



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Nazmul Hossain Shanto scored a controlled 71 off 139 balls as the Tigers gave a commanding reply to Zimbabwe on the second day of the one-off Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh reached 240 for three at stumps and trail by 25 runs.

Composed Tigers provide hope

MAZHAR UDDIN

Despite a commanding day with the bat, there will be some disappointment among Bangladesh's batsmen about failing to convert their starts into big knocks on the second day of the one-off Test against Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The hosts are in control, but Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Tamim Iqbal and Saif Hasan were surely scratching their heads after being unable to cash in and score big on a pitch that was batting-friendly for the second consecutive day.

Aside from that blot, the highlight of the Tigers' batting was their sensible approach and ability to keep stay focused for most of their stay at the crease.

Skipper Mominul Haque and Mushfiqur Rahim provided the hope for Bangladesh when they resume the third day.

Bangladesh ended the second day on a 240 for three and are trailing by 25 runs, with Mominul finally returning to form and heading towards a maiden Test hundred as captain. Mushfiqur also looked solid on thirty.

Saif, who started off with a gorgeous straight drive, paid the price for getting caught at the crease and was the only Bangladesh batsman yesterday to be dismissed for a single-digit score.

It seemed that the Tigers were going to replicate their insecure approach instead of

I think bowling-wise, little bit disappointing as we didn't hit the right areas consistently enough. There were little periods when we bowled well but we gave away boundaries and a few too many runs and released the pressure. Tomorrow we would like to rectify and try to break this partnership between Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominul Haque. We know they can both bat a long time and we would like to break that partnership early tomorrow.

CRAIG ERVINE
ZIMBABWE CAPTAIN

covers and down the ground, and the delicate pushes towards gully and point reflected the composed attitude from the Tigers, which will surely instill plenty of confidence to the others in the dressing room.

Nazmul will perhaps be the most disappointed to have missed the opportunity to score big as he has been in terrific touch, coming into the Test on the back of a double hundred in the Bangladesh Cricket League.

The left-hander probably played the only loose shot of the innings and paid the ultimate price. He poked at a Charlton Tshuma delivery that had an extra bit of bounce but was going away, getting an edge to the keeper after scoring a well-made 71.

The 21-year-old admitted that he had missed a chance, saying: "Of course, there was a good chance [to score a century] since the wicket is good. In the end, I am happy with the way I batted. But I should have played a big innings as the wicket was really good to bat on."

Nazmul, who made his Test debut in 2017 and has been in and out across the formats, informed that it was a change in mentality that helped develop his batting.

"I feel the mentality has changed a lot. I used to rush previously, but now I play with patience and I try to remain calm at the start. This innings was composed from the beginning," said Nazmul.

It will be interesting to see how Bangladesh fare over the next few days considering that it will be important for the Tigers to keep their focus sharp and regain lost confidence.

Tigresses unfazed by high-flying India

STAR SPORT DESK



Captain Salma Khatun urged the Tigresses not to dwell on India's stunning opening victory against Australia and instead focus on getting their performance right when they take on their neighbours in Bangladesh's opening match of the Women's T20 World Cup at the WACA today.

India's impressive bowling display lit up the opening match of the tournament in Sydney on Friday and Poonam Yadav playing a starring role under lights with four wickets to halt the defending champions' chase and seal a Group A win

stage for them to show that they can play quality cricket.

"If we can be competitive, aggressive and play without inhibition then we should have moments where we can get ourselves in advantageous positions. If we get our processes right then the result will take care of itself. Fight hard and compete until the very last ball -- that's all I ask of my team."

"We have some of the top teams in the world in our group. But when you come to a tournament like this, you cannot think in terms of good and weak opponents. We won the Asia Cup in 2018 by believing in



We can't be complacent with the victory [against Australia]. We have to let go of those emotions now and focus on repeating all the good things we did. We want to make sure we have enough of a score for our bowlers to defend.

VEDA KRISHNAMURTHY
INDIA ALL-ROUNDER



We're not worried about the result between India and Australia. We're just focused on our ourselves. We've been watching the opening matches of the tournament with interest and we are really excited to get going.

SALMA KHATUN
BANGLADESH CAPTAIN

for her side.

"We're not worried about the result between India and Australia. We're just focused on ourselves. All our girls gave 100 per cent into the warm-up match against Pakistan and we hope to make a positive start to this World Cup," Salma said in the pre-match press conference yesterday.

Cautioning her side, all-rounder Veda Krishnamurthy had said India could not afford to be distracted by the win over Australia and urged them to focus on the task at hand against Bangladesh.

Salma also wrote in an exclusive column on the ICC's website on the eve of the game and said that Bangladesh were excited and looking forward to the event as it is a massive opportunity and a

ourselves against all odds. We need to have the same mentality in the World Cup also," she stated.

"As captain, it is a great honour. I feel very fortunate. The role comes with a lot of responsibility as Bangladesh is a cricket-crazy nation and the people love us and expect good things from us. Now it is all about handling pressure situations and fitness. These are key elements that often decide matches at this level, and they are the differences between the top teams and the rest.

"Sometimes it is not just down to better players, but what people can do with the opportunities they have at any given time. So our goal is to see what we can do against these teams and push ourselves to the next level."

HIGHLIGHTS

- DPL to begin from March 15; players' transfers from March 3-5.
- Clubs will not be able to sign foreign players.
- Player-by-choice system to be replaced with previous players' transfer system.
- T20 league to be played after the Super League with the six sides in the Super League; tournament format yet to be decided.
- The first three-four rounds to be played outside Dhaka.

No foreigners in upcoming DPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Significant changes are to be introduced in the upcoming Dhaka Premier League (DPL), slated to begin from March 15 next month.

The players' transfer will be held from March 3 to March 5 with a Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) desk also to be present in Sylhet to facilitate the signings of national players, CCDM chairman Kazi Inam Ahmed informed during a press conference yesterday. The Tigers will be playing the upcoming ODI series against Zimbabwe in Sylhet and will be there from March 1 to March 6.

The biggest takeaway from the event was the announcement that no foreign players would be included in the upcoming edition of the league. During its glory days, international stars such as Wasim Akram and Sanath Jayasuriya had featured in Bangladesh's premier ODI competition. "It's a great opportunity for our local players. We also don't have international players in the National Cricket League or Bangladesh Cricket League. This year we want to try it out. We arrived at this decision upon discussion with the board and the clubs," Inam said.

For the past two years, a player-by-choice

system for signings was adopted for the DPL but following the players' strike last year, the system will revert to open-market players' transfers. The players' pool will also not be present, with clubs free to sign players through direct signings.

The DPL T20 league, arranged in two separate phases last year, will be held after the DPL Super League this year with six Super League teams.

"The T20 tournament will be played with the six Super League teams. We have introduced it so that each club can play five T20s and gather T20 experience.

"The top six sides can pick three players from the sides that did not make it to the Super League if they require. We will fix the scheduling of the matches prior to the tournament and share it with the clubs," Inam informed.

The first three or four rounds of the tournament will not be played in Dhaka or the BKSP, with Cox's Bazar and Chattogram likely venues. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will finance costs for travel and other costs related to clubs playing outside Dhaka.

"The Dhaka and BKSP pitches have been used a lot and if a month's break is not given, we will not get quality wickets there," Inam said, also reiterating that the board aspired to maintain the umpiring levels of the last two years.

South trending upwards

SPORTS REPORTER

Veteran left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak took two quick wickets following Forhad Reza's unbeaten hundred as South Zone tightened their grip on the five-day Bangladesh Cricket League final after the second day's play against East Zone in Chattogram yesterday.

Resuming the day on 305 for six, South Zone's first innings ended on 486 thanks to Forhad, who hit an unbeaten 186-ball 103 with ten fours and five sixes. In reply, Pinak Ghosh and Mohammad Ashrafual made a confident start for East but both were dismissed in the span of three overs and that put their team in a spot of bother. Razzak broke the 63-run opening partnership by removing Ashrafual for 28 and then picked up the wicket of Pinak,

