

SPORT

Khulna added to Zim series

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board has officially shifted the venue of the second Test between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe from Chittagong to Khulna. As per the revised schedule the first Test, which will begin on October 25, will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

The teams will then travel to Khulna to play the second Test at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium from November 3. The players will then travel to Chittagong to take part in the third Test which will begin on November 12.

The first two ODIs will also take place in Chittagong on November 21 and 23. The last three ODIs will take place in Dhaka on November 26, 28 and December 1.

Zimbabwe are set to arrive in Dhaka on October 17. They will begin the tour with a three-day practice match from October 20 at Fatullah.

SCHEDULE

- Oct 20-22: 3-Day practice match in Fatullah
- Oct 25-29: First Test in Dhaka
- Nov 3-7: Second Test in Khulna
- Nov 12-16: Third Test in Chittagong
- Nov 21: First ODI in Chittagong
- Nov 23: Second ODI in Chittagong
- Nov 26: Third ODI in Dhaka
- Nov 28: Fourth ODI in Dhaka
- Dec 1: Fifth ODI in Dhaka

Clarke may miss Pak ODIs

AFP, Sydney

Australia captain Michael Clarke was Monday in doubt for next month's one-day series against Pakistan as he recovers from a hamstring injury, chief selector Rod Marsh said.

The 33-year-old, who has a catalogue of hamstring trouble, broke down in a one-dayer against Zimbabwe in Harare on August 31 and returned home from the tour early. He is under treatment in a bid to prove his fitness for the two-Test series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates, which starts in Dubai on October 22, followed by a second Test in Abu Dhabi from October 30.

Clarke was also selected Monday for the three-game ODI series against Pakistan, starting on October 7, but coach Rod Marsh cast doubt on whether he would be fit.

Mushy, Riyad stand tall

SPORTS REPORTER

A resolute 77-run stand between Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad helped the Tigers avoid yet another collapse on the fourth day of the first Test against the West Indies at the Arnos Vale in St Vincent yesterday. At Tea, the Tigers were poised at 184 for 4. This was after they had lost four wickets before Lunch.

After being bowled out for a disappointing 182, in reply to West Indies's 484, in the first innings Bangladesh were asked to follow on by West Indian captain Denesh Ramdin.

As the morning session of the fourth day progressed, Bangladesh's second innings followed a similar trajectory to that of their first.

Shamsur Rahman was caught behind in the fourth over while attempting a wild drive on the back-foot off Kemar Roach.

Imrul Kayes joined Tamim Iqbal in the middle and the pair shared a good looking 70-run stand. However, Imrul eventually paid the price of frequently hitting the ball in the air as

he merely scooped a flighted Chris Gayle-delivery to short cover.

Wickets began to tumble following Kayes's departure. Six overs later Mominul Haque was adjudged

caught behind as he tried to drive Suleiman Benn through the covers. Like in the previous innings, Mominul reviewed the decision. While replays did not suggest anything conclusive, it did not provide enough evidence to over turn the decision of the on field umpire either, as a result, Mominul was sent back to the pavilion.

The 37th over saw Tamim receive a similar delivery and got bowled for 53. Benn managed to turn the delivery into the stumps from way outside the off stump and deceived the left-hander.

At a 107 for 4, Bangladesh were staring at yet another collapse. However, the post-Lunch session saw both Mushfiqur and Riyad dig in and survive the session. While both of them primarily aimed to keep their wickets intact they did not hesitate to go after the lose deliveries either. At Tea, Mushfiqur remained unbeaten on 33, while Riyad was on 41.

SCOREBOARD				
WEST INDIES: First innings 484 for 7 dcd (Gayle 64, Brathwaite 212, Bravo 62, Chanderpaul 85 not out; Taijul 5-135)				
BANGLADESH: First innings				
Shamsur c Bravo b Benn	35			
Imrul c Bravo b Taylor	9			
Mominul c Ramdin b Gabriel	51			
Mahmudullah lbw Blackwood	7			
Mushfiqur not out	48			
Nasir c Benn b Blackwood	2			
Shuvagata c and b Benn	16			
Taijul c Bravo b Benn	2			
Rubel c Ramdin b Benn	1			
Al-Amin c Bravo b Benn	5			
Extras (lb-2, w-2, nb-1)	5			
Total: (All out in 71.4 overs)	182			
Fall of wks: 1-1, 2-18, 3-80, 4-105, 5-110, 6-118, 7-147, 8-155, 9-166.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taylor	15	4	46	1
Roach	13	4	31	1
Gabriel	13	2	50	1
Benn	24.4	8	39	5
Blackwood	6	1	14	2
BANGLADESH: Second innings				
Tamim b Benn	53			
Shamsur c Ramdin b Roach	4			
Imrul c Edwards b Gayle	25			
Mominul c Ramdin b Benn	12			
Mahmudullah not out	41			
Mushfiqur not out	33			
Extras: (b-10, lb-3, w-2, nb-1)	16			
Total: (For 4 wickets in 39 overs)	184			
To bat: Nasir, Shuvagata, Taijul, Al-Amin, Rubel.				
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-81, 3-104, 4-107.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taylor	9	0	35	0
Roach	11	5	24	1
Gabriel	9	7	5	0
Blackwood	7	1	26	0
Benn	20	6	34	2
Gayle	13	1	47	1

Midnight horror

SPORTS REPORTER

Stumped, bewildered, perplexed -- these are some of the words that can perhaps best describe the emotions of Bangladesh's cricket fans after their side's batting debacle in the first innings at Arnos Vale in St Vincent on Sunday.

When a team fumbles to a score below 200, the instinctive reaction is that the conditions were perhaps not suitable for batting. However, those who stayed up past midnight to watch Bangladesh's innings can immediately dismiss that notion.

Why would Tamim Iqbal play an aggressive drive in only the fourth over? Was it absolutely necessary for Nasir Hossain to go down the track? Questions such as these reverberated on Monday morning after the Tigers were dismissed in less than a day.

For the fans, unfortunately, an answer has yet to be found. The wicket at Arnos Vale, apart from providing some slow turn, barely had anything in it for the bowlers. In fact for patches of the match it seemed like Bangladesh were playing at Mirpur, with pacers barely getting any assistance. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza upon his return to the country did state that the wickets in the West Indies resembled that of Bangladesh's.

So despite having the advantage of playing in relatively familiar conditions, why did Bangladesh falter so badly? For starters ten out of the eleven batsmen can be questioned for their batting technique.

Both Tamim and Imrul Kayes played away from their body whilst the ball was still new and moving and paid the price. Shamsur Rahman did go on to score a 35 but looked vulnerable almost throughout his 95-ball innings. He frequently played away from his body and two of the five boundaries that he hit were almost caught at slip.

It therefore was not a surprise when he eventually was held at second slip off Suleiman Benn. He was dismissed in a similar fashion in the second innings yesterday as well. He merely swung his bat, without moving his feet at all, at a half-volley and got caught behind.

The decision to send in Mahmudullah Riyad, who has scored just 30-odd runs in his last six Test innings, ahead of Nasir Hossain and Mushfiqur Rahim was questionable to say the least. And as expected, he was outdone by part-timer Jermaine Blackwood, who got a wicket in his very first over in Test cricket.

If Riyad seemed clueless, Nasir appeared to be over-confident. His attempt to dispatch Blackwood down the ground for a six, which eventually cost his wicket, was not required and proved that the batsman's most talked about ability -- the skill to absorb pressure -- is on the decline.

Mominul Haque, albeit for a brief period, provided the slightest of hopes through his cautious half-century. However, his unnecessary glance down the leg-side which led to his wicket proves that he is far from his best form.

Mushfiqur was perhaps the only batsman who managed to apply himself appropriately. However, as a captain he should have taken the responsibility and promoted himself up the order. There's not much that the best batsman of a dwindling batting order can do when he comes in to bat at number six.

It's always a quandary when half the players of your side are not performing, let alone 90 per cent of it. But it's one such quandary that the Bangladesh Cricket Board needs to address as soon as possible. The series has already seen a host of tactical errors from Mushfiqur and co and the board needs to consider this series as a clarion call for some assertive changes.



Mezbah Ahmed and Shirin Akter run with the flag of Bangladesh Navy after winning the 100m sprint titles in the Walton 12th Summer Athletics Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Mezbah, Shirin sprint to gold

SPORTS REPORTER



Mezbah Ahmed and Shirin Akter became the fastest man and woman in the Walton 12th Summer Athletics Championships which concluded at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mezbah of Bangladesh Navy finished his 100m sprint in 10:43 seconds to beat his teammate Kazi Shah Imran by 0.41 seconds while Navy's Shirin took 12:24 seconds to win her 100m dash, beating Shusmita Ghosh of Bangladesh Army by 0.70 seconds.

On way to grabbing the first summer meet gold, Mezbah eclipsed his previous best timing of 10:90 seconds but his teammate Shirin, despite winning the gold, saw her timing take a dip from 11:84 seconds

which she had set National Athletics Championship in 2011.

Mezbah's gold also gave him the fastest man's accolade in three different national events -- the Bangladesh Games, National Athletics Championship and National Summer Athletics Championship. Shirin, who had lost to Nazmunahar Beauty in the Bangladesh Games in 2013, won the summer meet gold following her gold in the National Athletics Championship in 2011.

"I was doubtful whether I could run fast enough after a little injury I picked during the 200m sprint yesterday (Sunday), but I eventually overcame that and am happy to have won three successive gold in three meets," said Mezbah.

"I want to sustain my dominance in the domestic circuit until the next Olympic Games," said the former BKSP student. "However, I will request the authority of Bangladesh Navy to

provide us with an athletic track for smooth training."

At the absence of Beauty and with Shamsun Nahar Chumki disqualified, Shirin hardly faced any challenge from three other competitors and finished her dash way ahead of others.

"I don't think the absence of Beauty and Chumki helped me to win the sprint because when we take to the track, there is an inspiration that works from the inside to become first," said Shirin, who however believed her timing should have been better.

Shirin and Mezbah's feats helped Bangladesh Navy emerge champions with 15 gold, nine silver and five bronze medals followed by Bangladesh Army, who snatched 14 gold, 14 silver and 17 bronze medals. Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) finished third with five gold, nine silver and eight bronze medals.

Williams's sixth at US

Joins Evert & Navratilova on 18 majors

AFP, New York



World number one Serena Williams won her 18th Grand Slam title at last, overpowering Caroline Wozniacki 6-3, 6-3 on Sunday to capture her sixth US Open crown.

The world number one, shut out in the first three majors of the year, ended a year of waiting as she joined Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova on 18 majors -- trailing only the 22 of Steffi Graf on the Open era list and six behind the all-time record held by Margaret Court.

Williams, who turns 33 later this month, said the goal of an 18th Grand Slam had hung over her "because I was joining Chrissy and Martina, someone I never thought me, Serena Williams, would be in that name group."

"Who am I?" said Williams, who grinned with delight as Evert and Navratilova presented her with a gold bracelet bearing an "18" charm.

"I never thought you would mention my name with such greats and legends."

Williams lifted the trophy at Flushing Meadows for the third straight year, joining Evert as the only woman in the Open era to win three titles in a row and matching Evert's six US Open triumphs.

She also offered words of encouragement to her beaten foe, her friend and confidant as both endured difficult months this year.

"Congratulations to Caroline, she knows the struggles I have had," Williams said, adding to her friend: "You will win a Grand Slam title soon."

But former world number one Wozniacki, owner of 22 WTA titles, still has that gaping hole on her resume.

U-18 tournament draw held

Arbitrary withdrawal of Sheikh Jamal

SPORTS REPORTER



The youth teams of Mohammedan and Abahani were pitted in the same group for the Airtel U-18 Football Tournament, which is

set to get underway from September 13 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The draw, which was held at the BFF house yesterday, pitted nine teams in two groups. However, the defending champions of Bangladesh Premier League, Sheikh Jamal DC, decided not to participate in the youth tournament for the second successive time.

"We had expected that all the established teams would be participating in the youth tournament as we extended the age-format from 16 to 18 in line

with recommendation from Sheikh Jamal. However, they are not participating which is really unexpected," said Bangladesh Professional Football League Committee's (BPLFC) vice chairman Abdur Rahim during the draw ceremony.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem said that after talking to Sheikh Jamal president Manzur Kader several times, it seemed to him that the club was unwilling to participate due to the small amount of participation money (3 lakhs) to be provided by BFF as the club don't want to subsidise the youth team like the senior one.

According to the bylaws, the clubs of the Premier League required to have a youth team and must participate in the tournament organised by the BFF but it doesn't state whether there will be any sanctions if a club opts out of

the tournament. It is widely believed that Sheikh Jamal are taking advantage of the week bylaws.

"We have taken the matter seriously and we will recommend the BFF executive committee to take stern action against Sheikh Jamal after the meeting of the league committee," said the BFF general secretary.

Top two teams from each group will advance to the semifinals before the final, which is scheduled for September 30.

In the last edition, which was held among the U-16 teams, Mohammedan emerged champions by beating Muktijoddha Sangsad in the final.

GROUP A: Sheikh Russel KC, Team BJMC, Muktijoddha Sangsad KC and Chittagong Abahani.

GROUP B: Abahani, Mohammedan, Feni Soccer, Brothers Union and Uttar Baridhara.

Finch new Oz T20 captain

AFP, Sydney

Top-ranked batsman Aaron Finch was named as Australia's new Twenty20 captain on Monday after George Bailey stood down to focus on next year's World Cup.

The explosive opener, number one on the Twenty20 International batting rankings, will first take charge of the side during the upcoming the series against Pakistan in UAE.

The 27-year-old has racked up an average of 41.25 in 18 Twenty20 Internationals, including a stunning 156 off 63 balls against England last year.



Serena Williams of the US holds the trophy after beating Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark in the US Open singles final at Flushing Meadows in New York on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP