

SPORT

Dublin rain keeps Tigers indoors

STAR SPORT DESK



The Bangladesh cricket team spent yesterday indoors doing gym work in Dublin because rain once again played spoilsport in the Irish capital.

Bangladesh were supposed to have a practice session at the Malahide Cricket Club ground, the venue of the ongoing tri-series that also features the hosts and New Zealand. Instead, they had a long gym session at the Westmastown Sports Centre.

The tri-series is part of the build-up to the Champions Trophy starting with the Bangladesh-England match in England on June 1. It has also assumed special importance for Bangladesh, currently placed seventh on the ODI rankings, as three wins out of four matches will see them leapfrog Sri Lanka into sixth position and sit more comfortably in the race to the 2019 World Cup where the top eight teams as of September 30, 2017 will gain direct qualification.

Bangladesh's washed out opener against Ireland on Friday made that road a little

more slippery as they had needed to win twice against Ireland and once against New Zealand to go one point clear of Sri Lanka. Now they will need to win both their matches against New Zealand as well as their second game against Ireland -- in other words all their remaining games -- to go past Sri Lanka. If they win both their matches against New Zealand and lose their game against Ireland, the Tigers will go level with Sri Lanka. However, if they win only one of their matches against New Zealand while winning the remaining game against Ireland, Bangladesh will lose a ranking point to be just two ahead of eighth-placed Pakistan on 90 points.

The tri-series is being played in a league-based format, with each team playing the other twice and the one with the most points at the end of the two rounds being declared winners. Ireland and Bangladesh have two points each after the rained out opener, while New Zealand have bagged four points by virtue of their win over Ireland on Sunday.

Bangladesh will take on New Zealand on Wednesday.



The Bangladesh cricket team were restricted to a gym session at the Westmastown Sports Centre on a rainy day in Dublin yesterday. The Tigers will play their second tri-series match against New Zealand tomorrow.

PHOTO: BCB



Abu Haider's four-wicket haul set up Gazi Group's seven-wicket victory over Khelaghar in their Dhaka Premier League encounter at Fatullah yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Ashraful guides Kalabagan

Gazi Group keep on winning; Prime Bank clinch a thriller

SPORTS REPORTER



M o h a m m a d Ashraful scored 88 runs in the first seven matches and after a one-match

break finally regained his rhythm with an unbeaten 81 that guided Kalabagan Krira Chakra to their second win in the Dhaka Premier League at the BKSP yesterday.

The brightest spotlight, however, belonged to Gazi Group Cricketers in the rain-interrupted ninth-round matches as they continued their flawless run with a comfortable seven-wicket victory against Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samiti at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium while Prime Bank Cricket Club posted an exciting one-run win against Brothers Union at BKSP on way to their seventh success in nine games.

Since returning to competitive cricket after a three-year ban for spot-fixing, Ashraful was nowhere near the form of old but yesterday the right-

SCORES IN BRIEF	
PRIME BANK V BROTHERS UNION	Muktar 2-48
PRIME BANK: 249-6 in 43 overs (Abhimanyu 70, Maruf 58, Zakir 52; Nihaduzzaman 3-58, Kapali 2-33)	KALABAGAN: 214-3 in 43.3 overs (Ashraful 81 not out, Tasamul 48, Mehrab 43 not out)
BROTHERS: 248-8 in 43 overs (Bisla 57, Junaed 51, Kapali 46; Alamin 2-44)	Result: Kalabagan Krira Chakra won by 7 wickets.
Result: Prime Bank Cricket Club won by 1 run.	KHELAGHAR V GAZI GROUP
SK. JAMAL V KALABAGAN	KHELAGHAR: 175-7 in 43 overs (Amit 49, Robi 41; Abu Hider 4-35, Rasool 2-34)
SK. JAMAL: 213-9 in 45 overs (Rajin 45, Shohag 39, Sunny 36 not out; Abul 3-50, Nasim 2-30,	GAZI GROUP: 176-3 in 36.1 overs (Anamul 67, Suhrawardi 58 not out, Rasool 42 not out; Tanvir 3-31)

hander hit an unbeaten 81 off 87 balls that contained six fours and two sixes as Kalabagan secured an easy seven-wicket victory over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club. The match was reduced to 45 overs a side due to rain and Jamal scored 213 for nine, a total that Kalabagan eclipsed riding on an unbeaten 111-run fourth-wicket partnership between Ashraful and Mehrab Hossain, who hit an unbeaten 43.

Out-of-favour Anamul Haque continued his good form with a 77-

ball 67 after Abu Haider's four-wicket haul as Gazi Group successfully chased Khelaghar's 175 with 41 balls and seven wickets to spare. Suhrawardi Shuvo was the other notable contributor for Gazi with the bat as the left-hander contributed an unbeaten 58 off 83 balls. It was a 43-overs-a-side affair due to rain interruptions.

In another 43-overs-a-side match, Prime Bank snatched victory from the jaws of defeat as Brothers completed their 43-over quota on 248 for eight in reply to Prime Bank's 249 for six.

Abahani leave for Male

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League champions Abahani left for Maldives yesterday to play their fifth match of the AFC Cup against Maziya Sports and Recreation Club. The match will take place at the Male National Stadium tomorrow.

Abahani, who are at the bottom of their group with three points alongside Mohun Bagan of India, started their campaign in April with a 2-0 defeat against the Maldivian outfit during the home leg in Dhaka. The Dhanmondi giants have little more than formality remaining in this campaign as both the top two clubs - Maziya and Bengaluru FC of India - are sitting pretty at the top with nine points each. Even if Abahani win their final two matches, things will come down to goal difference.

