

## SPORT



**Soumya Sarkar cuts a dejected figure after losing his stumps during the first T20I against Pakistan in Lahore yesterday. Following a slow-yet-watchful start, Bangladesh's batsmen failed to accelerate the scoring, eventually posting 141 for five, which proved too little in the end. The Tigers will take on Pakistan in the second T20I today.**

PHOTO: AFP



## ‘Stand with Ahsan was turning point’

SPORTS REPORTER



Recalled Pakistan veteran Shoaib Malik turned up with a crucial performance with the bat in the first T20I as the hosts won by five wickets against Bangladesh in Lahore yesterday.

Malik, who starred with a 45-ball 58, heaped praise on a young Pakistan side and said his partnership with debutant opener Ahsan Ali was the turning point in the match.

The win was Pakistan's first in their last eight T20 matches, having lost to England, Sri Lanka and Australia with their last win coming in February 2019.

Chasing a modest total of 142, Malik was ably supported by opener Ahsan, who hit 36 off 32 deliveries. The former Pakistan captain said that his responsibility in the side was to help groom the youngsters.

"Congratulations to the whole Pakistan team for this win and for hosting another match," Malik began during the post-match press conference yesterday. "The responsibility to perform is on those

who have experience but their main responsibility is how they groom the youngsters. When Ahsan was playing in the middle, he showed a lot of confidence. He accompanied me during a turning point of the match and on a pitch that was not easy for batsmen. We had lost some wickets and we needed to consolidate. That the youngsters are performing is a good sign for Pakistan cricket," he said.

The 37-year-old, the only active international cricketer who played in the previous century, was playing his first T20I match since February last year. His dismal form in the World Cup had seen him dropped from the rest of the tournament after just three matches.

"It's tough to be in and out of the team but I have been playing leagues and domestic cricket and that helped me stage a comeback in this match," he reflected on his time away from the T20I side.

"I wasn't answering anyone [with my performance]. I wanted to satisfy my own requirements and my goal is not to see who is upset with me and who is happy," he added.

## ‘We were 15 runs short’

SPORTS REPORTER



Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad said that Bangladesh's score of 141 for five was 10-15 runs short after the Tigers went down to five-wicket defeat against Pakistan in the first of the three T20Is at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday.

Mahmudullah also defended openers Tamim Iqbal and Mohammad Naim after questions were raised about their slow approach as the pair added 71 runs in eleven overs.

Bangladesh were 100 for two after 15 overs but the visitors managed to score just 41 runs in the last five overs for the loss of three wickets. The 33-year-old said that one of the main reasons for the sluggish finish to the innings was the slow nature of the pitch, which made it difficult for the batsmen to score freely in the latter stages.

"The way we batted in the Powerplay [first six overs] was spot on. Both Tamim and Naim batted really well but as the ball got older the pitch also acted differently. It made it difficult for the later batsmen to go out there and hit big strokes. I think we lagged behind in that situation and ended up 10-15 runs short. I think I should

have also finished better," Mahmudullah, who was unbeaten on 19 off 14 balls, told reporters after the game.

When asked whether the conservative batting from the openers had damaged the Tigers' cause, Mahmudullah said that losing quick wickets in

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGLADESH:** 141 for 5 in 20 overs (Tamim 39, Naim 43, Mahmudullah 19; Afridi 1-23, Shadab 1-26)

**PAKISTAN:** 142 for 5 in 19.3 overs (Ahsan 36, Malik 58 not out; Shafiq 2-27)

**Result:** Pakistan won by 5 wickets.

**Player-of-the-match:** Shoaib Malik.

the middle of the innings, including that of a set Naim, proved costly for Bangladesh.

"I think they [openers] started brilliantly. We lost two quick wickets in the middle, including a set Naim. If we could get a big over during that period, like 15 to 17 runs, the run rate would have increased. I think we lacked there and

obviously you have to give credit to Pakistan's bowlers. The way they bowled yorkers and varied the pace was incredible. We have to keep those things in mind and try to do well in the next game," Mahmudullah added.

Despite a modest target, Bangladesh did manage to put up a fight and took the game till the last over. Although Mahmudullah praised his bowlers, he also said that the bowlers gave away some easy runs by bowling down the leg side, which was the disappointing aspect for the Tigers.

Bangladesh were also below par in the field. Substitute fielder Nazmul Hossain Shanto dropped a rather tough chance off Shoaib Malik, on 47, off the bowling of Mustafizur Rahman at long off when Pakistan required 17 off 16 balls. Malik went on to register his fifty and remained unbeaten on 58 runs to guide Pakistan to victory.

"We have to give credit to the way our bowlers fought to defend the target. Although the bowlers bowled well, at times they also gave away some easy boundaries, at least six to seven, and we could have done better there. At the same time, if our fielding was better, things could have been different," he added.



**Returning Pakistan batsman Shoaib Malik's solid half-century powered the hosts to a five-wicket victory over Bangladesh in the first T20I at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP



**The winners of the Kool-BSPA Sports Awards pose for photographs at a city hotel yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

## Sana scoops top award

SPORTS REPORTER

Archer Ruman Sana was yesterday recognised as the Sportsperson of the Year by the Bangladesh Sports Press Association (BSPA), who awarded sportspersons in different disciplines, organisers, coaches and sponsors for their performance and contribution to country's sports in 2019.

Archer Sana, cricketer Shakib Al Hasan and footballer Jamal Bhuiyan were initially selected for marquee award, and out of those three, Sana, who bagged three gold medals in the recent South Asian Games after having become the country's first archer to qualify directly for the Olympic Games, was named as the winner in the Kool-BSPA Award Sports Award at a city hotel yesterday in line with the decision of the jury board.

The 24-year-old archer from Khulna not only bagged the sportsperson of the year

award, but also won the Popular Choice Award based on highest number votes cast by viewers online.

Other athletes of the year are: Shakib (cricket), Jamal (football), Mabiha Akter Simanta (weightlifting), Humaira Akter Antara (karate), Fatema Mujib (fencing), Ety Khatun (emerging archer), Dipu Chakma (taekwondo).

Archery coach Martin Frederick and Bangladesh Archery Federation's general secretary Kazi Rajib Uddin Ahmed Chapal were named as best coach and best organiser respectively while City Group was named as best sponsors of the year.

BSPA also honoured athletics coaches Rafique Ullah Akhter Milon and Tajul Islam and Kabaddi coach Abdul Jalil at the occasion graced by Square Toiletries' managing director Anjan Chowdhury Pintu and AIPS, Asia president Sattam Al Sehali.

## Eng 192 for 4 on Day 1

AFP, Johannesburg

Zak Crawley's maiden Test half-century gave England a solid foundation before South Africa struck back on the first day of the fourth and final Test at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday.

Holding an unbeatable 2-1 series lead, England were 192 for four when bad light ended a rain-shortened day.

England's youthful opening pair of Crawley (66) and Dom Sibley (39) shared England's first century opening partnership since 2016 and blunted South Africa's fast bowlers on a pitch which both captains expected to be challenging for batsmen. Crawley, 21, and Sibley, 24, put on 107 before Sibley was caught down the leg side by wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock to give new cap Beuran Hendricks his first Test wicket.

South Africa claimed three more wickets to have England at a slightly precarious 157 for four but captain Joe Root and Ollie Pope took the tourists safely through to the close in deteriorating light.

Rain prevented any play before lunch and the South African bowling was surprisingly unthreatening when it did get under way. England were 100 for no wicket at tea but South Africa changed their tactics after the interval, bowling more short-pitched deliveries.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**ENGLAND:** First innings 192 for 4 (Crawley 66, Sibley 44, Denly 27, Root 25 not out 25, Pope 22 not out; Philander 1-37, Hendricks 1-43)

## U-19s top group after washout

SPORTS REPORTER

The rain in Potchefstroom forced Bangladesh Under-19's last group match of the ICC under-19 World Cup against their Pakistani counterparts to be abandoned, thus helping the young Tigers finish on top of Group C.

Before rain intervened, however, Bangladesh were in deep trouble after being asked to bat first. Akbar Ali's troops were floundering on 106 for nine in 25 overs before the heavens opened. Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir Khan had taken four wickets for 30 runs. For Bangladesh, only opener Tanzid Hasan offered some resistance with a 35-ball 34.

Bangladesh and Pakistan had already qualified for the quarterfinals before the match. Both sides have five points from three games.

## India go 1-0 up

AFP, Auckland



India cast aside talk of travel fatigue with half-centuries from Lokesh Rahul and Shreyas Iyer headlining an emphatic run chase to beat New Zealand with an over to spare in the opening Twenty20 match in Auckland Friday.

Player of the match Iyer hit the winning runs with a booming six to be unbeaten on 58 as India reached 204 for four in reply to New Zealand's 203 for five.

Opener Rahul (56) set up the run chase in a 99-run stand off 50 balls for the second wicket with captain Virat Kohli (45).

Although the tourists only arrived in New Zealand on Tuesday, Kohli said they were determined that would not be a factor in how they approached the game.

"We never spoke of the jet lag inside the team. We thought we're not going to take anything for an excuse, we're just going to come out there and back our skills," Kohli said.

"We were just looking forward to going on the park and that's key to doing well at the international level and probably that's

the reason why we put in a performance like that today."

A 200-plus score on most grounds would usually be a formidable target in Twenty20 cricket but it is not so imposing at Auckland's Eden Park with its short boundaries.

New Zealand also did not help their defence of 203 by bowling 10 wides and missing wicket opportunities with sloppy fielding.

Kohli won the first play of the day when he called correctly at the toss and elected to bowl.

Half-centuries by Colin Munro (59), Kane Williamson (51) and Ross Taylor (54 not out) formed the basis of the New Zealand innings.

The second match in the series is in Auckland on Sunday.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**NEW ZEALAND:** 203 for 5 in 20 overs (Guptill 30, Munro 59, Williamson 51, Taylor 54 not out; Bumrah 1-31, Dube 1-24, Jadeja 1-18)

**INDIA:** 204 for 4 in 19 overs (Rahul 56, Kohli 45, Iyer 58 not out; Sodhi 2-36)

**Result:** India won by six wickets.

**Player-of-the-match:** Shreyas Iyer.



**Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 58 off 29 balls guided India to a six-wicket victory over New Zealand in the first T20I at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP