

SPORT

Afghans coming next month

Three ODIs slated for Sept 25, Sept 28 and Oct 1

SPORTS REPORTER

The Afghanistan cricket team will be touring Bangladesh in the last week of September for three One Day Internationals against the hosts, it was confirmed yesterday.

A statement by the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) stated that the Afghans would play the three matches against hosts Bangladesh, all of which will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

Nasimullah Danish, chairman of ACB said: "This will be the first series between Bangladesh and Afghanistan. We are looking forward to an entertaining cricket series along with the cricket lovers of Bangladesh."

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon later briefed reporters about the tour, saying the three



NAZMUL HASSAN PAPON

matches would take place on Sep 25, Sep 28 and Oct 1.

"The team wanted to play one series before the England series since they haven't played for a long time," the BCB president said. "We saw that Afghanistan were available. And then I asked the players whether they wanted to play and they were all willing."

"If we can play three ODIs against them [Afghanistan], it will help us in the series against England. So we were thinking about this. Many dates were discussed but finally we decided on September 25 and 28 and October 1. They will arrive here on September 22," Papon added.

This will be the first full series between Bangladesh and Afghanistan, the latter having been only recently awarded full membership of the Asian Cricket Council. The last time the two teams met, the Tigers were victorious. However, before that, the hosts had suffered a shock defeat in Fatullah during the Asia Cup in 2014.

Papon further said that the BCB had decided to hire a consultant ahead of the Afghanistan series.

"We have decided to hire a consultant for our national team. Our head coach has told us that we have a shortage in the coaching staff. There are a number of series after the Afghanistan series including the England series, New Zealand series, Ireland series and the Champions Trophy. And there is no break ahead, so we are looking to hire someone now."

Regarding the appointment of a bowling coach, he said: "As I had said earlier, the bowling coach has been finalised. However, he hasn't yet submitted his resignation to his team and so we can't announce his name officially. He is most likely going to submit his resignation tomorrow and inform us." The BCB boss was actually referring to former West Indies fast bowler Courtney Walsh.

SA strike after Faf century

AFP, Centurion

South African captain Faf du Plessis ground out a century and was rewarded for his patience when New Zealand lost three quick wickets before the close of play on the second day of the second Test at SuperSport Park on Sunday.

New Zealand finished the day on 38 for three, 443 runs behind South Africa's first innings total of 481 for eight declared.

In an era of rapid scoring in Test cricket, much of South Africa's innings was a return to a more attritional age, with the run rate hovering at around three runs an over.

Du Plessis was particularly cautious as he tiptoed to a fifth Test century off 225 balls.

But it paid off for South Africa as reunited fast bowling pair Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander ripped out both openers before Ross Taylor was run out.

It left New Zealand in deep trouble in a match which will decide the series after the weather-hit, abandoned first Test in Durban.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 481-8 dec. (Cook 56, de Kock 82, Amla 58, Duminy 88, du Plessis 112 not out; Wagner 5-86)
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 38-3 (Williamson 15 not out; Steyn 1-18,

Mamunul to miss Male tie

SPORTS REPORTER

Captain Mamunul Islam will miss Bangladesh's international friendly against Maldives on September 1 due to a left thigh muscle injury.

The booters are playing the friendly in Male as preparation for their Asian Cup Play-Off Qualifiers against Bhutan on September 6.

The midfielder sustained the quad muscle injury on October 22 and has started rehab after a week's rest and the medical team is against taking any risks with him ahead of the Bhutan game.

"Mamunul has recovered from the pain and is now doing gym to regain strength. I told management not to take any risks before the Bhutan match," physio Sajib Shams Bakshi said yesterday. Trainer Riedoh Burden echoed his sentiments.

National team manager Iqbal Hossain confirmed that Mamunul is not travelling to Maldives on Tuesday with a 23-member national team, which will be declared today.



Champion Sri Lankan batsman Tillakaratne Dilshan salutes the raucous home crowd after his final one-day innings, 42 off 65, against Australia yesterday.

NATIONAL SHOOTING Girl gets the better of

women

SPORTS REPORTER

Turing Dewan impressed in the junior section of the 28th National Shooting Championships when she clinched the 10m air pistol event in some style at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

The BKSP Shooting Club shooter scored 191.6 points, something not only inspiring at the junior level but also more than matched what the winner at the senior level has scored in the same event. Armin Asha won the 10m air pistol's gold in the senior section but her aggregate score was 188.1. Shammi Akter and Sinthia Naznin won silver in junior and senior sections respectively scoring 181.1 and 186.7 points respectively.

