Star SPORTS
DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 22, 2023, KARTIK 6, 1430 BS

Tom Latham, in absence of Kane Williamson, has led New Zealand nicely with four victories in four matches, but the Black Caps will meet their match today in Virat Kohli-inspired India, who have forged four excellent victories themselves. A contest worthy of a final, the two best sides of the competition will surely produce a match to remember in Dharamshala.

PHOTO: REUTERS

INDIA VS NEW ZEALAND STATS

- Both teams come into the match with a perfect record, having won all four of their opening matches.
- India lead the overall head-to-head record between the two teams by 58-50 and lead by 5-3 in the last 10 matches.
- India, however, won the last three matches at home, played earlier this year.
- The two teams have met nine times in the World Cup, with the Black Caps winning five and the Men in Blue having the last laugh on three occasions, with the other one washed out.
- The last time these two sides met in a World Cup was in the semifinals of the last edition, where New Zealand won by 18 runs.
- The venue – HPCA in Dharamshala – has hosted three matches so far, with Bangladesh beating Afghanistan, England beating Bangladesh and the Netherlands stunning South Africa.
- India will be without all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who injured himself in the last game against Bangladesh while New Zealand will continue to be without regular skipper Kane Williamson due to injury.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS AND GTV
ICC Cricket World Cup
India vs New Zealand
Live from 2:30 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
English Premier League
Aston Villa vs West Ham
Live from 9:30 pm

Orthodox batting-order could script Tigers' turnaround

MAZHAR UDDIN *from Mumbai*

An attacking brand of cricket has been the name of the game in the ongoing ICC World Cup. India, with the aggressive batting-approach have led the way so far but for Bangladesh, however, the scenario is quite the opposite.

Shakib Al Hasan and his troops have already lost three out of their four matches in the flagship event, and batting failure remained the biggest reason behind their downfall.

Apart from the batters lacking form and consistency, constant shuffling of the batting order has inflicted damage on the entire team.

While most teams have arrived at the mega event with a clarity over their game plan, Bangladesh, on the other hand, are still experimenting with their batting positions. As a result, the thought process of the cricketers has seemingly become complicated.

With backs against the wall after facing their third consecutive defeat against India on Thursday, the time has come for head coach Chandika Hathurusingha to sort out the glaring issues and utilise the available resources appropriately.

The idea to promote Mehedi Hasan Miraz was to hold the innings after the early fall of wickets, according to the Tigers think tank. Considering the matchups, the ploy worked against Afghanistan in their tournament opener.

However, there were still questions over Miraz's potential as a top-order batter against quality pace-bowling attack.

But the team management continued to use the right-hander as a shield, opting to send him at number four when it required a conventional approach.

Even after the opening pair of Liton Das and Tanzid Hasan provided a flying start of 93 runs against India – Bangladesh's highest-ever opening stand in the World Cups -- the decision to send Miraz at number four eventually proved costly.

In that game, Miraz's promotion ahead of an in-form Mushfiqur Rahim raised eyebrows aplenty since the Tigers had the platform to post a big total. In the end, the team management's defensive approach backfired as Bangladesh could only post a sub-par 256 for nine in 50 overs.

Another cause for concern for Bangladesh has been the form of Towhid Hridoy. Despite having shown promise at number five at the beginning of his international career, the right-hander has been forced to bat in various positions so far. As a result, the 22-year-old is finding it difficult to adapt to pressure situations.

The likes of Mushfiqur and another experienced batter Mahmudullah Riyad, who is also in good touch -- as evidenced by his 36-ball 46 against India coming in at number seven -- could inspire the team management to rethink their batting strategy.

If skipper Shakib, who missed out the game against India, is able to recover from his thigh injury before their next game against South Africa on October 24, the team management will have the luxury to play seven batters and six specialist bowlers in the line-up, considering the batting-friendly surface of Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium in mind.

In that case, Najmul Hossain Shanto would bat in his usual number three position. If Shakib is fit to play, he can play at No.4, followed by Mushfiqur, Mahmudullah and Miraz so that the Tigers can make the best use of their batting arsenal.

With the pressure to win every match from now onwards, it seems a more conventional approach in batting can pave the way for Bangladesh's turnaround in the tournament.

The battle of the unbeaten

STAR SPORTS DESK

The two leading teams so far in the World Cup will put their undefeated streaks on the line today when hosts India take on New Zealand in Dharamshala in what has all the makings of being a salivating contest.

New Zealand and India have been a cut above the rest so far in the tournament, defeating their first four opponents in the World Cup by sound margins to occupy the first and second spot in the points-table respectively.

Both teams come to the match at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Stadium on the back of comfortable victories.

