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SPORT



It's a very good finish. We had our plans and we executed well. I was bowling wicket-to-wicket and varied my pace. It's a slow pitch and had assistance for spinners.

RAKIBUL HASAN
BANGLADESH U-19 SPINNER

Jubilant Bangladesh players celebrate securing a semifinal spot in the ongoing ICC Under-19 World Cup after thrashing hosts South Africa by 104 runs at the Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday.

PHOTO: ICC

Young Tigers oust hosts South Africa

SPORTS REPORTER



A strong batting display backed by a clinical bowling performance, led by left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan, helped Bangladesh crush hosts South Africa by 104 runs and qualify for the Super League semifinal stage in the ICC Under-19 World Cup at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday.

After piling on a challenging 261 for five, it was Rakibul's spin that dismantled the South African batting line-up as the hosts were bundled out for 157 runs in 42.3 overs.

Rakibul's fifer included the scalps of three of the top four South African batsmen. South Africa never looked on course in chase of the challenging total as the hosts kept losing wickets at regular intervals. Luke Beaufort was the only exception but he kept on running out of partners before he too was finally removed by Rakibul in the 43rd over after a resilient 90-ball 60. Rakibul finished with impressive figures of five for 19 in 9.3 overs as the unnerved young Tigers outplayed the hosts.

Skipper Akbar Ali had mentioned earlier about their intention to put extra effort on their batting, especially after their poor showing in the last Group Stage match

against Pakistan, where rain had saved the young Tigers' from blunders. Their efforts did pay off as Bangladesh got off to a decent start, courtesy of openers Parvez Hossain and Tanzid Hasan. The duo strung together a 60-run stand before Parvez was dismissed in the 13th over.

Tanzid, who provided a solid start, was dismissed in the 28th over after a solid 84-ball 80, featuring 12 boundaries. After that, it was a magnificent 102-run fourth-wicket stand between Shahadat Hossain and Towhid Hridoy that saw Bangladesh post a daunting total. Shahadat remained unbeaten on a 76-ball 74 while Towhid scored 51 off 73.

Bangladesh will now face New Zealand in a Super League semifinal match on February 6 at the same venue with hopes of making it to their first ever final in the biggest age-level event. Meanwhile, hosts South Africa can now only hope to finish fifth in their own backyard.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 261 for 5 in 50 overs (Tanzid 80, Towhid 51, Shahadat 74 not out, Moletsane 2-41)

SOUTH AFRICA: 147 all out in 42.3 overs (Bird 35, Beaufort 60, Lees 19; Tanzim 2-41, Rakibul 5-19)

Result: Bangladesh U-19s won by 104 runs. **Player-of-the-match:** Rakibul Hasan.

BCL set to get underway from today

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) is set to commence today with the two Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)-run teams North Zone and South Zone locking horns at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram while Walton Central Zone and Islami Bank East Zone are set to face each other at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The BCB had earlier decided to cut the red-ball tournament short this time, running it in a single league format to create a window for the upcoming 2019-2020 Dhaka Premier League.

The only franchise-based first-class tournament of the country was arranged in a hurry this time with the players' draft completed on January 27, four days prior to the start of the tournament. East Zone skipper Mominul Haque reiterated that the BCL matches were good preparation for the Pakistan Tests.

While Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is yet to confirm whether Mominul will captain the side for the upcoming Test in Pakistan, it could be ascertained from the left-handed batsman's



East Zone skipper Mominul Haque (L) and his Central Zone counterpart Najmul Hossain Shanto pose with the trophy ahead of their BCL opening round clash today.

PHOTO: STAR

words that the matter is likely a formality.

"I think playing in the BCL will help us prepare [for Pakistan tour] better. As a captain I will be able to observe how others play, their approach and attitude. It is a very good opportunity.

"I think playing matches is very important. It helps you more than usual practice sessions. If you practice all year but do not play any matches then it won't be useful," said Mominul yesterday.

Mominul, was announced as the stand-in skipper for the Test series in India last year after then Test and T20 skipper Shakib Al Hasan was banned from all forms of cricket by the ICC for two years with one of those suspended.

East Zone will have to play the first round without opener Imrul Kayes, who has been suffering from hamstring injury. The left-hander will be unavailable till mid-February according to BCB chief physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury.

Meanwhile, all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz, playing for Central Zone will also be missing the first round and Debashish mentioned that the all-rounder will be assessed separately on Saturday for his finger injury.



Central Zone pacer Mustafizur Rahman takes a breather yesterday during training, on the eve of their BCL clash against East Zone at the SBNCs in Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR

NZ pace trio ruled out of India ODIs

AFP, Wellington

Struggling New Zealand will have their bowling stocks further tested after their three leading seamers were ruled out from the squad named Thursday for the one-day series against India.

New Zealand's fortunes have plummeted since making the World Cup final last year, losing three Tests against Australia and three Twenty20s against India.

Pace bowlers Trent Boult (broken hand), Lockie Ferguson (calf strain) and Matt Henry (broken thumb), who were all injured in Australia, have not recovered in time for the three ODIs against India which start next week after the final two Twenty20 fixtures.

Kyle Jamieson has been called into the squad for the first time while Scott Kuggeleijn and Hamish Bennett are recalled after last playing ODIs in Ireland in 2017.

Tom Latham, who broke a finger on his right hand in the third Test against Australia, has been cleared to resume playing.

"We've seen from the Twenty20 series (India) are clearly as strong as ever," he said.

Squad: Kane Williamson (capt), Hamish Bennett, Tom Blundell, Colin de Grandhomme, Martin Gupthill, Kyle Jamieson, Scott Kuggeleijn, Tom Latham, Jimmy Neesham, Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor.

Rain frustrates Zim

AFP, Harare



Heavy rain and bad light in the afternoon frustrated Zimbabwe's push to build a match-winning position on the fourth day of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Harare on Thursday.

A downpour mid-afternoon forced the players off the field and, although they returned briefly after tea, only 54 overs were bowled in the day, restricting Zimbabwe to 241 for seven at the close, an overall lead of 354.

The Zimbabwe captain Sean Williams, who made a century in the first innings, was 47 not out when bad light forced the players off and must now decide whether to declare overnight to give his bowlers a full day to try and win the match and square the two-Test series.

Brendan Taylor set the tone for the home side during the morning session when he made his second half-century of the

match. The 33-year-old struck a rapid 67 as the hosts added 117 during an extended morning session.

Lasith Embuldeniya was again the pick of the Sri Lanka bowlers, striking in the third over of the day when Regis Chakabva edged to Dhananjaya de Silva at slip having added just a single to his overnight 14.

Taylor joined Prince Masvaure who was run out for 35 after a needless mix-up over a second run and in spite of a dramatic dive for safety.

Timycen Maruma, who was drafted in as a 'concussion substitute' for Kevin Kasuza who was stretchered off on Wednesday after being hit on the head at short leg, scratched around for 14 balls before being stumped off Embuldeniya for a duck.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Zimbabwe: First innings 406 and second innings 179 for 5 (Taylor 67, Masvaure 35; Embuldeniya 2-57)

Sri Lanka: First innings 293.

Mario quits BD post

SPORTS REPORTER



Mario Villavarayan has tendered his resignation from the role of strength and conditioning coach of the Bangladesh national team, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury confirmed. The Sri Lankan wants to oversee IPL side Sunrisers Hyderabad and thus the BCB will accept his resignation.

Mario had joined the Tigers, along with then head coach Chandika Hathurusingha back in 2014. Although Hathurusingha left to take up the Sri Lanka head coach's job, Mario remained and his contract was extended by two years following the 2019 World Cup.

"He submitted the resignation and in due course we will accept it. He has got an offer from IPL for three years. The BCB does not release member of coaching staff for other domestic competitions. Since we won't release for a tournament, he has tendered his resignation. It's a mutual separation as per our terms of agreement," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star today.

The date of his release is yet to be decided as per the BCB CEO.



Gayle to play in Nepal's Premier League

AGENCIES

Swashbuckling West Indian batsman Chris Gayle will play for Pokhara Rhinos team in Nepal's domestic T20 tournament, 'Everest Premier League', which begins from February 29 in Kathmandu.

The 40-year-old Gayle, who is nicknamed 'Universe Boss' and has now become a freelance T20 player, announced his decision in a twitter message.

"I will be visiting Nepal for the biggest sporting event, the Everest Premier League. Come and support my team Pokhara Rhinos and be part of a magnificent cricket fiesta. Nepal, get ready for the Gayle storm," he said in his inimitable style in a twitter post of the league organisers.

The organisers of the league also confirmed the development in a post on its official twitter.



PHOTO: FTRO AHMED

Bangladesh women's team players take a selfie after their official photo session for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Australia. The Tigresses will depart for cricket's showpiece event on February 2.

'Facilities not the same for women cricketers'

BCB President Nazmul Hassan says

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan said that the board have not been able to provide the same quality of facilities that the men's team were afforded, two days prior to the Tigresses' departure for Australia on Sunday for the 2020 ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

The women's side, who are set to board their flight on Sunday evening, took part in a photo session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

"There are good expectations. While I won't say that the performances have been really good, but it's not bad either. We're Asian champions. We can't deny that the same facilities were not afforded to the women's side that were availed by male

cricketers," Hassan said.

The Tigresses failed to win any games in the last edition of the tournament played in West Indies. This time they have been placed in a strong group alongside Australia, India, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. The president said that more facilities were going to be given to women cricketers while also asserting that recent performances in India, where they clinched the Women's T20 Quadrangular series, should give them confidence.

"I believe our women cricketers will bring more success in the future," he concluded.

Captain Salma Khatun was reserved about the team's chances and said: "We're hoping for good cricket and to win one or two matches at the World Cup."