

Tigers to stay back in UAE

SPORTS REPORTER from Dubai

Bangladesh's Asia Cup campaign ended with a defeat to Pakistan in the virtual semifinal on Thursday. However, the team will not be returning home now. Just a few days later, a bilateral series against Afghanistan will begin in UAE.

The three-match T20I series, scheduled for October 2, 3, and 5, will be followed by ODIs on October 8, 11, and 14. Practice sessions have already been scheduled to start on September 29. Therefore, the players in the T20I squad for the Afghanistan series will not have the chance to return home.

On September 29, the team will switch hotels. Players not selected for the Afghanistan series will return, and a few replacements may arrive from Bangladesh. While the dates of the Afghanistan series are confirmed, there is still some uncertainty about the venues. The ODIs are expected to be held at Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi, while the T20Is are likely to be staged in Sharjah or Dubai.

T20I captain Litton Das, who missed the last two crucial Super Four matches due to a strain on his back, remains somewhat uncertain for the Afghanistan series as well.



Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu, Pakistan's Fatima Sana, South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt, and Bangladesh's Nigar Sultana Joty attended the captains' day event in Colombo on Friday ahead of the 13th ICC Women's World Cup, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka from September 30. The other four skippers -- from Australia, England, India, and New Zealand -- gathered for a similar event in Bengaluru. Having been short on match practice and also seeing their first warm-up against South Africa washed out, Bangladesh will look to gain valuable preparation in today's final warm-up against Sri Lanka before opening their campaign against Pakistan on October 2.

PHOTO: AFP

BCB polls: Final voter list published

SPORTS REPORTER

The Election Commission of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Friday announced the final voter list of 191 councillors for the upcoming board of directors' polls, scheduled for October 6.

The final list included councillors from 15 Dhaka-based clubs that were excluded from the draft list, revealed on September 23, as they were under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for irregularities.

In addition, the councillorships of five districts -- Sylhet, Bogura, Pabna, Sirajganj, and Naogaon -- were also granted although the councillorship for Narsingdi remained vacant. "We didn't receive any application from Narsingdi district for the councillorship. There were applications from the other five districts. We checked whether they met the criteria for councillorship and after being convinced, we added them to the list," Election Commissioner Kazi Nazrul Islam, who is also the executive director of National Sports Council, told The Daily Star on Friday.

As per the BCB constitution, the deputy commissioner of a district is supposed to approve the nomination of councillorship from that region as the head of the ad-hoc committee running that district's sports association.

However, Nazrul informed that the DCs of those five districts did not approve any names.

"They [deputy commissioners] didn't approve their names. But as they are eligible, the Election Commission decided that they can be included. We followed the BCB constitution before granting their councillorships," he said.

The election commissioner also said that the councillorship of the 15 clubs were granted as they were yet to be convicted by the ACC.

The EC also kept former BCB president Faruque Ahmed's councillorship as it was satisfied with his explanation for late submission.

Nazmul was hopeful that all doubts over the EC's fairness will end after the announcement of the final voters list.

"We are working independently and don't have any biases. After seeing the final voter list, I think everyone will feel that we are doing our job the right way."

On Thursday, the EC had conducted hearings on 38 objections submitted regarding the draft voter list at the BCB office.

The nomination forms for the board of directors election will be distributed today at the BCB office between 10:00am-5:00pm. The candidates will submit their forms on the next day.

Panicky Tigers forget 'basic cricket'

EKUSH TAPADER from Dubai

During the innings break of the Bangladesh-Pakistan Super Four match in Dubai on Thursday, Pakistan legend Wasim Akram looked tense.

When asked about the match situation, Akram, who is working as a commentator at the Asia Cup, said, "The wicket is a bit tricky, but if Bangladesh plays basic cricket, they'll easily make it to the final."

Thankfully for Pakistan, Bangladesh did not play that "basic cricket", suffered a 11-run defeat, and squandered a golden opportunity to play the final.

After the match, Akram spoke to the Bangladeshi media and pointed out that the Tigers' batting struggles reflected the weakness of their first-class structure. "Look, batters with good technique for any format will come from red-ball first-class cricket. That's the area Bangladesh needs to improve."

The term "batting technique" echoed throughout the media box of the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Thursday night. Journalists and former players turned commentators sat close by, exchanging thoughts in between sips of coffee. The common subject was the technique of Bangladesh's batters -- conversations that were not flattering for the Tigers.

The lack of technical skill among Bangladeshi batters is nothing new. But against Pakistan, the shortcomings in the team management's plans were also glaring.

The management reduced the



number of top-order batters and went in with a cluster of lower-order players. After the side lost early wickets, those batters looked embarrassingly out of place.

Indian legend Sunil Gavaskar told a journalist from his country, "If they had just played with a straight bat, these runs would have come anyway. Who knows what was going through their heads!"

The way nervousness and panic took over Bangladesh's innings while chasing a mere 136, it seemed as if they had no belief that playing with calm heads could get them those runs.

Bangladesh's goal this Asia Cup was to become champions. But apart from one or two flashes, the team never really looked like they could go all the way. In fact,

just reaching the Super Four after various calculations felt like an achievement. The way the team played in losing causes against India and Pakistan, rekindled old doubts about their T20 abilities. Before the Asia Cup, it looked like Litton Das and Co had finally grown into a proper team in the shortest format. On the bigger stage, however, their frailties were exposed once again.

