

## Target second round Tigers off to India today



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket team set off for India today with one complaint against a force they can hardly dictate. But despite being held hostage by inclement weather that could allow only half of a practice game during the four-week training, both Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar and coach Dav Whatmore promised a better show in their second ICC Champions Trophy challenge after a demoralising first venture in England two years ago.

Although the last practice game at the BKSP in Savar yesterday was called off without a ball being bowled, the good news for the Tigers was that it would be full strength for the second best one-day tournament after the World Cup with left-arm pacer Syed Raseel being declared fit to travel with the team.

"I must say the preparation was not ideal. It could have been nice for us if we could play today's practice match. It's not good that we played only one preparation game at home before such a big tournament," said skipper Bashar while elaborating his team's chances in the Champions Trophy that commences on October 7.

Fit-again Bashar, who returned home with a broken thumb midway through the Tigers' African tour in August, however, was excited about the lone practice game against Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) on October 4 before the real test against former world champions Sri Lanka in Mohali on October 7.

"We are looking forward to the only practice match in India," said the 33-year-old Bangladesh captain, adding that the target of his team in the Champions Trophy is to cross the first-round barrier.

"Our target is very simple. We

want to play in the second round and I honestly believe that we have the ability to make it happen. Yes, it is tough as Sri Lanka are in very good form while West Indies played good cricket in their last tournament and Zimbabwe won the last series against us but still it is not impossible for us," said a confident Bashar.

Bangladesh along with Sri Lanka, the West Indies and Zimbabwe will compete in the qualifying round from where top two finishers will join the other six Test nations in the tournament proper.

"We have to win at least two games if we want to reach the second round that's why we will try to win all our three games. There have been much talk about the Zimbabwe match but it will not surprise me if we qualify for the main tournament

beating the strong opponents," he explained.

Coach Whatmore also echoed his captain's sentiment but he was not too worried with the lack of match practice.

"I am not happy (with the preparation) but I'm not overly concerned. It would have been nice to get the second game though," said

Whatmore.

"The West Indies played pretty well in the DLF Cup in Malaysia. They made it to the final. So, for us to make it through to the Champions Trophy proper, it will take really a good effort but we are capable of it," said the high-profile Bangladesh coach.

"The expectation is to qualify, number one. The expectation is also to play good hard cricket against everyone. Some people are saying that we can beat Zimbabwe easily in the sub-continent and also the West Indies but we have to push these teams and Sri Lanka really hard and that's our objective. If we want to play well and qualify then we have to do well in all three

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### TEAM

Habibul Bashar (captain), Shahriar Nafees (vice-captain), Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Rafique, Mohammad Ashraf, Aftab Ahmed, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Rajin Saleh, Abdur Razzak, Syed Raseel, Shahadat Hossain, Forhad Reza, Sakib Al Hasan and Mehrab Hossain Jr.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore (L) speaks as captain Habibul Bashar (C) and manager Khaled Mahmud looks on during a press conference at BKSP in Savar yesterday.

## CHAMPIONS TROPHY WADA to test players

PTI, Mumbai

Two players from each of the ten participating teams would be selected at random and subjected to dope tests by the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) officials during the Oct 7-Nov 5 ICC Champions Trophy being played in India.

"This is the first time dope test has been introduced by the ICC in Champions Trophy. It had been done on a trial basis during the last World Cup in South Africa but officially this is being done for the first time at the top level," Tournament director Ratnakar Shetty told a press conference on Friday.

"The testing would be at random decided by WADA personnel. Two players in each team can be tested and there's no specification on the number of matches during

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## Rakib clinches Rating title

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Abdullah Al Rakib became champion in the senior section of the second University of Greenwich FIDE Rating chess tournament at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

Rakib earned 7½ points in nine games to clinch the title.

Last year's winner Grand Master Ziaur Rahman who was on top of the leader-board till the eighth round, became runner-up with 7 points after his loss to Syed Mahfuzur Rahman in the last round game. Emon finished third with 6½ points.

Ataur Rahman won the title in the junior section as he earned eight points. Sharif Hossain closely followed him in the second position.

In the last round of the senior section, Rakib beat Feroz Ahmed while Rajib drew with FIDE Master Sheikh Nasir.

## I forgive him: Inzy

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan cricket captain Inzamamul Haq said Saturday he would not seek legal action against Australian umpire Darrell Hair after being cleared of ball tampering charges by the ICC.

"Our religion Islam teaches us to forgive and forget, so I forgive Hair and will not take any action against him," Inzamam said on return from London, where a two-day ICC hearing cleared him of ball tampering.

The 36-year-old captain was however handed a four-match ban for bringing the game into disrepute over his team's refusal to take the field in the fourth Test against England at The Oval last month.

The protest came after Hair and fellow umpire Billy Doctrove of the West Indies penalised Pakistan five runs on suspicion of ball tampering.

The ban will keep Inzamam out of the eight-team biennial ICC (International Cricket Council) Champions Trophy competition which begins in India next month.

The Pakistan Cricket Board on Friday announced that Younis Khan would replace Inzamam as captain for the competition but extended Inzamam's tenure until next year's World Cup in the Caribbean.

Inzamam said he had nothing in his heart against the controversial Australian umpire.

"It will take time to forget what happened at The Oval but my heart is clear as always, and since we have been cleared of the more serious charge of ball tampering I think we should bury the matter," he said.

Former Pakistan captain Imran Khan and other ex-players had urged Inzamam to seek an apology and take the Australian to court for defamation.

Inzamam justified the decision not to appeal against the ban.

"The penalty imposed is the minimum in level III so it would

neither be reduced nor would it be lifted if I had appealed. So I see no reason to take the matter any further."

The batsman said the support from the Pakistani people was overwhelming.

"It was a tough period for not only me but for our cricket -- and I am thankful to all the people who supported me and our cause of getting our name cleared of tampering."

"A four-match ban is nothing compared to the stigma of cheating,

which could have destroyed our cricket. Had I not protested we would have to live with the stigma. I am happy that we are cleared," said Inzamam.

He said he would also sorely miss the Champions Trophy competition.

"It's the second-best event after the World Cup and I will miss it. But

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PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq receives congratulations from an elderly woman supporter on his arrival at the Lahore Airport from London yesterday.



### Did U Know?

The first official Chess Olympiad was held in London in 1927. That event was won by Hungary.



**John Howard**  
(Australia Prime Minister)  
"I rather like the opera but I am unashamedly, like an Australian, very fond of sporting events, particularly Tests."

## Boycott blasts Hair

Cricket

AFP, London

English cricket legend Geoffrey Boycott has lambasted Australian umpire Darrell Hair for attempting to "play God" in his handling of the forfeited fourth Test between England and Pakistan.

Boycott, now a respected media commentator, also took a swipe at Hair over his failure to show any contrition after the International Cricket Council overruled his decision to call Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq for ball tampering.

Inzamam was cleared of the charges on Thursday after a disciplinary hearing at which Boycott, along with television analyst Simon Hughes, was asked to examine the ball Hair and fellow umpire Billy Doctrove had deemed to have been interfered with.

Both experts testified that the condition of the ball was as consistent with normal wear and tear as deliberate scuffing.

The umpires' decision to impose a five-run penalty prompted the Pakistanis to refuse to play, a protest which caused them to forfeit the match.

Hughes said on Friday that he believed Hair had been "guessing" as to the condition of the ball, but Boycott went much further in his

column in the Daily Telegraph.

"Hair is the first man to apply the five-run penalty for ball-tampering and he got it wrong," Boycott wrote. "He is also the first man to call a Test match forfeited, and I believe he got that wrong too."

Boycott said Hair should have shown greater humility after Thursday's ICC ruling.

"Darrell Hair was so bullish, even though the decision had gone against him. He was still acting as though he was not aware of what he'd done," Boycott wrote.

"It astonishes me that he could sit there, with absolutely no sign of contrition, implying that he would do the same thing again. He seems to have learnt nothing."

"We are all told when we start cricket as youngsters that the umpire's decision is final.

"We all accept being given caught behind when we haven't nicked it, or lbw when the ball would have missed leg stump. But this is bigger than that - this is huge."

"It shows that the umpire is not always right. If he is going to make a huge decision, which affects the whole fabric of the game, he had better have some evidence to back it up."

"Hair doesn't understand that his man-management is just not up to scratch."

"He has studied the rules of

cricket, and insists on his right to interpret them as he sees fit, whether there's anyone to back him up or not.

"All Hair had to do was go up to Inzamam and say, 'We're not too sure whether the ball has been tampered with, but if anybody is messing around, they had better cut it out. We will be watching the ball carefully every over.'"

"That is what most former players would have done in Hair's position. If he comes back into the game, and carries on in the same way, there will be more trouble."

Boycott went on to say that he expected the fiasco at the Oval to result in a change in the laws with any ball-tampering penalty being preceded by a warning to the bowling side.

"Another change I expect to see is that the umpires will not be able to award the match to one team without involving the match referee," he added.

"At The Oval, the whole thing was done and dusted in 11 minutes. I'm sorry, but it's too big a deal for that. We don't want umpires to be allowed to play God like this ever again."



PHOTO: AFP

Zimbabwe captain Prosper Utseya (L) and coach Kevin Curran attend a press conference in New Delhi on Saturday. The Zimbabwe team arrived in India to take part in the Champions Trophy that begins on October 7.

# 10x4

### What to WATCH

- ESPN**  
English Premier Football League  
Man United v Newcastle United  
Live at 7:55 pm  
Tottenham Hotspur v Portsmouth  
Live at 10:00 pm  
Primera Liga  
Valencia v Gimnastic  
Live at 12:55 am (Monday)
- STAR Sports**  
Mumbai Open  
Live at 5:30 pm  
Primera Liga  
Real Madrid v Atletico Madrid  
Live at 9:55 pm