

SPORT

Tigers unimpressed by Dublin facilities

SPORTS REPORTER

That the rain is enough of a problem in Ireland was evidenced by the fact that both matches in the tri-series involving the hosts, Bangladesh and New Zealand have had rain interruptions. The rain does not look like staying away for the entirety of a 50-over match, which makes the days between matches all the more crucial as they may be the only opportunities to maintain the players' conditioning and skill levels. However, according to a source close to the team, the facilities on offer on such days have left the players dissatisfied.

While the facilities, according to the source, were satisfactory in Belfast, Dublin's cricketing offerings so far have left much to be desired. The Bangladesh team yesterday went to Balbriggan Cricket Club for their first practice session since the washed-out tri-series opener against Ireland on Friday, but upon reaching the ground found that only the centre wicket was available for practice and there were no net facilities. Moreover, the wicket was not suitable for batting as the ball was keeping low. This forced the team to be split up and the batsman taken to another facility that had indoor nets.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials in Ireland have communicated the problem to the Ireland Cricket Board, and it was learnt that the Bangladesh team will practise tomorrow at the Malahide Cricket

Club ground -- the tri-series venue.

However, the situation is not ideal. The Ireland tri-series is a build-up to the Champions Trophy later in the month and it presents a platform to get used to conditions and cricket in a climate far removed from what Bangladesh players are used to. In that light, batsmen practising indoors and bowlers bowling on a low-bouncing wicket counts as a day of practice all but wasted. The Champions Trophy apart, the tri-series in Ireland also represents a

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golden chance for Bangladesh to move up the ODI rankings to sixth and thereby sit more comfortably in the race to the 2019 World Cup.

It has also been learnt that New Zealand, for whom the conditions in England and Ireland are much closer to home, have also expressed their reservations about the facilities on offer.

The next match in the tri-series, which is a league-based competition with the team with the most points after two rounds will be named winners, is the Bangladesh-New Zealand match on May 17. Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is expected to be back for the match, after having missed Friday's opener because of a one-match suspension picked up in Sri Lanka.



Bangladesh bowling coach Courtney Walsh instructs his charges during a practice session at Balbriggan Cricket Club yesterday. PHOTO: BCB



Neil Broom's 79 off 63 propelled New Zealand to 289 for 7 against Ireland in the second match of the tri-nation series in Malahide yesterday. PHOTO: SPORTSFILE

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Golden pair make history

SPORTS REPORTER

A day after Rabbi Hasan Munna's silver medal exploit, Bangladesh's ace shooter Abdullahel Baki and Syeda Atkiya Hasan Disha brought the first gold medal from the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games in shooting's 10m air rifle team event in Baku, Azerbaijan yesterday.

The shooting pair comprehensively beat their Iranian counterparts in the final shootout 5-1 to bring Bangladesh its first ever gold medal from the Games. Bangladesh's previous best achievement from these games was a silver medal in archery and a bronze medal in taekwondo, which came in the previous edition in Indonesia in 2013.

Having qualified in third position for the eight team final round with a score of 516.8 points, the Bangladeshi pair made it through to the gold medal match against Iranian pair of Najmeh Khedmati and Pourya Norouziyan, who had topped the charts in qualifying.

While Bangladesh's other pair, Munna and Mahfuza Jannat Jui, could only finish sixth in the event, Baki and



ABDULLAHEL BAKI

Disha went on to win gold, beating their Iranian counterparts with ease. Turkey went on to win the bronze medal after beating another Iranian pair.

Baki, the 2014 Commonwealth Games silver medallist, said he was relieved to have won an international medal after a long while.

"I have participated in a number of international events in the last three to four years, but didn't win a gold medal. The last time I won a silver medal in team event in the South Asian Games. But our coach told me not to lose heart and I tried to keep my confidence



SYEDA ATKIYA HASAN DISHA

going. That has paid off today," Baki said after winning the team gold.

"The feeling of winning a gold medal is special. I hope this medal will prove to be a turning point in my career. Now my target is to earn a quota place for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics," Baki added.

Baki had, on the previous day, finished sixth in men's individual 10m air rifle event while Disha had finished sixth in women's individual 10m air rifle event. Munna had won silver in the men's 10m air rifle event on Saturday.

NATIONAL HOCKEY Dhaka, Army into semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka and Bangladesh Army moved into the semifinals of the 31st ATN Bangla National Hockey Championship after contrasting wins in their respective quarterfinals yesterday. Dhaka inflicted a 16-0 drubbing on Mymensingh, with former national team player Maksudul Alam Habul scoring a team-high four goals, at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

In the other quarterfinal, Bangladesh Army edged past BKSP with a 7-6 victory in penalty shootouts after regulation time had ended in a 3-3 draw.

Dhaka will take on the Dhaka Education Board in one of the semifinals, while Bangladesh Army will play against Bangladesh Navy in the other semifinal. Both matches will take place today.

DPL resumes today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier League resumes today as the second batch of matches of the ninth round will be played in three venues, with league leaders Gazi Group Cricketers looking to consolidate their position by winning today's match against ninth-placed Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity in Fatullah.

Gazi Group have won all of their eight matches so far, but Abahani Limited are just two points behind with a superior net run rate. In the unlikely event that they lose to Khelaghar, Gazi Group run the risk of being usurped in the next round.

Third-placed Prime Bank Cricket Club will also be in action at the BKSP today when they take on Brothers Union, who are in eighth place.

In another BKSP venue, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club will take on Kalabagan Krira Chakra. Sheikh Jamal, in sixth place, are expected to win the match as 11th-placed Kalabagan have just won one of their eight matches so far.

The first batch of ninth-round matches was played on Thursday, but the second batch was postponed as the players were given a break for Shab-e-Barat.

Pune thrash Punjab, cruise into playoffs

STAR SPORT DESK

Rising Pune Supergiant cemented their place in the Indian Premier League (IPL) playoffs on Sunday after thrashing Kings XI Punjab by nine wickets at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium.

After a fantastic performance from their bowlers, which saw Punjab bundled out for just 73 runs, it was a simple task for Pune, who are now second in the IPL standings.

Punjab's director of cricket operations Virender Sehwag was scathing in his review after the match, questioning the approach of the foreign players and even going on to name the failures.

"I'm very disappointed," Sehwag said. "I can say that none of the foreign players took responsibility and at least played 12 to 15 overs. I think they were complaining that the wicket was a bit slow but when you play international cricket so much, you should get used to playing on difficult or good wickets. But Maxwell, Shaun Marsh, Guptill and Morgan [were all disappointing]. Maxwell didn't take the responsibility as a captain and didn't perform for Kings XI Punjab."

The only foreigner that Sehwag praised, lavishly at that, was South African batsman Hashim Amla.

"We missed Hashim Amla. The kind of consistency he showed, none of the other players could do that, an individual couldn't take responsibility. He is an experienced player and has played more than 100 Test matches and averages close to 50 in Test cricket and also one-day cricket. He knows how to score runs immaterial of the format."

In the day's second match, the Royal Challengers Bangalore won their first match in their eight outings, defeating Delhi Daredevils by 10 runs.

Virat Kohli and Chris Gayle both finally showed up to the party, albeit still not in top gear. The Indian captain scored a 45-ball 58 while the West Indies firebrand hit a 38-ball 48.

The duo came together with the score at 30 when opener Vishnu Vinod was bowled for three, and the partnership ended when Gayle fell with the score at 96 after 13.1 overs.

Some late pinch-hitting took Bangalore to 161, a target the Daredevils fell short of. Rishab Pant top-scored for the losing side with a 34-ball 45 and Shreyas Iyer chipped in with 32. Pawan Negi and Harshal Patel took three wickets each.

#MisYou

Misbahul Haq and Younis Khan have the fifth-highest partnership average -- 69.67 -- among Test pairs who have put on 3,000 runs.

Among batsmen with 20-plus Test centuries, only Sir Donald Bradman, Steven Smith and Matthew Hayden have a better matches-to-hundreds ratio than Younis's 3.44.

Younis has five centuries in the fourth innings of a Test -- the most by any batsman in history. Arguably his greatest Test innings was when he authored the chase of 377 with an unbeaten 171 against Sri Lanka in Pallekelle in 2015.

Younis is the first Pakistan batsman to score 10,000 Test runs. He is also one of only five batsmen to have more 100s than 50s among those who have scored at least 2,000 Test runs.

Far removed from his current reputation as a dour batsman, Misbah was a tape-ball champ in college and was known as one of the cleanest hitters in Pakistan domestic cricket. He reprised that role briefly with the fastest Test fifty in Test cricket -- off 21 balls -- against Australia in 2014.

WHAT THEY SAID

Younis Khan's retirement should not be seen as The End but a Start. Let's give him a role in the PCB & benefit from the treasure of his experience
--Shoaib Akhtar
Huge respect... Younis Khan & @captainmisbahpk... Great players & more importantly Great people.
--Michael Vaughan
Hear hear @MichaelVaughan I agree, a credit to their country Misbah, Younis Khan.
--Geoffrey Boycott
Well played Misbah and Younis Khan. You can look back at your career with pride. Can still win last test.



Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq (L) is consoled by Younis Khan after the former was dismissed for two in his last innings before retirement on the fourth day of the final Test against West Indies in Roseau on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

TESTS	INNS	RUNS	AVE	100s	50s	HS
117	211	10,046	52.32	34	33	313
YUNIS KHAN						
MISBAHUL HAQ						

Chase, Holder resist charge

AFP, Roseau



An unbroken 53-run seventh-wicket partnership between Roston Chase and Jason Holder frustrated Pakistan's push for a series-clinching victory with the West Indies holding on at 146 for six at tea on the last day of the third and final Test at Windsor Park in

Dominica on Sunday.

Set an improbable target of 304 and starting the final day at seven for one, all looked lost for the home side when Shane Dowrich became Yasir Shah's fourth wicket of the innings to make the score 93 for six in mid-afternoon.

However Chase found a resilient partner in Holder on the way to his fourth score in excess of 50 in the series. He will resume on 66 in the final session of the match with the West Indies captain on 22.

With as much as two-and-a-half hours' play still available and the hosts' tail-enders not expected to offer substantial resistance, Pakistan remain favoured to give the retiring pair of captain Misbah ul Haq and senior batsman Younis Khan an historic farewell unless Chase and Holder can extend their partnership deep into the last period of play.

Pakistan have yet to win a Test series in the West Indies after seven previous tours dating back to 1958

Resuming after lunch at 73 for four, a swift end to the match looked likely as Vishal Singh and Dowrich both fell to Shah, lifting the leg-spinner's wicket tally in the series to 24, equalling his previous best effort which was achieved against Sri Lanka.

Both were taken at short-leg by Babar Azam and on a pitch offering turn and bounce, it appeared only a matter of time before more wickets fell. But Chase and Holder batted with calm assurance for over an hour as the Pakistanis grew increasingly impatient in pursuit of the breakthrough.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 376
WEST INDIES: First innings 247
PAKISTAN: Second innings 174 for 8 decl (Younis 35, Yasir 38 not out; Gabriel 2-24, Joseph 3-53, Bishoo 2-54)
WEST INDIES: Second innings 146 for 6 (Hetmyer 25, Chase 66 not out, Holder 22 not out; Amir 1-17, Shah 4-74)