The batting, in particular, looked like a leaky roof -- plugging one hole for only another to spring up. In trying to increase their six-hitting ability, the batters seemed to have forgotten the skill of rotating the strike. Then in the slog overs, when sixes are a must, the lower-order batters failed completely.

In fact, only opener Saif Hassan, who hit 12 sixes in four innings, consistently cleared the ropes for Bangladesh in the Asia Cup. After him, Shamim Hossain, Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Tawhid Hridoy are jointly second with three maximums each.

Jaker Ali, who led in the last two matches in Litton's absence, faced 66 balls in the tournament without hitting a single six.

Head coach Phil Simmons, however, considered Saif's emergence as the silver lining amidst the disappointment. This follows the set pattern of the management clinging onto one or two individual performances after a lacklustre tournament to try and stay afloat. But that hardly masks the reality that the team is drowning under its recurring troubles.

SAFF U-17 CHAMPIONSHIP Can Bangladesh end India jinx?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will look to break their title jinx when they come up against India in the final of SAFF U-17 Championship at the Racecourse International Stadium in Colombo on Saturday. The match will begin at 6:30pm (Bangladesh Time).

Although Bangladesh clinched two youth titles of the regional championships -- U-16 and U-15 -- in their first final attempts, they never won the U-17 title despite playing back-to-back finals in 2023 and 2024 -- losing to India 2-0 on both occasions.

The charges of Golam Rabbani Choton confirmed the final berth with three successive wins -- two in group stages and one in the semifinals -- without conceding a single goal. They have also played some scintillating football, raising hope of toppling six-time youth champions India.

"Boys are excited and motivated to play the final and they are fully prepared to take on India, who are a very good side," Choton said. "If the boys can implement the game plan and remain united, then we will have a good chance to achieve our target."

Replying to a query, Choton said, "India have always been a strong side at youth level and they are good in physic, transition, ball distribution, set pieces and quick attacks but we can have opportunities to catch them by utilising the big space behind their high-line defence."

Abahani held by 10-man Rahmatganj

SPORTS REPORTER

Last season's runners-up Abahani started the Bangladesh Football League with a goalless draw against 10-man Rahmatganj in Munshiganj on Friday.

Abahani, considered the second favourites, made a disappointing start against a side, who also held them to draws twice in last season's league.

Reduced to 10 men in the 39th minute, the Old Dhaka Outfit even went close to breaking the deadlock at the start of the second half.

Abahani reorganised and pressed hard for a lead until the final whistle but lack of cutting edge saw them drop two points in their opening game.

In Manikganj, Arambagh marked their return to the top-tier league with a 1-1 draw against Fakirerpool Young Men's Club. Arambagh, who last played in the professional league in 2021, took the lead through a strike from Nigerian forward Yaya John Denapo in the 60th minute before Egyptian forward Mostafa Mahmoud equalised in stoppage time.



Bangladesh's Jamal Hossain claimed the Telangana Golconda Masters 2025 title after rain forced the cancellation of the final round at the Hyderabad Golf Association golf course on Friday, sealing victory on a 54-hole total. The 40-year-old, a five-time PGTI winner, had positioned himself perfectly with three brilliant rounds of 61, 62 and 64, finishing at 23-under 187 and with a commanding four-shot lead over India's Akshay Sharma.

PHOTO: PGTI

Atletico face early Real reckoning

AGENCIES

Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone is wary of dwelling on the past, but when his side host Real Madrid at the Metropolitan on Saturday, echoes of history linger while the future also looms large.

The Rojiblancos have struggled for stability since their controversial Champions League last-16 elimination against Real in March, when Julian Alvarez's decisive shoot-out penalty was ruled out for a double touch. Their season unraveled after that exit, and the slump has continued into the new campaign.

Six games into LaLiga, Atletico sit nine points behind their city rivals, who top the table with a perfect record. Simeone's men have managed just two wins, with criticism of their inconsistency mounting despite heavy summer spending of over 175 million euros on recruits, including Alex Baena, David Hancko, and Thiago Almada.

"We will have a really hard, difficult game against a side that

has been winning all their games and who have a tonne of very good players," admitted Simeone, who this week became the longest-serving coach at a single LaLiga club since taking charge in December 2011.

For Real Madrid, this derby marks the toughest test yet of Xabi Alonso's



by going out on to the pitch it doesn't mean we are going to win. We have to be consistent," he said.

Madrid's firepower has been spearheaded by Kylian Mbappe, who leads the scoring charts with seven goals, while Jude Bellingham and Eduardo Camavinga have returned



reign. The new coach has overseen seven wins in seven matches in all competitions, and if Los Blancos prevail, Alonso can match Vanderlei Luxemburgo's record of seven straight league wins at the start of a season set in 2005.

Despite the flawless run, Alonso warned against complacency. "Just

from injury in time to feature. Atletico, meanwhile, lean heavily on Alvarez, whose midweek hat-trick against Rayo Vallecano lifted him to four league goals.

One side is chasing perfection, the other searching for redemption -- the Madrid derby will show which path prevails.

Golf isn't just a game... It's a masterclass in life!

SCAN HERE
btlbd.com

btlbd.com SINCE 1984

Proud sponsor of BANGLADESH NATIONAL GOLF TEAM

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE