

‘United’ Bangladesh begin WC preparation in Dharamshala

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh team took part in its first training session in Dharamshala yesterday ahead of the Word Cup opener as the players try to put the chaotic buildup to the tournament in the rearview and take the field as a united unit.

The Tigers are now in Dharamshala after their two warm-up games in Guwahati, where they defeated Sri Lanka by seven wickets and lost to England by four wickets.

They are now preparing for their first game in the tournament against Afghanistan on October 7.

But the talks before the match is not just centred around on how the team will tackle Afghanistan’s deadly spin attack as there is still concern about how the team will cope up with the off field controversies before the tournament.

However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus, who flew to India yesterday to join the Bangladesh contingent, told reporters in Dhaka before his departure that the team is united despite the drama following the World Cup squad announcement.

“Once they (cricketers) put on their jerseys, they



aren’t thinking of anything else. They are focused on the tournament and the matches coming up. They are very spirited and the team-spirit is high. So there is no problem regarding that,” Jalal said.

“I had been with the team before and during the Asia Cup as well. They are focused and they are very much united and only focused on matches. They aren’t bothered at all, I have talked to them quite a number of times [since the team’s departure]. They are looking forward to a very exciting cricket match [against Afghanistan],” he added.

The team received a big boost on the day as skipper Shakib Al Hasan returned to the nets session. He earlier didn’t take part in either of the warm-up games after suffering an ankle sprain during a training session.

In the warm-up games, young opener Tanzid Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz came good with the bat.

Bangladesh are without their most experienced opener Tamim Iqbal. Hence two of the three options for the opening slot scoring runs in both warm-up games is a reassuring sign for the Tigers.

“Tanzid is very good and he is still young. We are still not expecting a lot of things from him. He has just started his international career and he is a very promising cricketer,” Jalal felt.

The World Cup in India is likely to be a high-scoring affair and Jalal believes Bangladesh have enough firepower in their squad to achieve big totals.

“We are a capable team and are capable of big chases. Of course, everyone will not score all the time. But if four to five batters turn up and we get one or two good partnerships, it’s sometimes enough.”



Pakistan pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi looks all set for their World Cup opener against the Netherlands at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad today. With Naseem Shah missing the showpiece event due to injury, Pakistan will hope for Shaheen to be at his very best.

PHOTO: AFP

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‘Young boys of 2019 have now become men’

AFP, Hyderabad

Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur said that the young players that represented the country in the last World Cup in 2019 have now matured as he hopes his team will have two wins under their belts before they face old rivals India in the eagerly-awaited World Cup blockbuster.

The 1992 champions face the Netherlands first up in Hyderabad on Friday followed by Sri Lanka at the same venue four days later.

Pakistan will then lock horns against India in Ahmedabad on October 14 in front of 132,000 fans in the world’s biggest cricket arena.

“It’s going to be an unbelievable spectacle,” said Arthur on Thursday.

“I can’t wait for it, personally. Hopefully, we’ve got two wins under the belt before we get to Ahmedabad.”

Arthur praised world number one ODI team India.

“India are playing some fantastic cricket, but so are we,” said Arthur. “I just think it’s going to be a great game. I can’t wait for it, personally.”

Pakistan will hope to overcome a poor show in the recent Asia Cup where they suffered a 228-run rout at the hands of India and lost by two

wickets against Sri Lanka.

They also went down in both World Cup warm-up games against New Zealand and Australia, also in Hyderabad.

Arthur said his team will, however, be focused on the Netherlands rather than India.

“We’re not getting too far ahead of ourselves,” said Arthur. “First of all, the boys love being in India,

a second World Cup to add to Pakistan’s 1992 triumph.

“I felt in 2019 we were very, very close,” said Arthur despite Pakistan failing to reach the semifinals.

“These young boys have now become men and have another four years’ experience.

“Look, they’re a very close group because they’ve played together for so long. They know each other backwards. They’re not only teammates, but they’re generally friends as well.”

The pitch at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Hyderabad is known for high scores with New Zealand chasing 346 and Pakistan compiling 337 in a chase of 352 against Australia in the warm-ups.

“It looks an incredibly good wicket,” said Arthur. “The wickets we had for the warm-up games were brilliant and this pitch looks no different. It looks like a very, very good one.”

Arthur also played down concerns over the lack of form of opener Fakhar Zaman and spinning allrounder Shadab Khan.

“I think form comes and goes,” said Arthur. “The quality of these players that we have in those positions is undoubted. It’s about making sure they are in a good space mentally, and then just hopefully that they click tomorrow.”

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which is fantastic.

“The pressure of a World Cup is always massive. But I think our boys are in a really good place.”

Pakistan appointed Arthur in April this year for a second stint, doubling up on his job with Derbyshire in the English county championship.

He vowed to complete the unfinished business of winning

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND VS NEW ZEALAND

ENGLAND:

282 for nine in 50 overs (Root 77, Buttler 43; Henry 3-48, Phillips 2-17)

NEW ZEALAND:

283 for one in 36.2 overs (Conway 152 not out, Ravindra 123 not out; Curran 1-47)

RESULT:

New Zealand won by nine wickets

Player-of-the-match:
Rachin Ravindra

New Zealand opener Devon Conway smashed the first ton of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 in the Blackcaps’ nine-wicket drubbing of defending champions England at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday. Conway’s fifth ODI ton saw him score an unbeaten 152 and he was well complemented by fellow left-hander Rachin Ravindra, who also rose to the occasion to bring up his maiden ton. Ravindra also remained unbeaten on 123 as the Blackcaps chased down England’s 283-run target with 82 deliveries to spare.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Netherlands are yet to beat Pakistan after six ODIs.

The two sides are set for a third meet in the ODI World Cup.

The 1992 World Cup champions will play their first ODI on Indian soil after over 10 years. Since then, Pakistan have played four T20Is in India during the 2016 T20 World Cup.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam is the highest run-getter in ODIs between the two teams, having scored 222 runs in three innings.

Pakistan’s Fakhar Zaman and Netherlands’ Bas de Leede boast the highest individual scores for their respective teams. Fakhar’s run-a-ball 109 and De Leede’s 120-ball 89 – both came up in the bilateral series played in Rotterdam last year.

Logan Van Beek is the Netherlands’ highest wicket-taker since 2019, scalping 34 wickets in 25 matches in this period.



India-Pakistan the bigger rage?



STAR SPORTS DESK

The greatest cricket carnival began yesterday with defending champions England taking on New Zealand at the biggest cricket stadium in the world in a country that arguably has the largest fanbase of the sport.

However, as England skipper Jos Buttler and the Blackcaps’ stand-in captain Tom Latham made their way out to the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, they did not get a raucous reception with most of the 132,000-capacity arena empty.

Even the few present at the stadium were mostly looking forward to another game – the most-anticipated clash of the tournament between hosts India and archrivals Pakistan at this venue on October 14.

With the tradition of holding an opening ceremony bucked for the first time in many years, the vibe hardly had any difference from how it remains during the opener of a bilateral series.

Jyoti Malhotra, wearing a sari in the Indian tricolour, told AFP she was just “so excited” to be at the match.

But the big game she is looking forward to is the tournament’s blockbuster clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan.

“I’m still looking for an India-Pakistan ticket,” she said. “I’ll be here for the final, hopefully India-Pakistan.”

With seats already all sold out, the fans have been turning to the black market and touts, with tickets for a normal stand costing 2000 rupees (\$24) shooting up more than 25 times in cost to as much as 50,000 rupees (\$600).

Fan Zubair Ahmed said if he could, he would go. “It’s the most loved match in the world,” he said. “The kind of emotions that flow when India win are so great, I can’t explain it in words.”

Saikat begins historic journey

AGENCIES

Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid Saikat of Bangladesh made his World Cup debut as the reserve umpire yesterday when England and New Zealand clashed in Ahmedabad in the tournament’s opening match.

The 46-year-old, the first Bangladesh umpire to appear in the World Cup, will stand in five World Cup matches as an on-field umpire, including a group stage encounter between Australia and New Zealand on October 28.

“Being the first Bangladeshi to officiate in the World Cup, I have the same feeling. I hope it will not be the last, but first of many,” Sharfuddoula had said before the tournament.

Sharfuddoula, who has officiated in 106 international matches to date, is one of 16 umpires for the prestigious tournament and one of four from the ICC Emerging Umpire Panel.



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