



As the Bangladesh women's cricket team safely reached home after their short tour of Pakistan, they were greeted at the home of cricket, the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

## Zimbabwe tour in November agreed

SPORTS REPORTER



Zimbabwe Cricket has 'agreed in principle' to comply with Bangladesh's request to shift the dates of the two-match Test series, from January 2016 to November this year.

The rest of the matches of the series -- three One-Day Internationals and as many Twenty20 Internationals -- however are expected to take place as per the original schedule.

According to BCB, representatives of both boards will discuss the new schedule and are likely to finalise it in Dubai on the sidelines of the ICC meeting which is set to begin on Friday.

The two Tests are expected to begin in the first week of November and, as per the proposed schedule, will take place in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The rescheduling of the Zimbabwe Tests would mean a packed one-and-a-half months for the Tigers, with the Bangladesh Premier League set to begin on November 19.

The proposal to reorganise the dates of the tour was brought forward after Cricket Australia decided to postpone its tour of Bangladesh.

"Zimbabwe have agreed in principle to come here in November. However, we haven't finalised the schedule yet. We will discuss it during the ICC meeting," said BCB president Nazmul Hasan Papon following the board's 12th meeting.

Apart from finalising the tour on the sidelines, the BCB also stated that it would attempt to increase the number of bilateral tours in the current Future Tours Programme (FTP).

"There will be a discussion regarding the FTP on the 10th [Saturday] in the meeting and we will talk about it there. Our objective is to play more cricket. The value of the game has increased a lot in Bangladesh and we want more games than before."

"We have played against many good teams and that's why our ranking improved. But we feel that is not enough. We play a lot less cricket compared to the top-ranked

sides and that's a point we will raise in the meeting," explained Papon.

The board has also approved a proposal to revamp the BCB's indoor arena.

"Our head coach came to me and explained that since the pitches in the indoors are at least eight to ten years old, they don't benefit the pacers. He also wanted us to improve the facilities."

"When we went to Brisbane for our preparations ahead of the World Cup, our players trained at the Brisbane Centre of Excellence. The facilities there were excel-

Zimbabwe have 'principally agreed' to tour in November to play two Tests
BCB aims to schedule more bilateral series
Mirpur's indoor facilities to be revamped
Pacer hunt programme to take place this year
BPL-3 set to begin on November 19
BCB will bid for 2016 Asia Cup

## U-17s off to a bright start

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-17s got off to a solid start against their visiting Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) counterparts as the hosts posted 264 for four at stumps on the opening day of the first three-dayer between the sides at BKSP yesterday.

The home side rode on Ratul Khan's 84 during his three-hour stay and Aminul Islam's unbeaten 77 to reach the comfortable total.

Bangladesh opted to bat first but they lost their first wicket with the scoreboard on 11 as Foyzal Ahmed returned to the pavilion for a duck. Sojibul Islam then joined Ratul and shared an 80-run stand for the second wicket as the pair established the innings after the early jolt.

**SCORES IN BRIEF BANGLADESH UNDER-17S:** 264-4 in 92 overs (Ratul 84, Sojibul 41, Aminul 77 not out, Shamim 35, Mahmudul 5 not out; Souvik 1-54, Debaran 1-37, Rohit 1-48, Kaushik 1-45)

## Fry to join Elite Panel

IANIS, Melbourne

Australian umpire Simon Fry has been called up to make his Test debut when he officiates in the upcoming series between Sri Lanka and the West Indies this month.

Fry made his first class debut in his home state South Australia in 2002 and has since officiated 196 matches, including becoming the first Australian umpire to reach 50 domestic one-day matches last season.

## Upbeat women return home

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh women's cricket team returned home safely yesterday after a short visit to Pakistan.

Despite losing all four games on the tour, it was a happy return for the women's team as captain Salma Khatun and team officials expressed their satisfaction over the security and hospitality extended by the hosts, as well as the side's performances against their strong Pakistan counterparts.

"We were eager to play the series against Pakistan because we didn't play an international match for the past one and a half years. The World

Cup qualifiers are coming up, so this tour will help us a lot. I must say it was a good tour for us though we lost all matches. It could have been a different story had we contributed more with the bat," Salma told reporters.

"The security was fantastic. I cannot describe the kind of security we got there. We actually didn't expect that much. We only concentrated on our games because there were no security fears for us. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials welcomed us at the airport where even the journalists were not allowed to speak with us," she said.

Salma was excited while she was talking about the hospitality during the tour. "The hospitality was brilliant. We

had actually very little outings during the tour as there were back-to-back matches, but we attended a lot of parties."

Manager Shafiqul Haque Heera and BCB Women's Committee chairman MA Awal Chowdhury echoed the captain's sentiments.

The Bangladesh women's team was supposed to be busy with a home series against their South African counterparts, but Cricket South Africa postponed the series. When asked about the postponement, Salma said, "Two days ago, I received the news but I didn't know any of the details. The board will take a decision regarding this matter and only they can tell you why they will not come as planned," she

## A BCB plea to media

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan Papon yesterday requested the media to employ a cautious approach before publishing articles or airing programmes related to the postponement of Australia's tour for the greater interest of the country's cricket.

Ever since Cricket Australia decided against sending its team to Bangladesh on security grounds, several theories and speculations were brought up in talk shows and articles; most of which, according to the president, were not substantiated by any evidence and that eventually made things a lot more difficult for the board.

"Australia's decision to postpone its tour of Bangladesh has, no doubt, made the fans very sad. But one has to understand that this scenario was beyond the control of Australia's cricket administration."

"I was in touch with Cricket Australia's chairman and I can tell you that he tried till the very end to send the team, but could not get permission. The way their CEO and captain constantly sympathised with us goes to show that they really wanted to come," said Papon.

"Despite all that, when some of us try to link the postponement as a part of a conspiracy of the 'Big Three' in the ICC or that it was a result of us deciding to send our women's team to Pakistan, it puts us in an awkward situation. I am going to the ICC for an important discussion and it's important that these issues don't create a distance."

"These are baseless. If any of you need clarification regarding any point, you are always free to contact us. But when someone comes on TV and says these things, it harms our image a lot," he concluded.

## Proteas eye clean sweep

PTI, Kolkata

Boostered by their back-to-back wins against India, South Africa batsman David Miller says his team is all pumped to make a clean sweep in the three-match Twenty20 series on Thursday.

"I think it is a massive point. We are 2-0 up and are determined to make it 3-0. As you say, momentum and confidence is a big thing in international cricket. I think, our preparations have been really good. We've been trying to check all the boxes and hopefully we will come out on top tomorrow," said Miller on the eve of the third and final T20 international.

South Africa won the first two matches by 7 and 6 wickets respectively.

"To be honest, it's a great feeling to be coming to Kolkata 2-0 up in the series. The series win is really big. We came here with a lot of expectations to do well; we have put a lot of pressure on us to perform."

## 'Need more quality and time'

SPORTS REPORTER



As Bangladesh's AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers campaign at home soil came to a futile end, football officials might try to find solace from the news that none of the other South Asian sides in their respective groups managed to match Bangladesh's four points, let alone qualify. But there will be no hiding from the fact that Bangladesh were handed the easiest draw in the qualification, with two relatively weaker opponents -- Sri Lanka and Bhutan -- alongside favourites Uzbekistan in their group. In fact the easy draw was what had prompted the football federation to bid for hosting the qualifiers so that they could take advantage of the home condition.

But after a decent start with a 2-0 win over Sri Lanka, the shocking draw against Bhutan was what set the hosts on the back-foot, leaving them needing a victory against Uzbekistan, which was an improbable task, evident from their eventual 4-0 defeat. Coach Saiful Bari Titu, who worked with this team for the last two-and-a-half months, overseeing two failed campaigns including the semifinal exit from the SAFF U-19

Championship in Nepal in August, accepted responsibility for the latest failure while questioning the quality of the squad he had at his disposal.

"I cannot deny my failure, but I can say that there was no lack of commitment on my part. You have to realise that we cannot make the players play beyond their ability with less than three months' preparation," admitted the coach after the Uzbekistan defeat.

The camp for the two events started towards the middle of July, with 75 players initially chosen from an open trial which included, among others, players from Savar BKSP, BFF Academy and the Bangladesh Premier League. Titu feels there must have been more quality players at this age-level around the country, who might have somehow not been noticed.

"I think these are not all the best players of the under-19 level that we have in the country. We need to see whether we are missing out on some. The Sohrwardi Cup (expected to be held later this year) will be very important if we are to find the best players of this age group," said Titu.

Titu's claim of not having enough quality could be partially justified by the fact that three under-16 players were drafted into the side after the

SAFF campaign, in a bid to make up for the lack of quality -- a decision which ultimately did not pay much dividend.

However, while during the SAFF Championship the team had shown glimpses of brilliance, the same team, albeit with a few changes, looked lacklustre in all three of their matches in the qualifiers this week. It was not just the results, but the on-field displays which were very disappointing. The forward line lacked cutting edge while the defence was frustratingly shaky and made too many school-boy errors. The control and passing of the ball by the hosts also left a lot to be desired, something which should not have happened as they were playing at their familiar turf. Titu's claim of 'the artificial turf in Nepal being more helpful to playing quick passing football,' and 'the other teams prepared better than us,' sounded hyperbolic. In any case, the high-ups of the BFF, who have already appointed a Spanish coach to guide the under-16 and under-19 teams, may need to do more to make sure a better team is formed next time. Taking cues from Titu's remarks, widening the scouting scope and holding nationwide age-level tournaments could be used as

## IN A NUTSHELL

### Pac-man set to retire

Philippine boxing hero Manny Pacquiao announced Wednesday he would likely retire next year after one last fight so he could focus on a career in politics, hopefully as a senator.

The born-again Christian, winner of an unprecedented eight world titles in as many weight divisions and at times touted as a future president of the Philippines, said he had taken career advice from God.

"I think I'm ready [to retire]. I've been in boxing for more than 20 years," Pacquiao, 36, said in an interview.

"I prayed to God for guidance and I am happy about it."

Pacquiao, a congressman since 2010, announced this week his bid for a senate seat in national elections to be held in May next year.

### Ganguly's coronation on 15th

Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) president designate Sourav Ganguly will formally be elected as its chief at their special general meeting on October 15.

The former India captain on Monday did the formality of tendering his resignation from CAB joint secretary, a position which will be taken by Jagmohan Dalmiya's son, Avishek Dalmiya.

The CAB on Wednesday sent notification to all the 121 affiliated units for the SGM which was called after the demise of Jagmohan Dalmiya.

The former India captain, who is in his second term as CAB joint secretary, had emerged as the consensus candidate to take over the mantle in an announcement made by West Bengal

### Aussie trio to commentate

Australian Test vice-captain David Warner and recent retirees Chris Rogers and Ryan Harris will give viewers a unique insight into the Matador BBQs One-Day Cup as guest commentators on the Nine Network.

Warner -- who is sitting out the tournament with a broken thumb as he continues his recovery ahead of next month's Test series with New Zealand -- and retired pair Rogers and Harris will join Brett Lee, Mike Hussey and Tom Moody as part of Nine's commentary team.

The Matador Cup has already begun, with players from Australia's Test squad to tour Bangladesh joining their respective teams after the tour was postponed at the eleventh hour.

Compiled by Star Sport Desk



A file photo shows Saiful Bari Titu (L) instructing his charges at a training session during the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers earlier this week.

PHOTO: STAR FILE