In the three position 50m Rifle, veteran Suriya Akter outgunned Sharmin Shilpa to win the gold with 566 points. Atkiya Hasan Disha won the junior section gold with a score of 564 points while Nafisa Tabassum took the silver scoring 531 points.

Salma to miss Ireland tour

CRICINFO

All-rounder Salma Khatun will miss Bangladesh women's tour of Ireland next month, where they will play two ODIs and two T20s. Salma injured her shoulder during training a couple of weeks ago and hasn't sufficiently recovered.

Apart from Salma, Sharmin Akter and Shaila Sharmin have been dropped from the squad that played their last international assignment - the 2016 World T20 - with pace bowler Suraiya Azmin and all-rounder Jannatul Ferdous being their replacements in the 14-member squad.

They will play the T20s on September 5 and 6 while the two ODIs will be held on September 8 and 10. All four matches will be held at the Bready Cricket Club in Londonderry.

Confident hosts face Singapore

SPORTS REPORTER



Having thumped Iran on the opening day, the Bangladesh under-16 women's team have already crossed the biggest hurdle of the tournament, therefore they seemed understandably cheerful during training sessions ahead of today's AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifying tie against Singapore at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The girls in red and green were absolutely focused during their clash against Iran, who are arguably the strongest side in the South and Central zone of Asia, as evident by the result. They looked more relaxed than usual during the stretching session yesterday, sharing laughs among them, while three of their goalkeepers trained under the men's national team goalkeeper coach Ryan Sanford for the first time.

Despite the confidence boost however, the home side aim to keep their feet on the ground and take the game against Singapore with as much tenacity as the first fixture.

"I take every opponent as a strong one and so we will give our hundred percent effort against Singapore like we have given against Iran in our first match," said coach Golam Rabbani Choton after conducting a one-hour training session at the Astro-turf adjacent to the BFF House yesterday.

"After winning against Iran, I have told my girls to keep clam. There is a long way to go. We have just won a match and still have four matches in hand. So I have to go forward match by match as every match is difficult for us," said Choton.

Winger Sanjida Akter also added that she feels confident about keeping their winning run going.



The Bangladesh Under-16 girls deserve to sport big smiles on their faces after a stunning 3-0 win against Iran the previous day.

PHOTO: STAR

"We never felt any pressure against Iran because we had beaten them [AFC U-14 girls team] in Nepal and you all saw what happened yesterday [Saturday]. We were confident that we'd beat Iran and Sir told us that time and again. Now we want to keep our winning run intact against Singapore," said Sanjida.

"I never think about against whom I am playing; rather my target is to score goals. Yesterday [Saturday] it was also not in my mind that I was playing against a big team or a small team because I can't give my best if I think about the opponents," said Tahura Khatun, who struck the third goal against Iran and wrapped up the victory.

Singapore came here after having played three

practice matches in Japan where they conceded 22 goals in total against Visposayama, JFA Academy Sakai and Cerezo Osaka Saki Ladies but those practice matches seem to have had a good impact as they came from behind and played out a 2-2 draw against United Arab Emirates (UAE) in their opening match.

Despite this, Singapore coach Chen Cai Ying says they won't dream big against Bangladesh but simply want to give it their best.

"Bangladesh is a strong team who have some good players like number 7 [Sanjida], 9 [Swapna] and we may adopt a defensive strategy against them," said Ying just before the start of the training at the BFF astro-turf.

Injury not serious: Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER



Two days after the cricketers rejoiced England's decision to continue its tour of Bangladesh as per the original schedule, bad news has struck the Tigers camp.

Following Bangladesh's training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, chief selector Minhajul Abedin informed reporters that opening batsman Tamim Iqbal had sustained an injury to his left hand and that he would be out of action for at least three weeks.

According to Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) sports physician, Debashish Chowdhury, Tamim hurt his left little finger on Saturday during catching practice. Following a medical examination yesterday morning it was revealed that he had sus-

tained a fracture on the finger.

"He has suffered a fracture on his left finger. But the good part is that it's an 'un-dislocated' fracture and the fracture hasn't spread. We will reassess his condition on September 17. It usually takes around three to four weeks to recover from such an injury," Debashish told reporters yesterday.

"Since the England series is scheduled to begin on October 7, Tamim has enough time to recover. The only concern is that he won't be able to practise for the next three to four weeks," Debashish added.

