

SPORT



Sabbir Rahman hit a blistering century off 86 balls, punctuated by 16 fours and a six, to lead Bangladesh in their warm-up match against Ireland Wolves in Stormont yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Tri-series can take Tigers to sixth

To take on Ireland in opener tomorrow

STAR SPORT DESK



The upcoming tri-series in Ireland beginning on Friday presents Bangladesh with an opportunity to strengthen their chances of direct qualification to the 2019 World Cup as a good performance will see them leapfrog Sri Lanka into sixth position in the International Cricket Council (ICC) ODI team rankings.

An ICC press release issued yesterday laid out the possibilities for Bangladesh in the double-round-robin triangular series, which will also involve hosts Ireland and New Zealand.

"Bangladesh gets an opportunity to enhance its chances of direct qualification to the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 in an upcoming tri-series to be held in Dublin from 12 to 24 May," the press release stated.

The tri-series will follow a league-based format with each team playing the other twice, and the one with the most points to be named winners. Bangladesh are currently in seventh spot on 91 points, two behind Sri Lanka and three ahead of Pakistan.

According to the press release, if Bangladesh win all four matches, their tally will rise to 97 points, four clear of Sri Lanka. If they beat

FIXTURES			
DATE	TEAMS	VENUE	TIME
May 12	Ireland v Bangladesh	Dublin	3.45pm
May 14	Ireland v New Zealand	Dublin	3.45pm
May 17	Bangladesh v New Zealand	Dublin	3.45pm
May 19	Ireland v Bangladesh	Dublin	3.45pm
May 21	Ireland v New Zealand	Dublin	3.45pm

New Zealand once and Ireland twice, they will still have one point more than Sri Lanka. However, if they beat Ireland twice and lose to New Zealand twice Bangladesh will lose a point, and they will slip below Pakistan if they just come away with the four matches with one win against Ireland. Four losses and Bangladesh will slide down to 83, four points clear of ninth-placed West Indies.

ODI RANKINGS

RANK	TEAM	POINTS
1.	South Africa	123
2.	Australia	118
3.	India	117
4.	New Zealand	115
5.	England	110 (+1)
6.	Sri Lanka	93
7.	Bangladesh	91
8.	Pakistan	88
9.	West Indies	79
10.	Afghanistan	52
11.	Zimbabwe	48

The top eight teams in the ICC ODI rankings as of September 30, 2017, will gain direct qualification into the showpiece event in England in 2019. The Tigers will want to get as many points as they can from this tournament as they are in the group of death in the Champions Trophy that will start on June 1, pitted against world champions Australia, England, South Africa and New Zealand.

Manohar to remain ICC chief till 2018

AFP, New Delhi

India's Shashank Manohar will stay on as chairman of the International Cricket Council until the end of his elected term in June 2018, the game's world governing body said Wednesday.

Manohar, who resigned from his post citing "personal reasons" in March, was coaxed to stay on until the board met in April to vote on a series of major reforms.

As chairman he spearheaded a broad restructuring of the body aimed at curbing the dominance of cricket's wealthiest nations -- India, Australia and England -- since being appointed ICC boss last year.

His efforts came to fruition last month when the ICC overwhelming endorsed a plan to more equitably share revenue among all members -- a decision that cost India a large chunk of its funding.

The restructure -- described by Manohar as "another step forward for world cricket" -- was agreed in principle in February by the majority of Test playing nations, including England and Australia, but was opposed by India.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) stands to lose \$277 million in revenue over the next eight years under the changes.

Iyer leads Delhi to victory

STAR SPORT DESK

Young Shreyas Iyer scored a superb 57-ball 96 to guide Delhi Daredevils to a two-wicket win over Gujarat Lions in an inconsequential Indian Premier League (IPL) tie at the Green Park Stadium in Kanpur yesterday.

Chasing the mammoth target of 196, Delhi got over the line in the final over with two wickets to spare and two balls remaining.

Even though Iyer fell four short of a well deserved hundred, his effort meant Delhi got two more points on the board while inflicting more humiliation on Gujarat Lions.

Earlier, Aaron Finch's flashy half century helped Gujarat recover from the early jolts and post 195 for 5. Finch scored a 39-ball 69, laced with six fours and four sixes to raise a 92-run fourth wicket stand with wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik (40) to help the Lions recover from a precarious position after losing the early wickets of opener Dwayne Smith (8), Suresh Raina (6) and Ishan Kishan (34).

Tigers wallop Ireland A

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh tuned up for the tri-series in Ireland with a massive 119-run win against Ireland A, thanks to a solid batting display complemented by an all-round bowling effort, at the Stormont Cricket Ground in Belfast yesterday.

The Tigers, having won the toss, subjected the home side to a flurry of strokeplay and eventually piled up a mammoth 394 for seven. It was the highest total conceded by the second-string Ireland side. The Bangladesh bowlers then followed the footsteps of the batsmen as all the six bowlers used chipped in with a wicket or two to stifle the Irish chase.

The hosts had raced on to 50 for no loss in 10 overs before Rubel Hossain's double strike thwarted the chase. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahman got two wickets each as well while Shubhanshu Roy and Soumya Sarkar chipped in with a wicket each.

Earlier, one-down batsman Sabbir Rahman hammered a sublime 100 off 86 balls before retiring out in an attempt to allow the other batsmen to have some much-needed batting practice ahead of their first ODI against the hosts on Sunday.

Sabbir struck 16 fours and a six in his typically flamboyant innings. It was his first century in an international 50-over game since his magnificent unbeaten century against Pakistan in a practice game in Fatullah two years ago.

While Sabbir hit the three-figure mark, opener Tamim Iqbal missed it for 14 runs. The left-hander struck an equally impressive

86 off 74 balls that contained 14 boundaries and a couple of sixes. Fellow opener Soumya however missed out on the run-fest when he was caught at point after scoring 17 in an opening stand of 44.

Bangladesh started cautiously, scoring 49 runs off the first 10 overs. But a second-wicket stand of 103 in just 13.4 overs between Tamim and Sabbir provided the launchpad for Bangladesh to attempt to reach that elusive 400-run mark.

Shakib, who is set to lead the Tigers in the first ODI against Ireland on Sunday in the absence of the suspended Mashrafe, wielded his willow for a 27-ball 44 that contained five fours and two sixes. Coming in to bat at number five ahead of Mushfiqur Rahim, young Mosaddek Hossain chipped in with 31.

But it was Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah Riyad who provided the finishing touches with a 48-ball 91-run partnership for the sixth wicket. Mushfiqur struck a 24-ball 41 with the help of four fours and two sixes while Mahmudullah hammered 49 off 31 balls, laced with eight fours and a six. Only Andy McBrine and Craig Young have ODI experience among the home bowlers. McBrine was dropped from Ireland's tri-series squad, but took two for 69 yesterday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 394 for 7 in 50 overs (Tamim 86, Soumya 17, Sabbir Rahman 100 rtd out, Shakib 44, Mosaddek 31, Mushfiqur 41, Mahmudullah 49; McBrine 2-69, Getkate 3-60)

IRELAND A: 195 all out in 41.2 overs (Tector 60, Shannon 31; Mashrafe 2-31, Mustafizur 2-17, Shakib 2-32, Rubel 2-35) **Result:** Bangladesh won by 199 runs

Water-proof cricket, bullet-proof clubs

SPORTS REPORTER



A cricket match played in pouring rain. It was not some light-hearted, spontaneous excursion but an actual Third Division Cricket League match at Jahangirnagar University cricket ground between Badda Akota Samaj

Kallyan Sangho and Nobin Sangho, and the available evidence strongly hints that the match continued in the rain to help the former's chances. This untoward incident adds more muck to the reputation of domestic cricket, which was recently harmed when a Second Division Cricket League bowler gave away 92 runs in four balls in protest of allegedly biased umpiring and piqued the curiosity of the cricket world. Interestingly, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) solved the issue by serving bans on the players, officials and clubs.

A very interesting 25-minute video of the match showed the batsmen in the middle refuse to play and the umpires call for covers, but someone instructed the groundsmen to go back. Kazi Tabaraquul Islam, the general secretary of Nobin Sangho, later said the gentleman who was shouting at the groundsmen was none other than third division league coordinator Munna Miraz.

"The rain first came after 18 overs of play when Badda Akota were at 61 for two and the match was reduced to 40 overs a side. Badda finally scored 182 runs. When my team came to bat after lunch the rain again started after 1.2 overs and as at least 20 overs were needed for a result, the match continued in the rain," said Tabaraquul after the match.

"We requested match referee but he told us that it

was the umpires' decision. They were desperate to complete the desired overs as my team lost wickets one after the other, but suddenly Redwan Ahmed changed the complexion hitting three sixes and one four and we required just 25 runs from 28 balls. Interestingly the rain had also stopped but the umpires finally called off the game even though there was enough time to finish it," Tabaraquul added.

When attention was drawn to his shouting in the video, Munna said over the phone that: "It's the umpires' decision. I was there but I could not stop the match."

Match referee Abdul Aziz Sikdar said: "Please see what I wrote in my report and you will know that the match was eventually abandoned."

When contacted, umpire Abdul Motin Jewel said: "The match was called off timely and the match was not played in the rain."

Those who were present, among them some who had arrived at the ground to play football, were surprised.

"We came to the centre field to play football and saw that there was a third division cricket match going on. We were really surprised because it was raining. We came with about 25 people to play football and none of us could understand how they are playing cricket in this condition. Look at me. I'm soaked. We all are. We were only waiting to play football while the cricket match was going on," said a young man.

Many have already said that particular clubs, where powerful BCB officials are involved, were behind this kind of dirty happenings in domestic cricket, and Tabaraquul said that yesterday's incidents were no exception.

Pakistan make steady start

AFP, Dominica

Pakistan negotiated a potentially tricky first session, reaching 70 for one on the first day of the third and final Test against the West Indies at Windsor Park in Dominica on Wednesday.

After they were put in to bat, Shan Masood was the tourists' only casualty of the morning, falling to off-spinner Roston Chase after an hour's play.

Opening partner Azhar Ali (36 not out) was set to resume after the interval alongside Babar Azam (24 not out), their partnership having already produced 51 runs for the second wicket.

West Indies' faster bowlers failed to make the inroads that Jason Holder would have hoped for after he won the toss and had no hesitation in putting the opposition in to bat in heavy, overcast conditions.

While Shannon Gabriel, the destroyer of the Pakistanis on the final day of the second Test, used the new ball with accuracy and economy, Alzarri Joseph lacked control, forcing the captain to introduce himself and then Chase in the quest for the breakthrough.

It came when Masood, playing his first match of the series in place of the unwell

Ahmed Shehzad, reached nine off 30 deliveries and prodded indecisively at a delivery from Chase for Holder to take the straightforward catch at second slip.

Having failed to score in both innings of the second Test, new batsman Azam found the bowling to be much less challenging than at Kensington Oval and settled into the promising partnership with Ali.

Despite an effort dominated so far by caution, Ali latched on to two loose deliveries from Chase, hoisting them for sixes to highlight an otherwise quiet morning.

With a 106-run win in Barbados levelling the series, the home side named an unchanged eleven in pursuit of a first Test series win for five years against a team ranked higher than themselves.

Apart from the recall of Masood, fast-medium bowler Hasan Ali is making his debut at the expense of leg-spinner Shadab Khan, who struggled in his first appearance in the second Test.

Pakistan have never won a Test series in the Caribbean on seven previous tours.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First Innings 70 for 1 (Azhar 36 not out, Azam 24 not out, Masood 9; Chase 1-17)

'All systems go for Bangladesh tour'

STAR SPORT DESK



Cricket Australia (CA) chief executive James Sutherland insisted that it was 'all systems go' for Australia's tour to Bangladesh, saying that only a few of the security details were

left to be ironed out. The series, which is expected to feature one Test in Dhaka and Chittagong each, is expected to get underway from late August.

"We're just working through all the details," Sutherland said on Monday. "I'm very pleased to be at a stage of really fine-tuning the detail -- there are still some things that we need to work through just to lock down on security."

Sutherland also said that once the dates for the tour had been finalised, there would be nothing stopping the tour from going on as proposed, adding that the feedback from all government agencies was positive.

"Once our hosts have locked in dates and the schedule, then from us it's all systems go, subject to any security concerns we might have."

"From all the research we've done and the work we've done with [the Department of] Foreign Affairs and others through government



JAMES SUTHERLAND

agencies, we're confident the tour will take place."

In response to Sutherland's statement, Bangladesh CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said that an Australian security team were expected to visit Bangladesh next week. He continued that during the security team's visit, the BCB would finalise the dates for the tour.

"We have been working closely with CA for a

long time to finalise the tour itinerary. There were some issues in terms of scheduling that we have addressed. We are happy to know that CA is positively responding to go ahead with the tour," Nizamuddin said.

Australia have not played a Test in Bangladesh since 2006 and their last tour to the nation came in 2011 during a three-match ODI series.

Australia were originally scheduled to tour Bangladesh in October 2015 but postponed it at the last minute due to warnings of possible militant attacks from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Australia also withdrew their Under-19 side from last year's World Cup in Dhaka.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan last month declared Australia's tour was set in stone following a meeting with CA Chairman David Peever in Dubai at an International Cricket Council board meeting.

"[The] Australia series has been finalised," Hassan told Bangladesh media. "I am saying it because the president of their board told me on the last day of the meeting that he and his wife are coming to watch the first Test. That was the first time he said anything about the series during the meeting."