

Tourists in the driving seat

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan Academy consolidated their position in the second and final four-day match against their Bangladesh counterparts with brilliant batting yesterday.

Five batsmen reached the half-century mark as the visitors, having restricted Bangladesh Cricket Academy to 243 on the opening day, rattled 401 for six in their first innings at sums on second day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Khurram Manzoor (64 off 100 balls) and Babar Nayeem (57 off 68 balls), who resumed on overnight 82-0, added further 20 runs in the morning before the opening partnership was broken by Mosharrif Hossain, the left-arm spinner who was the peak of the local attack with 3-101.

Naeem, who smashed nine fours and a pair of sixes, was the first man out but his departure made little impact as Shahid Yusuf (73 off 168 balls) and skipper Fawad Alam (82 off 169 balls) shared another century-stand. With a flurry of boundaries, the two took the total beyond the 300-mark after coming together at 189-3.

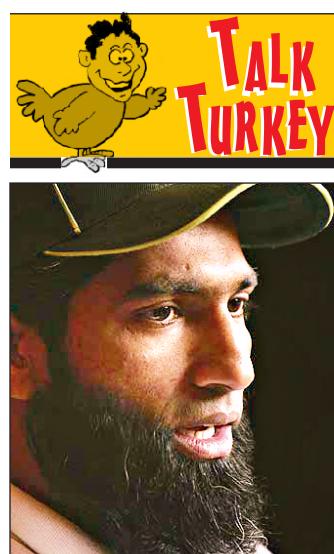
Number six Adnan Raza, the other batsman to score a fifty, was battoning on 51 with Sarfraz Ahmed (2) accompanying him.

Off-spinner Mahmudullah Riyad chipped in with a couple of wickets for the hosts, who lead the series 1-0.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh Academy first innings: 243.

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Mohammad Yousuf
(Star Pakistan batsman)
"I don't see any kind of pressure in the job. I think I'm a worthy candidate as in the last year I have really proven myself. It has always been an honour to represent Pakistan and it would be a real pleasure to lead the team at this difficult time." While expressing his desire to become the Pakistan captain.

What to WATCH

BTV & SET Max
ICC World Cup 2007
(Super Eights)
South Africa v England
Live at 7:30 pm
ESPN

English Premier Football League
Arsenal v Man City
Live at 12:30 am (Wednesday)
STAR Sports
English Premier Football League
Man United v Sheffield United
Live at 12:55 am (Wednesday)



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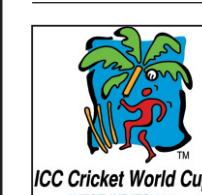


Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar loses his castle to counterpart Trent Johnston as Ireland win by 74 runs in their World Cup Super Eights clash at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Dare predict on the Tigers

BISHWAJIT ROY



Is it risky to predict anything about Bangladesh cricket team? The answer is definitely in the affirmative, especially after the heartbreaking show?

And last but not the least, whether they have set any standard as a team in the competition?

Fans hardly took to heart the huge defeats to giants like Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand after their great five-wicket triumph against India before pulling off another remarkable 67-run success against the Proteas, but it was hard to accept the loss against the Irish, which virtually soiled their glorious success.

The word 'inconsistency' may not be just good enough to ease the pain.

A good team may rise and fall in batting and bowling but how one can accept inconsistency in their fielding efforts? The reality is Bangladesh fielding was only good on a day when all other departments clicked simultaneously.

Despite having a high profile coach, who is assisted by a specialist fielding trainer, Bangladesh have hardly proved as a steady fielding side like Sri Lanka used to be when they were moulded as a team.

If left-arm paceman Syed Rasel's last moment injury was a setback against Ireland, who stunned Pakistan to make a second round berth but still failed to impress in the Super Eights, then sluggish ground fielding was one of the main reasons behind the upset.

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Bashar rues Rasel loss

AFP, Bridgetown



Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar has said his team would like to cap their roller-coaster World Cup campaign with an impressive performance.

Bangladesh suffered a setback when they lost their Super Eights match by 74 runs against non-Test-playing nation Ireland at the Kensington Oval here on Sunday, their fourth defeat in five games in the second round.

"Our last game is coming up against the West Indies and we hope we do well in that and go home with

some credit," said Bashar, whose side take on the hosts in their final match here on Thursday.

"We don't want to be number eight. We want to be number six or seven. We have one game left and still believe we are not as bad as we played today (Sunday)."

Bangladesh are currently occupying the eighth and last position in the Super Eights table with two points from six matches.

Inconsistency has been the problem for Bangladesh, who posted surprise victories over India and South Africa before floundering against the Cup debutants.

"One day we look brilliant, the next day we are ordinary. We should be more consistent. We beat two top teams and then came to a game we should have won, but lost," said the Bangladesh captain.

Bangladesh suffered a blow

even before the first ball had been bowled against Ireland as they lost in-form seamer Syed Rasel to an ankle injury in the warm-up.

"Rasel's loss was a big one because he has been bowling well in the tournament," Bashar said.

Ireland posted a challenging 243-7 after electing to bat and then restricted Bangladesh to 169.

Trent Johnston's Irishmen shocked Pakistan in a group game in Jamaica last month, a victory that eventually knocked the former champions out of the tournament.

"We were pretty ordinary in the field today (Sunday) and I think we deserved to lose. I know we lost the toss, but we'd have bowled first anyway. We had the early advantage, but did not use it," said Bashar.

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Windies do not matter: Dehring

AFP, Kingston

World Cup organisers insisted on Sunday that the West Indies' virtual failure to reach the World Cup semifinals will not lead to the matches being played out to empty stadia.

Sabina Park here will stage the first semifinal on April 24 with the second semifinal at Beausejour in St Lucia on April 25.

"A high percentage in the number of tickets for the semifinals have been sold," World Cup chief executive Chris Dehring told the Sunday Observer.

"You're always going to have fans who have tickets with the hope of supporting their team, but will always be anxious to be there and

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A day to forget

TIGERCRICKET.COM, Bridgetown



Before the toss, left-arm paceman Syed Rasel back-tracked on to the boundary rope to take a catch while warming up

and sprained his right ankle and had to be replaced in the starting eleven. The match was in its early stages and Mohammad Ashraful dived to stop a ball and in the process hurt a finger and could not field again. Then there were catches and run outs missed as Ireland rode on luck and grit to post 243-8 and then went on to win their World Cup Super Eights match by 74 runs on Sunday.

Bangladesh's chase never took

off. Shahriar Nafees remained off form and was out pulling a short of length delivery from the towering Boyd Rankin to the keeper's gloves. Aftab Ahmed got a poor decision from umpire Billy Bowden who gave the batsman caught behind to Andre Botha although the ball never touched the bat. Shakib Al Hasan was run out for no fault of his own at the non-striker's end after Tamim Iqbal's sweetly timed drive was deflected on to the stumps by Botha. It was that kind of a day for the Tigers.

Mohammad Ashraful was by far the best Bangladesh batsman on show and top-scored with 35, never looking in any trouble but he was pulling to fine leg. Tamim again did all the hard work and then again threw it all away after reaching 29

when he was bowled by Trent Johnston attempting a nothing shot by making room on the leg side. Johnston followed Tamim who chopped it in to the stumps (93-4). This was the last ball of the powerplay overs and Tamim had just put 45 runs with Ashraful.

The top order is gone and it was left to skipper Habibul Bashar to salvage something. He made 32 and was the last man out as Bangladesh folded for 169 in 41.2 overs.

"This is one of the most frustrating days as a cricketer for me. The way we played, we deserved to lose," said Bashar.

"It was one of days when nothing went right. Rasel injured his

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Last year's champion Enamul Hossain Rajib finished runner-up in the Mercantile Bank 33rd National Chess Championship when the International Master defeated Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman 1.5-0.5 in yesterday's play-off match at the NSC chess hall-room.

GM Niaz Mosharud beat FM Taibur Rahman in the 6-7th place play-off while FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed got the better of Mohammed Javed for the 10-11th place.

The tournament proper ended on Sunday with IM Abdullah Al Rakib clinching the championship. The prize distribution ceremony will be held today at the same venue.

KAI-ALTECH CRICKET
Orient Sporting Club handed a 74-run defeat to Rupali Bank in the concluding match of the season's Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium. In a match which only had academic interest, the bankers were all out for 189 in reply to Orient's 263-4 built around half-centuries by Mintu (90) and Masum (76). The race was decided on Sunday with BKSP emerging champions and Surjo Torun runners-up.

In second division, Farashganj SC (217) beat Al Rashid CC (203) by 14 runs while Mirpur CC (193) inflicted a 46-run defeat on

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BANGLADESH V IRELAND SCORECARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eights match between Bangladesh and Ireland at Kensington Oval in Barbados on Sunday:

IRELAND	R	M	B	4s	6s
Porterfield c Rafique b Mortaza	85	175	136	3	0
Bray run out	31	111	70	1	0
Morgan run out	5	7	9	1	0
N O'Brien c Iqbal b Shakib	10	21	14	0	0
K O'Brien run out	48	58	44	2	2
Johnston c Nafees b Mortaza	30	38	23	2	1
White run out	4	6	4	0	0
Langford-Smith not out	6	7	4	1	0
Botha not out	1	2	1	0	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-11, w-6, nb-5)	23				
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs)	243				
Did not bat: McCallan, Rankin.					

Fall of wickets: 1-92, 2-101, 3-128, 4-176, 5-215, 6-233, 7-237.

Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	10	1	38	2	nb-3
Shahadat Hossain	9	1	51	0	nb-2, w-1
Abdur Razzaq	9	0	48	0	w-2
Mohammad Rafique	10	0	42	0	w-2
Shakib Al Hasan	10	0	44	1	-

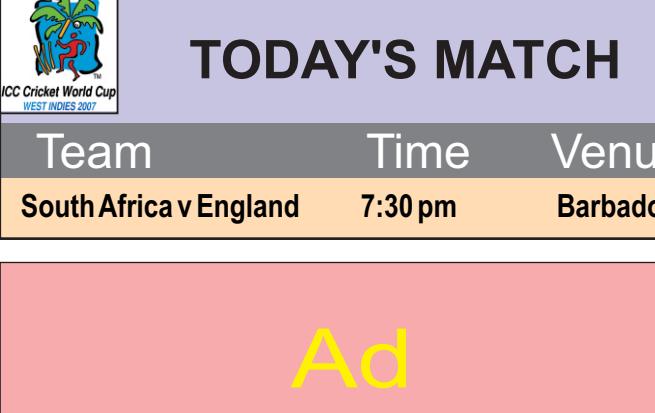
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TODAY'S MATCH

Team Time Venue

South Africa v England 7:30 pm Barbados

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