



Did U Know?

Bangladesh star batsman Mohammad Ashraful made his 100th appearance in the first one-day international against India at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on May 10.



Jose Mourinho

(Chelsea manager)
"I just say he is a referee Chelsea has no luck with. If we can have another referee we are happy. We do not like to have Mr Poll."
On Graham Poll.



BTV & NEO Sports

Bangladesh v India
Second ODI
Live from 9:30 am
ATN BANGLA
Exhibition Football
Abahani v Oldham Athletic
Live at 5:00 pm
STAR Sports
Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Hockey
Pakistan v Argentina
5th & 6th Place Decider
Live at 7:30 am
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Espanyol
Live at 12:00 am (Sunday)
Sevilla v Recreativo De Huelva
Live at 2:00 am (Sunday)



Exhibition Football
Abahani v Oldham Athletic (5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Tigers charged up

Mashrafe set to return

BISHWAJIT ROY



A good game slipped away from their hands but the Bangladesh team were not ready to latch on repentance rather seemed charged up to bounce back in the three-match series against India when the two meet in today's second one-dayer at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Rahul Dravid's men won the first battle by five wickets on Thursday but there had been something for Tigers in the loss, which home captain Habibul Bashar believes will work as inspiration.

But the fact is non-performing Bangladesh skipper, who wants to win the all-important toss also in the second match, should lead his side from the front to stay alive in the series against their next door neighbours, who have recharged after their World Cup disaster to come hard in the first game.

In the 2004 home series, Bangladesh also lost the first game but came back in the second to taste their first ever one-day success against India but Bashar was not interested to draw comparisons.

"In 2004 nobody expected us to win but now everyone expects it in every match. I firmly believe that we

are capable of beating India. We had a definite chance in the first game but we could not grab it. My team put a tremendous fight and we were very close of victory, so we can even take inspiration from the game," said Basharyesterday.

But what made the Bangladesh captain most happy is that pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, whose absence was badly felt in the series opener, looks all set to play today after recovering from backpain.

"Mashrafe is a very special player, so it's good news for the team that he is feeling better. We are very optimistic about him but we have not taken the final decision yet as team physio will give his final report in the morning. So we have not made the playing eleven yet," said a delighted Bashar.

If Mashrafe comes back, Shahadat Hossain will make way for the Narail Express. Meanwhile, Abdur Razzak looks a doubtful starter due to an attack of flu. If he is not fit enough to meet the demands of hot and humid conditions, all-rounder Forhad Reza will replace him.

Mashrafe took part in yesterday's training in Mirpur before watching the pitch where he looked quite well. There was hardly any evidence that the team's morale was down after a five-wicket loss.

"We just hope that we can get everyone fit tomorrow because the second match is very important for

us as India took the lead in the series. We will try hard to come back into the series but I don't want to brand it a do-or-die battle because we are not thinking on the series but only the second game," said Bashar.

"It is encouraging for us that despite the defeat, the mood of the camp is positive. We feel that we are in the right track. The strategy is simple as we want to play better cricket than the last game. For that we will try to do our basics rightly," he added.

The Tigers skipper was a bit surprised as his bowlers did not get the expected help from the wicket in the second part of the innings.

"The wicket looks more or less same. Actually it is very difficult to judge the nature of the black soil. To win the toss is important because it would be too difficult to bat second in these tough conditions."

Praising Javed Omar's effort in the first game, Bashar however said that he expected a big innings from young left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal.

"Tamim played a blistering innings against India in the World Cup. That is obviously a special knock. Yesterday's innings was also special because for the first time he played in front of such a big crowd in home. On both occasions, he set the tone although he could not carry the innings. But Tamim is more than capable of playing a big innings. So I expect some really big innings from him," he explained.



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) drives the ball while vice-captain Mohammad Ashraful takes a breather in the background at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

'A shocker'!

SPORTS REPORTER

Just better performance would not be good enough for Bangladesh to win the second match against India today. Because there is an umpire named Asoka de Silva.

If the country's cricket fans anyhow forgot him for all the bad reasons, then the Sri Lankan, who recently returned to international fold after more than a year in the wilderness, made no mistake to revive the bitter memories in his first chance against the Tigers.

The 51-year old former Test cricketer simply brought back the Multan memories into the minds of millions after ruling down a confident Abdur Razzak lbw appeal against Mahendra Dhoni, the dashing India batsman who took away the game from Bangladesh on Thursday with a 91 not out.

TV replays suggested how badly he judged against the home side and just think that Dhoni, struck plumb in front, was then 10.

He has given a number of bad decisions against Bangladesh in the past but what was most pathetic the way he played a role to deny the Tigers tasting their first Test victory in Multan in 2003 after ruling down a few close lbw appeals against then Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq, whose hundred helped the home side snatch a one-wicket victory from the jaws of defeat.

Once he was called 'a shocker' by a Caribbean newspaper after giving eight lamentable decisions during a Test match between Australia and West Indies in the Caribbean in 2003. He came to the spotlight again, also for all bad reasons, when he gave as many as four funny decisions during the Lahore Test between West Indies and Pakistan in 2006. That virtually saw his omission from the scene for a long time.

So, the common feeling would be whether Bangladesh can survive from the fingers of a man who was once very popular while playing club cricket in Dhaka.

Rafique in Asian XI

Four Tigers for Twenty20



SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Rafique was the only Bangladeshi face in the Asian XI that will take on Africa in the second Afro-Asia Cricket Cup to be held in India next month.

The veteran left-arm spinner is part of a 14-member squad that will play three official one-day internationals against the Africa XI in Bangalore on June 6 and in Chennai on June 9 and 10.

Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene will lead the Asians who have a number of his fellow countrymen including openers Sanath Jayasuriya and Upul Tharanga and pacemen Chaminda Vaas and Lasith Malinga. India great Sachin Tendulkar will make an appearance while stylish Mahendra Dhoni has been chosen for wicketkeeping duties.

Upon hearing about his selection, Rafique was humble as usual, citing Bangladesh's performance off-late as the reason for his pick.

"At the fag end of my career, I think this is a special achievement and I am proud to be selected," said the 37-year-old left-arm spinner.

"More than just taking Rafique, they recognised Bangladesh's good show at the World Cup," said the

most experienced bowler in Bangladesh.

"They also took Tamim (Iqbal) which shows how much our cricket and youngsters are being appreciated," concluded Rafique.

CEO of Asian Cricket Council Syed Ashraful Huq presented the squads at a press conference at a local hotel yesterday alongside Chetan Chauhan of India, Mohsin Khan of Pakistan, Lalith Kaluperuma of Sri Lanka and ASM Faruque from Bangladesh, the selectors handpicked by the four respective cricket boards.

The four former cricketers also picked a Twenty20 side that include Mohammad Ashraful,

ASIA ONE-DAY INT'L TEAM

Sanath Jayasuriya, Virender Sehwag, Upul Tharanga, Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Mohammad Yousuf, Yuvraj Singh, Mahendra Dhoni (wicketkeeper), Harbhajan Singh, Chaminda Vaas, Shoaib Akhtar, Lasith Malinga, Mohammad Rafique, Mohammad Asif.

ASIA TWENTY20 INT'L TEAM

Tamim Iqbal, Imran Nazir, Mohammad Ashraful, Shoaib Malik (captain), Tillekeratne Dilshan, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal (wicketkeeper), Farveez Maharoof, Abdur Razzak, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Munaf Patel.

Tamim Iqbal, Abdur Razzak and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza from Bangladesh.

Pakistan's new captain Shoaib Malik will lead out this side that play against their African counterparts in Bangalore on June 5. On the same day, a women's Twenty20 match will also take place.

Surprise selections came in the form of Pakistan's beleaguered superstar Shoaib Akhtar and ousted right-arm spinner Harbhajan Singh but the selectors were quick to defend the decisions.

"He is the fastest bowler in the world, without a doubt," said the dashing Mohsin Khan while talking of Shoaib Akhtar and the selectors mentioned that Harbhajan's selection was due to Muttiah Muralidaran's absence due to the Lankan's English county commitments.

"We selected the best side possible for these matches, having taken Bangladesh's World Cup performance into consideration," said the bespectacled Faruque.

"They have scope in the future and with that in mind, we have put them in the Twenty20 side."

Former Indian opener Chauhan said that Rahul Dravid and Sourav Ganguly were discussed as potential players but the former opted

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Jennings declines BCB offer

CRICINFO.COM

Ray Jennings, the former coach of South Africa, says he has declined an offer to coach the Bangladesh national team stating his South African loyalties as the reason.

Jennings said that the Bangladesh Cricket Board contacted him after Dav Whatmore, the current coach, announced that he would step down from the post after India's tour of Bangladesh.

"They called me shortly after the World Cup and asked whether I would be interested in the position," Jennings told Supercricket website. "It is an honour to be

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Ctg Abahani blank Farashganj

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Abahani ended the first leg of the B.League second from bottom but reduced the gap with teams above with a 2-0 home win against Farashganj yesterday.

The port city sky-blues scored either side of the break to frustrate the Dhaka riversiders, which stuck to ten points after ten games, just one

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Howard 'jammed' on Zim tour



AFP, Sydney

Australian Prime Minister John Howard said Friday he was 'jammed' on how to stop the country's cricketers from touring Zimbabwe later this year.

Howard, a strong critic of the regime of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, said it was not entirely clear whether his government could legally direct the national team not to tour the strife-torn southern African nation.

"I am jammed between my distaste for the government getting involved in something like this and my even greater distaste for giving a propaganda victory to Robert Mugabe," Howard told Australian radio.

"Obviously, if there is a way legitimately that the tour can be cancelled and there not be an exposure by Cricket Australia to any fine, then we'll go down that path."

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer met Thursday with officials from Cricket Australia, which face a two million US dollar fine imposed by the game's governing body if they abandon the tour.

Cricket Council has responsibilities, yes," Howard said. "But they're like any other body -- they're answerable to their constituent members.

"Now, I think there is some evidence emerging that even in those countries that would be very reluctant to see the ICC do anything, that something ought to happen.

"How long can the international cricket community -- not just Australia -- go on doing things that give aid and comfort to somebody who has thus far been totally impervious to any entreaties?"

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PHOTO: STAR

India's first match heroes Mahendra Dhoni (R) and Dinesh Karthik take a dip yesterday at their hotel swimming pool ahead of today's second one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

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