



Did U Know?

The honour of scoring the first double hundred at Lords by an Asian goes to Pakistan's former opening batsman Mohsin Khan.



Wasim Akram
(Pakistan cricket legend)
"I have been watching Sachin (Tendulkar). He has achieved everything. Now he should be toying around the bowling like Lara does. People say he has responsibility but so has Lara."



BTV & Channel i
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
First ODI
Live at 9:00 am
TEN Sports
Pakistan v West Indies
Third Test, Day Four
Live at 10:30 am
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Live at 8:30 pm

Ranatunga bats for Ganguly

AFP, Colombo

Indian batsman Sourav Ganguly Wednesday found support from former Sri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga, who said he was amazed that the stylish left-hander was being ignored.

"I simply can't understand how such a good player can be kept out of the side. Building up for the future is fine, but not at the expense of experience," Ranatunga told AFP.

India's Aussie coach Greg Chappell has often been blamed for the ouster of Ganguly, who last played for India in January this year in a Test against Pakistan, while his last one-day appearance was more than a year ago.

"I wonder whether it (his dropping) has got anything to do with

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Time for revenge



BISHWAJIT ROY from Khulna

The outcome of the two sides' last meeting and the current ICC ranking definitely favour Bangladesh to start the five-match one-day series against Zimbabwe as favourites but captain Habibul Bashar sounded cautious ahead of the first one-day to be held at the Khulna Divisional Stadium today.

The Tigers recorded a convincing 101-run victory over their southern African opponents in the previous meet in the ICC Champions Trophy in India in October but memories of a 3-2 series loss away in Zimbabwe is still fresh in the mind of Bashar, who had to come back home after playing the second match due to injury.

"If you consider the current form then you can definitely say we are favourites. But I told my boys that this tag is not good enough to win the series. We have to work hard," said Bashar yesterday during their training session.

The 33-year old Bangladesh skipper, however, was upbeat and believed that he has got a balanced side to fulfil his desire of winning the series.

"Rather than concentrating on the whole series, I want to think match by match because my main objective is to win the series. The margin is immaterial to me right at the moment. I'm very much confident that we will not make the same mistakes we had done in the away series," he explained.

But the premier Bangladesh batsman said that the Zimbabweans disciplined performance in the warm-up and the Twenty20 matches have impressed him.

"They are more organised than they had been a few months back. I am really impressed, so it can be dangerous for us if we show any relaxation. We have to be careful," he cautioned.

Bashar thought that his spin bowlers will play a vital role in the series like previous occasions but he also kept his faith on the pace attack.

"No doubt spinners will dominate the series in these conditions but I believe that our pacers also have the ability to turn the table. We should also be careful against the Zimbabweans spinners, especially against Prosper Utseya," he said.

Bangladesh did not reveal their playing eleven in a bid to keep the opponents in the dark but Bashar talked about his opening pair and the much-talked Mohammad Ashrafal issue.

"We are going to play the match with a new opening pair as Mehrab Hossain will open the innings with Shahriar Nafees."

It would be the 23rd opening pair under coach Dav Whatmore's tutelage.

"So, we will not consider Ashrafal as an opener this time. Ashrafal is now in good form and you know he got back his place after playing two brilliant innings in the domestic circuit. It is not sure where his batting position would be."

It was learnt that Tushar Imran is likely to make way for Ashrafal while all-rounder Forhad Reza will also be benched. Shahadat Hossain and Syed Rasel will battle to find a place to be the new ball partner of Mashrafe Bin Mortuza.

TEAMS (from)

BANGLADESH: Habibul Bashar (captain), Shahriar Nafees, Mehrab Hossain Jr, Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad Ashrafal, Sakib Al Hasan, Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Rasel, Forhad Reza and Tushar Imran.

ZIMBABWE: Chamunorwa Chibhabha, Hamilton Masakadza, Brendan Taylor, Stuart Matsikinyeri, Elton Chigumbura, Gary Brent, Prosper Utseya (captain), Anthony Ireland, Muleki Nkala, Sean Williams, Keith Dabengwa, Christopher Mpofu, Blessing Mahwire, Ryan Higgins and Tinolenda Mawoyo.

Rafique near milestone



SPORTS REPORTER from Khulna

Mohammad Rafique is just two wickets shy of becoming the first Bangladeshi to scalp one hundred one-day wickets and no doubt that the stage is all set for the ace left-arm spinner to achieve the feat when the Tigers renew their rivalries with Zimbabwe today.

The Zimbabweans' weakness against left-arm spin was in evidence in the recent past battle of the two bottom-ranked sides and surely there would be no exception in the five-match series where Rafique's experience is expected to play a big role.

"They (Zimbabweans) are little bit weak against left-arm spin and no doubt they will face a tough challenge on our home soil. I hardly think about my personal goal when I go in the middle but it would be great for me to become the first Bangladeshi to achieve the milestone," said 36-year old Rafique, who has 98 wickets from 103 ODI appearances.

Zimbabwe captain Prosper Utseya, also a very good off-spinner, however, said that they are getting used to spin bowling.

"During our preparation, we mainly concentrated on this department and I must say we are getting used to left-arm spin. You will see a different attitude in our batting

against them in the series," said Utseya.

Another Bangladeshi left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, who has also been instrumental in the shorter-version of the game with 34 wickets from 25 games, warned that they also have developed their



MOHAMMAD RAFIQUE

bowling to avenge their 3-2 series defeat against the southern African nation in July-August this year.

"I think I am more matured and aware of their weakness. It is a very crucial series for us because we lost the away battle recently. We have already come to know that they had special focus on slow bowling ahead of this tour we are going to adapt some new techniques to continue our domination," assured the local boy, who has a very good economy rate.

While the spinners took centre stage before the first match, at least one pace bowler was looking forward to erase bitter memories of his Zimbabwe tour four months earlier.

It was none other than pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortuza whose nightmare last over saw Zimbabwean Brendan Taylor rattle 18 runs to snatch victory in the third match of the five-match series in Harare.

"After that episode I had a very good series in Kenya and then faced Zimbabwe again in the ICC Champions Trophy. But still the memory is haunting me because that particular over played a very vital role behind our series defeat. So definitely I will try my best to change things in the home series," said the Narail Express, whose explosive bat steered Bangladesh to a comprehensive victory in Tuesday's Twenty20 international here.

Taylor, the visiting wicketkeeper cum batsman, however, did not want to put emphasis on the issue rather he wanted to play a big role for his side.

"He (Mashrafe) is a very good bowler. It was a totally different game because then the situation demanded big hitting. Here, I want to bat with patience and contribute to my team," said the talented left-hander, who had scored a match winning 79 not out in that match.



Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar (L) and batsman Mohammed Ashrafal chase each other during a practice session at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Matiur Rahman stadium in Khulna on Wednesday.

BCB to sign TV deal tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The contract signing ceremony of Bangladesh Cricket Board's worldwide marketing agency rights with Nimbus Sports International will be held tomorrow.

Youth and Sports Advisor CM Shafi Sami will be present at the ceremony to be held at the Sheraton Hotel.

The BCB in its executive committee meeting on November 17 approved the bid worth 56.88 million dollars.

Gibbs takes SA to 243-8

BBC ONLINE

Herschelle Gibbs' unbeaten 93 helped South Africa post 243-8 in the fourth one-day international against India in Port Elizabeth.

The hosts, 2-0 up in the five-match series, were in trouble when Graeme Smith and Loots Bosman fell for ducks.

But Gibbs put on 69 with Jacques Kallis (49) and 61 with Mark Boucher and Shaun Pollock, who crashed a quickfire 37.

Veteran leg-spinner Anil Kumble was the pick of the bowlers, with 2-42 of 10 overs.

India went into the game under intense pressure after heavy defeats in the previous two games but had a great start for the third game running.

This match followed a similar pattern -- Proteas skipper Smith won the toss and failed again, bow to the third ball of the game from Zaheer Khan.

Loots Bosman was then clean bowled by a Shanthakumaran Sreesanth yorker in the next over.

Kallis responded positively, hitting nine boundaries in his 62-ball knock before edging behind in an attempt to force away Kumble's first ball outside off-stump.

AB de Villiers thumped the spinner over long-off for six but missed with an attempted sweep to fall lbw before Gibbs and Boucher rebuilt the innings again.

Virender Sehwag -- standing in as captain with Rahul Dravid nursing a broken finger -- had Boucher

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Ctg, Dhaka smell win

SPORTS REPORTER



Chittagong and Dhaka brightened their chances to win full points in the fourth round of the Mirzapore Ispahani Tea 8th National Cricket League yesterday but Khulna seemed to settle for four points as their match against Sylhet headed for a draw.

Dhaka took an imposing 234-run lead against hosts Rajshahi with one day remaining at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium while some lusty batting -- Gazi salahuddin's century and Tamim Iqbal's explosive 76 -- helped Chittagong set a daunting 375-run target for Barisal from maximum 98 overs at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

RAJSHAHI v DHAKA
Overnight 150-4, Rajshahi were bundled out for exactly 200 in their first innings as Mosharrif Hossain

ripped through the tail taking four wickets on the third day. The left-arm spinner finished with 6-59 as the home side lost their last half of the innings in the space of 17 runs.

Mushfiqur Rahman added just two runs to his overnight 44 but Sohrwardi Shuvo fought a lone battle, scoring second highest 40 after resuming on 23.

Dhaka, expected to show some fireworks in a bid to give an early declaration, crawled to 148-2 in 60 overs in their second innings. Opener Uttam sarkar, who faced 180 balls, was unbeaten at close of play on 73.

CHITTAGONG v BARISAL

The Barisal first innings, resuming on 233-8, lasted less than four overs as Sajju Datta and Sabbir Khan clipped the tail in addition of five runs. Off-spinner Sabbir ended with 5-86 while Sajju claimed 4-46.

With a handsome 75-run first

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