



Ton-up Nabil propels U-19s to winning start

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Prantik Nabil Nawrose struck a scintillating unbeaten ton to help Bangladesh Under-19 start their ACC Asia Cup campaign with a thumping 154-run victory in their Group B encounter against Nepal at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Going into the tournament as part of the build-up to the upcoming ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup in the West Indies next year, the defending World Champions lived up to their billing as the young Tigers bundled out Nepal for just 143 in 42.3 overs before piling up a commendable 297 for four, thanks to Nabil's 127 off 112 deliveries not out.

Electing to bat, Mahfijul Islam and Iftekhar Hossain provided a decent start, stitching together a 39-run opening stand. Nabil, a member of the World Cup-winning Under-19 side, then had two cameo partnerships of 28 and 38 runs with Iftekhar and Aich Mollah, respectively, for the next two wickets to take the score past 100.

After that, Nabil was joined by wicketkeeper-batter Md Fahim and the duo stamped their authority with an outstanding 117-run fourth-wicket stand between them. The century-stand only came to an end

after the 43rd over, that too after Fahim was forced to retire hurt due to an injury.

Till then, however, Fahim had ably supported Nabil. The right-hander smashed a 54-ball 58, laced with three fours and as many maximums. Despite Fahim's untimely departure, Nabil continued, building another 62-run stand with SM Meherob, who played a 15-ball 21-run cameo innings. Nabil, however, remained unbeaten till the end as he smashed a total of 11 boundaries and a solitary maximum to ensure Bangladesh amassed a massive total.

Even with enough runs on the board, Bangladesh bowlers never let the Nepal batters sway the momentum towards them as the young Tigers stayed disciplined with the ball in hand. Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib cornered the opposition early in the innings, removing both the Nepal openers for cheap scores inside 7.1 overs.

Nepal could never force a fightback, struggling to build partnerships and losing wickets at regular intervals as they were left reeling at 81 for six at one stage of the game.

For the young Tigers, skipper Rakibul Hasan, Sakib, Meherob and Naimur Rohman scalped two wickets each.

Gulsan Jha scored a team-high 28-ball 35 for Nepal before being run-out in the 42nd over but that came later in the innings when they were already staring at an eventual defeat.

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After being elected for the third term as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president back in October 6 this year, Nazmul Hassan revealed the new standing committee along with a few major decisions following a marathon meeting of the board of directors at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Among the major outcomes, the BCB president announced that the board has appointed former Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons as the new batting consultant, who will start working from February next year.

"We have appointed Jamie Siddons as the new batting consultant and he is expected to join from February. However, we are yet to decide on which capacity he will work whether he will join the national team or we would utilise him for the development

Jalal Yunus named as the new chairman of the cricket operations, replacing Akram Khan.

The board appointed former Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons as new batting consultant from February next year. However, the board is yet to decide whether Siddons will work with the national team or with the development teams.

The BCB appointed a chartered accountancy firm to finalise the construction firm from the five shortlisted companies to build the Sheikh Hasina International Cricket Stadium. The board is confident to complete the stadium by the next three years with the capacity of fifty thousand spectators.

The salary of women's national team cricketers was proposed to increase up to 33 percent.

The board also approved contract of 89 first-class cricketers.

Siddons set to rejoin as BCB gets busy

programmes for the Bangla Tigers even," Hassan told the media yesterday.

Meanwhile, there have been a lot of talks in recent times over former captain Akram Khan's resignation from the crucial cricket operations department after he led the

on I hope it will change," the BCB president informed.

Among the other committees, Ahmed Sajjadul Alam will lead the tournament committee while Khaled Mahmud will work as the vice-chairman. Akram was made the chairman of the facilities

by the next three years where the approximate capacity of the stadium will be fifty thousand spectators.

The board of directors meeting also took the decision to increase the salary of the Bangladesh national women's team.



committee for the last eight years.

Among some major changes from the previous standing committee, it was the cricket operations department that remained the centre of all discussions. According to the new standing committee, Jalal Yunus, who led the media and communications department, was named as the chairman of the cricket operations department while Khaled Mahmud will work as the vice-chairman.

"Since I will not be available for some time in the coming days I have instructed the chairman of the related committees to brief and inform the media on behalf of their committees. Previously I had to answer the queries from the media on various topics but from now

committee and the former captain will also be the chairman of the physically challenged cricket team.

