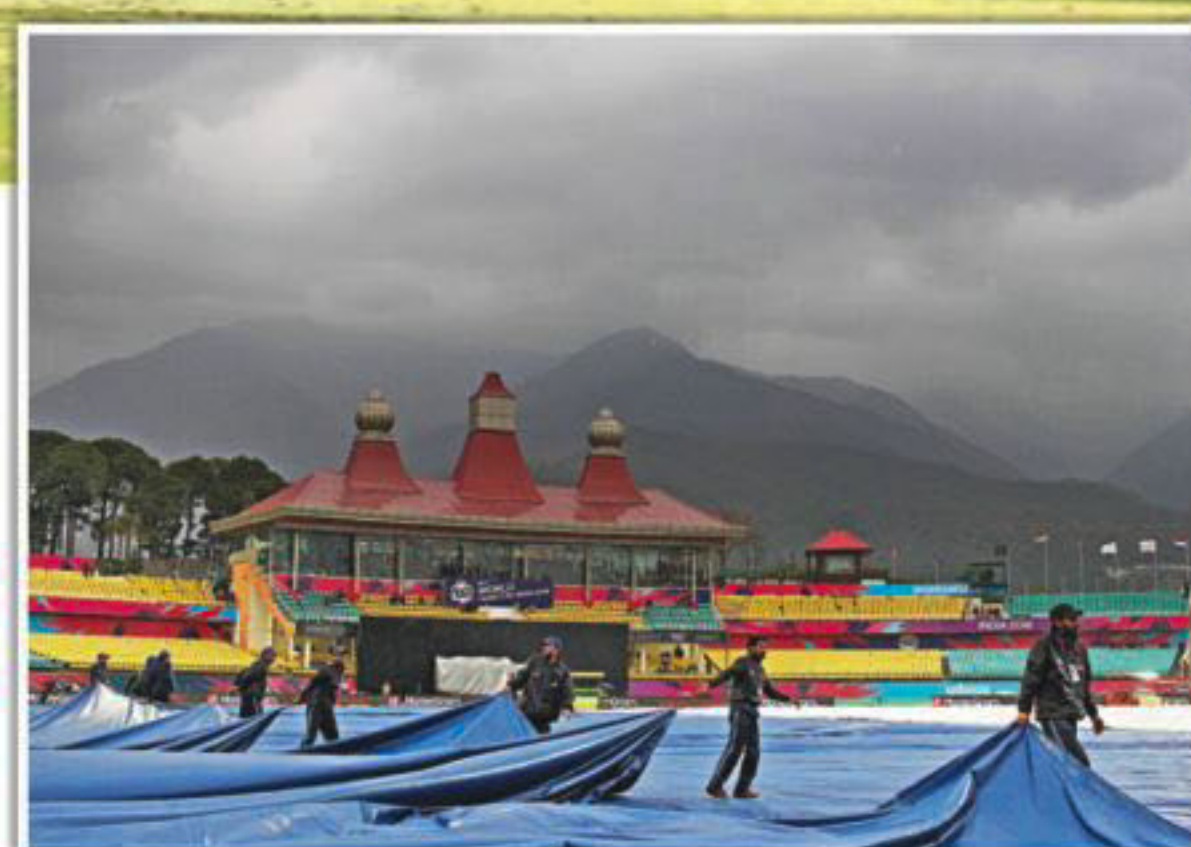




Tamim Iqbal (L) provided a roaring start for Bangladesh and Sabbir Rahman joined in during their ICC World Twenty20 first-round match against Ireland in Dharamsala, (INSET) but ultimately the match was abandoned due to rain yesterday.

PHOTOS: BCB



## More questions than answers

### Sunny to be tested today, Taskin on March 14

AL-AMIN from Dharamsala



It was all but confirmed that Bangladesh pace bowler Taskin Ahmed will travel to Chennai on March 14 to undergo a biometric test after being reported for a suspect action during the Tigers' ICC World T20 qualifier against the Netherlands on March 9.

Meanwhile left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny, who was also reported in the same match, will travel to the the same ICC-designated centre sometime today.

The issue of suspect bowling actions of the two Bangladesh bowlers created quite a stir in Dharamsala, with most people including the Bangladesh team management expressing surprise and shock at a ruling that could not have come at a worse time with the Tigers battling with a lot of injury issues.

Actually the Bangladesh team management was reportedly in an argument with the game's ruling body over the timing of the test. It was learnt that the team management wanted to schedule the tests of both players after their qualifying phase ends on March 13.

But the ICC, understandably against the delay considering that it would give unfair advantage to the team in question, wanted the test and results to be completed before the stipulated seven-day time.

While the official process was taking shape, Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha took a swipe at the ruling a day after both players were reported.

"I have not spoken to them [match officials]. But that's a concern as well. They have concerns about my bowlers and I have concerns about their action as well," he said acridly on Thursday.

Although there was a mixed reaction about Arafat Sunny, not many were convinced about the ruling on Taskin.

## 'We played for Taskin, Sunny'

SPORTS REPORTER from Dharamsala



Tigers skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza made no secret about how distraught the team were for bowlers Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny.

Appearing at the press briefing yesterday after the Tigers' washed out game against Ireland, Mashrafe said that they have decided to play for the two bowlers, who were reported for suspect actions during Bangladesh's opening ICC World T20 qualifier against the Netherlands on Wednesday.

"We have decided to play for them. We can't do anything about reports against them. But by doing that we are expressing our solidarity," said Mashrafe when asked how the team was feeling after the ICC action.

"Sunny was not in the team today. It was because he did not fit into our game plan on the day. But Taskin was with us and he was even more committed to what he has been doing for the team," said the inspirational Bangladesh captain, adding that it was unfortunate that he could not bowl in the rain-ruled match.

He said that Taskin will leave for Chennai on March 14 and Sunny today.

When asked how he felt when he lost the toss, which was vital in a shortened game, he said that he was a bit worried because in a reduced game it's always dicey when you are batting first.

But he was very happy the way Tamim and Soumya handled the situation. When asked about the injury status of the team, he said that it was getting better.

"Mustafizur [Rahman] is recovering very well from his side strain. It takes two to three weeks to recover from this kind of injury. We don't want to risk further injury by playing. Shakib has recovered from his groin injury", said Mashrafe.

When asked about his swelled right thumb, which he suffered while trying to stop a hard-hit drive in the game against the Netherlands, he said that it was fine.

## INDIAN RHYTHMS

### Fan interrupted

AL-AMIN from Dharamsala

As the reporters were collecting their match-day tickets for yesterday's double-header at the Kunal Hotel, which is also the home of most of the travelling Bangladeshi journalists, a gentleman in his 30s was seen standing outside the old-fashioned Indian government property.

Sajjadul Karim, an employee of NRB Bank, has actually come all the way from Dhaka to Dharamsala to cheer his beloved cricket team from the stands. He took a week's leave from his employer and had planned to watch the Tigers' final two qualifying games. But his all-out effort and the amount of money he spent were mostly in vain as heavy rain allowed only eight overs of play yesterday. And with the forecast of more rain in the next couple of days, Sajjadul's Dharamsala venture is all set to be a nightmare unless he plans to compensate for the loss of cricket with some sightseeing.

He has also planned to watch the March 16 Super Eight game between Pakistan and the winners of Group A, which at the moment looks like Bangladesh, at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. All he can hope for now is that Bangladesh qualify and travel to Kolkata. Rain in Dharamsala at this time of the season is not a common phenomenon. According to a local journalist it is a delayed spell of rain, which was supposed to take place in January and February.



PHOTO: BCB

The Bangladesh fans in attendance yesterday faced disappointment as rain played spoilsport.

#### THE INDO-PAK DISAPPOINTMENT

The moment the International Cricket Council (ICC) decided to shift the India-Pakistan ICC World T20 match from Dharamsala to Kolkata after a lot of frantic activity, it was greeted with a sigh of relief from an army of security personnel assembled from the three states of this region - Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

But people here in the upper reaches of the Kangra valley, for most of whom it would have been a financial bonanza, appeared devastated. While cricket fans considered it a missed opportunity to watch a game of this magnitude, hotel owners and taxi drivers -- who live on revenue from tourists -- rued the lost chance of a financial windfall.

