



## SCORES IN BRIEF

### West Indies vs Ireland

**West Indies:**  
146 for five in 20 overs (King 62, Charles 24; Delany 3-16, Singh 1-11)

**Ireland:**  
150 for one in 17.3 overs (Stirling 62, Tucker 45, Balbirnie 37; Hosein 1-38)

**Result:**  
Ireland won by nine wickets

**Player-of-the-match:**  
Gareth Delany

**Scotland vs Zimbabwe**  
**Scotland:**  
132 for six in 20 overs (Munsey 54, MacLeod 25; Chatara 2-14, Ngarava 2-28)

**Zimbabwe:**  
133 for five 18.3 overs (Ervine 58, Raza 40; Davey 2-16, Watt 1-19)

**Result:**  
Zimbabwe won by five wickets

**Player-of-the-match:**  
Sikandar Raza

## Masood cleared to play

AFP, Melbourne

Pakistan batsman Shan Masood has got away with "superficial bruising" after being hit on the head during a practice session ahead of the team's first match at the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia.

The team got the injury scare as it prepared for the game, when a stray shot from Mohammad Nawaz struck Masood on the head and left him lying flat on the ground before he was sent to hospital for scans.

"All of Shan Masood's neurological observations are normal," PCB said.

## Bowlers beware!

REUTERS

If the bigger boundaries at most grounds have lifted the spirits of bowlers converging on Australia for the T20 World Cup, they do well to temper their optimism with a flood of runs predicted by some from the tournament's Super 12 stage.

Cricket's shortest format is unapologetically batter-biased and bowlers, often cast as cannon-fodder, derive nearly as much delight from a dot ball as they would from a dismissal in one-dayers or tests.

Ground dimensions, however, suggest shots that would clear the boundary in most stadiums in the sub-continent and New Zealand, might not even make the rope in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

New Zealand coach Gary Stead, however, expects that bowlers will still have their work cut out when the world's best batmen start firing.

"I think what T20 cricket has certainly done is made teams much more comfortable in chasing bigger scores," the 50-year-old said on Sunday.

"So yeah, you're going to have to bowl very, very well if you are defending scores of 150-170 now, and that was shown through the tri-series (in Christchurch) as well."

Having played in the inaugural World Cup in 2007, India captain Rohit Sharma has seen close at hand how the game has evolved over the years and he believes the



## Rain looms as Trans-Tasman battle kicks off Super 12s

AFP, undated

Rain threatens to derail the Twenty20 World Cup when big guns enter the fray this weekend, with Australia's opener against New Zealand on Saturday facing the risk of being washed out.

Parts of Australia are facing a third straight La Nina weather event with a wetter than average summer expected, and downpours are forecast for Sydney and Melbourne from Friday through to next week.

Aaron Finch's Australia begin their title defence against New Zealand at a sell-out Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday evening – a repeat of the 2021 final in Dubai where Mitchell Marsh's unbeaten 77 powered them to an eight-wicket win and maiden crown.

But the Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting a "very high (90 percent) chance of showers" and potentially thunderstorms, with no reserve days for group games. They only come into play for the semi-finals and final.

It looks equally gloomy for Sunday in Melbourne where India face Pakistan in a hotly-anticipated clash with up to 100,000 fans in the cavernous MCG and tens of millions more tuning in to watch.

A minimum of five overs a side is required to constitute a match.

The weather could also cause havoc in Hobart where games are



scheduled for Friday and Sunday, although England's opener against Afghanistan in Perth on Saturday has a fine weather forecast.

Australia have a golden opportunity to become the first back-to-back T20 world champions, enjoying the advantage of being the only winners of cricket's shortest format to have a crack at defending the title at home.

But they begin their campaign on the back of a 2-0 series loss to England this month and with Finch admitting they were "tired" after a gruelling build-up.

Despite the tough lead-in, pace spearhead Pat Cummins insisted they were better placed after defying the odds to win last year's title.

"In saying that, T20 is a very fickle format. You look around and there are probably four or five teams that realistically could win it."

Kane Williamson's New Zealand enter the competition in mixed form, having lost to South Africa and Pakistan, but recently enjoying victories against Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Fast bowler Tim Southee is under no illusions that Australia

will be a tough opponent, should their game go ahead.

