ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2015

## What to WATCH

**BTV, Maasranga, GTV & Star Sports 1**
***ICC Cricket World Cup***
India v South Africa
Live from 9:30am
**Star Sports 2**
***ICC Cricket World Cup***
Sri Lanka v Afghanistan
Live from 4:00am
***Serie A***
Fiorentina v Torino
Live from 1:45am (Monday)
**Star Sports 4**
***Premier League***
Tottenham v West Ham
Live from 6:00pm
Everton v Leicester City
Live from 8:00pm
Southampton v Liverpool
Live from 10:00pm
**Ten Sports**
***Hero Indian Open***
Live from 3:00pm

## Worst defeat in decades

INTERNET, *Auckland*

England cricketing great Sir Ian Botham has labelled his country's crushing defeat to the Black Caps as their worst performance in four decades.

England fell to an eight-wicket loss in their cricket World Cup pool match after the Black Caps needed just over 12 overs to chase down the paltry target of 124.

"There have been other terrible performances of course, but this was just embarrassing – it wasn't even a contest," Botham wrote in the Daily Mirror.

"In nearly 40 years of playing for and watching England in one-day cricket, I have not seen a worse performance than the one I saw in Wellington on Friday."

Botham said New Zealand were playing the game the modern way and that was why he had tipped them to win the tournament.

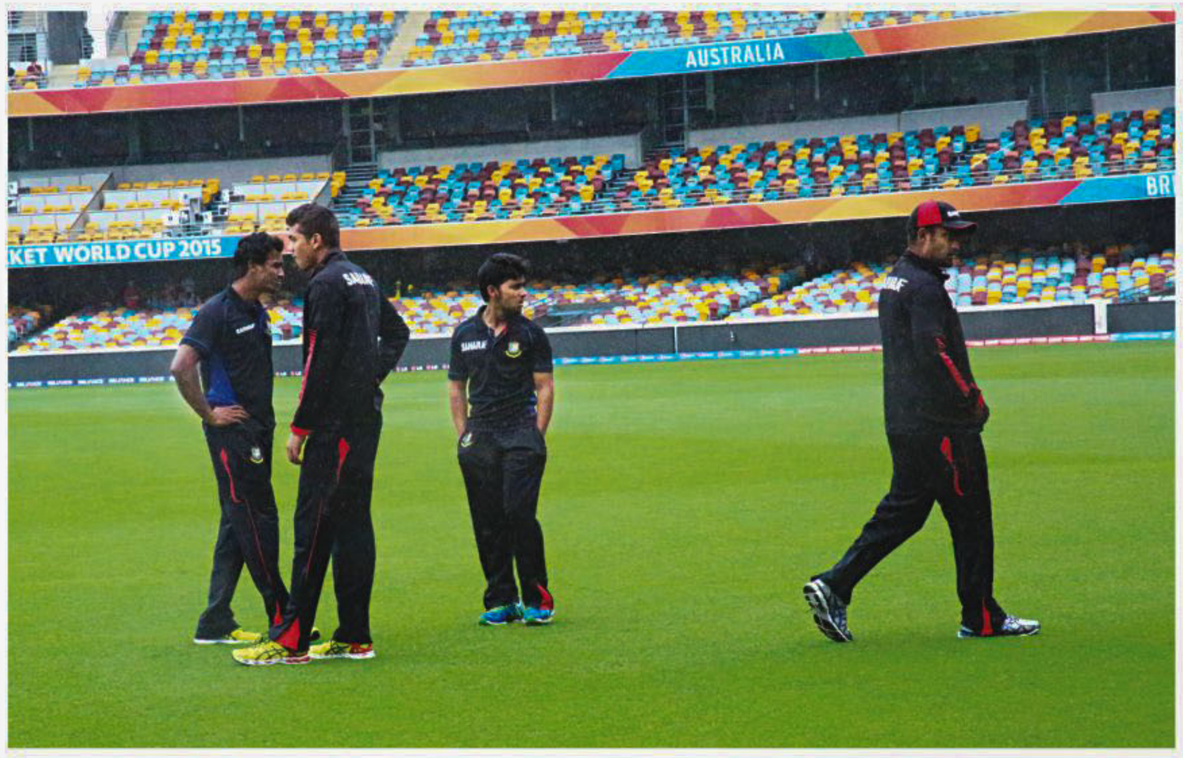
"But even so, I never imagined that they would do what they have done to an England team that are now in crisis."

In The Guardian, cricket correspondent Mike Selvey rated the result as eclipsing England's 111-run loss to Australia in their tournament opener.

"England cricketing disasters can come with the bar set very high, but even by their lofty standards this was par excellence," he wrote.

The Independent's cricket correspondent, Stephen Brenkley, said England were swept aside by a team who were more confident and more aware of what a modern ODI entailed.

"Southee and the other Kiwis seized the moment; England ran away from it."




**To play at the Gabba is anybody's dream. The Tigers were also eager to make their debut at the famous Brisbane venue but could only walk along the green carpet amidst increscent rain caused by Cyclone Marcia.**

PHOTO: BCB

# Mash would've loved to play

BISHWAJIT ROY *from Brisbane*

Breakfast tables at the Sofitel hotel showed Brisbane's day yesterday. Dashing opener David Warner looked to have all the time in the world to have his breakfast. The left-hander was seen having fun with his little son as if time was never an issue. Shane Watson and some other Australia players were also spotted in the same mood. There was no exception in the Bangladesh camp as well as Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal spent plenty of time eating and spending time with friends.

The ample amount of time was the result of the heavy rainfall in Brisbane from the morning. Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza also joined in the discussion for a while, but once his attention was drawn to local media reports on his comments that they would prefer playing the match rather than getting one point, he came up with a salvo.

A popular local newspaper reported: "There are 160 million cricket-crazy people in Bangladesh and many of them would be cheering for the expected World Cup washed out today". The report went on to say that Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza must be kidding when he claimed he was "disappointed" and "frustrated" by rain.

"People can say and write whatever they wish. But the fact is that we were eager to play this match. Ask Tamim or Shakib (pointing his finger towards them), definitely Shakib will play here and Tamim will also get the chance to play here if he gets a chance in the Big Bash League. But many of us, including myself, may not get this chance once again. More importantly our main focus was to play good cricket at such a famous ground," Mashrafe reiterated his team's position in favour of playing this match.

The Tigers skipper got excited whenever he saw a ray of sunshine from the sky as it raised the hope of playing the match but ultimately he had to arrive at the venue only to dine and attend an official press conference.

"Very much disappointed as we don't get enough chance to play at this kind of venues. And true the point will help everyone and we must be happy with one point," he said when asked how frustrating it was not to play at the Gabba.

The Bangladesh skipper however said that his side now wanted to focus on the next game against Sri Lanka on February 26 in Melbourne.

"Now we have to think on our next game. We are not ready to focus on whether this one point will help us reach the quarterfinals. I think we still have difficult tasks in our hands and we want to take it match by match," said Mashrafe.

"We don't target anybody. We didn't come here with a mindset that we wanted to win the match against Afghanistan and lose the match against Australia. We have a specific plan for this tournament and we want to execute our plan in the middle and the boys are ready to give their hundred per cent in every game," said Mashrafe when his attention was drawn to the point that even a victory against Scotland might confirm their place in the next round.

As Mashrafe put it, it would have been great had his bowlers bowled on such a quick wicket and batters faced quality pacers on challenging pitches, but Bangladesh still had lot of opportunities to excel in the cricket's flagship tournament.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# No play, so no pay!

SPORTS REPORTER *from Brisbane*

As soon as the match was abandoned yesterday afternoon, Bangladeshi journalists gathered their belongings from the press box and rushed towards the field at the Brisbane Cricket Ground, the Gabba, hoping to catch a quote or two from the players.

On days such as this, when there is no match to write about, the players' reaction becomes 'gold'. And while most of us were busy getting prepared, the Australian journalists seemed least bothered with regards to a possible post-match interaction. Most of them were busy typing out their analytical pieces.

When enquired about the issue, a couple of them said that the Australian players wouldn't talk, because the match was abandoned without a ball being bowled. This essentially meant that none of the players would receive their match fee and hence weren't likely to get involved in any match-related activities.

It was a piece of information which, in a way, emphasised the professionalism of the sport in the country. It was just like any other professional taking a day off from work and being away from any work-related activity.

And who would blame them? Match fees after all constitute a great deal of their earnings. It also instigates more competition among the players.

A Bangladeshi cricketer for instance, receives a bit more than a lakh from the cricket board for every ODI that they play in. Australian cricketers probably receive more from their own board.

While Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was kind enough to speak to the media yesterday, the practice followed by Australian cricketers and a number of others was understandable as well.

SRI LANKA V AFGHANISTAN

# Underestimation can be suicidal

AFP, *Dunedin*

Sri Lanka will play a full-strength team when they tackle Afghanistan in the World Cup on Sunday, with skipper Angelo Mathews insisting it would be disrespectful to underestimate the tournament minnows.

The 1996 champions lost their opening fixture in Pool A, as did Afghanistan, and that defeat make Sunday's clash at the University Oval all the more important to Sri Lanka's hopes of making the quarterfinals.

"We are playing the full team. Every game is important for us, whether you play Afghanistan or Australia, every game is important, so we'll take every single game very seriously, and we'll play the best XI possible on that day," said Mathews.

His plan to play his strongest side hinted at a reprieve for key swing bowler Lasith Malinga who was smashed to all parts of the Hagley Oval in Christchurch last Saturday in his team's 98-run loss to New Zealand.

Malinga, 31, ended with figures of none for 84 off his 10 overs as the Black Caps piled up 331 for six.

The loss to New Zealand also saw Sri Lanka commit a series of fielding errors, with the dangerous Kane Williamson one beneficiary when he was dropped by wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara off the first ball he faced before going on to post 57.

"We've done a lot of hard work with our fielding, but it's just the consistency level -- one game we'll be extremely good, the next game we've dropped our standards a little bit," said Mathews.

"It's a lack of concentration obviously. When you do mistakes, obviously you lose your concentration, and that split-second can turn the game around.

"As I said before the tournament, we are happy to walk into the tournament as underdogs," Mathews said.

"Not many people expect us to win but we know and we believe in ourselves that we can do it. The hunger is there... and the team certainly believes that we can do it.

"Whether you play Afghanistan or Australia, every game is important, so we'll take every single game very seriously and play the best 11 possible on that day," Mathews said.

Afghanistan lost their World Cup opener against Bangladesh by 105 runs when, chasing a target of 268, they were dismissed for 162 at Canberra's Manuka Oval on Wednesday.

But Mathews is not expecting the World Cup debutants to roll over on Sunday.

"They're a very dangerous team. You can't take them lightly because they can upset a team, and they've got nothing to lose," the captain said.

"We can't just run through them. We've got to fight really hard from ball one to ball 300 probably, and fight it out and just take it as a Test-playing nation."

Afghanistan seamer Mirwais Ashraf, who took two for 32 in the defeat by Bangladesh, admitted Wednesday's had been a brutal introduction to World Cup cricket and that they had been punished for basic errors.

Their naiveté was illustrated in the third over when Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal edged a ball from Hamid Hassan and was caught behind.

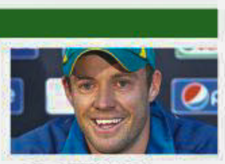
The umpire gave Tamim not out and the Afghans ran out of time in which to review the decision.

"We are new in this big event," said Mirwais. "It was a little bit disappointing, that decision," said the 26-year-old.

## INFO ZONE

| AFGHANISTAN | | SRI LANKA | INDIA | | SOUTH AFRICA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **HEAD TO HEAD IN WORLD CUPS** | | | | | |
| M W L | | M W L | M W L | | M W L |
| Never Played Before | | Never Played Before | 3 0 3 | | 3 3 0 |
| **IN ALL ODIS** | | | | | |
| M W L | | M W L | M W L | | M W L |
| 1 0 1 | | 1 1 0 | 70 25 42 | | 70 42 25 |
| Last meeting: March 3, 2014 at Fatullah in Dhaka. Sri Lanka won by 129 runs. | | | Last meeting: 8th December 2013, in Durban. South Africa won by 134 runs. | | |

**KEY PLAYERS**



| SHAPOOR ZADRAN | | LASITH MALINGA | VIRAT KOHLI | | AB DE VILLIERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33.96 | Bowl Average | 27.52 | 51.95 | Bat Average | 51.97 |
| 31 | Innings | 172 | 143 | Inns | 173 |
| 45.7 | Strike Rate | 31.5 | 6339 | Runs | 7484 |
| 4.45 | Eco Rate | 5.24 | 183 | HS | 149 |
| 31 | Wickets | 271 | 90.08 | Strike Rate | 97.03 |
| 4-24 | Best figures | 6-38 | 22 | 100s | 19 |
| 0 | 5w | 7 | 33 | 50s | 43 |
| 2-20 | Last inns | 0-84 | 107 | Last inns | 25 |

## FAN ZONE

**(Above) Distraught fans in Karachi burn an effigy of Pakistan captain Mishbaul Haq. However, (Right) Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and his Australian counterpart Michael Clarke are happy to share points.**

**Mehr Tarar: I send my love to the Pakistani spectators in that stadium. You deserve a standing ovation for still sitting there and clapping.**

**ShikaarTheOne: In all probability, the apple that fell on Newton was actually dropped by a Pakistani fielder.**