A hotel manager in Sidwari was so devastated with the cancellation of the game that he feared he might lose his job. Taxi driver Rakesh was grumbling while driving this reporter to the stadium.

"We were expecting to earn some more money because of the game. Now that the game is cancelled, we will have to wait till April before the regular tourists start arriving. It's because of the politicians that the game is cancelled. They should keep politics out of cricket," said a distraught Rakesh.

Meanwhile, the latest development regarding Pakistan's participation in the ICC World T20 is that they will arrive in Kolkata today, where they are also likely to play a practice game before their opening fixture at the Eden Gardens on March 16.

## Oman march on, Netherlands out

AGENCIES, Dharamsala



The Netherlands were knocked out of the World Twenty20 Friday after their match against Oman was abandoned due to rain in Dharamsala.

The Dutch, who shared a point with Oman in the rained-off game, had been invited to field after losing the toss but not a single ball was possible due to bad weather.

"There's extreme disappointment. We've put in a lot of time, effort and energy in trying to qualify. For it to end like this after having lost to Bangladesh in a closely-fought game, we are gutted," Dutch skipper Peter Borren said.

Looking at the future, though, he was desperately disappointed. As of now, they are left with one more T20I, two one-day games against Nepal in the World Cricket League and a four-day game against Afghanistan, and that's it for the rest of the year.

"We could have done a lot of things better in that game, it will haunt us for a while. We don't get a lot of opportunities at this stage. As someone says, our next chance could be in four years time."

"It's obviously not enough cricket, that's fair to say," Borren said. "If we had managed to get through here, it would have been fantastic. As someone says, our next chance could be in four years time. I've been lucky to have played in a few, but it seems like it's becoming less opportu-

nities for Associate teams, which is frustrating.

"For me, I'm getting older but some of our young guys... it's pretty hard to tell a guy like Paul van Meekeren, for example, who bowls four overs, gets 2 for 17 against Bangladesh, that there might be another opportunity if we get really really good cricket over three-four years time. It's pretty tough."

Meanwhile Oman, who stunned Ireland in their first group encounter, are still in the race for the Super 10 stage.

"We were confident coming into the game. We are still alive if we beat Bangladesh. We put in consistent performances in the qualifiers in Ireland and Scotland. They [players] are all excited," a beaming Oman captain Sultan Ahmed said.

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## WORLD TWENTY20 Pak cleared to play

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan on Friday announced it would send its national team to India for the World Twenty20 following security assurances from New Delhi.

The interior minister "Chaudhry Nisar [Ali Khan] has given permission to Pakistan's team to play in India," Najam Sethi, a senior Pakistan Cricket Board official, said after a meeting with the minister.

The Pakistan team had been due to fly out on Wednesday but the government put their departure on hold, citing the threat posed by Hindu extremists who disrupted a meeting between the heads of the two cricket boards held in India last year.

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

### TAMIM ON THE ATTACK

There were genuine concerns when Bangladesh were asked to bat first after they lost the toss. Under cloudy conditions it's always difficult for a side to set the target. However, the way Tamim Iqbal attacked the Irish bowlers right from the first ball relieved Bangladesh's dressing room. Continuing on from the last game, Tamim unleashed a series of sensible yet aggressive strokes to take control of the game. He smacked four sixes and three fours in his 26-ball 47 and put Bangladesh in control before play was abandoned due to rain. Batting with a strike-rate of 180, it was a delight for the spectators.



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BANGLADESH	R/B	4/6		
Tamim c Porterfield b Dockrell	47/26	3/4		
Soumya st N O'Brien				
b McBrine	20/13	3/0		
Sabbir not out	13/9	0/1		
Extras: (b-1, lb-9, w-4)		14		
Total: (For 2 wkts in 8 overs)		94		
Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-94.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Murtagh	2	0	16	0
Rankin	1	0	11	0
K O'Brien	1	0	19	0
McBrine	2	0	20	1
Dockrell	2	0	18	1

Result: Match abandoned.