



BANGLADESH T-20 WORLD CUP SQUAD



Mahmudullah (C)



Liton Das



Naim Sheikh



Soumya Sarkar



Shakib Al Hasan



Mushfiqur Rahim



Afif Hossain



Nurul Hasan



Mahedi Hasan



Shamim Hossain



Nasum Ahmed



Saifuddin



Mustafizur



Shoriful Islam



Taskin Ahmed

RESERVE BENCH



Rubel Hossain



Aminul

Changes likely for fifth T20I

MAZHAR UDDIN



Having already sealed the five-match T20I series against New Zealand with a game in hand, the hosts will look to tinker with the playing eleven in the fifth and final game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

Bangladesh's think-tank may have opted for an unchanged playing eleven for four consecutive games but after the selectors have named a 15-member squad for the T20I World Cup yesterday, head coach Russell Domingo will surely look to provide an opportunity to those who have not featured so far.

It was learned that ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan may choose to rest for the fifth game as he is suffering from pain in his finger while Mohammad Saifuddin, who suffered a blow to his finger while going for the ball off his own bowling in the fourth game, may also sit out.

The team management is expected to rest pacer Mustafizur Rahman and left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed, who has been part of the playing eleven for the last four games.

Among those in the squad for the T20 World Cup, Soumya Sarkar, Shamim Hossain, Shoriful Islam and Taskin Ahmed could get outings for the first time in the series today.

Soumya is still recovering from a shoulder injury sustained in training on Wednesday and it will be interesting to see whether the left-handed batsman can make it to the playing eleven.

The batting department is still among the major concerns for the Tigers, with the likes of Naim Sheikh, Liton Das and Mushfiqur Rahim yearning for confidence ahead of the mega-event.

It would not be a surprise if the likes of leg-spinner Aminul Islam, Mosaddek Hossain and Rubel Hossain, who were named reserves for the T20 World Cup, also make it to the playing eleven today.

On the other hand, New Zealand will be looking to get some positives from the fifth and final game after being able to win only one game on the tour.

Tom Latham and Co. will be traveling to Pakistan after the series to take part in a three-match ODI and five-match T20I series and they will be desperate to make today's game count.

Best-laid plans not a guarantee

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

A proper monsoon drencher welcomed those who made their way to the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday for the announcement of Bangladesh's squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) made quite an arrangement in setting up a staging area for the press conference in front of the media centre entrance, but the downpour foiled those plans and media personnel were forced to head down to the actual press



help his cause.

"He was ill for a long time and has returned but still we are taking him with us. Unfortunately, he doesn't fit the way we are planning to play, so he wasn't kept in the main team," Minhajul said about Aminul. Along with Biplob, pacer Rubel Hossain was included as a reserve too but with him not being in contention for a long time, it was an easy decision to make.

It remains to be seen how batsmen adjust to scoring at eight or nine per-over after playing at Mirpur, but selectors opened World Cup preparations were yet to begin. "Whatever format you play, wins are important. That winning run helped build confidence. Our preparation for the World Cup will begin in Oman. Until we get there, it is difficult to say what our plans will be," the chief selector said.

Meanwhile, the selectors also said that it would be up to the team management to pick the wicketkeeper from among the three that feature. Coach Russell Domingo has insisted previously that Mushfiqur Rahim wanted to skip wicketkeeping duties in T20Is.

The squad features a few players who will be playing their first T20 World Cup but there is a good mix of experience too. It all went peacefully at Mirpur yesterday but it remains to be seen whether the selectors' combination reaps rewards or if the party is foiled at the World Cup, much like the BCB's staging area was.



Wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan and leg-spinner Aminul Islam may be looking in same direction during training but their status in the side is in stark contrast. With Nurul having already cemented his place in the side, Aminul can only hope to make a first-time impression in the series against New Zealand today. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

There is a big difference between the Under-19 side and the national team. There are a lot of changes. In fact, everything is different such as the crowd, fans -- all are different. I will be playing against the top players around the globe in the World Cup and I take it as a huge challenge.

SHAMIM HOSSAIN
BANGLADESH ALL-ROUNDER

conference room, which had not been used since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over the years, the walls of the press conference room have borne

witness to plenty of tough talk, especially after World Cup squad announcements. But as the selectors announced the squad, there were no big surprises nor much room for drama. As the names rolled off chief selector Minhajul Abedin's tongue, the reason for the mundanity of the scene became apparent. The big event had already unfolded much earlier when Tamim Iqbal had opted out of the upcoming World Cup.

The veteran left-hander had played all T20 World Cups to date and was the Tigers' top-scorer in the 2016 edition of the tournament with 295 runs.

If there was some room for contention, it came in the inclusion of leg-spinner Aminul Islam Biplob among the reserves outside of the 15-member squad.

While every other team had a

leg-spinning option, Bangladesh felt their planning did not require serious consideration for a leggie. Leg-spinners are not usually used in checking runs, but for picking up wickets.

Despite the fact that Aminul has not established himself solely as a specialist leggie, he has also shown the knack of picking up the odd wicket in the seven T20Is he has played so far. His last game came in March 2020 when he picked up three for 34 in three overs against touring Zimbabwe at Dhaka.

Since then, Bangladesh have played New Zealand and Zimbabwe away before playing Australia and the Kiwis at home and Aminul failed to make the team in any of those series. He picked up two for 22 at Delhi in 2019 in what was Bangladesh's maiden T20I win over India, but such instances did not

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Let's go step-by-step'

World number one Novak Djokovic saw off Matteo Berrettini in the quarter-finals of the U.S. Open on Wednesday then swatted away questions about his bid to become the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to sweep all four majors in the same calendar year. Djokovic overcame a slow start against the Italian sixth seed before wrapping up a 5-7, 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 victory and moving a



step closer to his 21st Grand Slam title. The Serb, who will take on German fourth seed Alexander Zverev in the semi-finals, cut off Patrick McEnroe when he edged towards the subject in an on-court interview. "You don't have to ask me anything about that," said Djokovic. "I don't want to think about it, I know it's there, just focusing on the next match and let's go step-by-step."

Italy return to winning ways

Italy recorded their first win since being crowned European champions as strikers Moise Kean and Giacomo Raspadori inspired a crushing 5-0 win over Lithuania to strengthen their grip on top spot in World Cup qualifying Group C. The Azzurri side comfortably extended their record international unbeaten run to 37 matches.



India-Eng fifth Test faces uncertainty

AGENCIES



India head into the fifth Test in Manchester starting today just one match away from the superb achievement of winning Test series in both Australia and England in the same year.

Several Indian newspapers, however, reported that the fifth Test was put in doubt after a Team India support staff tested positive for Covid.

Though none of the players were found to be positive yet, the further spread of the virus within the team cannot be ruled out since most of the cricketers were in close contact of the support staff all through the last Test.

India have cancelled a training session on the eve of the fifth Test amid reports another member of their support staff has tested positive for Covid-19.

Their 157-run win at the Oval completed Monday, that put them 2-1 up with one to play, came after England's innings and 76-run victory at Headingley, where India were dismissed for just 78 in the first innings. But it was a different story in south London.

In Manchester, India must cope with the pressure of being favourites to win, or at least avoid defeat, if they are to enjoy just a fourth series victory in England following their 1971, 1986 and 2007 triumphs.

India may be able to summon some of the 'backs to the wall' spirit Kohli thrives upon from knowing they will be without head coach Ravi Shastri, bowling coach Bharat Arun and fielding coach Ramakrishnan Sridhar, who will all miss the match after testing positive for Covid-19.

Meanwhile, England are on the brink of losing two Test series in a home season for the first time since 1986. Veteran seamer James Anderson and Ollie Robinson have both bowled more than 163 overs each so far this series, the pair combining for 36 wickets in the absence of the injured Stuart Broad and Jofra Archer, with all-rounder Ben Stokes missing the series due to mental health issues. "You want to make sure you do the best thing for the player but you also don't want to go into a Test match and someone go down injured and you've got one less bowler at your disposal," said England captain Joe Root.

BD, Afghan U-19s face off today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team will face their Afghanistan counterparts in the first of the five-match one-day series at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium today.

This Afghanistan team is the first to play an international series in any form since the Taliban's takeover of the country. For defending champions Bangladesh, the series will be the build-up for the U-19 World Cup next year.

"Despite having been unable to play matches during this period we played a few games with each other. We'll look to utilise our home advantage and perform well in the series," Bangladesh skipper Meherob Hasan told the media yesterday.

Women booters suffer defeat against Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's bid to prepare the national women's football team for AFC Women's Asian Cup got off to a disappointing start when the women in Red and Green suffered a 1-2 defeat to hosts Nepal

in their first of two FIFA friendly matches at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu yesterday. Debutants Sabita Rana and Preeti Rai struck one goal each for Nepal before substitute Tahura Khatun pulled one back for Bangladesh, who played the first international match after a two and half years' gap. Bangladesh, who have never beaten Nepal, however played well compared to their previous performances against Nepal as the charges of Golam Rabbani Choton often played in the opponent's half and created opportunities to convert a goal.

However, an unforced error from goalkeeper Rupna Chakma and defender Akhi Khatun's absence contributed to Bangladesh's downfall. In the 14th minute, Rupna came out of her post and failed to negotiate Bimala Chaudhury's left-footed cross which debutant Sabitra headed home. Then in the 23rd minute, the margin was doubled when another debutant Preeti raced past defenders and scored.

After resumption, Krishna Rani was thwarted by the Nepalese goalkeeper Anjila Subba but she could not stop a left-footed drive by Tahura in the 83rd minute.

Jakir wins Mujib Borsho-Trust Bank Open Golf Tournament

SPORTS REPORTER

Jakiruzzaman Jakir won the Mujib Borsho Trust Bank Open Golf Tournament despite playing a double bogey at the close of the fourth and final day at the Kurmitola Golf Course yesterday. Having started the final day at the second position, Jakir scored two-over 74 to finish top with a three-over par on 291 while Mohammad Rasel took a big stride after playing four-under par on the final day to finish second with a four-over par on 292.

Mohammad Nazim, who was at the top after the third round, slipped to third in the leaderboard after playing a five-over par on the final day to finish at 292.

The reality show "Bangabandhu Innovation Grant (BIG) 2021" is about to begin. 65 startups with immense potential will battle it out through 13 exciting episodes!

After rigorous analysis, judges will pick 2 winning startups in every episode and each winning team will be awarded BDT 10 lakh in the TV show round.

Finally, the best startup will be awarded USD 1 lakh in the gala round of BIG 2021.

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