

A unique century

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Shakib Al Hasan's century yesterday would remain a landmark for two reasons, one overriding the other. It was the 10th one-day international century for Bangladesh, but more importantly it was the only hundred that was scored in the midst of a shabby batting display; when everything for the Tigers was lost.

Bangladesh had won the toss and decided to bat on a flat deck with the sun beating down on it. As usual, the top-order let go of the advantage and Bangladesh lost their footing on the match.

But the left-handed batsman watching the catastrophe unfold from the other end did not let go of his instincts, fortunately.

Shakib opened his repertoire of shots with a rasping square-cut off Umar Gul and followed it up with a miscued hook two balls later, his only aerial shot of the 120 balls he faced. Shakib's handling of Gul and Mohammad Asif was remarkable as the Tigers top-order were terrorised by the two.

With Bangladesh slipping to 49-5, Shakib found little strike but whenever he did, Shakib's strokes hinted a continuation of his beautiful 75 played in Lahore three days ago.

By the time Bangladesh's ninth wicket partnership 'expert' came to bat, Shakib had reached his half-century off 64 balls. Everyone thought that it would be yet another customary Bangladesh innings with one man scoring a 50

and the rest doing nothing.

Maybe Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's aggression rubs off on people or it was Shakib simply greeting his friend from Narail, but the cracking pull off Gul was audacious.

Shakib could not have asked for a better batting partner than Mashrafe but with two wickets left he must have wondered how far he would go. But the man who makes it a habit of adding valuable runs coming lower down the order made sure his younger Khulna teammate got a big one.

The southpaw swept Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik in front of midwicket to move to 96 and off his 115th ball, Shakib landed his second hundred at the highest level of the game.

Mashrafe fell for 38 off 67 balls, with just one boundary. And if ever there was a vice-captain's knock, this was it. The two Khulna boys added 97 for the ninth wicket, beating the 62-run stand between Khaled Mashud and Mohammad Rafique made in 2005. Shakib was last man out for the Tigers, scoring 108 off 120 balls with a solid strike rate of 90 and blazed eight boundaries. He scored more than half of Bangladesh's 210 made in 49.1 overs.

If one looks at the previous nine hundreds, Shakib's knock will be compared with Mohammad Ashraful's 100 against Australia in 2005 in terms of class but Shakib made most of his runs with the tail.

A hundred is a hundred and it would be unfair to degrade the others but Shakib's could be an inspiration for his teammates and last of all, it is groundbreaking.



A SIGNATURE PERFORMANCE: Bangladesh middle-order batsman Shakib Al Hasan pulls one down to the mid-wicket boundary during his sublime knock of 108 in the fourth one-day international against Pakistan in Multan yesterday.

HIGHEST 9TH WICKET PARTNERSHIP

Partners	Runs	Opposition	Ground	Year
Mashrafe-Shakib	97	Pakistan	Multan	2008
Mashud-Rafique	62*	West Indies	Kingstown	2004
Razzak-Mashrafe	51*	Kenya	Nairobi	2006
Mashrafe-Mushfiq	48	India	Dhaka	2004
Hasibul-Mashud	44	India	Mumbai	1998

NCA suffer 9-wkt loss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Grameenphone Academy Cup Mohammad Aamer ripped through the batting line-up of GP-BCB National Cricket Academy yesterday to give Pakistan Cricket Academy a thumping nine-wicket win at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

Left-arm paceman Aamer picked up four wickets conceding just 21 runs to restrict the home team to a meagre score of 177. The visitors reached the target comfortably with nearly 12 overs to spare. Opener Khurram Manzoor and one-down Khalid Latif built a superb 136-run second wicket partnership to seal the match.

The duo remained unbeaten on 68 (off 116 balls) and 84 (off 89 balls) respectively. Manzoor hit nine boundaries in his 166-minute

stay while Latif smashed a dozen fours and three sixes in his 117-minute stay.

Unlike the first match against South Africans on Tuesday, everything on the field didn't click for Bangladesh, excepting the toss, yesterday. They lost four of their batsmen even before the score was 50.

Nasir Hossain, who scored 52 in previous match, made team-high 36 this time around. Suhawardi Shuvo (26), Delwar Hossain (26) and Nazmul Hossain (28) did some face-lifting works to give the tally a sober look.

The home team no doubt missed the services of previous match's centurion Imrul Kayes, who couldn't play due to an injury.

BRIEF SCORES
GP-BCB ACADEMY: 177 all out in

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Pakistan Academy pace bowler Mohammad Aamer appeals for a leg before decision during his side's opening match of the tri-nation one-day tournament against Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

CCDM clears other 'match'

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) found nothing wrong in the proceedings of the Premier Division Cricket League match between Old DOHS and Partex Sporting Club.

Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, chairman of CCDM, yesterday said after a hearing that they didn't find anything about match-fixing in the reports of the match referee, one on-field umpire and the third umpire.

"There were some observations on the last five overs but we didn't get anything from match referee and one on-field umpire. The third umpire only questioned a catch, nothing else. So you can say that the match is in the clear," said Lipu.

Earlier, CCDM had cleared Surjo Torun and Sonargaon from match-fixing charges on Sunday.

The hearing was convened not on the match referee's report rather the CCDM itself took the initiative following whispers of alleged match-fixing in the matches concerned.

Krishna treble sink Mariners

SPORTS REPORTER

Krishna Kumar hit a hat-trick to give Sonali Bank a thumping 7-0 victory over Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club in the Brac Bank Club Cup hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first-half 3-0.

Iqbal Nader opened the goalgate in the 16th minute with a field goal while Sheikh Mohammad Nannu doubled the margin through another field goal ten minutes later.

After that it was the turn of Krishna who scored his first goal in the 28th minute and completed the first hat-trick of the competition by scoring two more goals after the breather in the 44th and 50th minutes.

Krishna added one more in the 52nd minute to give his team a lead of 6-0.

Ashraful Islam sealed the one-sided affair by converting a penalty corner in the 58th minute.

Ajax Sporting Club take on Bangladesh Sporting Club in today's first match at 2.30 pm while Usha Kriha Chakra meet Wari Club at 4 pm.

Rain keeps it 2-0

Cricket

AFP, Gros Islet

West Indies won the three-match one-day international series with Sri Lanka 2-0 after rain washed out the final match at the Beausejour Stadium here Tuesday.

This decider promised much but delivered a no-result when rain forced an abandonment of the third and final ODI under lights.

In pursuit of a challenging total of 258 for victory in their allocation of 50 overs, West Indies had reached 81 for two from 18.2 overs when the rain swept across the ground.

Though the ground-staff worked tirelessly to conduct mopping-up operations, too much damage had been done from the persistent showers, and the umpires abandoned any ideas of resuming about an hour before the scheduled close.

Left-handed opener Seunarine Chattergeon had given West Indies early hope.

He scored 46 from 53 balls before he was caught behind in the ninth over, but the match was hanging in the balance, when the rain arrived.

The outcome left West Indies as victors after they won the opening ODI last Thursday at Queen's Park Oval by one wicket, and the rain-affected second ODI on Saturday at

the same venue by seven wickets under the Duckworth-Lewis Method.

Earlier, half-centuries from Mahela Udawatte and Tillakaratne Dilshan typified consistent Sri Lanka batting down the order and helped them reach 257 for eight from their allocation of 50 overs.

Udawatte hit five fours and one six in the top score of 73 from 122 balls, and Dilshan struck three fours and one six in 64 from 54 balls, after Sri Lanka were sent in to bat on a hard, easy-paced Beausejour Stadium pitch.

The visitors slumped to 44 for three inside the first 15 overs, when Kumar Sangakkara was caught at cover for one off Daren Powell in the second over, Mahela Jayawardene was caught at short fine leg for 17 off Dwayne Bravo in the 11th over, and Chamara Silva was caught behind off Powell for six in the 12th over.

But Udawatte and Dilshan propped up the Sri Lankans with controlled batting, and formed strategic alliances with Chamara Kapugedera and Kaushalya Weeraratne.

In the middle overs, Udawatte added 84 for the fourth wicket with Kapugedera, who got 40 from 52 balls, and in the closing stages, Dilshan put on 79 for the sixth wicket with Weeraratne, who gathered 41 from 33 balls, before they were two of three wickets that fell

for six runs inside the last two overs.

West Indies captain Chris Gayle finished with the best figures of two wickets for 41 runs from 10 overs, Daren Powell took two for 50 from 10 overs, and Dwayne Bravo snared two for 67 from 10 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the third and final One-Day International between West Indies and Sri Lanka at the Beausejour Stadium in St. Lucia after match abandoned due to rain on Tuesday:

SRI LANKA				
Sangakkara c Samy b Powell	1			
Udawatte st Ramdin b Gayle	73			
Jayawardene c Powell b Bravo	17			
Silva c wkpr Ramdin b Powell	6			
Kapugedera c and b Gayle	40			
Dilshan c Pollard b Bravo	64			
Weeraratne b Taylor	41			
Vaas not out	2			
Thushara run out (Taylor)	0			
Extras: (lb-6, w-6, nb-1)	13			
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs)	257			
Did not bat: Kulasekera, Mendis.				
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-37, 3-44, 4-128, 5-172, 6-251, 7-257, 8-257.				
Bowler				
Taylor	10	1	52	1
Powell	10	0	50	2
Bravo	10	0	67	2
Sammy	10	0	41	0
Gayle	10	0	41	2

WEST INDIES
Chattergeon c Sangakkara b Vaas 46
Morton c Sangakkara b Thushara 17
Sarwan not out 13

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Rajani still undecided

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajani Kanta Barman will decide tomorrow whether he will join the national camp at BKSP or not.

The experienced defender left the camp, which has been arranged on the eve of next month's AFC Challenge Cup and SAF Football in June, last Sunday after he had a bad experience while seeking treatment for his injured calf-muscle.

"I am yet to change my mind because it is very hard to accept such behaviour from a responsible person after playing more than a decade for the country. The federation officials asked me to meet them tomorrow and only after that I can say whether I will rejoin the camp or not," he said.

The former national captain alleged that the director general of BKSP treated him harshly after he went for therapy as there was no professional physiotherapist in the national side.

Kumble could miss opener

PTI, Bangalore

Indian Test skipper Anil Kumble may miss the inaugural match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) for his team, the Bangalore Royal Challengers, as he has still not recovered from his groin injury.

"He (injured Kumble) probably might miss the first game definitely," Royal Challengers' skipper Rahul Dravid said, adding, another team member, Nathan Bracken would be able to join the squad only in the first week of May.

Given the Twenty20 format, Dravid said the tournament was "very, very competitive" and therefore there were no favourites.

"I think there is no clear favourite in the tournament," he said.

On his comment made in Chennai over auctioning in team selection for IPL, Dravid said it was an "off the cuff" remark that was taken out of context, and then went on to support the IPL concept.

"It's a great opportunity for domestic cricketers," he said. "It's a domestic tournament with international flavour".

The team's manager, Martin Crowe, said the T20 format would "speed up" the one-day games and test matches. This format is now "sitting along side" the other two versions "comfortably", he said.



Did U Know?

American Don Schollander was the first person to break two minutes in the 200m freestyle in 1963 with a 1:58.4.



Wasim Akram

(Pakistan cricket legend)

"I fear the IPL can be a serious distraction and destruction if the International Cricket Council doesn't intervene because it involves huge money and players are ready to abandon international cricket."



ESPN

Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
English Premiership
Everton v Chelsea
Live from 12:55am (Friday)



Australia captain Ricky Ponting licks his lips during an International Cricket Council (ICC) press conference in Mumbai yesterday. Ponting accepted a cash award on behalf of the Australian team who retained the top Test side status in the ICC Test championship for the fourth time in a row.