However, one thing that will encourage the Sky Blues ahead of this fixture is the fact that they ended their three-match losing streak with a rousing 2-0 win in their last match against Bengaluru FC on May 3 in Dhaka. Drago Mamic's charges played a technically excellent game and capped it off with two wonderful goals. The Croatian coach will be hoping for a similar performance in Male.

Women's NCL kicks off today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 8th Women's National Cricket League begins today in Bogra and Rajshahi.

Eight teams split into two groups will take part in the 50-over competition. Group-1 comprises Rajshahi, Khulna, Chittagong and Barisal while Group-2 features Rangpur, Dhaka, Sylhet and Mymensingh.

Rajshahi will meet Barisal at the Shahid Chandu Stadium in Bogra while Rangpur play against Mymensingh at the Rajshahi District Stadium in the opening day's fixtures.

Two semifinals will be held on May 26 at the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium and Rajshahi District Stadium respectively while the final will take place at the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium on May 28.

Latham banks on young guns

AFP, Dublin



New Zealand captain Tom Latham believes his emerging players can help the Blackcaps take the Tri-Series in Dublin after they made a winning start against Ireland.

The 51-run victory at Malahide was sealed by a career best five for 50 from left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner and 79 from Neil Broom, but there were also three wickets for opening bowler Scott Kugeleijn on his one-day international debut on Sunday.

"These guys called in have been putting in performances back home for the last couple of years and we back them 100 percent," said Latham.

"Our main goal is to win the Tri-Series and make the selectors think and if they can keep putting performances on the board it can only be good for New Zealand cricket," he added.

"Neil Broom played really well and the partnership he built with George Worker (who scored his maiden fifty in only his third ODI) put us in a position to get us close to 300.

"We haven't played cricket for a while, and it wasn't the complete performance, but the guys came under pressure and played really well," explained Latham, whose side next face Bangladesh in Clontarf, another Dublin suburb, on Wednesday.

With seven New Zealand internationals taking part in the Indian Premier League, rather than on tour in Ireland ahead of next month's Champions Trophy one-day tournament in England, Latham was delighted at how his youthful side performed under pressure.

Ireland were actually ahead of the Blackcaps after 38 overs, needing only another 80 from the last 12 overs with five wickets left to reach their victory target of 290 and claim their first top eight scalp outside a global tournament.

But the next over saw the return of Santner and in it he claimed the wicket of debutant Simi Singh to spark an Ireland collapse which included the vital wicket of Niall O'Brien, stumped by Luke Ronchi for 109, the former Leicestershire wicket-keeper's first ODI century in his 85th match.

"Ireland played beautifully and Niall's innings put us under pressure but the way Mitch came back and how Kugeleijn bowled so aggressively, that we are used to back home, it was a good response," said Latham, who was captaining New Zealand for the first time, in place of Kane Williamson who is still at the IPL.

'JUST INCREDIBLE'

AGENCIES, Roseau



As Younis Khan and Misbahul Haq head off into the sunset after long and illustrious careers, Pakistan begin a tricky period of transition looking for a new wave of players ready to fill a huge void left by the retired batting greats.

Younis, Pakistan's most prolific Test run-scorer, and Misbah, the country's most successful captain, bowed out together in a blaze of glory on Sunday with the team celebrating a first-ever series triumph in the Caribbean.

It was a Test match befitting of a send-off to two of the country's greatest cricketers. Needing to last the entire fifth day to force a draw and deny Pakistan their first series win in West Indies, the home side were kept afloat till all but six balls from close by a masterful century from Roston Chase and stout

lower-order resistance.

But in a classic Test-match twist, number eleven Shannon Gabriel, who had resisted for 21 balls and needed to play just one more from leg-spin wizard Yasir Shah to enable Chase to take them to a hard-earned draw, played a slog to a tossed-up googly and was bowled off the inside edge. That ill-advised shot gave Yasir an incredible 25th wicket and his third five-wicket haul of the three-Test series.

"This was just incredible," said a breathless Misbah after Gabriel's dismissal triggered Pakistani celebrations as the West Indies were dismissed for 202 to lose the series 2-1.

"There were so many things happening in that last session - dropped catches, appeals, no-ball dismissals -- it looked for a while as if it wasn't going to happen.

"I am thankful for myself, the team and all supporters of Pakistan cricket that we were able to pull it off."

"The bowlers bowled their hearts

out on a slow track," he said.

"Everyone was so motivated. They were working hard for me and Younis, too. There were frustrations. No-balls, wickets, couple of chances here and there, but you enjoy wins like this much more than straightforward wins.

"I'm happy with what I've had in my career, couldn't have asked for a better finish. Really happy for this team.

"The way they gave me and Younis a send-off ... I wish [Younis] all the best. It was a fine journey with him in the middle, sharing a lot of partnerships. In the history books, both our names will be there."

Younis steps away from international cricket as Pakistan's best batsman, it seems he has found closure. "People say to me, you should've done more captaincy," he told.

"But I think whatever happens, happens for the best. Had I been captain maybe I wouldn't have scored all these runs. People think that maybe I carry these regrets, but no.



Having been irresistible throughout the series, Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah (L) benefited from a Shannon Gabriel brain-freeze in the penultimate over to seal a maiden Test series victory in the West Indies, in the process giving captain Misbahul Haque (R) and Younis Khan the perfect farewell in Roseau on Sunday.



PHOTOS: AFP