

SPORT



The Bangladesh cricket team are ecstatic after lifting their first major multinational ODI series trophy in Malahide yesterday. The Tigers romped to a five-wicket win against the West Indies in a rain-interrupted tri-nation series final, which may prove to be a crucial result ahead of the World Cup. PHOTO: AFP

A great team effort: Mashrafe

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's celebration after a five-wicket victory against West Indies in the rain-curtailed tri-series final was enough evidence to show how significant the triumph was. The ever smiling Tigers' skipper hugged everybody once the winning run came from Mahmudullah Riyad and his joys seemed to know no bounds. And why not? Especially since the team was so hungry to break their jinx after so many heartbreaks. The Bangladesh captain also reminded everyone during the post-match presentation that they previously missed out on a title on six occasions and pointed out that team effort was behind the success. He also praised Soumya Sarkar for his special knocks as well as Mosaddek Hossain for making the Tigers seventh time lucky in the multi-national tournament final.

"Great win. It's a great team effort. The wicket was good and Tamim [Iqbal] and Soumya [Sarkar] gave the foundation. Mushy [Mushfiqur Rahim] did the job in the middle and Riyad [Mahmudullah] and Mosaddek [Hossain] finished the job brilliantly," said a jubilant Mashrafe.

"Hopefully after this success more will come. It was fantastic to become unbeaten champions. The success will give the team lot of confidence ahead of the World Cup," he added.

Undoubtedly, the way Tigers signed off their tri-series campaign, chasing down 210-run target in 24 overs, should give them a lot of confidence ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup in United Kingdom.

Injured Silva in Brazil's Copa squad

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Hosts Brazil included injured defender Thiago Silva in their squad for the Copa America, coach Tite announced on Friday.

Paris Saint-Germain's Silva, 34, has been suffering from a knee issue since mid-April but Brazil's physio Fabio Mahseredjian said the former captain could be in a "good condition" by May 28.

There was no space for Tottenham's Champions League hero Lucas Moura despite his hat-trick in last week's semifinal second leg against Ajax nor for Real Madrid youngster Vinicius.

The eight-time winners face Bolivia, Venezuela and Peru in the group stage, which start on June 14.

SQUAD
Goalkeepers: Alisson (Liverpool), Ederson (Man City), Cassio (Corinthians)
Defenders: Dani Alves (PSG), Fagner (Corinthians), Alex Sandro (Juventus), Filipe Luis (Atletico Madrid), Thiago Silva (PSG), Marquinhos (PSG), Miranda (Inter Milan), Eder Militao (Porto)
Midfielders: Casemiro (Real Madrid), Fernandinho (Man City), Arthur (Barcelona), Allan (Napoli), Paqueta (Milan)
Forwards: Coutinho (Barcelona), Neymar (PSG), Everton (Gremio), Neres (Ajax), Richarlison (Everton), Firmino (Liverpool), Jesus (Man City)

Tigers secure clinical finish in Malahide

SPORTS REPORTER

A clinical Bangladesh team clinched their maiden tri-nation ODI series title by defeating West Indies in the final by five wickets at The Village ground in Malahide yesterday.

The series was crucial for Bangladesh, not just as preparation for the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup in the United Kingdom but also as platform to combine individual performances into a collective approach in all three departments of the game.

There were concerns over quite a few aspects of the team ahead of the series, ranging from the bowling department's lack of experience to finding a regular and settled opening partner for Tamim Iqbal. In addition, there were doubts over the side's pace bowling all-rounder, who could prove handy in English conditions during the World Cup.

Last but not least, there were talks over whether spinners could play a vital role considering the batting friendly conditions in England and with the absence of a wrist spinner in the Bangladesh side, Shakib Al Hasan is the only fallback in the spin bowling department.

Although the Tigers' faced weaker opponents in the tri-series, it was a collective approach and execution on the field that saw Bangladesh remain undefeated throughout the tournament.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Co. will surely be buoyed by the series win and certainly have reason to hold their heads high and remain positive ahead of the World Cup.

However, Bangladesh's bowlers were on the back foot in the series final yesterday with rain also playing a part in making things tougher for the Tigers. Returning to the issue of consistency, when it comes to the batting department, none of Bangladesh's batters have struck a century in the series so far while on the other hand there were four hundreds from West Indies and two from Ireland.

Interestingly, despite not having produced any individual hundreds, Bangladesh's batsmen were consistent and this was because of their collective approach. That saw the Tigers successfully chase targets of 262, 248 and 293 runs comfortably by eight, five and six wickets respectively.

Soumya Sarkar, who was given the opportunity to cement his place in the opening slot with Tamim, showed that he is capable of the responsibility as

the left-hander managed to hit two half centuries and more importantly, he looked confident with his shot-making ability.

Meanwhile, Tamim remained as consistent as ever as, when paired with Soumya, he helped provide two hundred and one fifty run opening stands in three matches.

Even stylish right-hander Liton Das, who got the chance to play against Ireland despite it being a dead rubber encounter, went on to strike a brisk 67-ball 76-run knock, which should surely encourage the

selectors for when it comes to seeking alternative options for the opening pair.

As usual, Shakib maintained his lofty standards across all three departments -- batting, bowling, fielding -- as played crucial roles in all three of the Tigers' wins in the series.

Skipper Mashrafe led Bangladesh's fast bowling department from the front in Ireland, where Mustafizur Rahman, Abu Jayed and Mohammad Saifuddin looked to be in fine rhythm, which should also surely be encouraging for the team

management.

In the spin department, alongside Shakib it was Mehedi Hasan Miraz who stepped up and took responsibility. The off-spinner may have only picked up two wickets in three games but with an economy rate of 4.28 and the ability to keep opposition batsmen at bay in the middle overs was brilliant.

Back in yesterday's match, Mossadek Hossain, who was Shakib's last minute replacement, grabbed the opportunity, striking an unbeaten fifty to guide the Tigers to victory with seven balls to spare.



Coming in to bat with 67 runs needed off 56 balls in the tri-series final against West Indies, Mosaddek Hossain showed that Bangladesh's youngsters were not done stepping up in pressure situations. The 23-year-old took charge, blazing his way to the third-fastest half-century by a Bangladeshi. He accounted for 52 of the required runs off just 24 balls, smashing two fours and five maximums to take the Tigers over the line and banish their final demons.

PHOTO: AFP

'Nothing concerning'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan was excluded from the Tigers' squad for yesterday's ODI tri-series final against West Indies at The Village ground in Malahide, Dublin in order to allow the ace all-rounder to recover from a minor back injury.

Shakib suffered a muscle spasm in his back during Bangladesh's match against Ireland on Wednesday. However, BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin informed that it was nothing to worry about.

Shakib had walked off the field during their encounter with the hosts after receiving treatment on the sidelines, making his participation in the series final

anyone's guess. However, doubts were confirmed when Bangladesh took the field without their star all-rounder yesterday.

According to Minhajul, not including Shakib was a precautionary measure.

"There is nothing to worry about Shakib's situation. It is nothing serious. Shakib might have even played the game if the final was after two more days. He is recovering well and not playing him in today's [yesterday's] game was just a precautionary measure," Minhajul informed The Daily Star yesterday.

With Shakib being an integral part of Bangladesh's setup, this new surety comes as a relief to the fans and team, especially ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup which begins later this month.

Babar takes Pak to 340

AGENCIES, Nottingham

Babar Azam's ninth ODI ton helped Pakistan post 340 for 7 against England at Trent Bridge yesterday after the visitors were put in to bat first in the fourth ODI.

Azam made 115 off 112 while Fakhar Zaman and Mohammad Hafeez struck half-centuries to give Pakistan what probably will be a par score considering the short boundaries and a pitch designed to please the batsmen.

Imam-ul-Haq had to retire hurt as he missed a pacy back of length ball and was pinged on the left elbow, but he seems in the clear for the World Cup.

However, Azam's arrival at the crease instantly put the pressure back of the bowlers as he constantly peppered the cover boundary.

SCORES IN BRIEF:
PAKISTAN: 340 for 7 (Fakhar 57, Babar 115, Hafeez 59; Curran 4-75)

ICC WORLD CUP 2019 BITES ENGLAND & WALES 2019 12 DAYS TO GO

'500 is a realistic target for us'

ICC

England pacer Mark Wood believes that the current one-day team is capable of becoming the first one to ever post a total of 500.

England are the No.1-ranked ODI team and possess the deepest batting line-up in the modern-day game. They have also transformed into an unstoppable run-amassing machine since revamping their team with the addition of limited-overs specialists four years ago.

They are holders of the two highest totals in ODI cricket - 481/6 against Australia and 444/3 against Pakistan, both in Nottingham. They have shown similar form in the lead-up to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019, racking up 373/3 in the second ODI of their ongoing series against Pakistan, and mowing down a 359-run target with 31 balls to spare in the following game.

"That [500] is a realistic target for our one-day team," Wood said. "It's almost normal to get 350; 400 is easily gettable. We truly believe we can chase down high scores, no matter what the opposition get."

Wood featured in England's third ODI against Pakistan and picked up two wickets. Before the game, he had said: "I feel in good rhythm. In terms of being 100%, I've not played any matches lately, so I'm still missing a little bit of match fitness," Wood said.

"I feel fit and strong, and in good rhythm in practice, but there's nothing like a game when you are under pressure and you need that extra adrenaline. I can't wait to get out there and try to win the series."

ICC confirms \$10m prize; \$4m to champs

AFP, London

The winners of the upcoming World Cup in England will receive a record \$4 million for lifting the trophy, the ICC announced Friday.

In all a total of \$10 million is on offer during the showpiece men's one-day international tournament, which starts later this month and lasts 46 days.

As well as the champions' pay-out, each team that wins a group stage match will receive \$40,000, with the losing semifinalists collecting \$800,000 and the runners-up banking \$2 million.

Tournament hosts and favourites England, bidding to win the trophy for the first time, will open the World Cup when they face South Africa at The Oval in south London on May 30.

It will be the first fixture of a World Cup where all 10 teams will play each other in the group phase ahead of the knockout stages that will culminate with a final at Lord's in northwest London on July 14.

Each team will receive \$40,000 for winning each league match that they play in. Teams that make it past the league stage, into the semifinals, will receive \$100,000.



Bangladesh fans turned up in droves to watch their beloved Tigers take on West Indies in the tri-series final in Malahide, Dublin yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP