

## Tigers' first opponents unveiled as Netherlands qualify

SPORTS REPORTER

With the Group A qualification saga coming to an end yesterday, Bangladesh can start analysing the Netherlands as the Tigers are set to begin their T20 World Cup campaign against the Dutch side on 24th October in Hobart.

Despite falling short by 16 runs against Sri Lanka, the Dutch cemented their place in the Super 12s as runners-up behind the Lankans, courtesy of UAE downing Namibia by seven runs in the second and final match of the day on Thursday.

The results mean that Bangladesh, who were scheduled to face the Group A runners-up in their tournament opener, will meet Netherlands after six years following the two sides' T20 World Cup affair in Dharamsala in 2016, where the Tigers rode on Tamim Iqbal's 58 ball 83 to edge their counterparts by eight runs in the preliminary round of the mega event.

Moving on to Group B proceedings, West Indies take on Ireland, while the evening match will see Zimbabwe face Scotland. As all four teams are tied on two points, the equation is simple as the respective winners of today's games ensure a Super 12 spot.

However, if bad weather spoils both games, Zimbabwe and Scotland would go through based on superior net run rates over West Indies and Ireland.

So far, the two-time champions West Indies managed to down Zimbabwe to keep their qualification hopes alive following a shell-shocking defeat to Scotland. The Caribbeans are yet to produce a polished performance, struggling to live up to the tag of T20 specialists and lacking firepower that the big hitters promise.

Against Ireland, Windies are in for a tough hurdle as the Irish have momentum on their back as they are fresh off a remarkable turnaround against the Scottish, where Curtis Campher and George Dockrell rose from the ashes to stage a match-winning stand when all hope seemed lost.

Meanwhile, Scotland, despite their death-bowling misfiring against Ireland, would not feel demoralised against a spirited Zimbabwe. The game promises to be a cracker as the two sides have demonstrated sparks of fine form across all departments.

## India 'need to do lot of things right'

REUTERS, Melbourne

India begin the T20 World Cup in Australia as one of the favourites but captain Rohit Sharma says a lot of things will have to fall into place if they are to win the title.

Inaugural champions India failed to make the knockout stage at last year's tournament in the United Arab Emirates and have not won a World Cup since taking the 50-overs title on home soil in 2011.

"It's been a while since we have won the World Cup," Rohit, who leads the side at a World Cup for the first time, told the Indian cricket board's website.

"Obviously the motive and the whole thought process is to win the World Cup, but we know that we need to do a lot of things right to get there, so one step at a time for us."

At the last tournament in the UAE, India lost their opening match against Pakistan and were also beaten by New Zealand as they crashed out at the Super 12 stage.

Rohit said it was important to focus on each game as it comes. "We can't think too far ahead. You really cannot think about semis and finals from now itself," said the opener, whose form remains a concern for the side.

There is considerable hype around India's opening match on Sunday - a "blockbuster" against Pakistan - but Rohit said his players must not get swept up in the moment. "It's a big game - we are starting off our campaign. But, at the same time, we want to just keep ourselves quite relaxed and focused on what we need to do as individuals, because that is going to be the key for us."



Netherlands opener Max O'Dowd (L) hit unbeaten 71 against Sri Lanka in Geelong yesterday but his effort went in vain as they lost by 16 runs, leaving their qualification in doubt. It was, however, up to UAE who did the Dutch a favour as they beat Namibia by seven runs, where Muhammad Waseem (R) starred with a fifty and later gave just six runs in the final over and dismissed danger man David Wiese. PHOTO: AFP

## Red-ball assignment in view but who will take charge?

SPORTS REPORTER

India will arrive in Bangladesh for their first tour since 2015 to play three ODIs and two Tests on December 1, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said on Thursday.

While a majority of the red-ball players are in Australia to play the T20I World Cup, a few stalwarts such as Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominul Haque are playing in the ongoing National Cricket League (NCL) to gear up for the assignment against India.

However, Russell Domingo, relinquished of T20I duties and told to focus on ODI and Tests, is yet to arrive in the country to gauge NCL performances. Domingo was set to travel to Dubai with the A team before that tour was scrapped.

Later, the BCB XI, a side featuring Test stars Mominul and Mahmudul Hasan Joy, saw their tour of India to play Tamil Nadu postponed. It was learned that the BCB XI would tour India on October 22 for two four-day and three one-day matches as the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association finally managed the go-ahead from the union ministry. However, Domingo will not be part of that tour either.

Domingo had said during a press conference in August that he would attend NCL games in mid-November. A BCB source yesterday

### ITINERARY

**December 1:** India team arrives in Dhaka.

**December 4:** First ODI, Mirpur

**December 7:** Second ODI, Mirpur

**December 10:** Third ODI, Mirpur

**December 14-18:** First Test, Chattogram

**December 22-26:** Second Test, Mirpur

informed that, as per schedule, Domingo would be in Bangladesh for the NCL. The last round of matches is slated for November 14-17, but another source, a BCB higher-up requesting anonymity, informed that they were 'still looking but it is likely someone new will be appointed as solution' when asked whether Domingo would be staying on.

Domingo's future remains pretty much up in the air still and it is a possibility he may not attend NCL matches. Past that, he may be replaced as head coach although his contract with BCB runs through to the ODI World Cup in India.

Dhaka will play host to the three ODIs against India, scheduled for December 4, 7 and 10th while the two Tests, part of the World Test Championship, are slated to be played from December 14-18 and December 22-26 with the first in Chattogram and the latter in Dhaka.

India, currently fourth in 2021-2023 WTC cycle, will place importance on the two Tests as it will factor heavily into their hopes of qualifying for the final. Thus, bar one or two shake-ups, a near full-strength squad is expected to arrive in Bangladesh.

The last time Bangladesh hosted India in 2015, the lone Test in Fatullah ended in a draw. This time, a majority of the players are in Australia. The Super 12 stage ends on November 6 and, barring any unprecedented results, Bangladesh are likely to head back after that stage. But it still gives very little time for the rest of the Test squad to prepare for the India tour.

The players playing in the BCB XI tour and the NCL will get much-needed preparation for the series but how the majority of the pace stars return to the red-ball format will be crucial to Bangladesh's chances in the home series. Without Domingo, the plans for the series and who will guide the team remain cloudy at the moment.

## Man Utd display 'season's best act'

REUTERS, MANCHESTER

Manchester United coach Erik ten Hag hailed his side's display in their 2-0 victory over Tottenham Hotspur on Wednesday and said Cristiano Ronaldo's decision to walk down the tunnel early would be dealt with.

After having two shots on target in a dire 0-0 draw with Newcastle United on Sunday at Old Trafford, the hosts looked like a different side against Spurs, dominating the match from start to finish.

United had 28 shots - the most by a team in a Premier League match this season.

The figure was also the most that a team managed by Antonio Conte has faced in a top-flight game, in what was the 318th league match he has taken charge of in Serie A and the Premier League.

"I am pleased with the team," Ten Hag said. "I think it was the best team performance this season."

There was one negative for Ten Hag as unused substitute Cristiano Ronaldo walked down the tunnel before the final whistle, seemingly unhappy at not being involved once again this season.

The United boss, however, did not want the incident to detract from their display. "I don't pay attention today, we will deal with that tomorrow," he added.

## Sylhet go top after second win

SPORTS REPORTER

In a tight contest on the fourth and final day of the second round of the National Cricket League, Barishal Division won against Khulna Division by 71 runs in Cox's Bazar while Sylhet Division and Rajshahi Division won from strong positions in their respective games at the BKSP and Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Tajul Islam was the hero for Rajshahi in Chattogram, picking up a six-wicket haul for 109 runs as Dhaka Metro were bowled out for 268. Rajshahi's openers got them over the line to secure a 10-wicket win.

Sylhet needed 108 more runs on the fourth day at the BKSP after continuing from their overnight score of 110 for three against Dhaka Division. Skipper Zakir Hossain's 38 and Ali Jaker's unbeaten 51 saw them win by four wickets after opener Imtiaz Hossain had struck 51 at the top. The win leaves Sylhet with two wins in two after two rounds of matches.

In Cox's Bazar, Barishal slumped from 195 for four to 212 all out against Khulna on day four as left-arm spinner Tipu Sultan bagged five for 37. Needing 247 on the final day, Khulna were bowled out for 176 with spinners Tanvir Islam and Moin Khan combining for seven wickets.

## Police snatch title on exciting final day

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police Club were crowned as champions of the Premier Division Table Tennis League after an exciting 3-2 win over Wari Club in the last match of the Super Four League at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Police Club, which on Wednesday clinched their maiden Women's Premier Division Table Tennis League title, came into a must-win final match against eventual runners-up Wari Club, who had beaten Police Club 3-1 in the first phase of league matches.

However, former national champions Javed Ahmed and Manosh Chowdhury held their nerve to not only exact vengeance but also deliver a maiden trophy for Police Club, who were runners-up in their maiden appearance in the last edition.

Javed first beat Ramhima Lian Bawm in straight sets in the first match before defending champion Mohtasin Ahmed Hridoy beat former champion Manosh in straight sets to level the margin. Wari then took a 2-1 lead overall, with Emon beating Imran Hossain Rridoy 3-1 in the third match. Manosh brought Police back into the match by beating Ramhima 3-2 before Javed showed his character by defeating Mohtasin 3-1 in the deciding fifth match.

The win saw Police Club join Wari Club in first place, with both teams tied on 22 points from 12 matches. However, Police Club emerged as champions by virtue of their head-to-head record in the Super League match as per bylaws.

### WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS & STAR

Live from 10:00 am

SPORTS 2

Scotland vs

T20 World Cup

Zimbabwe

Ireland vs West Indies

Live from 02:00 pm



Fresh from winning the prestigious Ballon d'Or, Karim Benzema resumed action in fitting fashion as the French forward netted Real Madrid's second goal, sandwiched between strikes from Federico Valverde and Marco Asensio, during Real's 3-0 win at Elche in La Liga yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP