

'Harder to bat at home than in NZ'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's team management has left no stones unturned as far as their preparations for the New Zealand series is concerned.

They named a preparatory squad months before the series; they will be touring Australia before going to New Zealand in order to acclimatise to conditions in the southern hemisphere; they will also be playing against two teams from the Big Bash League in order to prepare for the T20Is against New Zealand.

All this, of course, has been planned as the management is expecting the foreign conditions to be tough for the Bangladesh national team.

The Bangladesh ODI and T20I skipper however told reporters yesterday that he expects the tour of New Zealand to be easier for Bangladesh's batsmen.

"I feel that the wickets here are more difficult to bat on than in New Zealand. Whenever we think about New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, we think of seaming conditions, but at the moment, it's nothing like that.

"Teams end up scoring 350 to 400 runs over there. They are very true wickets and easy for batsmen. It may be a bit difficult to bat in the first five to seven overs, but after that it will be easy for batsmen," said Mashrafe.

"Of course, the Tests may be a little different. But on the whole, I think that it will be easier for our batsmen to score there as compared to here, provided that they are mentally prepared," he added.

Furthermore, he also said that it would be wrong to expect those performing well in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) to do similarly well in New Zealand.

"A batsman may be a bit more confident if he performs well in the BPL, but there is no similarity between performing here and there. You can't say that a player who has done well in this league will do well there. Bowlers especially will find it more difficult over there," said Mashrafe.



With Comilla Victorians' season having come to an end, skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza now has to shift his focus to the main job – captaining the limited-overs teams on Bangladesh's tour of New Zealand starting later this month.

PHOTO: STAR



With a playoff spot up for grabs Khulna Titans skipper Mahmudullah Riyad rose to the occasion with a 28-ball 50 against Bangladesh Premier League leaders Dhaka Dynamites at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Comilla out, but not down

SPORTS REPORTER



Reigning champions Comilla Victorians ended their Bangladesh Premier League campaign with an eight-run win over the Rangpur Riders at Mirpur yesterday and in the process helped the Rajshahi Kings book a place in the play-offs.

Comilla, on the other hand, will finish this season in sixth place.

The result of the match yesterday was not going to make any difference for Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's Victorians, but the Riders needed to win the game in order to confirm a slot in the play-offs.

However, a lacklustre performance from the team saw them lose that opportunity.

After being asked to bat first the Victorians, courtesy of a 35-ball 52 from Imrul Kayes and a 36-ball 43 from Khalid Latif, posted a strong 170 for six. In reply, the Riders were restricted to 162 for eight after.

It was Comilla's strong start that made all the difference. Imrul and Khalid put on 88 runs in the first 10.1 overs. Imrul hit seven fours and two sixes and seems to have returned to form right before the New Zealand series.

However, he was caught in the deep off Arafat Sunny in the eleventh over. Two overs later, Sunny dismissed Latif, who had hit two sixes and

POINTS TABLE					
Team	M	W	L	Pts	RR
Dhaka Dynamites	12	8	4	16	+0.912
Khulna Titans	12	7	5	14	-0.215
Chittagong Vikings	12	6	6	12	+0.233
Rajshahi Kings	12	6	6	12	+0.208
Rangpur Riders	12	6	6	12	-0.106
Comilla Victorians	12	5	7	10	-0.345
Barisal Bulls	12	4	8	8	-0.688

PLAYOFF FIXTURES			
Date	Match	Teams	Time
Dec 6	Eliminator	Vikings v Kings	13:00
Dec 6	Qualifier 1	Dynamites v Titans	17:45
Dec 7	Qualifier 2	Losers QF1 v Winners EI	17:45
Dec 9	Final	Winners QF1 v Winners QF2	18:15

three fours as well.

Towards the end, Marlon Samuels and Ashar Zaidi added a few quick cameos and helped them reach the 170-run mark.

Sunny and Rubel Hossain, who scalped two wickets each, were the key wicket-takers for Comilla.

An aggressive start from Mohammad Shahzad helped Rangpur race to 49 for 1 after six overs, with Soumya Sarkar being dismissed in the sixth over.

Soumya's fall however triggered a collapse and they lost their next three wickets for just nine runs.

Shahzad, who had scored a 31-ball 45 with two sixes and five fours was one of those scalps. He was bowled by a slower delivery from Mashrafe.

Naeem Islam and Shahid Afridi tried to mend the situation and put on a 42-run stand. Afridi looked in fine form, but once Naeem was bowled by Rashid Khan in the 13th over, they ran out of steam. Afridi was dismissed in the 15th over with a well-disguised googly from Rashid for a 19-ball 38 and the game effectively ended there.

Ziaur Rahman hammered a few sixes towards the end and reached a 22-ball 38, which only served to reduce the margin of defeat.

With figures of three for 13, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan was adjudged the player of the match yesterday.

Despite his team reaching the end of the road this season, Mashrafe was happy to have ended the tournament on a good run.

"We went through difficult times in the tournament. But the players were able to cope with that and come back with wins. And I think that will help the younger players a lot in the future. They will know how to cope with pressure," reckoned Mashrafe after the match yesterday.

"It feels good to have won. It's difficult to live up

SCOREBOARDS

VICTORIANS V RIDERS				
COMILLA VICTORIANS	R/B	4s/6s		
Imrul c Dawson b Arafat	52/35	7/2		
Latif c Afridi b Arafat	43/36	3/2		
Samuels run out	30/24	2/1		
Mashrafe c Dawson b Afridi	7/7	1/0		
Zaidi b Rubel	17/11	3/0		
Liton b Rubel	6/3	0/1		
Rashid not out	11/4	0/0		
Extras: (lb-2, w-2)	4			
Total: (For 6 wkts in 20 overs)	170			
Did not bat: Saifuddin, Nabil, Nazmul, Sharif.				
Fall of wickets: 1-88, 2-107, 3-132, 4-148, 5-159, 6-170.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anwar	4	0	32	0
Shohag	1	0	17	0
Arafat	3	0	29	2
Rubel	4	0	30	2
Dawson	2	0	19	0
Afridi	4	0	30	1
Soumya	2	0	11	0

RANGPUR RIDERS				
RANGPUR RIDERS	R/B	4s/6s		
Shahzad b Mashrafe	45/31	5/2		
Soumya c Imrul b Nabil	5/12	0/0		
Mithun c Liton b Mashrafe	2/3	0/0		
Dawson c Nazmul b Nabil	3/6	0/0		
Afridi st Liton b Rashid	38/19	3/2		
Naeem b Rashid	14/13	2/0		
Ziaur not out	38/22	1/3		
Anwar c Nazmul b Saifuddin	1/3	0/0		
Shohag st Liton b Rashid	7/8	1/0		
Arafat not out	4/4	0/0		
Extras: (lb-2, w-2, nb-1)	5			
Total: (For 8 wkts in 20 overs)	162			
Did not bat: Rubel.				
Fall of wickets: 1-48, 2-51, 3-56, 4-57, 5-99, 6-114, 7-120, 8-144.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sharif	4	0	51	0
Saifuddin	4	0	34	1
Mashrafe	4	0	27	2
Nabil	4	0	35	2
Rashid	4	0	13	3

Result: Comilla Victorians won by 8 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Rashid Khan.

DYNAMITES V TITANS				
DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	4s/6s		
Maruf run out	16/16	1/1		
Sangakkara b Howell	59/41	8/0		
Nasir run out	19/17	2/0		
Shakib c Fletcher b Junaid	11/7	1/0		
Prasanna lbw b Junaid	14/8	1/1		
Mosaddek b Shafui	20/18	2/1		
Bopara c Ariful b Junaid	6/10	0/0		
Alauddin not out	1/1	0/0		
Tanveer not out	2/2	0/0		
Extras: (lb-1, lb-9)	10			
Total: (For 7 wkts in 20 overs)	158			
Did not bat: Beaton, Jayed.				
Fall of wickets: 1-58, 2-87, 3-105, 4-119, 5-121, 6-145, 7-156.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mahmudullah	3	0	27	0
Shuvagata	2	0	21	0
Shafui	3	0	29	1
Junaid	4	0	22	3
Mosharraf	4	0	35	0
Howell	4	0	14	1

KHULNA TITANS
Fletcher b Shakib 9/8 4s/6s 2/0
Hasanuzzaman c Beaton 40/19 3/3
Mazid b Bopara 21/36 1/0
b Tanveer 50/28 5/2
Howell not out 26/16 2/1
Pooran not out 1/1 0/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-11) 12
Total: (For 4 wkts in 18 overs) 159
Did not bat: Shuvagata, Ariful, Junaid, Shafui, Mosharraf.
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-61, 3-107, 4-151.
Bowler O M R W
Jayed 0.1 0 0 0
Alauddin 2.5 0 29 0
Shakib 4 0 40 1
Beaton 4 0 35 0
Bopara 3 0 17 2
Prasanna 2 0 23 0
Tanveer 2 0 14 1
Result: Khulna Titans won by 6 wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Mahmudullah.

India clinch Asia Cup T20

PtI, BANGKOK

Indian women maintained their supremacy in the Asia Cup by beating arch-rivals Pakistan for their sixth title in as many editions on Sunday.

Veteran Mithali Raj, who was removed as T20 captain before the start of the tournament, made a statement with an unbeaten 73 to guide India to 121 for five in 20 overs.

The bowlers then bowled brilliantly to limit Pakistan to 104 for six, completing a comprehensive 17-run win. The star with ball once again was left-arm spinner Ekta Bisht, who took two wickets conceding 22 runs in her four overs.

It was the second time that India got the better of Pakistan in the competition, having beaten them by five wickets in the league stage besides remaining unbeaten in five games en route to the final.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: 121 for 5 in 20 overs (Mithali 73 not out, Goswami 17; Anam 2-24)
PAKISTAN: 106 for 6 in 20 overs (Ayesha 15, Javeria 22, Bismah 25; Bisht 2-22)
Result: India Women won by 17 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Mithali Raj.
Player-of-the-series: Mithali Raj.

Kiwis crushed under weight of Smith ton

AFP, Sydney



Steve Smith hit a record-breaking century and took two superb catches as Australia beat New Zealand by 68 runs in the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy one-day series opener in Sydney on Sunday.

The Australia skipper smashed 164 off 157 balls, the highest one-day international score at the Sydney Cricket Ground, to lead Australia to 324 for eight.

Player of the match Smith struck 14 fours and four sixes in his seventh ODI century after winning the toss to give the Black Caps a tough target to chase down.

Smith then took two great catches and paceman Josh Hazlewood claimed three wickets to dismiss the Kiwis for 256 in 44.2 overs.

Smith's knock, the seventh highest by an Australian, surpassed South Africa's AB de Villers 162 at the same ground in last year's World Cup.

It was also the joint-highest by an Australia captain. Ricky Ponting also made 164 against South Africa in Johannesburg in 2006.

He then underlined his player-of-the-match qualities with two decisive catches in the Black Caps' innings.

It was his throat-high catch at slip that got a big breakthrough to dismiss skipper Kane Williamson for just nine.

Smith later latched onto a flying one-handed screamer to dismiss BJ Watling for six off Mitchell Marsh, hurling himself to his left in the gully for a stunning catch.

"I got a bit of luck. I was probably out lbw at one point," Smith said.

"It's nice to get my highest score at my



CAPTAIN'S KNOCK: Australia skipper Steven Smith smashed 164 off 157 balls with 14 fours and four sixes during the first ODI against New Zealand in Sydney yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

home ground and post a huge total."

Opener Martin Gupthill raised his 11th ODI century with a mighty six off Marsh over long-on off 93 balls and was his side's major hope of reeling in Australia's huge target.

But leg-spinner Adam Zampa coaxed Gupthill into a false shot to find fielding substitute Glenn Maxwell at mid-wicket and he was on his way for 114 off 102 balls in the 33rd over.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 324 for 8 in 50 overs (Warner 24, Smith 164, Bailey 17, Head 52, Wade 38; Henry 2-74, Boult 2-51, Neesham 2-58)

NEW ZEALAND: 256 all out in 44.2 overs (Gupthill 114, Neesham 34, Munro 49, Henry 27; Hazlewood 3-49, Marsh 2-38, Cummins 2-62, Zampa 2-66)

Result: Australia won by 68 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Steve Smith.

Saha to miss Mumbai Test

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Parthiv Patel is set to play the fourth Test against England in Mumbai, according to reports in the Mumbai Mirror on Sunday. Wriddhiman Saha, the first-choice wicketkeeper, hasn't recovered from a strain in his left thigh and will miss this Test as well.

Ishant Sharma, who has been part of the squad for the first three Tests, has been released for his wedding while the selectors have decided to stick with a 14-member squad.

"With the Ranji Trophy going on, it was felt that the squad should not be packed with too many players," a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) official said.

Parthiv made an impressive comeback to the side and opened the batting in place of KL Rahul, who missed the match in Mohali due to a last minute elbow injury. The left-hander struck 42 and an unbeaten 67 in India's eight-wicket win over England that helped them take a 2-0 lead.

Rahul is expected to be fit for the Mumbai Test and is still a part of the squad after he was released to see a specialist and recover for the upcoming games.

Fizz-ing at 90 per cent

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman bowled 10 overs yesterday with an intensity of up to 90 per cent and has also begun catching and throwing with his right hand, informed Bangladesh Cricket Board's sports physician.

"Our trainer is very happy with Mustafizur's progress. He has bowled with an intensity of 80 to 90 per cent. The good news is that he also tried bowling his variations and cutters yesterday and he seemed okay. He didn't complain of any pain while bowling those deliveries," BCB sports physician Debashish Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

"He has also started throwing and catching with his other arm. And his throws with his right arm have been impressive. He will be under us for two more days during which time he will have another bowling session and have a few more gym sessions. After that he will be under the guidance of the team management," added Debashish.



Bangladesh's pace prodigy Mustafizur Rahman is almost back to bowling at his best after his shoulder surgery in August.

PHOTO: STAR FILE