

# SPORT



## One-off ODI if Mash retires?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is thinking of organising a one-off ODI against Zimbabwe next month to give ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza a grand farewell.

Bangladesh will host Afghanistan for a solitary Test next month, which will be followed by a tri-nation T20I series involving Afghanistan and Zimbabwe.

It was learned that the BCB is planning to host a lone ODI against Zimbabwe either between the Test and tri-nation series or following the two series, but it will all depend on whether Mashrafe will retire, which the 35-year-old has still not communicated with the board.

According to a BCB source, hosting the game will cost the board a fair amount of money and arrangements cannot be made without Mashrafe's confirmation.

Mashrafe's retirement from international cricket has been a topic of discussion in the cricket fraternity over the past few months and the BCB is eager to give the beloved cricketer a proper send-off. Scheduling, however, was a challenge as Bangladesh had no ODIs till February next year, according to the Future Tours Programme.

"This involves a heavy financial investment. We will also need to find out if Zimbabwe will agree to play or not. If they do, then the board will have to have a budget of some Tk 60 lakh as there will be logistical and other expenses involved," said a top BCB official, who wished to remain anonymous, yesterday.

"But before anything we will need to have consent from Mashrafe. We cannot just move ahead, arranging the game and then find Mashrafe not willing to retire at the moment. The [BCB] president [Nazmul Hasan] is likely to speak to him about this today or tomorrow [Thursday]," he added.



Bangladesh women cricketers had their last gym session at the BCB Academy Gymnasium yesterday. The Tigresses will leave for a 10-day preparation camp in the Netherlands today ahead of the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup qualifiers in Scotland.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Coach to be named in a day or two: Yunus

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is all set to appoint a new head coach, a position that has been vacant since the board parted ways with Steve Rhodes following a disappointing World Cup campaign in July.

The BCB officials conducted a tele-conference with a few probable candidates yesterday.

"Even today [Wednesday] we have talked over the phone with a few probable candidates for the head coach's post. We are confident that we will be able to disclose the name of a new head coach over the next one or two days," BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus told The Daily Star yesterday.

There had been talk that former New Zealand head coach Mike Hesson was all set to become the Tigresses' new coach. However, although the board was keen to rope in the 44-year-old, according to sources close to developments there are very slim chances of Hesson, who is also one of the shortlisted candidates to be India's head coach, coming to Bangladesh.

Yunus, however, was not willing to make any comment on Hesson's current status but he did say that the attributes the board is looking for are strong vision and passion, along with the financial considerations.

Former South African coach Russell Domingo had visited the country for an interview with the BCB earlier this month, and board officials were satisfied with his plan and vision during the presentation.

## Tigresses headed for Netherlands

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team will leave for the Netherlands today, where the Tigresses will have a 10-day preparation camp before travelling to Scotland to participate in the upcoming Women's World T20 qualifiers, set to begin on August 31.

Ahead of the stiff challenge, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) women's cricket wing development manager Nazmul Abedin Fahim was hopeful of the Tigresses' chances.

"On paper, Bangladesh are the strongest team that will be participating in the qualifiers. Bangladesh ended comfortable champions in this tournament last time and I hope that they will be able to hold

onto the same position this time. Two teams will qualify and I hope Bangladesh are one of them," Fahim told The Daily Star yesterday.

Fahim also informed that Bangladesh will be playing a number of T20 practice matches to get prepared.

"We will be playing matches and have practice sessions over there [in the Netherlands]. The Thailand team is over there and we will be playing two practice matches against them and also one practice game with the Netherlands. We will also play a practice match against the Netherlands under-17 boys' team."

Bangladesh will miss out on the services of experienced all-rounder Rumana Ahmed as the 28-year-old was ruled out due to an injury. However, Fahim said that other players alongside new entrants

Murshida Khatun, Sobhana Mostary and Shailla Sharmin could step up.

Bangladesh's main concern has long been their batting, but Fahim was hopeful that the batters would be more consistent, while hailing the Tigresses' spin bowling department.

"Our main strength is in our bowling, especially our spin bowling. We have a very good spin bowling department and I think it is better than most sides in the world. Even in the last World T20, none of the teams were able to post high scores against us. We could not win matches as our batsmen failed. Most teams could score just above 100. We have a very good bowling attack, but if our batting department could become a bit more consistent, we can even win matches against better teams."

## Tigers' tough road to 2023 WC

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the conclusion of the thrilling 2019 World Cup final between England and New Zealand, the road to qualification for the 2023 World Cup in India began yesterday with the launch of the inaugural tri-series of the Cricket World Cup league 2 in Scotland.

Just as in 2019, 10 teams will participate in the 2023 World Cup but for the first time, the rankings table will not be used for qualification as the ODI Super League, starting from May 1 next year, comes to the fore.

The top seven sides in the ODI Super League plus hosts India will qualify directly to the World Cup and the bottom-placed five teams will play the World Cup qualifier in 2022.

Bangladesh will not be facing the likes of India, Pakistan, Australia and the Netherlands but they will have to face the likes of New Zealand, and South Africa away while also facing Sri Lanka, West Indies and current World Champions England at home.

All of the 12 full members and Netherlands will play the ODI Super League and play an equal number of matches (24) from May 2020. Each of the 13 teams will host four home and four away series, with each consisting of three ODIs that will count toward World Cup qualification.

The Tigers will be playing four home and four away ODI series with three ODIs from each series to be attached to the ODI Super League and the qualification to the World Cup. All the ODI series Bangladesh are scheduled to play from May 1 in 2020 till March 31 of 2022 -- the span of the ODI Super League -- will be three-match ODI series.

To ensure hassle-free qualification to the World Cup and to avoid playing in the 2022 World Cup Qualifier, the Tigers will have to ensure a top-eight finish in the 13-team league. With a greater degree of emphasis

and meaning now attached to all upcoming ODI series both home and away, the Tigers have a long and arduous road in front of them in order to qualify for the World Cup.

The teams ranked 14-20 will play in the redesigned Cricket World Cup league 2 which began with the match between Oman and Papua New Guinea today.

The teams ranked 21st to 32nd

in the World Cricket League will have to top their league to make it through to the World Cup qualifier playoff. There they will play against the bottom four of the Cricket World Cup League 2.

While the format for the 2022 World Cup Qualifier has not yet been determined, the top two teams from the 10-team event will go through to the 2023 World Cup.

### QUALIFICATION PATHWAY FOR THE 2023 WORLD CUP



Sri Lankan spinner Akila Dananjaya celebrates after dismissing New Zealand's Henry Nicholls on the first day of the opening Test in Galle yesterday. PHOTO: ICC

## Taylor rescues Kiwis

AFP, Galle

Ross Taylor hit an unbeaten half-century to keep New Zealand afloat after Sri Lanka spinner Akila Dananjaya claimed five wickets on a rain-hit day one of the first Test on Wednesday.

New Zealand were 203 for five, having recovered from 71-3 at lunch, when rain stopped play for the day in the final session in Galle with Taylor batting on 86. Dananjaya claimed his fourth five-wicket haul.

The mystery spinner took three early wickets including skipper Kane

Williamson for nought before Taylor put on 100 runs for the fourth wicket with Henry Nicholls.

Dananjaya trapped Nicholls for 42 to break the century stand and then got BJ Watling for one to make New Zealand slip further.

Taylor handled pace and spin with aplomb as he registered his 31st Test 50 and had no problems resisting Dananjaya, who mixed up his deliveries to outfox the batsmen.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 203 for 5 (Raval 33, Latham c Dickwella 30, Taylor 86 not out, Nicholls 42; Dananjaya 5-57)

## Rain washes out Day 1 at Lord's

REUTERS, London

The first day of the second Ashes test between England and Australia was rained out at Lord's on Wednesday without a ball being bowled.

Play had finally looked set to get underway after a morning of wet weather, with the umpires calling for a 3:30pm (1430 GMT) start during a dry spell.

The sides briefly came out, and the England staff had time to present Jofra Archer with his debut test cap. But the rain began to fall again minutes later, before the captains came out for the coin toss.

The sides will now aim to start the match on Thursday, with an extra half-hour of play allowed on each of the remaining four days to make up for the day lost.

Australia lead the five-match series 1-0 after an emphatic 251-run win at Edgbaston.

## HAS GAYLE PLAYED HIS LAST?

Chris Gayle smashed 72 off 41 deliveries at Port of Spain yesterday against India in the rain-affected third and final ODI, which might have been the last ODI for the 'Universe Boss'. Although there is no official word yet, Gayle's body language and those of the Indian players suggested this might have been the last we saw of the great man in an ODI. Wearing a specially made jersey with 301 -- the number of ODIs he played -- Gayle received a special send-off from the Indian players before he walked off, holding his helmet aloft his bat.



PHOTO: AFP