

Tigers in Antigua

TIGERCRICKET.COM, *undated*

The Bangladesh World Cup squad reached Antigua after nearly two days of traveling. The Tigers arrived in St. John's via Dubai and London and despite the jetlag the players were in good spirit.

Tigers landed in St. John's at 3:45pm local time yesterday (1:45am Bangladesh Time early Wednesday). It was a 48-hour journey from Dhaka.

The team is staying at the Jolly Beach Resort which is about half an hour's drive from capital St. John's.

"Everyone is fine. It is a very nice resort and very big also. The food is also fine and the players are feeling comfortable. We'll have training today. It takes around an hour to reach the ground," informed team operations manager Ali Asif Khan over telephone.

Bangladesh are in Antigua for a warm-up tri-series against World Cup qualifiers Bermuda, coached by former West Indies star Gus Logie, and Canada starting later this week before heading to Barbados to face New Zealand and Scotland in the official ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 warm-ups at the 3Ws Oval.

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PHOTO: STAR

THE WRONG PLACE? Bangladesh A opener Mehrab Hossain contemplates as he stretches with his teammates at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday ahead of today's four-day match against England A.

Tushar wary of English

Four-dayer starts at Mirpur today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Captain Tushar Imran expects a tough challenge when Bangladesh A take on their England counterparts in the first four-dayer of the two-match series at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

"We are going to face a tough challenge in the series because they are a very good side. I am hopeful because we have a young but talented team," he added.

"I think it's created an opportunity for out-of-favour players like me and the other promising ones to put pressure on the selectors. I think good performance against such formidable opponents count high," said the dashing middle-order batsman.

"It would be an exciting series if we can play as per our potential. I am hopeful because we have a young but talented team," he added.

And out Tushar also said that he was desperately looking forward to showing his best to earn back his place in the national side before the home series against India in May.

"I want to come up with my best because I believe that I can only put

pressure on the selectors by performance," said the out-of-favour batsman, who toured with the national side in the recently concluded Zimbabwe tour only to play one game before being ignored for the World Cup squad.

The home skipper expects a very good batting wicket in Mirpur although the recent past record in this newly built pitch has hardly produced any high-scoring matches. "From what I saw today it looks like a very good batting wicket," he informed.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH A (from): Tushar Imran (captain), Sahagir Hossain (wicketkeeper), Mehrab Hossain, Jahirul Islam, Nasiruddin Faruque,

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England: Peaking at the right time

AFP, London



England's transformation from World Cup washouts to serious contenders is bound to raise a few wry smiles from players more used to jeers than cheers.

Just a few weeks ago it was suggested England should not turn up in the Caribbean after being bowled out for 155, 120 and 110 in consecutive one-dayers.

But a run of four straight wins, including three over world champions Australia, saw them recover to

take the triangular series. However, before that astonishing turnaround, England had won just seven out of 31 one-day matches and hopes of a first World Cup trophy appeared absurd.

"I know momentum and confidence are crucial but don't let's kid ourselves that England are now the team everyone fears," ex-England captain Alec Stewart told the News of the World newspaper.

And West Indies legend Viv Richards, twice a World Cup winner, said: "Ever since they beat Australia you would think England have a chance."

"But I don't believe their one-day team is as good as they do. They might have got a tired Australia team in the end."

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England's World Cup campaign could hinge on their opening Group C match against a dangerous New Zealand team.

With both sides all but certain to reach the second phase, the points carried over from a victory over a fellow qualifier could prove decisive in the Super Eights.

It is no criticism of England's resilience to point out that three dropped catches played a major part in their revival.

These allowed Ed Joyce and Paul Collingwood to score hundreds against Australia and New Zealand respectively after they were missed early on, and meant England did

Lesson for Indian fans

PTI, Port-of-Spain

Trinidad and Tobago's Tourism Development Company has announced plans to teach the Indian and other cricket fans visiting during the World Cup how to play steel pan, the only musical instrument to be developed in the 20th century.

The Tourism organisation has prepared a programme 'Pan Sensation' which will give visitors from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bermuda the opportunity to learn to play the steel pan.

There will also be a 'Food Fair' where visitors can taste doubles, roti, dhalpouri, pilau and the like.

Former Miss Universe 1977 Penny Commission-Chow, who also serves as Communications Manager, said "we are encouraging people to come forward and keep the fetes and other outings because we will have visitors here for two weeks and we must take advantage of this fact to sell Trinidad and Tobago."

Coach John Buchanan, who just last month complained that England and New Zealand were too poor to give their team of champions a competitive hit-out, said there was no need to radically overhaul World

Tariqul traps Khulna

SPORTS REPORTER



Barisal left-arm spinner Tariqul Islam hogged the spotlight with an eight-wicket haul against hosts Khulna on the second day of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League yesterday.

Young Shamsur Rahman on the other hand shone with the bat on the day as Dhaka buried Chittagong under a pile of runs to take control of the seventh round match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Away at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, Khaled Mashud's home side took a huge first innings lead against Sylhet when they scored 354-8 in reply to the visitors' 200 runs in the first essay.

BARISAL-KHULNA

Khulna finished the second day's play on 209-8, still 74 runs adrift of Barisal's first innings.

Only opener Imrul Kayes and Manjul Islam chipped in with significant contributions against the

whirl of Tariqul. Imrul made team highest 47 off 120 balls that featured eight boundaries while Manjul added 41 off 123 balls with the help of six boundaries.

Earlier Barisal were bowled out for 283 after they resumed on their overnight score of 272-9.

DHAKA-CHITTAGONG

After wicketkeeper Anwar Hossain's effort the Dhaka innings saw another hundred with Shamsur hitting 103 to amass 500 runs in their first innings.

