

Series sweep and more records in sight

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With the series already in the bag, Bangladesh will vie to inflict a clean-sweep over Pakistan by winning the third and final T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur today and complete a few more feats in the process.

After a prolonged lean period, having won just three of 16 matches across formats from the start of the year till July 12, the Tigers have turned their fortunes around in the shortest format, securing back-to-back series wins over Sri Lanka and Pakistan inside seven days.

Against Sri Lanka, Bangladesh bounced back from losing the first match and sealed the series 2-1. The Tigers carried that winning momentum into the home series against Pakistan that followed shortly after and have taken an unassailable 2-0 lead heading into the final match.

The eight-run win in the low-scoring thriller in the second T20I was Bangladesh's fourth straight win in the format. If they can win today, they will equal their best-ever winning streak in T20Is, which had come in 2023 when they



whitewashed England 3-0 at home and followed it up with two consecutive wins over Ireland in Chattogram.

A win today will also earn Bangladesh their maiden series sweep over Pakistan in T20Is in a multi-match bilateral series.

The Tigers had handed Pakistan a 1-0 defeat in a one-off T20I back in 2015. However, they are yet to whitewash the Asian opponents in a multi-match series.

Bangladesh, overall, have six clean sweeps in multi-match T20I series,

which have come against Ireland (2012), Zimbabwe (2020), UAE (2022), England (2023), Afghanistan (2023), and West Indies (2024).

However, the weather could end up playing spoilsport in the match, with some overnight showers and more rain throughout the day on the cards as per the weather forecast.

Rain has already played a part in the series as its constant presence has made the Mirpur pitch damp, making it more

challenging than usual to bat on.

The Pakistan batters have especially struggled in these conditions, getting rolled over for just 110 in the first match and being 47-7 in 11.5 overs, chasing 134 in the second game.

From there, Faheem Ashraf's counterattacking 51 off 32 balls nearly snatched the game away from Bangladesh, as the equation was brought down to 28 off the last two overs.

However, Bangladesh eventually prevailed. Winning a tight match like this was a "good sign", felt Jaker Ali, Player of the Match of the second T20I for his 55 off 48 balls. "Yes, it was difficult [last two overs]. We were a little anxious. But we were ready for it, and determined to win... Such tough moments will come. Winning close matches is a good sign for a team. Winning such a match will give us confidence," he said at the post-match press conference.

Now, the Tigers will want to take this momentum and wrap up the series with yet another win, which would be a fitting reply to when they were whitewashed in a three-match series in their last tour of Pakistan in May-June this year.

Fizz returns to top 10 of T20I bowling rankings

AGENCIES

Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman broke into the top 10 of the ICC T20I bowling rankings after almost four years, as ICC updated the list on Wednesday.

The last time the left-arm pacer was in the top 10 of the list was back in October, 2021.

Making a notable leap of 17 places, Mustafizur now sits in the joint-ninth position with India's Arshdeep Singh, both on 653 rating points. Mustafizur had a stellar run in the T20I series win over Pakistan, picking three scalps at an average of seven.

His teammate Mahedi Hasan was also rewarded for his strong showing against Pakistan, moving up nine positions to reach 16th. He contributed with three wickets in the ongoing series against Pakistan, including a 2/25 in a close win in the second game on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, New Zealand's Matt Henry has climbed 13 places to 29th in the bowler rankings.

The batting rankings saw the West Indies captain Shai Hope obtain 670 rating points to be placed at his career-best tenth position.

West Indies' Roston Chase has jumped seven spots to claim second place with 221 rating points in the all-rounder rankings, trailing behind only India's Hardik Pandya.

T20 giant DRE RUSS bids adieu

Two-time T20 World Cup champion and an all-rounder with a consistent flair for the spectacular, Andre Russell lived up to his reputation even in his final international knock on Tuesday. His sparkling 36 off 15 balls helped West Indies reach 172 for eight in their second T20I against Australia in Kingston. However, unbeaten fifties from Josh Inglis and Cameron Green saw the visitors chase down the target with eight wickets and 28 balls to spare. Numbers, however, would not be enough to capture Russell's impact on the game. "I enjoy seeing the ball go over the ropes," he said following his final game -- a statement that perfectly embodies the entertainer in him.



Andre Russell's international career spanned 143 caps, including 86 T20Is, 56 ODIs, and one Test.

The all-rounder helped West Indies win the T20 World Cup in 2012 and 2016.

He closed out his international chapter in the manner he was always known for -- smashing two fours and four maximums at a staggering strike rate of 240.

“ Played in front of my home crowd, family and friends. The result didn't go my way, but at the end of the day, I'm happy and grateful. ”

ANDRE RUSSELL

RUSSELL'S CAREER

T20I
Matches: **86**
Runs: **1122**
Batting SR: **163.79**

Average: **22**
50: **3**
Wickets: **61**
Economy: **9.42**

ODI
Matches: **56**
Runs: **1034**
Batting SR: **130.22**

Average: **27.21**
50: **4**
Wickets: **70**
Economy: **5.84**

Test
Matches: **1**
Runs: **2**
Wickets: **1**



England captain Ben Stokes celebrates after trapping in front his Indian counterpart, Shubman Gill, for 12 in the second session on Day 1 of their fourth Test in Manchester on Wednesday. Stokes, who has been providing crucial breakthroughs throughout the series, helped England keep India to 149 for three at Tea, after an impressive start that saw the visitors amass 94 runs for the opening stand.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bahrain friendlies lined up for U-23s' AFC prep

Coaching gap remains

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-23 national football team will play two friendly matches against their Bahrain counterparts next month as part of their preparation for September's AFC U-23 Asian Cup Qualifiers.

The matches are scheduled for August 18 and 23 in Bahrain.

The decision was made yesterday at the meeting of the BFF national teams committee, chaired by BFF president and committee chairman Tabith Awal. The meeting also decided to send Bangladesh U-23 national team to host nation Vietnam five days before the start of fixtures in Group C -- which also comprises Singapore, Yemen and Bangladesh.

Despite finalising the tour plans, the meeting left two key matters unresolved: the appointment of the U-23 head coach and the start date of the training camp. BFF general

Since the tournament's inception, Bangladesh have failed to progress past the group stage in six consecutive editions, managing only one win (against Sri Lanka) and one draw (against India) in 18 matches since 2012.

secretary Emran Hossain stated that these decisions would be taken at the next committee meeting.

Although senior national team coach Javier Cabrera was initially expected to oversee the U-23 squad, he is likely to be unavailable due to Bangladesh's senior team commitments, including two friendlies against Nepal in Kathmandu in

September.

The BFF had approached several top local coaches to take charge of the U-23 team but all of them declined.

"The decisions regarding these two issues [the appointment of the head coach and the time of training camp] may come soon," informed national teams committee member Amer Khan, also hinting that BFF technical director Saiful Bari Titu is a likely candidate to lead the side.

The board president had previously stated that the federation intends to form a strong U-23 squad by including up to seven national team regulars and potentially a few foreign-based players, aiming to break Bangladesh's poor run in this competition.

This time, 11 group winners and the four best runners-up from the qualifiers will join hosts Saudi Arabia in the 16-team final round, which will be held during January 7-25 next year.



Will Asia Cup decision be made at ACC meeting?

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Amid speculations and uncertainties, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is set to take place in Dhaka on Thursday and Friday, as per schedule. This is the first time such a high-level meeting of the continental cricket body is taking place in the country.

One of the key agendas of the AGM is the finalising dates and venues for the upcoming Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in September. However, whether a decision regarding the fixtures and venues of the marquee event will be reached remains uncertain. That is because the participation of India and Sri Lanka -- two of the five full members of ACC -- is still unclear, even though media reports in India on Wednesday suggested that both nations might join the meeting virtually.

ACC president Mohsin Naqvi will preside over the meeting, which is likely to be attended by representatives of majority of the 27 member nations, majority physically and a few virtually.

Ahead of the ACC AGM, Naqvi, also the interior minister of Pakistan, reached Dhaka yesterday morning and was greeted by Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam.

Although the AGM is set to take place on Thursday and Friday, the CEO-level meeting among the member nations took place on Wednesday while a dinner party was held at the Intercontinental Hotel. Apart from ACC high-ups, members of Bangladesh and Pakistan cricket teams were invited.

The ACC members are also expected to witness the third and final T20I between Bangladesh and Pakistan, scheduled at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Thursday.

Pots revealed ahead of Women's Asian Cup draw

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For the first time in history, the Bangladesh women's football team have qualified for the AFC Women's Asian Cup, a tournament that will take place from March 1-21, 2026, in three Australian cities: Sydney, Perth, and Gold Coast, featuring 12 nations.

The official group stage draw will be held on July 29 in Sydney. Based on FIFA rankings (as of June 12, 2025), the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Tuesday divided the 12 qualified teams into four pots, each containing three teams. One team from each pot will be drawn into each group.

From each group, the top two teams and the two best third-placed teams will progress to the quarter-finals. A spot in the last eight could potentially open doors to qualification for the Women's World Cup and the Olympics.

- Pot 1: Australia (hosts), Japan, North Korea
- Pot 2: China, South Korea, Vietnam
- Pot 3: Philippines, Chinese Taipei, Uzbekistan
- Pot 4: Bangladesh, India, Iran