"You can't give them a sniff. They are a class side," he said.

England are in the same six-team group as Australia and New Zealand and loom as potentially their biggest challenger, having dominated white-ball cricket in recent years.

Jos Buttler's men suffered a blow on Wednesday when pace bowler Reece Topley was ruled out of the tournament with an ankle injury, with fellow left-arm bowler Tymal Mills promoted from his previous status as travelling reserve.

They were already without injured star batsman Johnny Bairstow, with only two teams from each of the two groups making the semi-finals.

However, despite the injury concerns skipper Buttler on Friday hailed a new era for England and warned that his "dangerous" team were "very ready" for their title charge ahead of their T20 World Cup opener against Afghanistan today.

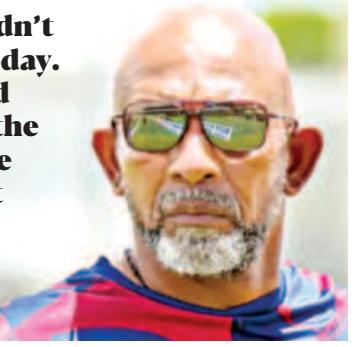
Buttler succeeded Eoin Morgan as England's white-ball captain in June and led his team to a 2-0 T20 series win over Australia and a victory over Pakistan leading up to the World Cup.

"We are in a good spot. We have had really good games in the last 10 matches and played some really good cricket," the wicketkeeper-batter said, striking a buoyant tone.

"On the eve of the tournament, we are very ready."

We just didn't turn up today. We started well with the bat, but we just didn't continue.

West Indies coach PHIL SIMMONS



## Time for Bangladesh to learn from Windies fall

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a dramatic group stage of the ICC T20 World Cup in Australia that saw the Netherlands and Zimbabwe qualify for the Super 12 and join Bangladesh in Group 2, raising hopes among Tigers fans when it comes to Bangladesh winning a couple of games in the mega-event.

The Dutch finished as runners-up in Group A while Zimbabwe romped into the Super 12 as the champions from Group B in the first round. They will join Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and South Africa in Group 2.

The biggest miss from the Super 12 will be two-time World Cup champions, the West Indies, who were sent back home after a stunning nine-wicket defeat to Ireland.

Bangladesh may get weaker opponents on pen and paper in Netherlands and Zimbabwe, but prominent coach Nazmul Abedeen Fahim believes it will not be a walk in the park in the Super 12. "Teams like Netherlands, Ireland and Zimbabwe play cricket at a certain level. The worrying part is that they have played a competitive qualifying round, which has helped them. When they enter the Super 12, they will be at their peak. Their primary goal has been achieved and they will start the Super 12 with that satisfaction, which will help them to play freely," Fahim told The Daily Star yesterday.

"These things will work in their favour. On the other hand, Bangladesh have to prove everything. It's not that Bangladesh do not have quality. We may also be ahead of those teams in terms of strength. But it will be interesting to see how Bangladesh cope with the challenge and expectations."

The mentor to many prominent cricketers in the country also said the Tigers needed to learn from the West Indies' early exit.

"They are the mighty West Indies and dominated world cricket at one point. There is no chance for anyone to doubt their quality or caliber. Even after their early exit, I am sure the other cricketing nations are concerned about it because it hampers the overall quality of cricket. Keeping in mind what they have done before, everyone will be with the West Indies."

"But if we make mistakes and fall down to such a stage, where Zimbabwe were not so long ago or like what happened with Kenya, I don't think there would be many to support us since we haven't had such contributions. The fact is that many don't want us to be playing cricket at the top level, so we need to be careful about this," he said.

According to Fahim, Bangladesh's gradual decline is spiraling towards darkness, so he urged authorities to rebuild and restructure the country's cricket before it breaks down.



Zimbabwe's Ryan Burl (R) and Milton Shumba celebrate their victory over Scotland in the T20 World Cup against at Bellerive Oval in Hobart on Friday. Zimbabwe chased down the 133-run target with five wickets in hand and nine balls to spare to book a place in Super 12.

PHOTO: AFP