



Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R), West Indies captain Jason Holder (C) and Ireland captain William Porterfield take a photo with the ODI tri-series trophy in Dublin yesterday. With the ICC Cricket World Cup inching closer, all three teams are considering this series as a part of their build-up ahead of the quadrennial mega event.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Tigers take on Wolves today

SPORTS REPORTER

Ahead of their ODI tri-series opener on Tuesday, Bangladesh will take part in a practice match against Ireland Wolves at the Vineyard ground in Dublin today. The fifty-over encounter will begin at 11:45 am local time (4:45 Bangladesh Standard Time).

The Tigers participated in a training session at the Pembroke Cricket Club, where the cricketers practiced at the nets and also had a fielding session.

Overcoming the chilly weather in Ireland will be the visitor's biggest challenge with the temperature at nearly seven degrees Celsius in the morning while the mercury drops further in the afternoons.

"We will have a 13-member side for tomorrow's (today's) game which we are yet to finalise. All 13 members of both sides will be able to bat and bowl. The players are doing well although the weather here in Dublin is very cold. I am going to buy thermal wear for the cricketers as it's very chilly here," team manager and the chief selector Minhajul Abedin told The Daily Star yesterday.

The tri-series is set to begin today with hosts Ireland taking on West Indies while Bangladesh will play their first match of the series against West Indies on May 7 at the Castle Avenue Cricket Club in Clontarf.

All of the fixtures will be day games with matches scheduled to begin at 10:45 local time (3:45 BST).

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Co. are taking considering the tri-series as a part of their build-up for the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup in the United Kingdom.

TRI-SERIES KICKS OFF TODAY

West Indies set to face Ireland challenge

AGENCIES, Dublin



The tri-series between Ireland, West Indies and Bangladesh starts Sunday with the opening encounter to be played between the hosts and the Caribbean side in Dublin.

After facing the heat against England in the recently concluded ODI and T20I series in the Caribbean, the men in maroon would be looking forward to clinch this tri-series in order to boost their confidence before the World Cup gets under way.

It's not going to be a cakewalk though as Bangladesh have their best players available for the series while Ireland gave England a tough time in the one-off ODI on Friday.

If you look at the Windies' squad for this series, there are few players that are not included for the World Cup but for others it's an opportunity to get accustomed to these conditions in the Great Britain before the showpiece event kicks-off by the end of this month.

Darren Bravo would play a major role as he's

the most experienced batsman in the squad, while there will be expectations from Shai Hope at the same time. The top order batsman has played number of match-winning knocks in recent times and it wouldn't be a surprise if Hope continues doing the same in this series.

Presence of Jason Holder, Kemar Roach and Shannon Gabriel adds firepower to their pace attack while they have players like Ashley Nurse, Roston Chase and Fabian Allen who can chip in with their handy all-round contributions.

Ireland too have a well balanced side with batting as their main strength. With the likes of William Porterfield, Paul Stirling, Gary Wilson and Kevin O'Brien, the hosts have the capability to post those competitive totals against their opponents.

Playing in home conditions will be another added advantage. Joshua Little had a fantastic ODI debut as he bagged four wickets against England and all eyes would be on the lanky bowler who's got the ability to surprise batsmen with his pace and bounce. George Dockrell holds the key for Ireland in the spin department.

'Unfortunate, but wise decision to cancel final'

SPORTS REPORTER



Calling the cancellation of the Bangamata Under-19 Women's International Gold Cup final as unfortunate, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin said that the right decision was made considering the gravity of the threat posed by Cyclone Fani.

"It was very unfortunate that the tournament committee was forced to call off the match. The whole country was under great threat from Cyclone Fani, so in those circumstances, it would not have been wise to take the risk of holding the match," the BFF boss told reporters at his office yesterday.

The cancellation of the final, which was billed as the most anticipated match-up between the two best sides of the competition in the form of Bangladesh and Laos, garnered a lot of hype among the people in general. At least 4000 fans braved the drizzle and the threat of storm to turn up at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Friday to watch the match.

But a sudden announcement from the organising committee some 20 minutes after the scheduled kick-off time took most people by surprise as both teams along with match officials were gearing up while the groundsmen had siphoned off some of the water from the pitch. The announcement caused resentment among the crowd and caused an uproar in social media, with some questioning whether the announcement could have come earlier since the threat posed by Fani was forecast for the past three days.

However, Salahuddin feels it was the right decision to cancel the game as 'it would have been inhuman had they celebrated a football tournament with the whole nation under such a threat' while the risk of holding the match was too high.

"If the match was organised and unfortunately any incident had occurred, it would have been a big disaster for us, the whole world would condemn us. So I think it was a wise decision. But I do believe that it was a fantastic tournament, but it was not a happy ending," said Salahuddin.

The BFF boss said that they might organise the event next year as well with the same six teams participating with the same grouping and under the same format. Meanwhile, Salahuddin also shared the federation's plans regarding the men's national team for their first round fixtures of the joint preliminary qualifiers for the World Cup and the Asian Cup against Laos in June.

"We have already set our program with the men's team for the World Cup pre-qualifying match. The team will go abroad to play two practice matches, might be in Singapore, Thailand or Malaysia, whoever will be free at the time," Salahuddin said.



'It's a great honour to represent Pakistan'

AFP, Karachi

Four years ago, two-time World Cup winner Steve Waugh predicted young fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain would one day make a name for himself on the international stage.

Now the 19-year-old can prove Waugh right after his blistering pace earned him a call-up to Pakistan's squad for the World Cup.

Pakistan's chief selector Inzamamul Haq called the young bowler a "surprise package", while legendary paceman Waqar Younis says he sees shades of himself in the ultra-quick, destructive teen.

Tall and with a wide smile, Hasnain has turned heads after first arriving on the national scene in 2015 and sending down balls at a blistering 150kph (93 mph).

Tigers' jerseys available online

SPORTS REPORTER

Aadi Bd Limited signed an agreement with Sports & Sportz, the Bangladesh Cricket Board's merchandiser, for the rights to sell the Bangladesh national cricket team's official jersey through their online platform.

Fans can order the jerseys online from anywhere in the world on www.aadi.com.bd. International deliveries will be made through DHL while payments will be processed through a secured gateway.



"It's a great honour to represent Pakistan and the honour multiplied when I was named in the World Cup squad," Hasnain told AFP.

"I am on cloud nine and ready to make batsmen struggle with my speed. I love to bowl fast and that is my strong point."

'This WC will be one of the best'

ICC

Former Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara feels one can expect a "close competition" and "great cricket" in the ICC World Cup 2019.

"I have a feeling this World Cup will be one of the best ever tournaments," he told Hindustan Times. "There will be close competition and I am sure we can look forward to some great cricket. The fans will enjoy it. It will be a great occasion for the sport and I am really excited."

'We focus more on WC'

In the lead-up to the 2019 World Cup, we take a look back on World Cups past through the eyes of Bangladesh's former World Cup stars. Shahriar Nafees, who became the first Bangladeshi to score two ODI hundreds when he smashed a career-best, unbeaten 123 against Zimbabwe in the ICC Champions Trophy in 2006, had many impactful performances for Bangladesh over the years. However, the left-hander did not set the stage on fire in the two World Cups where he featured for Bangladesh in 2007 and 2011. Nafees spoke about his World Cup experiences and more during an interview with The Daily Star's Nabid Yeasin.



The Daily Star (TDS): You played in two World Cups for Bangladesh -- in 2007 and 2011. How did it feel to be a part of and participate in a World Cup squad?

Shahriar Nafees (SN): The first dream for any player is to represent their country while the second is to play in a World Cup. When it comes to Bangladesh players, we basically got inspiration from watching the World Cup during our childhood. We even put more attention and focus on the World Cup than Test cricket and if the case is similar for others, then every cricketer dreams of participating in a World Cup. That's why when I got the chance to play in the 2007 World Cup, it was a dream come true for me and it was really exciting. I felt very satisfied at the time. Also, we could consider that one-day cricket is actually played keeping the World Cup in mind. All the teams build their squads for the World Cup which comes every four years and in that sense, the World Cup holds a very unique significance for each player.

TDS: You had torrid outings in the World Cups you featured in, do

you still regret not being able to perform as well as you had in other tournaments or series?

SN: The 2007 World Cup was not a good one for me and in the 2011 edition I featured in only two games. There is no doubt that it feels great for a player if they do well in a World Cup. I personally feel that it is important to perform regularly for your country, be it in a World Cup or any other tournament. While it is true that if you play well in a World Cup then you will be highlighted but it is not a sure thing that that would lengthen your career. Geoff Allott of New Zealand was the highest wicket taker in the 1999 World Cup but he could not continue playing after that. So that's why it would have felt great if I had performed well but I do not have any regrets about not doing so.

TDS: Mention a memorable World Cup experience.

SN: The most memorable experience for me would be defeating India in the 2007 World Cup. I think it was a milestone in Bangladesh's history and a wonderful victory. So that was my most memorable experience.

TDS: Do you have any personal memories of the World Cup which you cherish?

SN: It was actually not during a World Cup but before the

2007 edition, when we played a tournament [associates tri-series] against Bermuda and Canada. In that tournament, where we played ODIs, I scored a century against Bermuda but that is not what I cherished most. I remember that ton because of the field on which I scored. It was at Antigua Recreation Ground, where cricket is no longer



played. It is the same ground where Brian Lara had played innings' of 350 and 400 runs and so it remains as one of my most cherished moments.

TDS: What is your view on this World Cup squad?

SN: I think there are no controversies regarding this squad. The only thing that could be discussed is why Imrul Kayes did not make the squad. Other than that I don't see any chances for controversy. We already knew about most of the players who would make the squad. I only felt bad for Taskin [Ahmed] but the truth is that he is still not 100 per cent fit. Although about a month is left, right now Taskin is not fit. So if we think about it like this, then this World Cup squad is without controversy.

TDS: What do you think Bangladesh's chances are in this World Cup?

SN: The format is very hard this time. The best ten teams will play in the World Cup, six of which will be eliminated in the first round. So it is difficult for Bangladesh and other teams as well. So we need to be careful because this World Cup is comparatively harder than the previous ones. It is our desire for Bangladesh to play in the semifinal or final but that is a very tough task.