vs Andorra
Live from 10:00 pm

Switzerland vs Italy
Live from 12:45 am (Monday)

TEN 1
World Cup Qualifiers
Belgium vs Czech Republic
Live from 12:45 am (Monday)



Boaters play against Palestine today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Jamie Day yesterday said he would like to use different playing styles and personnel in the Three Nations Cup matches as the team take on Palestine in their first match today.

The match will kick off at the Dolen Omurzakov Stadium in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan at 8:30pm Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh, ranked 188th, will begin their campaign with the game against 102nd-ranked Palestine side, who were beaten 1-0 by the hosts on Thursday.

While the tournament will see the three sides taking on each other once, Bangladesh will wrap up their tour with a game against Kyrgyzstan Under-23 side on September 9.

The Bangladesh team is taking these matches as an opportunity to experiment ahead of October's SAFF Championship.

"In these three games we might try some different tactics, formations to see if we can have a number of options of playing going into SAFF (Championship). So we might change tactics and personnel to see if we're capable of playing in a number of ways in these three games to make sure everyone gets gametime before SAFF," the coach said in a video message posted by the Bangladesh Football Federation.

Bangladesh have faced Palestine five times in the past, drawing once while losing on four other occasions. That draw, too, came 15 years ago, so it will be an uphill task for the men in red and green to compete

against the middle eastern nation. Day knows that all too well, having led the side to two defeats against Palestine at home in recent years.

"We know Palestine are a good, powerful and strong team," Day said. "They're ranked 90 places above us, so it's going to be tough. It's going to be a test for us."

The team's captain, Jamal Bhuiyan, said they have analysed Palestine and they are looking forward to the game.

"We have already watched the match between Kyrgyzstan and Palestine. So we have seen Palestine's strengths and weaknesses. We will try a new system and if it works, we will continue this," Jamal said. "Overall, everyone is fit and ready and we are ready to fight Palestine tomorrow."

SHARMA HITS FIRST OVERSEAS TEST TON

India opener Rohit Sharma celebrates his first overseas Test hundred with Cheteshwar Pujara on the third day of the fourth Test against England at the Oval yesterday. Sharma held firm along with Pujara as India lost just one wicket before Tea. A dominant India took control, extending their lead to 100 by Tea as Sharma struck his eighth hundred. The opener reached the landmark just before the break with a six over long-on off Moeen Ali as the touring side ended the session on 199-1 in their second innings.



PHOTO: REUTERS