Tamim, however, remained confident. He reckons that he would not only be ready in time for the England series but will also be able to play against Afghanistan, if the series takes place.

As per latest developments, Afghanistan team is expected to tour Bangladesh right before England's arrival on September 30.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Tamim said: "I hurt my finger while attempting to go for a catch during training yesterday. It still does hurt a bit but I am confident that I can come back soon and play the England series."

"Doctors have said that it will take me around two to three weeks to recover. This is the first time that I have injured my ring finger. What I have to do right now is to wait for the fracture to heal. Once that happens I can take the next step. Let's see how it goes," the left-handed batsman said.

Tamim is the second national player to get injured ahead of the England series. Pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who underwent a shoulder operation on August 31, will not be taking part in the England series.

England are set to arrive here on September 30 to play two Tests and three one-day Internationals in Chittagong and Dhaka.



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (L) is ruled out for three weeks after sustaining a fracture on the little finger of his left hand. But the dashing opener is confident of being ready before Tigers' home series against England in October.

PHOTO: STAR

BPL now resumes on Sept 19

SPORTS REPORTER

The Professional Football League Committee of Bangladesh Football Federation once again bowed down to clubs' pressure to defer the resumption of the Bangladesh Premier League by nearly two weeks.

The ongoing professional league, which was suspended for preparation of the national team ahead of Asian Cup play-off qualifiers against Bhutan, was supposed to resume from September 8, but it will now resume from September 19 as per the decision made yesterday.

The league committee, chaired by BFF's senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshed, agreed to defer the league after five clubs -- Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan SC, Arambagh KS, Brothers Union and Rahmatganj MFS -- requested the committee to do so stating the clubs giving needed time for preparation after the break for Eid-ul-Azha.

Rain robs India

AFP, Fort Lauderdale

Heavy rain forced the second Twenty20 international between West Indies and India at the Central Broward Regional Park on Sunday to be abandoned as a no-result.

After dismissing the world champions for 143, India were 15-0 in two overs when the rain came.

Ninety minutes later, and with the outfield soaked, play was abandoned, much to the irritation of the thousands of expatriates who turned out to watch India's first ever weekend playing in the US.

West Indies claimed the two-match series after winning the first game on Saturday by just one run.

Earlier, West Indies struggled to 143 all out with slow bowler Amit Mishra claiming a career best 3-24.

The Caribbean side had piled up 245 on Saturday in what was the third highest total of all time.

But the Florida pitch -- and eventually the weather -- turned its back on the stromekers on Sunday.

Not a fitting farewell

AGENCIES, Dambulla



There were reasons for Sri Lankan fans to cheer at the third ODI in Dambulla. But the result wasn't one of them. On a day when Tillakaratne Dilshan was farewelled from one-day international cricket, and Dinesh Chandimal scored his fourth ODI hundred, Australia held on for a tense victory that gave them a 2-1 series lead with two to play - and gave David Warner a 100% success rate as an international captain.

Not that it was all smooth sailing. Chasing 227, Australia relatively cruised most of the way. At 187 for 4 they needed only 40 more runs, with George Bailey and Matthew Wade both

well set, but suddenly Sri Lanka's spinners came into the game. Four wickets fell in quick time and it was beginning to look like Australia might find a way to throw it away. It was Adam Zampa who struck the winning runs, a boundary behind point off Amila Aponso, and a single next ball.

It wasn't any old single - it was cut in the air towards extra cover, where Angelo Mathews hurled himself into the air to try for a one-handed catch. The ball didn't stick, and the result was sealed: a two-wicket win, though with four full overs remaining.

The 39-year-old Dilshan, who announced on Thursday that he was retiring after the Dambulla ODI, scored a 65-ball 42 before falling to leg-spinner Adam Zampa.

Dilshan, who recorded 10,290 runs in 330 ODIs with 22 hundreds and 47 half-centuries, acknowledged the cheers of a raucous home crowd as he walked back to the pavilion.

Chandimal, who has recorded five half-centuries and a ton in the last seven ODI innings, registered his fourth ODI century to keep the hosts in the hunt after they were reduced to 178 for eight.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SRI LANKA: 226 all out in 49.2 overs (Dilshan 42, Chandimal 102; Starc 2-42, Hastings 2-41, Faulkner 2-44, Zampa 3-38)
AUSTRALIA: 227-8 in 46 overs (Finch 30, Bailey 70, Wade 42; Mathews 2-30, Aponso 2-44, Perera 2-45)
Result: Australia won by 2 wickets.