India completed a comfortable seven-wicket victory over Bangladesh in Pune while the Kiwis overpowered Afghanistan in Chennai on their way to a nine-wicket win.

Tom Latham, who has been leading New Zealand in the absence of injured captain Kane Williamson, feels that the match could end up being a battle between the Kiwi pacers and Indian top-order.

"India's top order have been fantastic this tournament. And again, our bowling attack has done a really good job up front as well. So that's going to be a great contest with bat and ball," Latham said on Saturday.

India will have the advantage of playing in front of a packed home crowd and history also favours India as they have been dominant in home ODIs against New Zealand in the past, winning 29 out of the 38 ODIs against the Black Caps on home soil.

However, when it comes to World Cups, New Zealand have the upper hand against India.

In their nine previous meetings in the showpiece event, New Zealand have won five times, India thrice, while the other match got washed out.

The last World Cup meeting between the sides was in the semifinal of the 2019 edition, which New Zealand won by 18 runs.

Latham, however, downplayed their good record against India in the 50-over showpiece and heaped praises on his opponents.

"They're a fantastic team. They've been playing some great cricket for a long period of time. We've had some great contests in ICC events, but also in bilateral series, whether that be home or away," Latham said on Saturday.

New Zealand have been managing the injuries of key players Williamson and pacer Tim Southee throughout the tournament.

Williamson recovered from an ACL injury to play against Bangladesh, where he again hurt his thumb owing to a misdirected throw from Najmul Hossain Shanto.

The Kiwi camp had said that Williamson is unlikely to return to action this month and on Saturday Latham reaffirmed the status of the star top-order batsman.

"Fingers crossed he'll be available for later on in the tournament," said Latham.

However, there was some good news for the Kiwis as Southee is finally fit to play his first match in the tournament, confirmed Latham.

India, on the other hand, will have to replace all-rounder Hardik Pandya in the XI, who hurt his ankle during the match against Bangladesh.

India have a few options up their sleeves, as they could strengthen their batting by adding batter Ishan Kishan or Surya Kumar Yadav in place of Pandya, or include a fast bowling option in Mohammad Shami.

Sri Lanka batter Sadeera Samarawickrama drill one down the ground during his unbeaten 91 against the Netherlands in a five-wicket victory at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow yesterday. The middle-order batter struck seven fours during his 107-ball knock to guide the former world champions to their first victory in this competition.

PHOTO: AFP

PROTEAS SET RECORDS TUMBLING

229 England lost the match by 229 runs, which is their biggest defeat in ODIs in terms of runs. This is also the second-biggest defeat in terms of runs in World Cups. West Indies suffered the biggest defeat - 257- against Australia in the 2015 World Cup.

151 Heinrich Klaasen and Marco Jansen added 151 runs for the sixth wicket, their biggest-ever partnership for the wicket in ODIs.

70 Gus Atkinson and Mark Wood formed a 70-run partnership for the ninth wicket for England in a losing cause, which is their highest ninth-wicket stand in ODI World Cups.

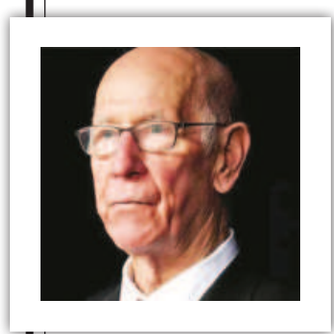
67 Henry Klaasen completed his century off just 67 balls, which is the third-fastest hundred by a Protea batter in World Cups.

> **"It's up there with my best ever. The conditions were brutal. It's just proper heat, sapped out all the energy. Was told to not run my runs too hard, save energy cos the heat out is extreme..... Netherlands was a tough loss. One bad performance doesn't make us a bad team. We had some hard chats, boys bounced back with training sessions. Fantastic performance today."**
>
> Player-of-the-match **Heinrich Klaasen**

Bobby Charlton no more

REUTERS, *London*

Bobby Charlton, the Manchester United player who won the World Cup with England and went on to become a much loved and hugely respected ambassador for club and country, died on Saturday, aged 86. His death was announced by Manchester United in a statement.



Charlton, known for his powerful shooting and distinctive hairstyle won three league titles, the European Cup and an FA Cup during a 20-year career with Manchester United. He was also an integral part of the England team that won the 1966 World Cup.

Dignified, unassuming and regarded as United's greatest ever servant, Charlton appeared 758 times for the club, scoring 249 goals. Both records stood for a long time until Ryan Giggs overtook the former in 2008 and Wayne Rooney the latter nine years later.

"Manchester United are in mourning following the passing of Sir Bobby Charlton, one of the greatest and most beloved players in the history of our club," the club said in a statement.