

## Pressure on England ahead of Bangladesh tie

SPORTS REPORTER from Dharamshala

After being knocked out from the 2015 World Cup following a defeat to Bangladesh, English cricket has gone through a revolution, culminating in their first World Cup triumph at home four years later. According to the troop of English media who have travelled to India to cover the matches of the defending champions, the England team are well aware of the probable threat from Bangladesh at the world stage.

There was a sense of seriousness during the team meeting as the England cricketers were about to start their warm-up session yesterday, ahead of their second fixture against Bangladesh on October 10 in Dharamshala.

"The defeat to Bangladesh in 2015 was an infamous one for England, which eventually changed the entire English cricket and I am sure England won't take you guys lightly at all. Obviously there are a few dangerous players in the Bangladesh team but if you compare the XIs of the two sides, we expect England to win this game. So that itself is a bit of pressure for the England side," Simon Burnton, who works for The Guardian, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The England team management is seemingly worried about the team's lack of options in the opening slot. Jonny Bairstow, who will play his 100th ODI against Bangladesh opened alongside David Malan in their match against New Zealand. These two are the only options England can rely on to open the innings at the moment. Malan got out



for 14 runs while Bairstow scored 33 in that game against the Kiwis. If one of these two batters suffer an injury at some stage of this competition, the English think tank may opt for either Ben Stokes or Jos Buttler to open the innings.

While the nine-wicket thrashing by New Zealand on Thursday came as a huge blow for England, the outfield of the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium is adding more concern for the defending champions.

The journalists covering the event in Dharamshala were barred from entering the ground yesterday as groundsman were busy preparing the outfield, which came under the microscope during Bangladesh's opening game against Afghanistan on Saturday.

Players from both teams found it difficult to field on the patchy surface. Afghanistan spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman was lucky to escape without a serious injury after his left knee stuck into the sandy outfield when he put in a dive during their six-wicket defeat to Bangladesh. The poor condition of the Dharamshala outfield remained the main talking point among the members of the English media. It was also learnt that the England team management has decided to rest Stokes, who did not play against New Zealand, against Bangladesh too as the all-rounder is still recovering from a knee injury.

While England will be under some sort of pressure to get their World Cup campaign back on track, Bangladesh will have a slight psychological edge following a comprehensive win in their opening match.



After beginning their World Cup 2023 mission with a convincing win against familiar foes Afghanistan, Bangladesh players spent yesterday mostly relaxing with no practice scheduled for the day. The likes of Mustafizur Rahman, Towhid Hridoy, and Taskin Ahmed, however, hit the gym as the Tigers now prepare for a bigger challenge. Bangladesh, who beat the Afghans by six wickets in Dharamshala, will next face defending champions England at the same venue tomorrow.

PHOTO: EKUSH TAPADER



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## FOCUSED TIGERS keep their feet grounded

MAZHAR UDDIN from Dharamshala

There was no official training session for Bangladesh on Sunday, a day after their comprehensive six-wicket win over Afghanistan in their World Cup 2023 opener. Only five members of the Tigers' squad worked out in the gym of the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamshala yesterday.

Mushfiqur Rahim, Towhid Hridoy, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman and Tanzim Hasan Sakib along with assistant coach Nick Pothas and trainer Nick Lee arrived at the stadium around 10:00 am local time. The cricketers worked out at the gym for about a couple of hours before leaving the ground without interacting with the media.

The remaining members of the Bangladesh team opted to rest at the team hotel, enjoying a well-deserved break. The Tigers have a practise scheduled today ahead of their crucial tie against the defending champions England tomorrow.

Despite the commanding win over Afghanistan – the Tigers had romped to the 157-run target with 92 balls remaining, a record-margin win for Bangladesh in the World Cup in

terms of balls remaining – Shakib Al Hasan and his troops seemed to have their feet on the ground.

There were no celebrations from the cricketers in the team hotel after the win on Saturday and it was learned that Shakib has made it clear to his players about keeping their

The news headlines can hamper the environment around the team. So, in order to avoid such a situation, the players, and even the officials, have been asked to maintain the protocol," chairman of the BCB's media committee Tanvir Islam Tito told the media in Dharamshala yesterday.

"At the end of the day, we all want Bangladesh to do well and our aim is to help the players keep their focus so that they can perform freely."

Shakib will also have to work on some areas. The opening position will once again remain under the scanner after young Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Liton Das failed to make an impact against Afghanistan.

It will be interesting to see whether the team management would once again use the in-form Mehedi Hasan Miraz up the order after the right-hander smashed a fifty at number three against Afghanistan.

Miraz and Shakib also remained instrumental with the ball in hand. Considering the performance of the spinners in the first game, the Tigers' think tank may opt for an extra spin option against England who began the tournament by receiving a nine-wicket thumping from New Zealand.



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focus intact.

Even the members of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), who travelled to Dharamshala, were given clear instructions not to make any unwanted comments that could spark a controversy.

"Whenever there is a tournament, the players keep their entire focus on it which is ideal. So, now if we talk to the media often then it may create an unnecessary controversy.



India's Ravindra Jadeja celebrates taking the prized wicket of Australia's Steven Smith, who scored a 71-ball 46 in their World Cup opener in Chennai yesterday. The left-arm spinner bowled a ripper that pitched on middle-stump and turned away, evading Smith's defence to hit the outside of off-stump. Jadeja also got rid of Marnus Labuschagne and Alex Carey, returning figures of three for 28 to help bundle out the Aussies for 199.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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### WORLD CUP TIDBITS

## Jarvis invades Ind-Aus game

A pitch invader breached heavy security and fencing to break onto the field at the Cricket World Cup game between India and Australia on Sunday, getting to within touching distance of players including superstar Virat Kohli.

British YouTube prankster Daniel Jarvis stunned the crowd of around 30,000 at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium when he appeared wearing a blue India team shirt with "Jarvo 69" written on the back.

Kohli appeared to speak with Jarvis before security escorted him away.

Jarvis has become a serial pitch invader, making it onto the field three times during England's home Test series against India in 2021.

**Kohli grabs another record** India's star cricketer Virat Kohli, who is usually well-known for breaking batting records, made a record as a fielder in their World Cup 2023 opener against five-time champions Australia yesterday.

Kohli took the catch of Aussie opener Mitchell Marsh in the third over to surpass Anil Kumble for the most catches by a non-wicketkeeper

against India.

Kohli also took the catch of Adam Zampa later in the innings as he now has 16 catches in 27 World Cup matches. Kumble had taken 14 in 18 matches in the mega event.

Australia's World Cup-winning



skipper Ricky Ponting tops the overall chart in this regard, taking a total of 28 catches in 46 matches. **Warner breaks Tendulkar, De Villiers' record**

Australia opener David Warner on Sunday snatched Sachin Tendulkar's record for the fastest to reach 1,000 World Cup runs during the clash

against India.

Warner achieved the landmark in 19 innings in Chennai to better Tendulkar and former South Africa skipper AB de Villiers – both of whom got the runs in 20 outings.

**Rohit oldest Indian captain in World Cup**

Rohit Sharma at 36 years and 161 days, became the oldest to skipper India in a World Cup yesterday. He beat Mohd Azharuddin to the feat. Azhar had captained India at the age of 36 years and 119 days in the 1999 World Cup.

**Starc's fifty**

Australia pacer Mitchell Starc got rid of India opener Ishan Kishan in the very first over yesterday, and with that, the left-arm quick completed 50 wickets in World Cups.

Starc, who had Kishan edge one back to the first slip, became only the fourth pacer and fifth bowler overall to claim 50 or more wickets in World Cups. Australia's legendary pacer Glenn McGrath leads the chart in this regard, scalping 71 wickets in 39 World Cup matches.

## Kane-less New Zealand face Netherlands

AGENCIES

New Zealand pace duo of Tim Southee and Lockie Ferguson are fit to return for Monday's World Cup match against the Netherlands but regular skipper Kane Williamson will continue to sit out, head coach Gary Stead said on Sunday.

Southee (thumb injury) and Ferguson (back injury) missed Thursday's comprehensive victory against defending champions England after failing to recover from their respective injuries. The duo is expected to be up for selection for today's game, boosting the Blackcaps' pace unit, led by Trent Boult.

"Lockie Ferguson got through training really well so providing he is scrubbed up okay this morning, he will be available for this next game," Stead said.


"Tim Southee also got through the training really well. He will just get a final x-ray done this morning and we will make a call after that."

Meanwhile, Williamson will skip the match in Hyderabad to complete his recovery from a knee surgery and is expected to play against Bangladesh.


"He is progressing really well but his fielding needs to be higher," said Stead. "We're confident he will be ready for the third game."

Williamson is the current squad's top scorer in ODIs with more than 6,500 runs and 13 centuries.


New Zealand all-rounder Glenn Phillips Sunday stressed that the Blackcaps must keep their feet on the ground after the convincing win over England.




The meet-up between the Netherlands and New Zealand in Hyderabad today will be the first one in a World Cup (ODI) in 27 years.



The last time the two sides met in a World Cup was also in India in 1996. New Zealand won that game in Vadodara by 119 runs.



The Netherlands are yet to win against New Zealand in any format. The Dutch have lost all four ODIs and three T20Is played against the Blackcaps.



All four ODIs between New Zealand and the Netherlands have been one-sided affairs, with three matches resulting in wins over 100-run margins and one by seven wickets for the Kiwis.

New Zealand pacer Trent Boult ahead of boarding the flight from Ahmedabad to Hyderabad for their World Cup game against the Netherlands today.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK