

‘Experienced’ Riyad stays, Miraz returns

SPORTS REPORTER

Veteran Mahmudullah Riyad held his spot while Mehedi Hasan Miraz made a comeback to the T20I side as Bangladesh announced a 15-member squad for the three-match T20I series against India, starting in Gwalior on October 6.

Chief selector Gazi Ashraf Lipu backed under-fire Mahmudullah, saying that he had not given up on experience despite underlining how this squad was a reflection of their plans for the 2026 T20 World Cup.

Mahmudullah had come under scrutiny after star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan announced that “he had played his final T20I” on Friday to make way for new faces, keeping in mind the major event two years later.

Many had pointed out how Mahmudullah, who dished out a detrimental performance in Bangladesh’s last Super Eights match, should follow suit or be axed from the demanding format in which the 38-year-old has struggled in, as evidenced by a career strike-rate of under 117.81. He batted with a strike-rate of 94.05 in the T20 World Cup earlier this year.

“Mahmudullah Riyad is in the team. We still have faith in him that he can help the team,” Lipu said in a video message yesterday.

Miraz, on the other hand, received a recall after 14 months due to Shakib’s absence. Lipu explained how they were not looking at the 26-year-old for the 20-over format but Shakib’s unexpected announcement had prompted them to rope him in.

“The great Shakib Al Hasan announced that he had played his final T20I. Considering his experience and performance, we don’t have someone anywhere near him for replacement but batting-wise; someone who can make up for Shakib’s absence is Mehedi Hasan Miraz. He will take that spot.

“Our thinking is that Miraz can make his biggest contributions with the bat. He bowls good off-spin but we did not go for him in the T20 World Cup; a big reason for that was that we did not want to hamper his batting or bowling in Test and ODIs through the aggressive nature of T20 cricket. We thought that his Powerplay bowling was not a good option. We were clear then about where we wanted to see him. In the context, we want to see him bat higher and not as a finisher.”

Soumya Sarker was dropped and left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam was sidelined due to injury, making way for opener Parvez Hossain Emon and Rakibul Hasan.

SQUAD: Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon, Towhid Hridoy, Mahmudullah, Liton Kumar Das, Jaker Ali Anik, Mehedi Hassan Miraz, Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Rakibul Hasan.



Bangladesh batter Mushfiquur Rahim’s wait for the action to resume extended further on Sunday as play was called off for a second consecutive day due to a wet outfield following just 35 overs of action on a rain-interrupted opening day of their second and final Test against India in Kanpur. Mushfiquur, unbeaten on 6, will hope for things to improve on the fourth day today as all he could do yesterday was lay down his gloves and pads on the Green Park stadium turf to dry.

PHOTO: BCB

Curious case of wet outfield in another no play day

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Kanpur

It was unclear to reporters present at the Kanpur Green Park Stadium yesterday what was halting the third day’s play of the second Test between Bangladesh and India from getting on to the field.

There was no rain in the morning and it did not rain near the venue till 5:00 PM, so naturally, expectation was that the match which saw no action on Day 2 and only 35 overs of play on the opening day, will resume at some point in the day.

But three inspections later, at 2:00 PM the umpires called off the day’s play, without there being any rain.

The weather had however played tricks. Conditions were mostly overcast but light improved at certain points of the day, which brought out loud cheers from the big turnout in the stadium, who saw it as a sign that the day’s play would eventually begin.

After the first inspection at 10:00 AM, there was hope that the next inspection at 12:00 PM will bring good news. Instead, the umpires set up another inspection at 2:00 PM, this time with the added note of ‘bad light’.

There was confusion over why another inspection had been set up, was the outfield still damp? In each inspection, the bowlers’ run-up areas and the outfield were checked. It could be surmised from the press box that there was moisture in the surface. Yet there was no word on outfield’s condition.

The covers on the ground had been taken off before 9:00 AM yesterday and 30 minutes later, the pitch covers were



removed.

But after the 2:00 PM inspection, when the sun too had come out for the first time in two days, the day’s play was called off due to wet outfield. Just a few minutes later, it got overcast again.

Why the umpires singled out bad light when the outfield had been the issue or did the correct information not reach the press box, is unclear.

Sources claimed that the groundstaff had drilled inadequately to cover up the Kanpur outfield. There may have been issues with covering the ground as well, perhaps it was not done as fast as it should have been. Large super soppers were at work on Day 2 but were not actively tending to the outfield yesterday.

The umpires were not seen checking

for lights. The condition of the outfield, it appeared, was being kept out of the radars of reporters. Sources have claimed the poor drainage system is the biggest issues at the Kanpur stadium.

The venue may have offered resistance to play continuing but the weather too was unkind. Humidity was high throughout the day and moisture does not go away easily, especially without the sun coming out.

The weather was described as peculiar by most involved with cricket in Kanpur. Simply said, at this time of the year, there is usually no rain. That could have been a reason for under preparation.

A sunnier sky is expected on Monday which could allow some cricket. However, with two days down the drain, a draw seems like the likeliest conclusion now.



The captains and coaches of Bangladesh and India teams pose for a photograph with the trophy at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday ahead of today’s final match of SAFF U-17 Championship. Bangladesh finished runners-up to India in the last edition and were beaten by the same opposition in the first match of the tournament which is why coach Saiful Bari termed the final opponents as favourites.

PHOTO: SAFF

SHORT CORNER

‘Shakib must clarify political standpoint’

Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud said yesterday that star all-rounder and former member of parliament of the autocratic Awami League government Shakib Al Hasan must clarify his political standpoint to make amends with his compatriots. Mahmud said the state will, naturally, ensure the security of its citizens, and Shakib, being a cricketer, will be assigned as much security as any player receives.

Bangladesh end AFC U-20 Asian Cup Qualifiers with win

Bangladesh ended their AFC U-20 Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign with a 2-1 win over Bhutan in their final Group A encounter at Lach Tray Stadium in Hai Phong, Vietnam yesterday. With two defeats, one win, and a draw, Bangladesh finished third in the five-team group.

Afghanistan confirm Bangladesh ODIs in November

Afghanistan cricket team will play three one-day internationals against Bangladesh in the United Arab Emirates next month, confirmed the country’s cricket board today. In a social media post, Afghanistan Cricket Board said, “Afghan national cricket team will play one day international matches with Bangladesh national team on 6th, 9th and 11th of November 2024 which will be hosted by Afghanistan in UAE.

Archer Alif reaches final of Asian Youth C’ship

Archer Abdur Rahman Alif stormed into the final of the Men’s Recurve Under-21 event of the Asian Archery Youth Championships with a comprehensive 7-1 set points win over Iran’s Mohammed Hossein Golshani Asl in the semifinal in Taipei City in Chinese Taipei yesterday. Alif will now play against Li-Cheng Huang of Chinese Taipei in the gold-deciding match on Tuesday.

Wadifa secures first WIM norm

WFM Wadifa Ahmed clinched her first Women’s International Master norm from SixDays Budapest September 2024 IM A tournament after beating FM Kemal Bashirov of Ukraine in the ninth and final round in Budapest, Hungary on Sunday. Wadifa secured five points from nine matches to ensure her WIM norm as well as finish fourth among 10 players, who played each other in the tournament.

Read full stories on The Daily Star’s website.

Hard work pays off for Sri Lanka

AGENCIES

Debutant off-spinner Nishan Peiris took six wickets yesterday after Kamindu Mendis played a record-breaking knock earlier as Sri Lanka sealed their first series win against New Zealand in 15 years with a crushing victory by an innings and 154 runs in the second Test in Galle.

New Zealand were all out for 360 in their second innings before tea on day four after being asked to follow-on.

Sri Lanka won the opening match by 63 runs and the series win is their first against New Zealand since a 2-0 win at home in 2009.

The result leaves New Zealand winless from six Test appearances at Galle, with Sunday’s 360 their highest innings total at the venue.

Peiris, 27, and fellow spinner Prabath Jayasuriya shared 18 wickets in the match, the latter taking 6-42 in the first innings to bundle out the tourists for just 88 after the hosts had amassed a mammoth 602-5 declared, thanks to Kamindu Mendis’ unbeaten 182.

Peiris took his maiden five-wicket haul, finishing with figures of six for 170 in the second innings.

“Amazing how the batting unit rose to the occasion,” Sri Lanka captain Dhananajaya de Silva told reporters.

“Then the spinners were too good... Once we bowled them out for less than 100 runs in the first innings, it was very



difficult for them to come back into the game.”

De Silva also talked about how the toss had went their way and hailed his team as their hard work paid off for the series.

“I call well and toss well! Nishan was brilliant, he was doing well in domestic cricket. He has the control. We have been practising hard [with the catching], and it has paid off,” De Silva added.

New Zealand’s lower order did put up some fight after resuming at 199-5 on Sunday, with Tom Blundell, Glenn Phillips, and Mitchell Santner all making half-centuries.

Kamindu Mendis, who made a hundred in the opening game, was named player of the match for his epic knock during which he became

the fastest Asian to 1,000 Test runs by reaching the milestone in his 13th innings.

“I think Kamindu at five can play the long innings and I can finish the game at number six,” Sri Lanka skipper De Silva mentioned how Mendis had significantly strengthened his team’s middle-order.

New Zealand captain Tim Southee said playing two Tests at Galle, known as a spinner’s paradise, was always going to be challenging.

“It’s a tough place to come for a foreign team, and Sri Lanka played some great cricket,” Southee said after New Zealand slipped to seventh place in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings. Sri Lanka remain in third place but they have now improved their point percentage to 55.55%.



With only 11 days left for the season’s curtain-raising one-off Challenge Cup match against Bashundhara Kings, Mohammedan players train at the club premises in Motijheel yesterday, with head coach Alfaz Ahmed (L) involved with Uzbek playmaker Mozaffarjon Mozaffarov and local midfielder Alamgir Kabir Rana. The Black and Whites, who started their camp on September 18, will look to start the campaign with a title after finishing the Federation Cup, the Independence Cup, and the Bangladesh Premier League as runners-up last season.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED