

A do-or-die contest for Kiwis

AGENCIES

Following a stunning 84-run defeat against Afghanistan in their tournament opener, New Zealand now face a challenging task as the Kiwis need to win their remaining Group C matches in order to progress to the Super Eight.

That challenge for the Kiwis, who now stutter at the bottom of the five-team table, starts against co-hosts the West Indies at the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad today.

"This is essentially like a knockout game. We have got to give it everything we can," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said.

"We have to win three games. We have to win them well," Stead said, adding that he may tinker with his line-up, but will resist making vast changes.

Meanwhile, with two wins in as many games, the Windies find themselves in a comfortable second position in the group, following Afghanistan. But the co-hosts will certainly be wary of a slip, especially having survived a scare of their own in their opening game when they laboured to a five-wicket win over Papua New Guinea.



Zampa first to 100

Australia leggie Adam Zampa led the rout of Namibia in their nine-wicket victory in a Group B game of the T20 World Cup in Antigua on Tuesday. Zampa returned figures of 4-12 as he became the first Australian man to reach 100 T20I wickets. The win also saw Australia secure a Super Eight spot.

Frequent opening slot rejig yet to bear fruit

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh take on the Netherlands in a vital T20 World Cup game at the Arnos Vale Stadium in St. Vincent on Thursday where adaptation would be key for the distraught top-order batters. For Bangladesh, however, it would come in various forms, with team combinations also forcing them to adapt to different batting lineups.

Form troubles at the top guide the Bangladesh team management towards such changes. Earlier in March this year, head coach Chandika Hathurusingha was asked about whether they were finding stability at the top and about the then opening pair of Soumya Sarkar and Liton Das in the Sri Lanka T20Is.

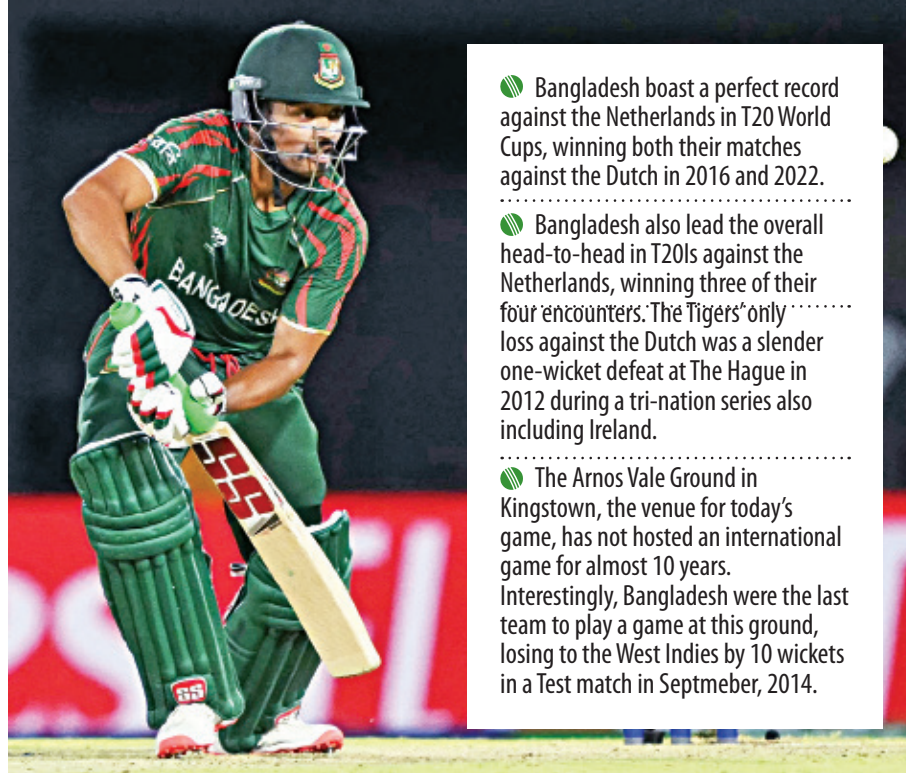
"It's not about this pair but correcting what we have done wrong in the past. Because if something was working, I don't think they would have made so many changes," was Hathurusingha's reply to The Daily Star's query during a press conference.

In a nutshell, many batters have been tried in combinations, but consistency has been lacking. In Monday's South Africa fixture, team combination or opener Soumya's form concerns kept him out of the side while the Tigers unfurled another opening pair as skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto came out to open.

For Shanto, it was an opportunity to find some meaningful time and form at the crease, which he could not capitalise in a chase that was not steep.

The thing to watch for, in terms of playing eleven-wise, is what Bangladesh feel is the best combination against the Dutch. Jaker Ali Anik played the last game but did not keep wickets. Given the form of the rest of the batting unit, bar Towhid Hridoy and Mahmudullah Riyad, most of the others have experienced a difficult time of late.

The team management would have



● Bangladesh boast a perfect record against the Netherlands in T20 World Cups, winning both their matches against the Dutch in 2016 and 2022.

● Bangladesh also lead the overall head-to-head in T20Is against the Netherlands, winning three of their four encounters. The Tigers' only loss against the Dutch was a slender one-wicket defeat at The Hague in 2012 during a tri-nation series also including Ireland.

● The Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown, the venue for today's game, has not hosted an international game for almost 10 years. Interestingly, Bangladesh were the last team to play a game at this ground, losing to the West Indies by 10 wickets in a Test match in September, 2014.

to focus on playing to their strengths, but where does that strength lie in the batting unit? The last T20I played at the Arnos Vale Stadium was in 2013 and there is no certainty that Bangladesh and Netherlands will play on a better batting surface in West Indies compared to what it was in USA.

Bangladesh have used three different opening pairs within the last six matches, and seven pairs within a year. It is surprising that they had a century opening stand in their last game of the three-match T20I series against USA and are having to change plans so soon. It also gives an idea of the inconsistency at the top, but it may also be a matter of putting trust in players.

Bangladesh batters have always dealt with slower or lower wickets. A better wicket may even see Soumya come in after being overlooked in the last game. If Shanto is to open, it leaves room for middle order to be bolstered. It may not have worked with Jaker against South Africa, but it will once again be up for discussion after that tight match ended in a disappointing loss.

Form inconsistency starts from the very top. It could also be from the top that the tone is set for better batting effort. Netherlands bowling has been up to mark in this mega event and Shanto and Tanzid Hasan Tamim would have to find an answer.

SHORT CORNER



Alcaraz, Nadal named in Spanish Olympic tennis team

French Open champions Carlos Alcaraz and Rafael Nadal have been named in the Spain team for the 2024 Olympic Games, the Spanish tennis federation (RFET) announced Wednesday. World number two Alcaraz last weekend won his first Roland Garros title on the clay in Paris, where the Olympic tournament will take place from July 27 to August 4.

India coach rues 'injustice'

India coach Igor Stimac condemned what he called an "irregular" goal in a 2-1 defeat at Qatar that ended his team's World Cup 2026 qualifying hopes, saying: "It shouldn't happen." The loss in Doha on Tuesday dashed India's dreams of reaching the third round of Asian qualifying for the World Cup for the first time.

Ten Hag to remain as Man Utd boss

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag will remain in the job for next season and has entered into talks with the Old Trafford club over a contract extension despite the team's lowest ever Premier League finish of eighth, British media reported. Ten Hag's contract runs until the end of next season, with the club having the option of extending it a further 12 months.

Shakib drops to fifth as Nabi rises to top

Veteran Afghanistan all-rounder Mohammad Nabi is the big winner in the latest ICC Rankings update, with the 39-year-old rising to the No.1 spot on the list for all-rounders following his recent two-wicket haul against New Zealand in Guyana. Previous No.1-ranked player Shakib Al Hasan dropped four rungs to fifth as a result of the major shake-up at the top.

Read full stories on The Daily Star website



Mohammedan Sporting Club players take a selfie after clinching a record third Dhaka Premier Division Women's Cricket League with a 46-run win against Rupali Bank Krira Parishad at the BKSP-3 ground on Wednesday. Disha Deepak Kasat scalped a fiver as Mohammedan, unbeaten in the league with nine straight wins, bundled out Rupali Bank for 203 for 10 in 45.5 overs while defending a 250-run target.

PHOTO: BCS

Junior hockey teams eye Asia Cup berths

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's and women's U-21 hockey teams left for Singapore last night to take part in the Junior AHF Cups starting from June 14 with an aim to secure berths in next month's Junior Asia Cups in their respective events.

Bangladesh, reigning champions in men's Junior AHF Cup, have been placed in Pool A along with Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Singapore while Pool B features Oman, Chinese Taipei, China, Hong Kong, Iran and Kazakhstan, with four semifinalists advancing to the next edition of Junior Asia Cup.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh women's U-21 team, who are going to participate in this tournament for the second time, will have to battle against Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Sri Lanka as top four finishers will qualify for Women's Junior Asia Cup.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

tournaments but could not play any warm-up matches.

"Our target is to defend the title as we have prepared well for more than one month. It could have been better with a couple of practice matches but we are optimistic as the players came into the camp just after the Dhaka Premier League," said men's team's assistant coach Hedayetul Islam Razib on the eve of the teams' departure.

Women's team manager Tariquzzaman Nannu informed that they would try to arrange a couple of practice matches in Singapore.

"Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka and played well against Hong Kong in 2019 while the girls also performed well against Chinese Taipei and Indonesia in another five-a-side tournament. So we are hoping to finish among the top four," Nannu told The Daily Star.



Stream ICC T20 World Cup Exclusively on Toffee

Toffee, the country's leading digital entertainment platform, is bringing the carnival of cricket to the Bangladeshi cricket frolics once again as the T20 World Cup is already on its way. With 20 participating nations for the first time in history, the world is experiencing cricket invading an unconquered land, the USA being a co-host with an old fix of this format. West Indies, Bangladesh has exclusive digital broadcasting rights to this event, so Toffee is the only digital platform in Bangladesh that will be streaming the ICC T20 World Cup matches, offering access to this major sporting event for the people of Bangladesh.

Toffee is accessible from any mobile network, not just Banglalink users. This inclusivity ensures that all cricket fans in Bangladesh will enjoy the T20 World Cup and the future major ICC events broadcast on Toffee.

Toffee will also exclusively stream major cricket events in 2024 and 2025, including the ICC Men's and Women's T20 World Cups and the ICC Men's Champions Trophy. Fans can look forward to 71 men's and 95 women's matches from 20 nations to watch live on Toffee.

Sports and entertainment consumption habits have changed drastically among the people of this country over the last few years. Mobility is on the rise, so people need entertainment that is personalized and on the go. With the help of Ookla's certified fastest 4G internet of Banglalink, the digital operator's homegrown digital entertainment platform, Toffee is leading this development.

Toffee has already established itself as the premier destination for high-quality live streaming of major sporting events in the country. It has attracted over

50 million viewers across Bangladesh who have enjoyed live streaming of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Asia Cup Cricket 2023 and ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023. During the FIFA World Cup in 2022, more than 30 million people enjoyed the matches on Toffee. Specifically, the final between Argentina and France had 15 million viewers, capturing one-third of the Bangladeshi audience.

In the last year of 2023 alone, during Asia Cup Cricket 2023 and ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023, Toffee generated one billion minutes of premium cricket views, which reflects cricket lovers' faith in this OTT platform. Matches of this T20 World Cup 2024 are when people are way to work in the morning or back from work in the evening. So, all the matches can be enjoyed uninterrupted on Toffee while commuting.

When asked about his experience, a young viewer named Sajid, who enjoys watching cricket on Toffee, shared, "From my university days to my current corporate life, I am always on the move. As life gets busier, finding time to sit and watch content becomes increasingly difficult. But as a cricket fanatic, I can't imagine missing any matches. Thanks to Toffee, I can catch my favorite live cricket matches on the go, all on one platform, without any hassle and while multitasking."

Toffee has been popular among senior and marginalized citizens for its user friendly interface and versatile content library suitable for people from all socio-economic backgrounds.

With the DO 1440 initiative, Banglalink is the innovative force behind Toffee's success as Banglalink's commitment to providing premium digital experiences every 1440 minutes of a day.