The right-hander's 184-ball 103 that featured nine fours and a 100-ball 69 by Sharifulah helped the hosts to add 200 more runs to their overnight total of 300-3.

Chittagong failed to make a bold reply against a mammoth total as they lost three wickets for 71 runs at stumps.

Nazimuddin was batting on 22 and Ehsan Haque on 16.

RAJSHAHI-SYLHET

Resuming the day on 56-1, Rajshahi lost their second wicket in the third over of the day when pacer Hasibul Hossain removed bowler-hero Forhad Reza. But Naeem Islam joined Rafiqul Islam to steady the innings during the 71-run third wicket stand.

Rafiqul scored 69 off 151 balls with the help of 11 boundaries and his departure brought Anisur Rahman in action to associate a 157-run partnership for the fourth wicket with Naeem who made the team highest 87 off 196 balls that featured 12 fours.

Anisur smashed a 106-ball 103 with nine fours and a six. In his side's good batting display skipper Mashud (4) failed to show up after his much-debated omission from the World Cup squad.

Former national paceman Hasibul was the most successful Sylyet bowler with three wickets for 56 runs in 23 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

DHAKA: First innings 500 all out in 142.2 overs (overnight 300-3 in 90 overs) (Uttam 62, Anwar 108, Al Shahri 71, Shamsur 103, Riyad 8, Sharifulah 69, Sajjad 4, Hossain 0, Sunny 18 not out, Talha 0, Mahbubul 20, extras 37, Tareq 3-110, Alamgir 2-56, Sabir 3-127, Elias Sunny 1-86) CHITTAGONG: First innings 71-3 in 37 overs (Elias Sunny 12, Nafis 13, Nadimuddin 2, Nazimuddin 22

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'We are on track'

AFP, Sydney



Australia's battered and beaten one-day cricket side limped home Wednesday insisting its World Cup defence was on track despite an unpreceded 3-0 series pasting from the Black Caps in New Zealand.

Australia's winless New Zealand campaign, dubbed a "blackwash" by the media here, followed two losses to England in the domestic tri-series final, with the five consecutive defeats representing Australia's worst run in a decade.

Coach John Buchanan, who just last month complained that England and New Zealand were too poor to give their team of champions a competitive hit-out, said there was no need to radically overhaul World

Cup preparations.

Buchanan said the Australians would simply put the defeats behind them as they rest for a week, and opening batsman Matthew Hayden undergoes tests on a right big toe fractured by a yoker in Tuesday's loss to New Zealand.

JOHN BUCHANAN

"There's no getting away from the fact we'd like to be winning, there's no doubt about that," Buchanan told reporters.

"But I'm still very confident about the planning we've put in place, the preparations we'll do when we get there and the team that we've got."

"So this is behind us now and we look forward to a week or so away and then heading off to the West Indies."

Buchanan conceded selectors may need to consider their options once they receive information on a string of injuries including Hayden (toe), Andrew Symonds (torn bicep), Brett Lee (ankle) and Michael Clarke (hip).

"Once we get all that information it'll then be over to the selectors and Ricky Ponting and myself and we'll toss that all around and

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NZ's form Taylor-made

AFP, Wellington



The decisive manner in which New Zealand thumped Australia this month has put the spotlight on a shy Ross Taylor who is being hailed as the new saviour of New Zealand cricket.

New Zealand has never been known for consistency and have traditionally relied on spasmodic stand-out performances to hover in the top half of the world rankings.

But there is no doubt that performances have improved across the board in the past month coinciding with Taylor's growing coin at the crease.

The 22-year-old part-Samoan doesn't say much, he prefers to let his bat do the talking and in less than

a year on the world stage the right-hander is averaging 42 from 15 outings.

But it was a slow start, and less than six months ago he couldn't make the New Zealand team for the Champions Trophy.

Such was the dismal top-order batting there, however, Taylor's revival was a formality and he hasn't looked back.

In the second match of the Australian series this month, he led New Zealand to a record-breaking win and their first Chappell-Hadlee series title.

With incredible hand-eye co-ordination, he smashed 111 -- his second century of the season after his maiden against Sri Lanka -- to transform an unlikely chase for 337 into one of New Zealand's most memorable triumphs.

The Black Caps now go to the Caribbean desperate to prove their

victories over Australia were not an aberration.

But after a history of stunning wins entwined with inexplicable failures, captain Stephen Fleming knows not to be too confident.

"We are excited but we want to become a consistent side," he said.

"We'll continue to be the dark horses in every tournament if we go up and down."

With a small talent pool to call on, the New Zealand team largely selected itself although the trick for coach John Bracewell was getting the right balance of batsmen, bowlers and all-rounders.

Backing Taylor in the batting ranks are the resurgent Lou Vincent and Fleming while Craig McMillan and Peter Fulton are likely to be

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MU demand urgent action

AFP, London



British sports minister Richard Caborn and Manchester United football club have called for urgent action after United fans appeared to be crushed on a safety barrier in their Champions League match.

The club is calling for eye witness accounts and Caborn has urged European football's governing body UEFA to ensure safety in stadiums following United's 1-0 victory over Lille in their last 16, first leg match at Lille's Felix-Bollaert stadium on Tuesday night.

A UEFA spokesman told AFP early Wednesday they would wait for reports from the match delegate and the referee, which must be sent within 48 hours, before making a statement.

At least two supporters, one a schoolboy, were lifted over the barrier while security officials slammed shut a gate which had been pushed open by United supporters trying to relieve the pressure.

The qualifiers will be played in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore between November 18 and 24, the ICC said in a statement from its headquarters in Dubai.

Besides the hosts, teams from

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