Newly elected directors Tanvir Ahmed Tito was named as the new chairman of the media committee while Obeid Rashid Nizam will be leading the age-level committee. Iftekhar Rahman became the new chairman of the umpires committee while Salauddin Chowdhury is set to lead the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan.

Meanwhile, Hassan also informed that the board has appointed a chartered accountant firm to finalise the construction firm for the Sheikh Hasina International Cricket stadium. The BCB boss is hopeful to complete the construction of the stadium

"As there is still a huge gap between the salaries of the men's and women's team, we have decided to increase the salary of the women's team in the meeting. According to the new pay structure, the women's cricketers will get the raise of up to 33 percent of their salaries for those who have performed well," Hassan informed further.

He also mentioned that the BCB is looking to purchase land to build at least ten stadiums all across the country which will be exclusively owned by the board to solve the need for grounds.

The board has approved the contract of 89 first-class cricketers and also decided to reconstruct the sitting arrangements of the Mirpur stadium.

Rahul ready for SA challenge

REUTERS, Pretoria

India vice-captain KL Rahul knows all too well the unique challenges batting in South Africa brings but says helping the team to get off to a solid start will be a key ingredient to victory ahead of the first Test in Pretoria on Sunday.

India have never won a Test series in South Africa, but after recent successes in Australia and England are buoyed by their ability to compete on the road.

Rahul concedes South Africa present an altogether different trial though, especially for the batsmen, but believes India are ready.

"The pace and bounce in the pitches here is very different to every other country," Rahul told reporters on Friday. "That

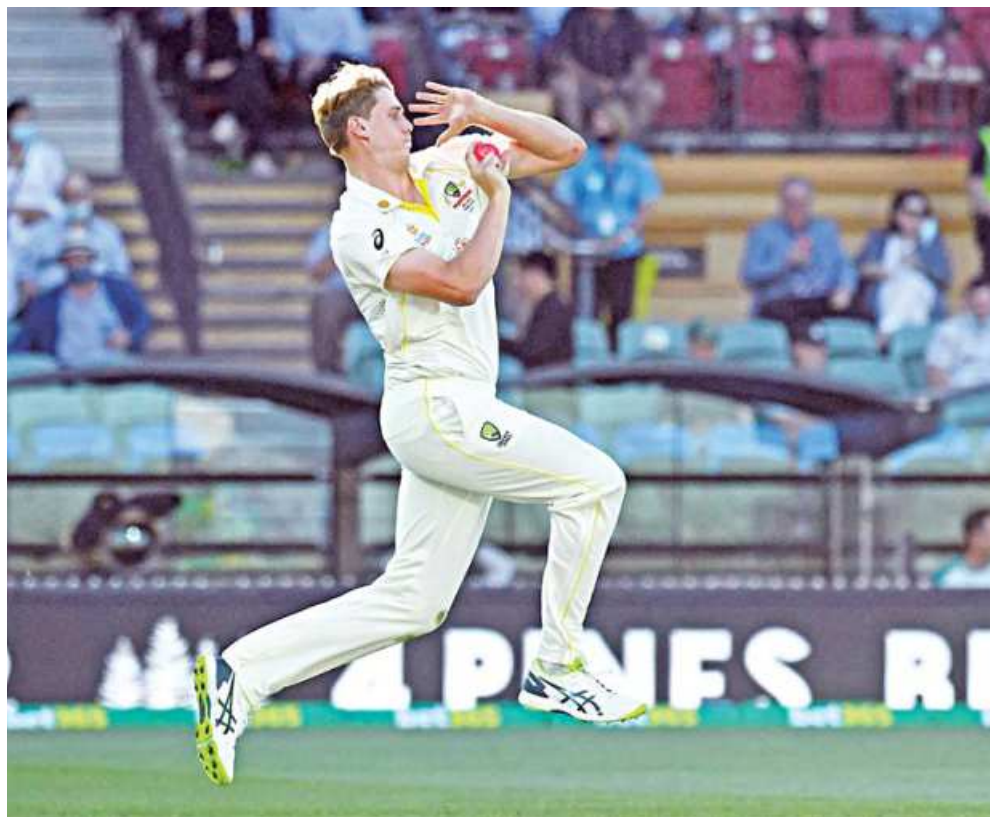


is why it was important we came here earlier to try to adjust to the conditions.

"We've had a lot of sessions in the middle to create match situations and practiced with a lot of intensity. It has been a great week of preparation. The pitches can be challenging because of the 'tennis ball' bounce. When we played in Australia they are fast and bouncy, but here it can be a bit spongy in the first few days and then to starts to quicken up.

"South Africa is an exciting place to play cricket and comes as a challenge for both batters and bowlers."

India did not have an opening stand of more than 30 in their last series in South Africa in 2018, where Rahul averaged only 7.50 in his four innings with a top score of 16. "You need to be a lot more focussed and disciplined in your mind here, and be a lot more patient and wait to score your runs," Rahul said.



Ashes on the line for UNDER-SIEGE ENGLAND

AFP, Melbourne



England head into the Boxing Day Test against Australia on Sunday knowing they must fix the mistakes that have blighted their tour or lose the Ashes series.

After a nine-wicket thumping in Brisbane and then crashing by 275 runs in Adelaide, Joe Root's team must win at Melbourne Cricket Ground to keep their slim Ashes hopes alive.

A boisterous crowd of about 70,000 is expected on the opening day of the Test.

As holders, Australia need only to avoid defeat to retain the urn.

The omens are not good for England -- the only instance of a team coming from 2-0 down to win the Ashes was Donald Bradman's Australia back in 1936-37.

In the first two Tests the tourists' batting, bowling and fielding were sub-standard and Root knows they must improve quickly.

"I am convinced we have what we need to win Test matches over here but we are not going to if we keep missing chances and don't give ourselves an opportunity to get into the Test match with the bat," he said.

Root blasted the side after Adelaide for "making the same mistakes", highlighted by a first-innings batting collapse and his bowlers hitting the wrong lengths, allowing Australia to build a big score.

But he also came in for sharp criticism himself, despite performing well with the bat and ball.

"What is the opposite definition of excellent leadership? There's a good chance it can be summed up by Joe Root's captaincy," ex-Australia skipper Ian Chappell said.

Another former captain, Ricky Ponting, also chipped in, blasting Root for not doing more to correct the bowling problems while the match was under way.

"If you can't influence your bowlers on what length to bowl, what are you doing on the field?" he said. To rub salt in Root's wounds, Australian number three Marnus Labuschagne overtook him to become the world's number one Test batsman after his first-innings Adelaide century.

English media reports suggest the visitors could make up to four changes with opener Zak Crawley potentially in for either Rory Burns or Haseeb Hameed and Jonny Bairstow taking over from Ollie Pope.

They are also likely to mix up the bowling unit again with speedster Mark Wood tipped to return, along with off-spinner Jack Leach, after England blundered by dropping him for Adelaide.

That would mean either Chris Woakes, Ollie Robinson or star quicks Jimmy Anderson or Stuart Broad missing out.

Coach Chris Silverwood is also under increasing pressure.



Ravindra wary of Tigers' 'exciting fast bowlers'

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The odds always remain stacked up against Bangladesh whenever they travel to New Zealand, especially if the series includes Tests given the format has always been the Achilles heel of the country's cricket.

In fact, till date, Bangladesh have lost all of their 33 encounters across formats, including nine Tests, against New Zealand in their backyard.

However, despite the Tigers' rugged history, New Zealand batting all-rounder Rachin Ravindra feels that Bangladesh, especially the pace attack of the Tigers, will pose a threat to the hosts when the two sides meet for a two-Test series, part of the World Test Championship, next month.

"I think they have a lot of exciting fast bowlers at the moment. We faced a few of them during the T20Is [in Bangladesh] and they bowled really fast. It shows that they have come a long way as a cricketing side in the last few years," Ravindra said in a video posted by the New Zealand Cricket (NZC) on Twitter yesterday.

Ravindra made his international debut against Bangladesh back in September this year. The left-handed opener, however, had a torrid time on slow and gripping Mirpur surfaces as he was able to score a total of only 47 runs during the Kiwis' 3-2 defeat to the Tigers.

During that series, in the only game that was played in a sporting wicket in Mirpur, Ravindra was beaten by the pace and swing of Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam a number of times. And that probably left a mark on the young batter, who made his Test debut against India last month.

Ravindra thinks Bangladesh will be a team to beat in the upcoming Tests.

"As we have experienced in the T20I series in Bangladesh, it was seriously tough cricket by them. And they have got some experienced players. They will be a good side [to beat in the Tests] and we would just need to do what we have been doing for a number of years and hope to come out on top," Ravindra added.

