

# SPORT



Bangladesh cricket captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza leads his teammates for a football session during their training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## Zimbabwe in town

SPORTS REPORTER



A 23-member Zimbabwe contingent, led by Elton Chigumbura, arrived in Dhaka yesterday evening. Without spending much time at the airport, the team went straight to the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, where they, and the Tigers, will be residing during the two-week tour.

Officially the series begins on November 7 with the first ODI scheduled to take place at Mirpur that day. However, the first match of the tour will take place on Thursday when the visitors face-off against a BCB-XI at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah.

The African side hasn't been in the best of forms lately, losing both the ODI and T20I series to Afghanistan at home last month. However, they did take part in a number of limited over contests, one of which saw them beat India in a T20I, in the last few months.

As far as their results with regards to Bangladesh are concerned, Zimbabwe have some catching up to do. The teams have faced each other 64 times so far and

the Tigers lead by 36 to 28. The last time Zimbabwe were in Bangladesh was back in November, 2014 when the Tigers were going through one of their worst runs. Bangladesh had lost all their ODIs prior to that series that year, including an embarrassing defeat to Afghanistan.

However, that series changed it all for Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Co. They beat Zimbabwe 3-0 in the Tests and 5-0 in the ODIs.

While the Zimbabweans were busy gathering their luggage, the Tigers were attending a practice session in Mirpur which extended till late evening. Interestingly, one of the sessions saw the batsmen bat without stumps on the wickets.

Skipper Mashrafe later explained the strategy saying that the coach wanted the batters to expand their stroke-play by playing with a lot of freedom.

It's a kind of training session that the Tigers may attend more often considering that the Asia Cup and World T20 are coming up next year.

If Bangladesh go on to win the ODI series 3-0, they will gain one rating point in the ICC rankings.

## SA delay tour again

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa's women's cricket team has postponed its tour to Bangladesh again. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) made the announcement just a day before the visitors were scheduled to arrive in Dhaka to play three one-day internationals and four Twenty20 Internationals.

"South African cricket authorities told us that their women's team cannot come on Tuesday," BCB chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury told AFP.

"They cited logistic problems. We hope the problems will be solved soon and they'll announce a fresh date of arrival," he said.

Nizamuddin further said that the formation of a new itinerary would force the board to shorten the number of matches against South Africa since the Zimbabwe women's cricket team is scheduled to arrive in Bangladesh in mid-November.

According to AFP there were no comments from South Africa cricket chiefs or the government.

South African women's team was originally scheduled to visit in October but the tour was postponed following Cricket Australia's decision to postpone its men's tour due to security concerns.

## 'Shishir didn't want to see me sad'

SPORTS REPORTER



Soon-to-be-father Shakib Al Hasan yesterday revealed that his wife Umme Ahmed Shishir played a big part for his decision to take part in the Zimbabwe series, starting next week.

Shishir is due to give birth to the couple's first child in three weeks time and the ace-all-rounder, who was granted one-and-a-half-month leave, was supposed to be with his wife in the USA to strictly monitor the countdown.

However, he decided to take part in the five-match series and credited his wife for the decision. And so the left-hander cut his vacation short and joined the training camp on Sunday.

"She told me that it was better for me to come and play rather than sulking there (in USA)," Shakib quipped while speaking to reporters after training in Mirpur yesterday.

Shakib was actually referring to his wife's understanding that if he stayed there and had watched Bangladesh's matches against Zimbabwe on television he would have definitely felt sad. "I don't want to see that face of yours," Shakib quoted his wife.

The Zimbabwe tour is set to finish by November 15 and Shakib's wife is due a week after that. While the left-hander does plan to take part in the entire tour, he might go back in case of an emergency.

"I'm still not certain how many matches I will play. I am looking forward to play all the matches. And I can do that if everything takes place as per schedule. However, things will be different if anything unexpected happens," explained Shakib.

All in all, the left-hander was extremely

excited to be back in action.

"I have been on a break for a long time and that's the reason why I enjoyed today's training session so much. It felt good.

