

SPORT

Cox's Bazar ruled out

ICC announces World T20 dates

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Cricket Council (ICC) yesterday announced the match schedules and ticket sale plans for the ICC World Twenty20 Bangladesh 2014 which will be staged from March 16 to April 6.

A total of 60 matches -- 35 men's and 25 women's -- will be played in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet in the 22-day tournament. The women's semifinals and final will be held on the same days as the men's semifinals and final, and at the same venue.

The women's event, which was earlier supposed to be held in Cox's Bazar, has been shifted to Sylhet due to concerns raised by the ICC.

Tickets will go on sale from November 10 and will be available via ICC's website and also at NCC Bank and Agrani Bank branches which have MoneyGram outlets across the country.

Of the two competitions, 17 matches will be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, 15 will be held at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong while the Sylhet Divisional Stadium will host a total of 28 games -- six matches of the men's first round and 22 women's matches.

The first round of the men's event will include eight sides, divided into two groups of four, with the table-toppers progressing to the Super 10 stage. Group A will feature hosts Bangladesh alongside three teams who will qualify from the ICC World T20 Qualifier UAE 2013, to be staged over November 15-30. Group B will include Zimbabwe, who will be joined by another three teams from the same qualifiers. The two groups will be finalised on November 30.

Sixteen teams, divided into two groups, will be competing in the qualifiers in the UAE. Ireland, Afghanistan, Scotland, Netherlands, Nepal and Kenya are some of the nations that will be competing for the spots.

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim said that his side's first aim will be to qualify for the Super 10s. "Our first goal is to get through to the Super Tens. And then if we can play to our potential, then I believe we can beat any team in the group," said Mushfiqur.

"It's a big opportunity and a big event for Bangladesh, not only for players but also for the whole country and we will give it our best shot," he added.

If Bangladesh do qualify to the Super Tens then they will be playing all their games at Mirpur and will be pitted against the West Indies, India, Pakistan and Australia.

The women's event, which will begin on March 23, will see 10 sides, divided into two groups, fight for four knock-out spots. Bangladesh have been placed in Group B alongside England, West Indies, India, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan and Ireland are in Group A.

The first round of the World Cup will begin with Bangladesh taking on a qualifier on March 16 at Mirpur. The Super 10 stage will start with an evening match between India and Pakistan in Dhaka on March 21.



Cricket fans stand in long queue in front of a United Commercial Bank branch in Mirpur to buy the Bangladesh-New Zealand one-day series tickets yesterday. (Inset) Some happy fans show their prized possession. The first of the three ODIs will be held on Tuesday. PHOTOS: STAR

Shafiul injured

Al-Amin replacement

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacer Shafiul Islam suffered an injury to his right ankle during training yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and has been ruled out of the one-day series against New Zealand.

Pacer Al-Amin Hossain, who made his Test debut last week in the second match against New Zealand, has been called up as his replacement.

Tigers physio Vibhav Singh said, "Shafiul suffered a ligament tear while warming up before training [on Sunday] and could be out of action for four to six weeks."

Mashrafe & Shamsur: same aim

SPORTS REPORTER



Apart from the fact that both Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shamsur Rahman played for Mohammedan Sporting Club in the Dhaka Premier League this year, the players have one more thing in common: they are raring to get some international game-time.

For Mashrafe it's been more of a case of fighting to stay fit rather than competing for a place in the side. The bowler, who last featured during Bangladesh's series win against the West Indies in December last year, suffered a heel injury during the Bangladesh Premier League the following month and has been working on his recovery since.

"I have worked very hard in the

last three months. I am sure everyone did, but for me it was a bit more challenging because I was injured. It feels really good to get into the team after 10 months," said Mashrafe.

On the other hand, Shamsur, who has been a regular opener in the T20s, is looking to play his first ODI match. He will, however, have to compete with Anamul Haque, who usually opens the innings with Tamim Iqbal.

While there were talks about how Anamul's poor run in the Tests could pave the way for Shamsur, the latter thinks otherwise.

"While Bijoy [Anamul] is younger than me, he is more experienced in international cricket and he is more deserving. He was not too bad in the last ODI series. But whoever plays will give his best," said Shamsur.

Shamsur also feels that the

'willingness to play well' among the players has increased by many folds over the last few years. While the 25-year-old is yet to make his debut, he was a part of the ODI squad before and has watched matches from the dressing room, something, according to him, that has been immensely helpful.

"I am very lucky that I was with the team before. I feel that it's good to take it step by step rather than just getting into the team. If you sit with the team, you can set goals and analyse what you can do for the team if you are in," said Shamsur.

Also taking a step-by-step approach is Shamsur's senior colleague Mashrafe, who decided against playing the series in Zimbabwe despite being asked to by the selectors. Mashrafe's main aim back then was to ensure that he was

fully fit and did not want to jump a step, lest he sustained another injury. Now though, Mashrafe believes that he is ready to play.

"I am mentally prepared. I played five or six matches with Mohammedan and that helped a lot. I needed a lot of match practice because I had not played for eight to ten months," said Mashrafe.

"At the end of the day though everything depends on the situation; after all there's a lot of difference between practice and the real game," he added.

Many expect the hosts' 4-0 win over the visitors in 2010 to be a source of inspiration for the Tigers. However, both Mashrafe and Shamsur seemed nonchalant with regard to that win. Describing the achievement as a 'thing of the past', both the players stressed the need to

HEARTBREAK along the sea beach

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The decision of the International Cricket Council (ICC) to discard Cox's Bazar as a venue for next year's Women's Twenty20 World Cup sent shockwaves among the people of the coastal town yesterday.

The ICC on Sunday disclosed that all but the three knock-out stage games of the women's event would be held in Sylhet. And at a press briefing in Dhaka that followed the official disclosure of the schedules for both men and women's tournaments, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon said that the ICC had decided not to hold any games 'on a wicket where no matches has been played before'.

"I'm surprised and upset by the decision. It is very unfortunate for the people of Cox's Bazar," said Ruhul Amin, the deputy commissioner of the district.

A disgruntled Salamat Ullah, who is the president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the district, said that it was not a judicious decision. He also demanded that the ICC should revoke its decision.

Habibur Rahman, general secretary of shop owners' association along the sea beach, lamented they have lost an opportunity to show the world how sports-friendly a tourism city could be.

However, everybody demanded that the ICC should reconsider its decision so that the country's first green venue in the making got the chance to enthrall the cricketers and cricket fans in a truly festive manner.

Meanwhile, the construction work of the Cox's Bazar Stadium is going on in full swing despite inclement weather. Two main and the practice grounds on a 50 acre land have already been completed. The players' lounge and the members' stand were receiving finishing touches. The press box and a 2000-capacity spectators' gallery are also expected to get ready before the scheduled final ICC inspection next month. BCB curator Zahid Reza Babu, who is looking after the ground, said that both the main and practice grounds are now ready for play.

The BCB, which is constructing the venue from its own coffers, has also completed the fencing of the whole area which will also accommodate an academy in the future.

It was learnt that the BCB, despite the official declaration, would further try to convince the ICC to host a few matches of the women's World Cup in Cox's Bazar.

FIXTURE

FIRST ROUND GROUPINGS

Group A: Bangladesh, Qualifier, Qualifier, Qualifier
Group B: Zimbabwe, Qualifier, Qualifier, Qualifier

SUPER 10 GROUPINGS
(Based on teams' rankings on the Reliance ICC T20I Team Rankings as on October 8, 2012)

Group 1: Sri Lanka, England, South Africa, New Zealand, Group B Qualifier 1 (Q1B)
Group 2: West Indies, India, Pakistan, Australia, Group A Qualifier 1 (Q1A)

Date	Match	Time	Venue
March 16	Bangladesh v TBC	3:30pm	SBNCS
March 16	TBC v TBC	7:30pm	ZACS
March 17	Zimbabwe v TBC	3:30pm	SDS
March 17	TBC v TBC	7:30pm	SDS
March 18	TBC v TBC	3:30pm	ZACS
March 18	Bangladesh v TBC	7:30pm	ZACS
March 19	Zimbabwe v TBC	3:30pm	SDS
March 19	TBC v TBC	7:30pm	SDS
March 20	TBC v TBC	3:30pm	ZACS
March 20	Bangladesh v TBC	7:30pm	ZACS
March 21	Zimbabwe v TBC	11:30am	SDS
March 21	TBC v TBC	3:30pm	SDS

Date	Match	Time	Venue
March 21	India v Pakistan	7:30pm	SBNCS
March 22	South Africa v Sri Lanka	3:30pm	ZACS
March 22	England v New Zealand	7:30pm	ZACS
March 23	Australia v Pakistan	3:30pm	SBNCS
March 23	India v West Indies	7:30pm	SBNCS
March 24	New Zealand v South Africa	3:30pm	ZACS
March 24	Sri Lanka v TBC (QB1)	7:30pm	ZACS
March 25	West Indies v TBC (QA1)	7:30pm	SBNCS
March 27	South Africa v TBC (QB1)	3:30pm	ZACS
March 27	England v Sri Lanka	7:30pm	ZACS
March 28	Australia v West Indies	3:30pm	SBNCS
March 28	India v TBC (QA1)	7:30pm	SBNCS
March 29	New Zealand v TBC (QB1)	3:30pm	ZACS
March 29	England v South Africa	7:30pm	ZACS
March 30	Pakistan v TBC (QA1)	3:30pm	SBNCS
March 30	Australia v India	7:30pm	SBNCS
March 31	England v TBC (QB1)	3:30pm	ZACS
March 31	New Zealand v Sri Lanka	7:30pm	ZACS
April 1	Australia v TBC (QA1)	3:30pm	SBNCS
April 1	Pakistan v West Indies	7:30pm	SBNCS

April 3 First Semifinal
1st Group 1 v 2nd Group 2 3:30pm SBNCS

April 4 Second Semifinal
1st Group 2 v 2nd Group 1 7:30pm SBNCS

April 6 Final
TBC v TBC 7:30pm SBNCS

(April 7 Reserve Day)
SBNCS: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Dhaka
ZACS: Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chittagong
SDS: Sylhet Divisional Stadium



(L-R) Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim, BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon, ICC general manager Campbell Jamieson and Bangladesh women's team captain Salma Khatun attend a press briefing in connection with the schedule announcement of the ICC World T20 World Cups at a city hotel yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Mushfiqur caught in Mondri magic

SPORTS REPORTER

In a phase of time which saw the likes of Shakib AL Hasan and Tamim Iqbal get married, Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim followed suit!

On Saturday night the 24-year-old Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim confirmed that he was set to begin a new innings in his life when he got engaged to Jannatul Khifayet Mondri, who hails from Manikganj and studies BBA.

Incidentally, Jannatul is also Mahmudullah Riyad's sister-in-law. It was learnt that the ceremony was a very personal affair, with only immediate family members invited.

One only hopes that the engagement further boosts Mushfiqur's performance in the upcoming one-day series against New Zealand.

BNS awaits NSC's repairing job

SPORTS REPORTER

Nearly six months after the vandalism at the Bangabandhu National Stadium by the Hefajate-Islam, the country's premier venue, especially its press box, still awaits to be repaired due to the 'reluctance' of the National Sports Council (NSC).

The NSC, custodian of all the sports venues of the country, was supposed to refurbish the venue within a short period of time as promised by the NSC chairman and sports minister Ahad Ali Sarker, but the BNS has still remained in that haphazard previous shape, with the new football season knocking on the door.

The sports regulatory body, NSC, had estimated some Tk 89 lakh worth of damage in that May 5 incident which included vandalism of 50 chairs, some glasses at press box, a giant glass at the president's box, eight dugouts, store-room of athletics federation, time-keeping house of the athletic track, elec-

tronic timer, electric cables, sound system and a small portion of the Tk 10-crore athletic tract.

However, despite the repeated appeals from the Bangladesh Football Federation, the NSC has shown very little interest in refurbishing the press box.

Athletics also suffered due to the vandalism as athletes had to take part in the Bangladesh Games and Summer Athletics Championship on the damaged turf.

A source within the NSC informed that only Tk 2 lakh is needed to fix the glasses at the press box but the concerned file is left unattended on a directors' table.

"The file of the renovation work at the BNS press box has been sent to me today and I will sit immediately with the director of the Planning and Development once he comes back from Sylhet," said NSC secretary Shubnath Roy yesterday, hoping that renovation work at the BNS press box would be completed before the start of the new season, November 4.

Siddikur 25th at CIMB

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished in joint 25th position with an aggregate of four-under (284) in the CIMB Classic which concluded at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club yesterday. The 29-year-old Bangladeshi carded two-under (70) in the last round following 75, 70 and 69 in the earlier rounds.

Siddikur had a decent outing on Sunday as he traded five birdies for three bogeys to finish the last three rounds under par.

In the end, Siddikur was ten strokes off the joint leaders Ryan Moore and Gary Woodland, both from America, who will return today for a sudden-death play-off to determine the champion at the 7-million-dollar event.

Siddikur said it was a good experience for him playing alongside some of the greats of modern-day golf, especially playing with long-hitters Bubba Watson and Keegan Bradley in the opening two rounds of the event.

"The results showed when I played in the last three days. I learnt a lot by playing with Bubba (Watson) and Keegan (Bradley)," Siddikur said. "Previously, I always played it safe but I learnt from them that sometimes, you need to play aggressively. That's what I tried and it really worked for me."