

Semi-qualification scenarios approach hyper-complexity

SPORTS REPORTER

With Zimbabwe and South Africa beating Pakistan and India, respectively, in the Super 12 of the ongoing T20 World Cup, the Group 2 came alive with five of the six teams still in contention to make it to the semifinals of what has already been a fascinating edition of the marquee event.

As it stands after three games, the Netherlands are eliminated but the Dutch side can still make their campaign a success if they are able to stun fourth-placed Zimbabwe today. The African nation, on the other hand, cannot afford to lose if they are to stay in contention.

Today's second fixture feature India and Bangladesh -- who occupy the second and third spot despite gathering equal points as the record 104-run loss suffered by the Tigers against the Proteas damaged their net run-rate (-1.533) beyond repair.

Bangladesh are inferior on paper in their next two outings against India and Pakistan but the Bangladesh fans are curious about the several possibilities to how the Tigers' Super 12 fate may pan out ultimately. Moreover, persistent bad weather in Adelaide has caused the last-four qualifying criteria for all the teams, especially Bangladesh, to be a lot more complex.

While two wins in two games guarantees a semifinal as either group champions or runners-up, however, it's worth mentioning that the Tigers' campaign may just hang by a thread even if they lose against India, or the game washes out, today. A defeat against India would mean that Bangladesh must beat Pakistan in their final Super 12 match and bank on South Africa to lose their both games and also India to down Zimbabwe later.

BANGLADESH-INDIA T20 STATS AND TRIVIA

India beat Bangladesh by eight wickets in a group-stage encounter to cement a spot in the semifinals of the 2014 T20 World Cup.

India bettered Bangladesh in the 2016 Asia Cup final to clinch their sixth title. It was the first time that the tournament was played in the 20-over format.

The 2016 T20 World Cup encounter between India and Bangladesh saw one of the most thrilling contests where Dhoni's presence of mind and sharp skills helped India win by just one run.

Bangladesh had the Nidahas Trophy final in 2018 all but wrapped up but India, needing 12 runs off the final over, came out victorious, courtesy of Dinesh Karthik who hit the last ball for six to give India a four-wicket win.

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS & GTV
T20 World Cup
Zimbabwe vs Netherlands
Live from 10:00 am
India vs Bangladesh
Live from 02:00 pm

T SPORTS
Hockey Champions Trophy
Padma vs Cumilla
Live from 06:30 pm
Dhaka vs Chattogram
Live from 08:00 pm

SONY TEN 1
UEFA Champions League
Juventus vs PSG
Live from 02:00 am
(Thursday)

SONY TEN 2
UEFA Champions League
Real Madrid vs Celtic
Live from 11:45 pm
Manchester City vs Sevilla
Live from 02:00 pm
(Thursday)

SONY TEN 3
UEFA Champions League
Milan vs Salzburg
Live from 02:00 pm
(Thursday)

SONY SIX
UEFA Champions League
Shakhtar Donetsk vs Leipzig
Live from 11:45 pm



Indian batting stalwart Virat Kohli looks up to the heavens during training session yesterday at the Adelaide Oval as the weather was also a big talking point ahead of today's Bangladesh-India ICC T20 World Cup Super 12 match. Due to rain, the Indian cricket team took the net session under the roof while [bottom] Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan turned up at the venue only to attend a pre-match press conference as the team management opted to rest the players.

PHOTO: AFP/BCB

Shakib under no illusions but keen on an 'upset'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh T20 skipper Shakib Al Hasan was under no illusions of his side's chances going into the Super 12 game against India today, but he did not fail to put the onus on India to get the result they need, with both teams tied on four points ahead of a crucial encounter at Adelaide.

Crucial matches, including finals, between the two teams have always gone in India's favour. The last time the two teams faced each other in a T20 World Cup, Bangladesh lost a closely-contested tie that shattered hearts and sent the team spiralling into despair. That game in Bengaluru remains one of the biggest disappointments in Bangladesh's cricketing history.

Shakib said India had come to this World Cup to win the trophy, reminding the opponents that it is a tie that they have to win. Bangladesh, having secured two wins in the Super 12 stage, have already produced their best-ever campaign, at least results-wise, in the showpiece event.

"India are favourites. They have come here to win the World Cup. We are not here to win the World Cup," Shakib said at the press conference yesterday. "You can understand the situation. If we win against India, it would be an upset. And we will try our best to upset India," he added.

"As I had said before the World Cup, every match is important and we want to maintain our approach and not think about which side we are playing or the situation. We want to enjoy the game," he said.

"In T20s, since it's the shortest format, most of the games are close



encounters and keeping nerves in check is very important. What happened previously is that we lost close matches. We are learning to turn around from such positions. I won't say we have completely learned to do it, but we are starting to turn things around," he said.

"Our target is to play well in the next two matches. If we can win even one [of the remaining two games against India and Pakistan], it will count as an upset. If we can cause that upset, we will be very happy. But if we can't, there is not much to say. Both teams are better than us on paper. But if we play well and it's our day, why can't we win? We have seen in this World Cup that Ireland have beaten England and Zimbabwe defeated Pakistan. So a result like that would obviously make us happy," he said when asked about the target in the two matches in Adelaide.

India coach Rahul Dravid was not too keen to take on the pressure. "We respect them a lot.

I think they're a very good team. This format and this World Cup has shown us you can't take any team lightly," Dravid told reporters yesterday.

"Ireland showed that against England ... The fact that it's already such a short format. The margin of victory and defeat, even if it is 12-15 runs, it's actually two hits. It's two hits one way or the other and that's the game," he added.

Bangladesh will be aware that India possess the kind of impact and ammunition to take the game away very early. South Africa's pace attack forced India's top-order into submission and with the Tigers' pace attack showing promise, Bangladesh will hope their pace can dent some of India's attacking force as well.

Pace was the key to Bangladesh's success last time around at this very venue, when the Tigers knocked England out of the 2015 ODI World Cup. An upset similar to that is what the Tigers seek again.

England, Sri Lanka stay alive; Afghanistan exit

REUTERS, MELBOURNE

England survived Glenn Phillips's late onslaught to beat group leaders New Zealand by 20 runs in a major boost to their semi-final hopes at the T20 World Cup in Brisbane on Tuesday.

England skipper Jos Buttler led by example and smashed 73 while Alex Hales made 52 to power the 2010 champions to 179-6 after electing to bat in the crucial Super 12 contest.

Phillips threatened to pull off an audacious chase for New Zealand, bashing 62 off 36 balls but had little support from anyone barring skipper Kane Williamson (40).

New Zealand are still top of Group 1 on superior net run rate, followed by England and Australia with all three level on five points.

Former champions Sri Lanka knocked out Afghanistan with a six-wicket victory at the Gabba in the day's first match.

Spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (3-13) led Sri Lanka's disciplined bowling as the Asia champions restricted Afghanistan to a modest 144-8 in the Group 1 contest at Gabba.

Dhananjaya de Silva smashed an unbeaten 64 to help the 2014 champions prevail with nine balls to spare and revive their campaign after back-to-back defeats by Australia and New Zealand.

Sri Lanka now have four points from as many matches, while Afghanistan stay rooted at the bottom with two.



U-15s blow Bhutan away

SPORTS REPORTER

Substitute Sauravi Akanda Prity fired home a hatrick to power hosts Bangladesh to a massive 8-0 win against Bhutan in the opening match of the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Umehla Marma also netted twice while Thuinuye Marma, Joynob Bibi Rita and substitute Kanon Rani Bahadur got their names on the scoresheet in a one-sided affair. The Bhutanese players appeared out of breath in the second half, with the girls in red and green cashing in on almost every transition as they added five goals before the final whistle.

Although there was apprehension about how the inexperienced Bangladesh team would perform in their maiden international match, Golam Rabbani Choton's charges banished those fears as they notched their second biggest in the tournament's history, second only to a 14-0 win over Pakistan in the second edition of the championship in 2018.

"We said before that this group is talented but they need to improve in every aspect -- technically, tactically, mentally and physically. I think the experienced gathered today will help them in the upcoming match," Choton said.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Lionel Messi will hope to continue his scintillating run in the Champions League this season when Paris Saint-Germain take on Juventus in their final group game tonight. Messi has scored four goals and notched three assists in four games in Europe's elite competition this season and a win will be crucial to the Parisiens' hopes of topping the group and getting a more favourable draw. Meanwhile, AC Milan and RB Salzburg will duel for a berth in the last 16, with the loser of tonight's game set to drop down to the Europa League.

PHOTO: AFP