"I am excited about the Zimbabwe series and I am excited about that (becoming a father) as well. On the whole, the degree of excitement seems a bit too much in my life at the moment," laughed Shakib.

Despite all the excitement, the 28-year-old kept a cool head while talking about the upcoming series.

"Not at all," he said firmly when asked if the players would find it difficult to motivate themselves. He wants Bangladesh to dominate both the series.

"The challenge changes day-by-day. Since we did so well against them in the past and because we are playing at home, our target should be to dominate this series.

"Also, we have done well throughout the year. If we finish on a good note I think this will be our best cricketing year ever," said the all-rounder.

The left-hander thanked Zimbabwe Cricket for sending in their cricketers and 'helping' Bangladesh.

"This series is a very good thing for us. Zimbabwe has helped us a lot. Obviously there's plenty of uncertainty created when a country [Australia] cancels its tour.

Honestly speaking I still don't think that there should be any security concerns in Bangladesh, at least when it comes to cricket. There has never been any such problem before and it's unlikely for such an issue to come up. I am very happy that Zimbabwe has come," said Shakib.

Bangladesh will face Zimbabwe in three ODIs and two T20Is starting with the first ODI on November 7.

## Mithun ton downs Zim A

SPORTS REPORTER

A brilliant century from Mohammad Mithun and a four-wicket haul from off-spinner Mahmudul Hasan led Bangladesh A to a 138-run victory over Zimbabwe A in the first one-day at the Harare Sports Club yesterday. Batting first, the second-string Bangladesh side finished on 252 for 9 in 50 overs before getting the hosts bundled out for just 114 in 37 overs.

The domination from Bangladesh A was a welcome change after their dismal performance in South Africa prior to this tour.

Mithun, who batted at number three, scored 100 off 103 balls, with three sixes and six fours. The wicket-keeper batsman was supported by opener Sadman Islam's cautious 89-ball 58. The pair shared a 77-run stand for the second wicket.

After the exchange, Bangladesh's bowlers ran through Zimbabwe's top order and reduced them to 21 for four in 13 over, with pacers Mohammad Shahid and Abu Jayed removing the top four in quick time. The middle order tried to stitch partnerships but failed against the tidy bowling by the spinners. Apart from Mahmudul's four-for, skipper Shuvagata Hom took two wickets.



Zimbabwe's in-form all-rounder Sikandar Raza Butt (L) leads his teammates out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after arriving here yesterday evening for two T20Is and three ODIs against Bangladesh. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Mominul hits double ton

Khulna a day away from title

SPORTS REPORTER



It might have been a touch too late, but at last Mominul Haque has something to cheer about. The top order batsman hasn't been in the best of forms lately and his fierce 239 in the final round of the National Cricket League should help him regain his confidence.

It was his sole effort that helped Chittagong finish on 423 for 8 against Barisal at the end of the third day's play at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday. The southpaw hit 37 fours in his nine-hour-long innings before getting bowled out with five overs remaining for the day. His innings, though, won't make a difference with regards to the context of the match which is heading for a draw.

With just one more day to go, the captains of the sides are likely to play the waiting game. Barisal have already confirmed their promotion to Tier One.

The other Tier Two encounter witnessed Rajshahi thrash Sylhet by ten wickets within three days. Having conceded a 219-run lead in the first innings, Sylhet needed something special in their second



Mominul Haque raises his bat after reaching 200 for Chittagong in their NCL match against Barisal in Bogra yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

essay to stay in the game. However, all they could manage was 242. It would have been worse for Sylhet had their wicket-keeper Ruman

Ahmed not scored an entertaining 106, an innings which witnessed 18 boundaries.

After the exchange Rajshahi required just 24 runs to win and they got those runs in 6.2 overs.

Meanwhile, both the Tier One games are headed for draws, courtesy of inclement weather in Chittagong division. At the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Rangpur finished on 324 for 7 against league leaders Khulna yesterday. With one more day to go, they have the enormous task of bowling Khulna out twice in order to avoid relegation.

Khulna, on the other hand, have already put one hand on the championship trophy. The reason behind that of course is that the match between Dhaka Metro and Dhaka division in Cox's Bazar has endured three washed-out days. A draw will only give the two sides -- placed second and third -- three points each, which isn't enough for either of them to topple leaders Khulna.

## England solid in reply

AFP, Sharjah



James Taylor hit a maiden half-century in his comeback match to bolster England to 222-4 at stumps on the second day of the second Test against Pakistan in Sharjah on Monday.

The 25-year-old, playing his first Test since 2012, kept Pakistan at bay with an unbeaten 74 and found an able ally in Jonny Bairstow (37 not out) as the two put on an invaluable 83 for the unbroken fifth-wicket stand at Sharjah Stadium.

That leaves England just 12 behind Pakistan's first-innings total of 234 with six wickets intact as they hope to gain a decisive lead in their bid to level the three-match series.

Pakistan lead the series 1-0 after winning the second Test in Dubai while the first Test ended in a draw in Abu Dhabi.

Taylor kept England in the hunt as he survived a keen tussle between bat and ball, with Pakistan's spin duo of Yasir Shah and Zulfiqar Babar threatening to take wickets.

But Taylor, playing his first Test since his two debut Tests against South Africa three years ago, battled with resolve, using his feet and sweeping to blunt the spin.

He pushed paceman Wahab Riaz for a single to reach his first half century off 100 balls. He has so far hit six boundaries during his 141-ball fight.

When Taylor walked in England were struggling at 97-3 after Alastair Cook (49)

and Joe Root -- their two key batsmen -- had been dismissed.

Taylor added 42 for the fourth wicket with Ian Bell (40) to steady the innings as Pakistan attacked through both pace and spin.

For Pakistan Shah took 2-79 while Babar went wicket-less in his 25 overs and even a second new ball at 181-4 failed to dislodge the Taylor-Bairstow partnership.

Bell, who survived a confident caught behind appeal off Babar, was finally stumped off Shah. He hit two boundaries and a six during his three hour 37 minute innings.

Bell and Cook had steadied the innings with a 71-run stand for the second wicket. England had added three runs to their lunch score of 87-1 when Cook fell to a soft dismissal as he pushed a Shah delivery straight into the hands of short leg fielder Azhar Ali.

Cook hit four boundaries during his 119-ball knock.

England had hoped Root would supplement Bell but the fast-rising batsman fell to a loose shot off paceman Rahat Ali and was smartly snapped low to his right by wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed.

Resuming at 4-0, England lost Ali in the seventh over of the day when he miscued an aggressive shot off spinner Shoaib Malik and was caught in the slip by Younis Khan for 14.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 234

ENGLAND: First innings 222 for 4 (Cook 49, Bell 40, Taylor 74 not out, Bairstow 37 not out; Rahat 1-35, Shah 2-79)

## Tahir advised to stay in hotel

DAWN.COM

Pakistan-born South African cricketer Imran Tahir has been confined to his team hotel in Mumbai, Wisden India reported.

Tahir's Pakistan connection has reportedly forced the South African team management to avoid taking any risks as atmosphere in Indian state of Maharashtra remains unsafe for Pakistani nationals.

"There were instructions from the team management that Tahir should not leave the team hotel at any point of time when in Mumbai.

"Since Tahir is born in Pakistan, the team management took extra security precaution. It was only to avoid any untoward incident," a source close to the South African team said on Saturday.

The move reportedly comes after the October 19 Mumbai fiasco when the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan was due to meet the BCCI chief Shashank Manohar.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>BARISAL V CHITTAGONG</b> Barisal: 489 Chittagong: 423 for 8 (Mominul 239, Nafees 56; Monir 3-64, Shohag 3-133)	<b>RAJSHAHI V SYLHET</b> Sylhet: 176 and 242 all out in 61 overs (Ruman 106; Sanjamul 3-90, Shafiq 2-24) Rajshahi: 395 and 26 for no loss Result: Rajshahi won by ten wickets.	<b>RANGPUR V KHULNA</b> Rangpur: 324 for 7 (Tanveer 105, Dhiman 69; Razzak 4-124, Murad 3-66)
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