

Tigers eye delightful double

SPORTS REPORTER



If the victory margin in the last two games is an indication, than Bangladesh will go into their third one-day match against Kenya as the overwhelming favourite at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium today.

The Tigers, already 2-0 up in the four-match series after resounding victories by 131 runs in the first game at Bogra and by nine wickets at Khulna, will however seek to achieve two things by winning the third game in the new international venue at the outskirts of the city.

A win at Fatullah will not only give Habibul Bashar's men a decisive 3-0 lead against their East African rivals but will also guarantee them a place in the ICC Champions Trophy to be held in India next October.

The match starts at 9:30am with state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Channel i beaming live

coverage from the fourth purpose-built international venue of the country after the Khulna Divisional Stadium, which made its ODI debut during the second match on March 20.

Although the series lost its competitive appeal after two huge victories for the hosts, it suddenly received a twist after the game's ruling body ICC announced that if Bangladesh are to guarantee the tenth spot in the one-day table and thus qualify for the Champions Trophy they must win at least one of their remaining two games against Kenya.

The latest revelation certainly puts additional pressure on Bangladesh, though coach Dav Whatmore played down the 'pressure factor'.

"We knew it before the series. But our focus at the moment is to win tomorrow's match and clinch the series. We have been playing good cricket so far and we just want to maintain the same standard," said a relaxed Whatmore.

Captain Bashar also echoed the

sentiment of his coach.

"Qualification in the ICC Champions Trophy is not an extra pressure for us. The way we played the last two games there is hardly any scope to think of anything other than a victory. Our fielding was not up to the mark in the last match and we are keen to improve on it in the last two games," said the Bangladesh captain.

Bashar also said that he was not really bothered with the slow wicket at Fatullah.

"I think at the moment it is not a big factor whether we bat first or not. We are in great touch and I believe that we can win the match in any situation against Kenya. But I think it will be a very good batting track," said a confident Bashar.

Bangladesh announced a 13-man team with left-arm spinner Manzarul Islam making it into list of probabilities in place of Rajin Saleh. Although the team management is set to retain the winning combination, Manzarul stands a chance to play the role of super-sub, which will still be effective in the series despite

the ICC decision to scrap it in future.

There was also good news for Kenya with their skipper and best batsman Steve Tikolo, who missed the second game due to fever, declaring himself fit for the next two matches at a venue, where he won a lot of games for Dhaka Premier League champions Old DOHS.

"I'm feeling much better and looking forward to play in the important third game. We are not thinking about ICC Champions Trophy qualification. Rather our main target is to bounce back in the series by winning the game," said Tikolo.

"I believe that we have the ability to do much better than the previous two games. Still, it is not impossible to make it 2-2 if we win the third game," he added.

Coach Roger Harper said that his young brigade was yet to play to their potential in the series.

"My young team is yet to play

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Bangladesh cricketers having a stretch at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR



Did U Know?

Galatasaray became the first Turkish team to play a match in a different country when they travelled to Transylvania to play Kalosvar, now Cluj-Napoca during the conflict of the 1992 Balkan War.



Matthew Hoggard
(England fast bowler)
"Freddie manages us better than those batsmen who flog us to death and don't give two hoots."

While praising Andrew Flintoff's man-management skills.



BTV & Channel i
Bangladesh vs Kenya
3rd ODI
Live at 9:30 am
ESPN
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh vs Kenya
3rd ODI
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
7th National Cricket League
One-Day Matches
Rajshahi vs Dhaka
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
Sylhet vs Khulna
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Barisal vs Chittagong
Venue: Barisal Divisional Stadium

Indo-Pak series in UAE

REUTERS, Dubai

Pakistan and India will square off in a two-match one-day cricket series in the Middle East next month to raise funds for victims of the earthquake that devastated the region last year.

Rahul bemoans batting woes

PTI, Mumbai

Captain Rahul Dravid today said India had a gameplan of making a late charge towards the target like in the first match in Nagpur but a "bizarre" batting collapse wrecked any such hopes in the third and final Test against England here.

Chasing a target of 313, India went to lunch at 75 for three before being all out for 100 in about an hour into the tea session, the last seven wickets falling for 25 runs.

The win helped England tie the three-match series 1-1.

"We thought if we don't lose too many wickets, we can have a go at the target in the last session like in Nagpur. But we got out to some bad shots," Dravid said after the loss at the Wankhede Stadium.

"It was bizarre. We batted really poorly after lunch. But credit to England, they kept the pressure on us throughout the match." Dravid, however, praised the performance of the youngsters in the team. "It is good to see the youngsters do well. They have show great attitude and promise," he said.

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A tour of opportunity



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Sri Lanka A start their three-week tour here today with the first four-day match against Bangladesh A at the BKSP ground in Savar.

"This is a team comprising of some under-19 and internationally capped players. They can make a mark for themselves for future recognition. This will be a challenge for us," said Jehan Mubarak, the captain of the Sri Lanka A team, who recently toured Bangladesh with the senior's ODI team.

Stan Nell, the coach of the touring team also spoke at the press conference. He said, "The players had a good domestic season but it will be a testing time for them here in Bangladesh. Jehan (Mubarak) will also get an opportunity to get back into the national fold."

Tushar Imran, captain of the Bangladesh A side said, "We expect to play good cricket in the series. This will be a good chance for the players to cement their places for the tour to Zimbabwe. The players have been doing well in the domes-

tic fronts as well but it will not be an easy task against a strong Lankan side.

The Bangladesh A coach Sean Williams and Anura Tennakoon was also present at the press conference. Sri Lanka arrived in Dhaka on Monday to play two four-day and three one-day matches against Bangladesh A.

The teams for the first four day match at BKSP between Bangladesh A and Sri Lanka A: **BANGLADESH A** (from): Tushar Imran (captain), Nazmus Sadat, Nafees Iqbal, Sakib Al Hassan, Mehrez Hossain Jr., Musfiqur Rahim (wk), Farhad Reza, Mahamudullah Riyadh, Shafaq Al Zahir, Tapash Baisya, Enamul Haque Jr., Nadiif Chowdhury, Nazmul Hossain.

SRI LANKA A (from): Jehan Mubarak (captain), Malintha Gajjanayake (vice-captain), Shantha Kalavittigoda, Jeewan Mendis, Chamara Silva, Kaushal Silva, Gayan Wijekoon, Akalanka Ganegama, Ishara Amarasinghe, Mahela Udawatta, Suraj Mohamed, Ranganatha Herath, Ian Daniel, Charith Jayaweera, Malintha Wamapura.

Final round from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The tenth and final round of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League begins today at three different venues to determine the winner of the four-day version.

Chittagong are in a comfortable position to clinch the first-class title as they go into the round against Barisal at the Barisal Divisional Stadium with a two-point advantage.

The port city team bagged 36 points, two points ahead of their nearest rivals Rajshahi who face Dhaka, who have 28 points, in the last round at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Barisal bagged 27 points from nine matches while Sylhet secured 22 and Khulna 15 points in the four-day games.

The round will start with the one-day competition but there is no real interest as Rajshahi have already clinched the trophy with two rounds in hand.

Tendulkar out of ODIs

AFP, Mumbai

Indian batting superstar Sachin Tendulkar has been ruled out of the upcoming one-day series against England due to a shoulder injury, a top official said here on Tuesday.

"Tendulkar will undergo a shoulder operation in London shortly. Depending on the outcome of the surgery, he will be unavailable for a period of at least eight weeks," Indian cricket board joint-secretary M. P. Pandove said.

India will play seven one-dayers against England, the first starting in Delhi on March 28.

Tendulkar, however, is expected to bat in the second innings on the last day of the ongoing third and final Test against the tourists here on Wednesday.

He is the world's highest scorer in the shorter version of the game with 14,146 runs in 362 matches with a record 39 centuries.

Tendulkar is also likely to miss a one-day series in the West Indies, scheduled to begin in May.

Opening batsman Virender Sehwag and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh returned to the squad after missing one-dayers due to injuries in Pakistan last month.

Seamers Munaf Patel and Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, and batsman Venugopal Rao have also been named in the 15-member squad.

India: Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Rahul Dravid (captain), Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Suresh Raina, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wicket-keeper), Irfan Pathan, Venugopal Rao, Munaf Patel, Sri Sreesanth, Harbhajan Singh, Ajit Agarkar, Ramesh Powar, Rudra Pratap Singh.

Rs jointly top the table

SPORTS REPORTER

International Masters Enamul Hossain Rajib and Abdullah Al Rakib jointly led the table with 10.5 points each after the end of the eleventh round games of the Mercantile Bank 32nd National Chess Championship at the federation hall room yesterday.

In this round Rajib, Rakib, Zia, FM Mehdi Hasan Parag, Abdul Maleq and Delwar won their respective matches.

A lucrative 6-yr package



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh put behind the looming threat of their very existence in the elite Test family when they won an encouraging package for the next six years at the ICC board meeting held in Dubai on Tuesday.

BCB general secretary Mahbul Anam, who represented Bangladesh in the much-talked about two-day meeting in the ICC's new headquarters, was extremely delighted to announce that Bangladesh were not only given a go ahead to play home and away series like the other established cricketing nations in the new FTP (Future Tour Programme) for the next six years, but were also awarded the right to host significant international events after their eye-catching success at the junior level.

A delighted Mahbul informed that Bangladesh are hoping to host the 2012 ICC Champions Trophy, along with either the 2010 or 2014 ICC Under-19 World Cup as well as six 2011 World Cup matches.

"Four sub-continent board officials will meet on April 21 to decide on the compiling bidding for 2011. We have expressed our desire to host the 2012 Champions Trophy and either the 2010 or 2014 Under-19 World Cup's. We are hopeful about getting the nod when ICC's special board meeting will decide on the next eight years events on April 30," Mahbul told reporters at a local hotel yesterday.

"There had been lot of talk about reducing the number of away series of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe over the last two years but I can now assure you that we will play against all the teams on a home and away basis like our previous arrangement. We made a very good impression in the meeting, especially our junior cricket has impressed the others a great deal," said the bearded BCB general secretary.

He said that the new FTP also gave them an opportunity to make huge financial gains in the coming years.

"We are expecting much higher TV deals this time around as we have now matured enough to bargain about the matter and have a very good home slot in the six-year

FTP programme to make it possible. We are expecting 22 home Tests in the next six years which will be a much higher number than the previous one," he explained.

What made Mahbul most happy was the arrangement of three triangular series in the programme.

"The FTP has assigned us to hold at least three triangular series involving India (twice) and they have also agreed to it which is a big boost for us. We can even arrange another additional triangular series in that period," he said.

The existing TV deal with the ESPNStarSports will expire after the Australian tour in April but Mahbul promised that they would make a very transparent TV deal to avoid any kind of controversy.

"We will call an open international tender for a new deal and I can assure you that we will be transparent about the issue," he added.

One thing that is still undecided is when Bangladesh will play their

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Pakistan clinch series



AFP, Colombo

Pakistan scored a comfortable four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the third and final one-day international on Wednesday.

Pakistan scored a comfortable four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the third and final one-day international on Wednesday. Pakistan produced a fine team effort and passed their target of 225 with 4.4 overs to spare.

They had won the second game on Sunday by four wickets after the series opener was abandoned due

to rain on Friday.

All-rounder Shahid Afridi set the game up for Pakistan with his effective leg-spin bowling that took three important wickets and helped dismiss the home side for 224 in 49.4 overs.

The hosts were 86-1 when Afridi came on to bowl in the 21st over. He struck three quick blows to remove Kumar Sangakkara (22), Kaushal Lokurachchi (13) and Russel Arnold (zero) to leave Sri Lanka struggling on 133-5 by the 35th. Opener Chamara Kapugedera top-

scored with 50 while Tillakaratne Dilshan (44) and captain Mahela Jayawardene (31) were the other main contributors.

Kapugedera struck seven fours off 74 balls during his maiden half-century in 10 matches, adding 57 for the first wicket with Upl Tharanga (23) and 36 for the second with Sangakkara. Sri Lanka were boosted by a late flurry from in-form Dilshan, who followed up his 48 not out in the last match with

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PHOTO: AFP

Ecstatic England captain Andrew Flintoff (L) being hailed by teammate Kevin Pietersen after taking the wicket of Indian captain Rahul Dravid on final day of the third Test at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Wednesday.