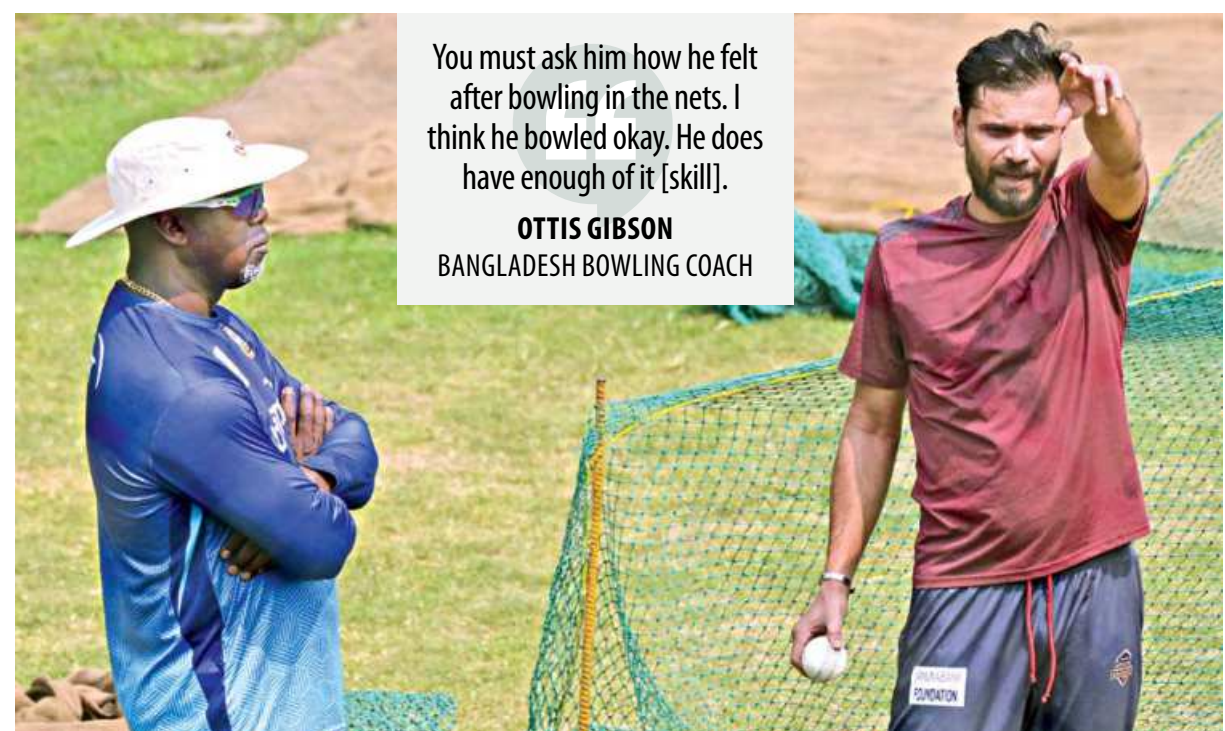
who scored a 67-ball 38.

Mahmudul Hasan and captain Imrul Kayes tried to steady the ship but pacer Shaiful Islam removed Kayes for 22 to put South in a strong position at stumps, with East reeling at 110 for three. Hasan remained not out on 21 while Afif Hossain, who got a maiden call-up to the ODI squad yesterday for the first two matches of the three-match series against visiting Zimbabwe, accompanied him with naught.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH ZONE: First innings 486 all out (Fazle 86, Anamul 76, Shamsur 79, Reza 103 not out, Shaiful 30; Ruyel 2-86, Saqlain 2-78, Ashrafual 2-13)

EAST ZONE: First innings 110 for 3 (Pinak 38, Mahmudul 21 not out; Razzak 2-34)



Bangladesh bowling coach Ottis Gibson (L) watches as ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza trains yesterday, ahead of the first of a three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe, starting March 1.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Changes galore for Zim ODIs

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) named uncapped ODI players Afif Hossain and Naim Sheikh in the squad the first two ODIs against Zimbabwe while skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza returned to lead the side after missing the last ODI series against Sri Lanka due to injury.

There were changes galore to the side that played in Bangladesh's last ODI series, with seven players dropped from the 16-member squad that was named for the Sri Lanka ODIs in July, 2019. But although there might appear to be big changes, some players were not in serious contention for a place in the side.

Soumya Sarkar, who had hit a fifty in Bangladesh's last ODI in Sri Lanka, was one of the notable omissions in the squad. Shaiful Islam retained his place in the side but pacers Rubel Hossain and Taskin Ahmed were excluded after Mashrafe and Mohammad Saifuddin returned,

SQUAD

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (Capt), Tamim Iqbal, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Mahmudulhaq Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Mithun, Liton Das, Taijul Islam, Afif Hossain, Naim Sheikh, Al-Amin Hossain, Mohammad Saifuddin, Shaiful Islam, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Mustafizur Rahman.

In: Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mohammad Saifuddin, Liton Das, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Afif Hossain, Naim Sheikh, Al-Amin Hossain.

Out: Anamul Haque, Sabbir Rahman, Soumya Sarkar, Rubel Hossain, Mosaddek Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Farhad Reza.

batsman Sabbir Rahman and all-rounder Farhad Reza were left out. Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Taijul Islam were retained.

"We had to make certain adjustments to the last ODI series we had played in as a number of cricketers were unavailable due to various reasons, but I am happy that we now have a fit pool of players to select from," chief selector Minhajul Abedin was quoted as saying in a BCB press release. "[Nazmul Hossain] Shanto's current form in international and domestic cricket gets him into the team while Naim and Afif are also part of our long-term plan for the shorter version."

Nazmul makes a return to the ODI side, having last played back in 2018 during the Asia Cup, while opener Naim had played well in his T20I debut series against India. Afif had left good impressions on debut during the tri-nation T20I series against Zimbabwe and Afghanistan last year at home.

The first ODI is on March 3, while the second is on March 5.