



The Bangladesh national football team pose for a picture after arriving in the country from Nepal on a Bangladesh Air Force aircraft at around 4:40 pm yesterday. The booters, who had been stranded at a hotel in Kathmandu for three days after flight operations in the Himalayan nation were disrupted due to political unrest, were relieved to return home safe and sound -- with captain Jamal Bhuiyan describing the entire ordeal as a "different experience." The team was originally scheduled to return on Wednesday, but the second and final FIFA friendly match against Nepal, slated for September 9, was called off following Monday's violence, which claimed several lives and led to the resignation of the country's Prime Minister.

PHOTO: BFF

A dream for Oman, a chance to gauge for Pakistan

STAR SPORTS DESK

On paper, the Asia Cup match between Pakistan and Oman in Dubai today might seem like a mismatch, but it will offer both sides different points to prove -- Oman looking to mark their first ever appearance in the continental event with a memorable outing, while Pakistan aim to continue their good run of form before facing archrivals India in their next Group A fixture.

Pakistan enter the tournament on the back of a tri-series win in Sharjah against the UAE and Afghanistan, gaining valuable exposure to Gulf conditions -- already a familiar setting for them, having played many matches there over the past decade.

➤ This is going to be the first T20I meeting between Pakistan and Oman.

➤ Oman, who qualified for the event finishing as top two sides in the ACC Men's Premier Cup last April, will be playing in the Asia Cup for the first time.

The Salman Ali Agha-led side won four of their five matches in the tri-series, with their only defeat coming against Afghanistan in the round robin stage.

Meanwhile, Oman, led by Jatinder Singh, might be short on game time in T20 cricket. Their last outing was a home series against the USA in February, where they lost all three matches.

For Oman, however, simply featuring in the Asia Cup is an achievement in itself. Their skipper Jatinder recently reflected on what this moment means for the nation.

"When we started, our primary goal was to find a job; cricket was always secondary," Jatinder told PTI Videos last week.

A 'Nagin' reminder for HASARANGA!

EKUSH TAPADER from Abu Dhabi

"Nagin, Nagin!" shouted some fans at Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga from the gallery of the Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Thursday. The leg spin bowling all rounder didn't notice the chants at first, when he did, he responded with a faint smile.

The said fans were a group of Bangladeshi expatriates who had arrived early to watch the Tigers practice at the venue ahead of their opening Group B match of the Asia Cup against Hong Kong later in the day.

The fans told the reporter that the Hong Kong match didn't interest them much and they were desperately trying to procure tickets for the games against Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in Abu Dhabi, however, the online portal showed that none were available for either games.

By teasing Hasaranga with the "Nagin" chants, the expatriates stirred up the memories of the Nidahas Trophy in 2018, a tournament that sparked the Bangladesh-Sri Lanka rivalry, which has turned into the second most

spiciest cricketing contest in the sub continent after India-Pakistan.

On Thursday, the Sri Lankan team, who will face the Tigers on Saturday, had a scheduled training session in Abu Dhabi before Bangladesh. As the Tigers entered the venue, the Lankans were still training, and a few players exchanged greetings.

Players from both sides have recently tried to downplay the rivalry in the media. Hasaranga did not even want to touch the topic as when this reporter asked, "Are you fully prepared for

the rivalry?" while he was leaving the ground, he replied, "Bangladesh media? No comments."

In July, Bangladesh defeated Sri Lanka in Sri Lanka for the first time in a T20I series, but Hasaranga did not play due to injury.

The leg spinner usually does well against Bangladesh in T20Is, having claimed six wickets from four games. Beyond wickets, pressure created from his end has many-a-times led to wickets at the other.

Hasaranga has a strong record at Abu Dhabi as well, with five wickets in three matches while never conceding more than six runs per over.

He generally bowls after the Powerplay, which makes him major threat to Bangladesh's middle order consisting Litton, Jaker Ali, Saif Hassan, and Tawhid Hridoy -- all right handers, which plays into the leg spinner's advantage.

Bangladesh players as well as fans know that neutralising his threat would be key for them when playing the six-time Asia Cup champions. Hasaranga, who has been out of action since last July, himself faces the challenge of regaining his rhythm. And during Thursday's practice, he got a taste of what kind of atmosphere awaits him in the Abu Dhabi stands in his comeback game.



Rony balances pride and regret on world stage

ANISUR RAHMAN

Representing the national team at an international event is a matter of pride for any athlete. The same holds true for hurdler Najimul Hossain Rony, who is set to compete in the 400m hurdles at the World Athletics Championships on Monday in Tokyo, Japan.

However, along with pride, Rony also carries a sense of regret.

"It has really been an honour to represent the country at the international level, but we usually can't give back anything to the nation despite trying our best in these world-class meets. It is more of a regret than a bad feeling," Rony told The Daily Star over phone, reflecting on the struggles of Bangladeshi athletes on the global stage.

The 26-year-old hurdler's appearance in Tokyo will mark only his second international meet, following his debut at the Asian Athletics Championships last March in South Korea. Rony was selected for the national team after setting a new record at the National Athletics Championships in February.

Although competing against the world's best may seem daunting, Rony has set his sights on using his experience at the World Athletics Championships, which gets underway on Saturday, as preparation for the upcoming South Asian Games.

"What I achieved at the national or Asian Athletics Championships is far from international standard, but I think I can repay the nation in the South Asian Games if I improve on my national

record timing of 50.84 seconds," he said, adding that he would be happy if he could better that mark in Tokyo.

"I know it will be tough to achieve something big with my current timing [50.84], but I need to bring it down to around 49.20 or 49.30 seconds for the South Asian Games," the Bogura-born athlete said. "Of course, this is possible if I get proper training facilities under a foreign coach, along with a proper diet."

Rony clocked 52.39 seconds at the Asian Athletics Championships in March before producing 52.30 seconds (hand-timed) last month at the Summer Athletics Championships -- a competition before which the Bangladesh Army man went through a knee injury that saw him refrain from training for nearly 12 days.

In Japan, he will undergo three days of official training starting today before stepping on the track on Monday. However, he kept himself active by warming up and running in open spaces around his hotel in Tokyo.

Rony's rise has not been easy. He began competing in the National Athletics Championships only in 2022, five years after joining the Bangladesh Army. He first caught the attention of selectors in 2018 through inter-unit competitions but had to wait until 2021 to earn a call-up to the Army athletics team.

Since then, Rony has not looked back, winning gold in the 400m sprint at the 45th National Athletics Championships before switching to the 400m hurdles -- an event in which he has now claimed three successive national gold medals.



WOMEN'S WORLD CUP All-women officials to make history

AGENCIES

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that the upcoming ICC Women's Cricket World Cup will feature an all-female panel of match officials for the first time in the tournament's history.

The panel comprises 14 umpires and four match referees, including Bangladesh's Shathira Jakir Jesy. While recent events such as the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the last two ICC Women's T20 World Cups also had all-female officiating teams, this marks the first time the Women's World Cup will achieve the milestone.

"This marks a defining moment in the journey of women's cricket, one that we hope will pave the way for many more trailblazing stories across all facets of the sport," ICC chairman Jay Shah said. "The inclusion of an all-women panel of match officials is not only a major milestone but also a powerful reflection of the ICC's unwavering commitment to advancing gender equity across cricket."

Match Referees: Trudy Anderson, Shandre Fritz, GS Lakshmi, Michelle Pereira

Umpires: Lauren Agenbag, Candace la Borde, Kim Cotton, Sarah Dambanevana, Shathira Jakir Jesy, Kerrin Klaaste, Janani N, Nimali Perera, Claire Polosak, Vrinda Rathi, Sue Redfern, Eloise Sheridan, Gayathri Venugopalan, Jacqueline Williams.

Mirpur spirit comes alive in Abu Dhabi

EKUSH TAPADER from Abu Dhabi

Wherever Bangladesh play, the roar of their fans follow. In Mirpur, a sea of red and green waves in unison, and across the globe -- be it Melbourne or Dubai -- small pockets of Bangladesh fans keep that same spirit alive.

On Thursday evening at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi, it was no different. Bangladesh opened their Asia Cup campaign against Hong Kong, and even though the opposition wasn't glamorous and the stands looked sparse, a small band of migrant workers turned the concrete galleries into a little Bangladesh.

They had no drums, no trumpets, and no corporate-sponsored fan zones -- only flags draped over their shoulders, painted cheeks, and voices full of unshakable belief.

Al Islam from Narayanganj and Abul Kalam Azad from Brahmanbaria work in Dubai, but on Thursday they left behind their jobs and drove 150



kilometres to Abu Dhabi. "We didn't go to work just to watch. We believe this team will do well," Al Islam said, smiling despite knowing he will have to pay a fine for his absence.

Saiful Ismam, another worker, also risked deductions from his salary. "Inshallah, we will play the final," he declared with conviction.

For these fans, life in the UAE is not easy. They toil long hours in construction sites, shops, and offices, sending money home to families they rarely see. A day off costs them heavily, both in wages and, sometimes, in penalties. Yet on this weekday afternoon, they chose cricket.

Amidst such optimism, there was also a hint of nostalgia. "I miss Shakib Al Hasan a hundred out of a hundred," said Jewel Ahmed, an emotional fan. "The team needs him. But even without him, I believe. This team can fight."

Kamrul, wrapped in a Bangladesh fan, termed Bangladesh captain Litton Das a "true T20 hero". His friends nodded in agreement, tipping Litton, Jaker Ali, and Taskin Ahmed as the pillars of Bangladesh's campaign. "Litton is in superb form -- we expect something big. We enjoy Jaker's sixes. And Taskin is our best bowler. This time, we'll be champions." The crowd may have been small in number, but their passion was boundless. Each cheer, each chant, each raised flag stitched a piece of Bangladesh onto the desert air of Abu Dhabi.

Novartis (Bangladesh) Limited

has been renamed as
Nevia Lifescience PLC

Public Announcement
Company Name Change

Novartis (Bangladesh) Limited has been renamed as Nevia Lifescience PLC with effect from 10 September 2025, following the acquisition of its majority shares by Radiant Pharmaceuticals Limited from Novartis AG Switzerland, with due incorporation by the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms (RJSC), while the shareholding status of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) in the Company remains unchanged.

This milestone has been achieved after fulfilling all statutory and regulatory requirements, ensuring a seamless and compliant transition.

Earlier on 05 December 2024 Novartis announced its intention to sell its stake in Novartis (Bangladesh) Limited to Radiant Pharmaceuticals Limited, a leading and trusted pharmaceutical company in Bangladesh.

Nevia Lifescience PLC ensures that patients in Bangladesh will have continued access to Novartis' global brands manufactured under-license using the same process, under the same quality standards, as well as through import and distribution of Novartis' innovative life-saving medicines under the banner of Nevia Lifescience PLC.

Nevia Lifescience PLC

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