

Bangladesh to host NZ in WC tune-up

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand are set to play three one-day internationals against hosts Bangladesh in September, marking a long-awaited return to the country for a multi-format series after 10 years, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) confirmed yesterday.

Following their arrival in Bangladesh on September 17, New Zealand will play three ODIs on September 21, 23, and 26, the BCB said in a statement.

Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium will stage all matches, slated to begin from 2pm (Bangladesh Standard Time).

The ODI series will be the last for both teams before the World Cup starts in India on October 5.

The second leg of the tour in November-December comprises a two-match Test series which will be Bangladesh's first outing in the current ICC World Test Championship cycle.

Bangladesh won their previous two ODI series against New Zealand at home 4-0 in 2010 and 3-0 in 2013.

Tanzid relishing 'freedom' of continuing natural game

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

When youngster Tanzid Hasan Tamim came for his first press conference yesterday as a national team player, he did not look like someone giving his very first presser.

Indeed, the youngster wore the look of confidence and having a good head on his shoulders, as seen while he was batting at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium during the match-scenario training a few days back.

People look to draw connections when trying to identify what kind of a player has just been ushered into the national team, that too ahead of very important assignments. There were quite a few of those. For starters, he is replacing his namesake Tamim Iqbal, one he admires. Many of his mates from the U-19 World Cup in South Africa – one that Tanzid and his young team won – are already in the national team.

Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Shamim Hossain, Shoriful Islam and most recently Tawhid Hridoy have showcased their talents for the national side. Tanzid came off that tournament as one of Bangladesh's top run-getters right after Joy.

He is perhaps a bit late compared to those who have come from that side but Bangladesh have also enjoyed solidity at the top in recent times, meaning he had to wait. Tanzid, having gotten in, said he or the others from that U-19

side are not dwelling on the past.

"What we achieved is in the past," Tanzid said when answering a question which was another attempt from the media to draw connections and link Tanzid to the present.

"Everyone talks about one thing, which is the dream of winning the seniors' World Cup. Whenever we meet up, that's what works in our mind since the World Cup is ahead of us,"



he added on what he talks about with his U-19 mates.

He knows the difficulty of the challenge ahead. After all, it is the national team he will now represent. That too, filling a position held by country's best opener Tamim for a long time.

"Of course, [opening spot] has importance. Not only my spot but every spot is important for everyone. As you said regarding Tamim

bhai, he is everyone's idol. I have grown up watching him. So, I would try to give my best and hold onto my spot," he said, showing calm control over the confidence he wanted to project.

Bangladesh would need his youthful exuberance and like his namesake, he has a certain flair as an opener too. The Tigers have gone through very important match-scenario training and coach Chandika Hathurusingha also wanted Tanzid to play according to his natural flair.

"After coming to the national team, the coach told me to 'play the same way you have always played and what comes naturally... If you feel that there is an issue, you come and talk to me.' He always likes asking questions since that way you can speak clearly about what's inside you. So that's good," Tanzid said.

"I have enjoyed it [game scenario]. Team management has given me full freedom.

"Match scenario training helps us. Our match situations were totally Asia Cup oriented. As everyone was saying, there will be 300-plus scores in Sri Lanka and we practiced like that. We wanted to achieve our target and everyone succeeded," he said on his training experience with the side.

Tanzid said he focuses on his strength and believes in it. Asked about the pressure, he said: "It's a game of pressure. There are many situations in the game and the sooner I can handle that, the better my cricket will be."



CITY ADD UEFA SUPER CUP TO TROPHY CABINET

Treble winners Manchester City successfully marked their maiden appearance in the UEFA Super Cup after they beat Sevilla 5-4 on penalties as the game ended 1-1 after 90 minutes. The first nine spot-kicks of the shootout were all converted but Serbian defender Nemanja Gudelj struck his penalty against the crossbar to hand victory to City. Earlier, Youssef En-Nesyri gave Europa League winners Sevilla the lead with a towering header in the 25th minute but City equalised through a header from 21-year-old Cole Palmer in the 63rd minute.

PHOTO: AFP

Salary hike has girls uplifted in training

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's national team players were uplifted in their training on Thursday after the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) agreed to increase the players' salaries.

"It has always been about working hard in the training and the girls have always been ready for it. To be honest, the girls are always serious in their training and not much has changed in that regard. However, it [the increment in salaries] has definitely inspired the girls. I will say the mood of the girls had been good today," Saiful Bari Titu, head coach of the national team, said.

Titu, who replaced long-serving coach Golam Rabbani Choton, was also delighted over receiving a "positive signal" regarding his accreditation for the upcoming Asian Games.

"They gave me a positive signal about the accreditation a few days back and it might be finalised in two days. I am happy with the confirmation of accreditation," Titu told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh have been pitted against former World Champions Japan, World Cup-playing nation Vietnam and Nepal, and the former men's national team coach Titu has been trying to prepare the girls accordingly.

"Japan and Vietnam are very strong sides and there is also Nepal in the group. So I have been working on different ways the girls can play against different opponents. And, I want to provide them with as much information as they can take, otherwise they might get confused. The girls have been doing well and my duty is to keep that performance intact," said the former national footballer.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Players 'happy' with CLOSED-DOOR SESSIONS

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national team Thursday completed four days of closed door training in Mirpur in order to prepare for the upcoming Asia Cup.

While there are assertions that training sessions needed to be held behind closed doors in order to avoid opponents getting technical information from video footage, the aim was to hold the sessions under comfortable circumstances.

The request had come in from the team management to facilitate these closed door sessions away from media eyes. Match-scenario training was the most significant part of these sessions on August 13, 14, 16, and 17. On August 12, match-scenario training was held in the presence of the media.

Media scrutiny has peaked at an all-time high, where every little detail, even insignificant ones, becomes part of content creation, leaving the players awkward over how they conduct themselves even during sessions.

Closed door sessions are often used in modern day sports.

"It's not like they are doing something that has to be done away from the public's eyes. The players often feel awkward with so many media houses focused on scrutinising unimportant details. I feel that the players are happy," a member of the team management told The Daily Star.

The team management is also understood to be content with the situation as during the match-scenario training, players were put under different situations, and how they reacted to those could very well be used by opponents. Super Over scenario, for instance, was introduced this time around. The approaches of batters, bowlers, and fielders too were detailed in their enactment.

Such sessions, it is understood, could also be arranged in the future. The players will head for two days' rest before beginning the second phase of their ongoing camp from August 20.

Tuchel channels in 'Kane effect' before season opener

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich coach Thomas Tuchel said on Thursday the "Harry Kane effect" was already improving his side ahead of Friday's season opener against Werder Bremen.

Kane signed with Bayern last Saturday and Tuchel said the "fantastic" England captain "has had an immediate impact on the training pitch."

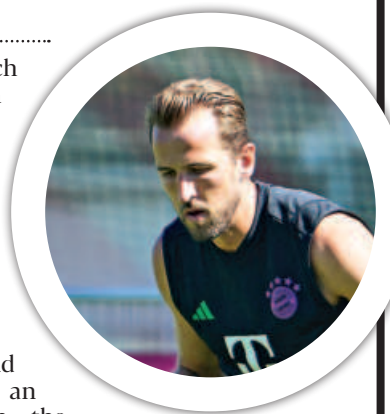
"The way he works and the way he is in the locker room, the way he goes about things, how humble he is and how keen he is.

"He's the first on the training pitch, he works with the reserve players, he's the one who's looking ahead and inspiring others - and that's why he's a big star.

"That's the Harry Kane effect and that's why he raises our chances to win tomorrow massively."

On Saturday, Bayern were thrashed 3-0 by RB Leipzig in the Supercup, where Kane made his debut off the bench.

Tuchel also confirmed that injured captain Manuel Neuer would be "back in team practice in a couple of weeks". The manager clarified that the goalkeeper's progress was the reason Bayern did not sign another goalkeeper after letting Yann Sommer move to Inter Milan.



The enduring images of the Women's World Cup

AFP, SYDNEY

Unless there is an uncharacteristic outbreak of hostility and flurry of red cards in Sunday's final, opposing players consoling each other after games will be among the enduring images of the Women's World Cup.

England, who face Spain in the final in Sydney, have been notably quick to approach their emotional opponents after the final whistle to offer a heartwarming hug and words of sympathy.

The European champions dealt out some rough treatment to Australia's skipper Sam Kerr in defeating the co-hosts 3-1 in their semi-final on Wednesday in front of 75,000 in Sydney.

But after the final whistle the Lionesses players and staff consoled an emotional Kerr, who plays in England for Chelsea and is one of the most respected forwards around.

Images of England players rushing over to commiserate with Nigerian goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie after defeating the African side on penalties in the last 16 were shared widely online.

England midfielder Keira Walsh said



it was not something the players had made a conscious decision to do. It was the result of an ethos established by coach Sarina Wiegman about remaining humble and respectful in victory.

"We all know the feeling of being knocked out of a World Cup and it's one of the worst feelings in the world," Barcelona's Walsh said. "When you can see fellow players who are really upset, I think the natural human thing is just to go over and see if they are OK. I'd like to think that most people would do the same in that situation."

Pictures of Sweden defender Jonna

Andersson hugging a distraught Maika Hamano of Japan after their quarter-final were also widely shared online.

"I got sad because I saw she was sad," Andersson told reporters in Auckland after Sweden's victory. "I hope it was important for her to feel that support, I know she has that support from the national team and the club team. I wanted to show her that I care about her, she's a fantastic person."

The two players know each other well from club football, where both played this season for Hammarby in Stockholm.



There were similar scenes on Tuesday, when the tables were turned and the Swedes left in tears after Spain won 2-1 in their semi-final.

Spain's players comforted a tearful Fridolina Rollof, the Swedish forward who plays for Barcelona and was up against several club colleagues.

Julie Dolan, the first captain of Australia's Matildas, in 1979, noted that similar happens in the men's game, but not to the same extent. "It's how to win graciously, I guess. It's a wonderful thing to see," she told AFP.

Pundits say it has been one of the endearing features of a World Cup that will already go down as the best attended and be remembered for a series of shock results.

"That has been one of the most heartwarming things about this tournament," former Australia international turned broadcaster Grace Gill said. "Because as much joy and elation as there is for the winners of the game, they're so quick to turn their attention to make sure their friends, ultimately, are OK. To offer them a little bit of support in that moment is really touching to see."