

It's Razzak-Shakib show

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers shrugged off the pressure to square the five-match series in style as Shakib Al Hasan slammed his fourth hundred after Abdur Razzak's career best bowling to secure an emphatic seven-wicket victory in the second day-night one-dayer at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

As promised Shakib Al Hasan's men returned to their best against their Southern African opponents after a shocking five-wicket defeat in the first match at the same venue and reestablished the favourite tag in front of cheering crowd at the big bowl.

Razzak's 5-29, the left-arm spinner's second five-for in his 86th appearance, restricted Zimbabwe to 219 in 47.2 overs. Shakib then toyed with the opponent bowlers during his aggressive knock of 105 not out that also brought up his 2000th run in 72 matches.

During his unbeaten 69-ball 105 the left-hander smashed 14 boundaries and three sixes as Bangladesh cruised to 221 for 3 in 29.3 overs.

Bangladesh captain reached the three digit figure in magnificent style when he squeezed as wide ball from Justice Chibhabha down to third man after he had brutally punished the same bowler in the previous over by hitting two fours and a six to make sure he got his fourth hundred.

Earlier two southpaw openers Tamim Iqbal and Zunaed Siddiqui set the tune for the chase.

The left-handers went for kill against the new ball bowlers, who gave them a lot of trouble in the first game, as the pair added 44 runs in 3.5 overs before the latter offered a return catch to first match hero Elton Chigumbura.

Then the hosts got a light jolt as a result of unnecessary tendency of playing too many shots. Tamim (26) and Mohammad Ashraful (3) paid the prices for that to bring trouble for the team, who were one down in the five-match after losing the first game by five wickets.

At 3 for 53, the responsibility rested on the shoulder of captain Shakib Al Hasan, who recovered from his early edginess to settle he



Bangladesh left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak (C) is ecstatic after having dismissed Zimbabwe batsman Brendan Taylor (L) with a gem of delivery that pitched on the leg stump and turned that much only to dislodge the bail on off stump during the second one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Razzak finished with five for 29.

PHOTO: STAR

team along with the steady Rokibul Hasan, who played a responsible innings of 39 from 75 deliveries, to safety.

Zimbabwe, for the second successive occasion rightly tossed the coin but this time they decided to bat first as the grass was removed to offer a dry surface for the batters. And it was a perfect start for the visitors to enhance the pressure on the home team.

Stand-in skipper Hamilton Masakadza and Justice Chibhabha made full use of the poor new ball operations of Dollar Mahmud and Nazmul Hossain, who replaced Rubel Hossain in the second game, to make sure that the Tigers chase a fighting target under lights. But the scenario was changed once the local side brought their main weapon spinner to the attack and it's made an immediate effect as the two openers suddenly looked clumsy. And it was off-spinner Nayeem Islam who gave the much-needed breakthrough by trapping Masakadza, who scored 34 off 31 balls with five fours and a six, in front to put an end to the 59-run opening stand. Nayeem was however lucky as umpire Enamul Haque responded to his loud appeal though the ball stroked the pad outside the line.

Brendan Taylor joined Chibhabha to revamp the innings but captain Shakib made a timely change bringing in part-time spinner Mohammad Ashraful to break the partnership. Chibhabha (39) was beaten by a straight delivery and dragged his feet from the crease and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim made no mistake to nail the bails.

And the rest job was done by Abdur Razzak who started the carnage by removing Taylor for 21 runs. It was a lovely delivery from the experienced bowler as the ball pitched on the leg stump and knocked the top of off stump and Taylor did not play for the turn and got beaten.

In the same over he got his second success Charles Coventry edged a delivery pitched on the stump and spun across to reach Zunaed Siddiqui at first slip.

Another good partnership between Tatenda Taibu and Stuart Matsikenyeri however was

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U-19s take series

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19 cricket team took a winning 4-0 lead against their England counterparts when they recorded a four-wicket victory in the fourth game of the seven-match series at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah yesterday.

As has been the case in the series so far, the local boys dominated their English opponents in every department of the game and bowled out the tourists for 151 in 44.4 overs after losing the toss.

English skipper Azeem Rafiq's decision to bat first was proved wrong very early as both their openers were sent back to pavilion with the scoreboard reading two for two, both falling to right-arm pacer Abul Hassan. They kept losing wickets in braces and it was only for a half-century from Joe Root and a 41-run knock from number nine batsman Danny Briggs that they managed to cross the 150-run mark.

Left-arm spinner Shaker Ahmed took 3 wickets for 26 runs. All-rounder Shaikat Ali was the star as he bowled an outstanding spell of ten overs taking 2 wickets and conceding only 17 runs.

Shaikat later had his time with the bat as well as he scored 46 runs off 53 balls, with six boundaries and two sixes, to lay the foundation for an easy chase. Right-hand batsman Tasamul Haque finished things up with an unbeaten 50 off 87 balls with more than 15 overs to spare.

The fifth match of the series will be held at the same venue tomorrow.

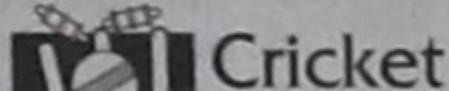
This one-day series victory adds to their single-Test victory over these opposition. They had also won their away one-day series 2-1 in July.



Citycell Bangladesh League
Feni Soccer Club v Abahani (4:30pm)
Venue: Feni Stadium
Shukhtara v Mohammedan (4:30pm)
Venue: Narayanganj Stadium
Premier Div Cricket League
Gazi Tank v Old DOHS
Venue: BKSP-2
Biman v BKSP
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Paritex v Cricket Coaching School
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium

Premier Division on

Easy wins for Abahani, Mohammedan & Surjo Torun



SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier Division Cricket League started yesterday with defending champions Abahani, title-contenders Mohammedan and dark-horse Surjo Torun recording convincing victories on the opening day.

Mohammedan staged a comfortable victory against Victoria at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, thanks to an all-round performance by Marshal Ayub. Mohammedan opted to field first and soon reduced the opponents to 20 for three within the first five overs.

Victoria recovered somewhat from that position, thanks to a few mediocre contributions from their middle-order batsmen. Arafat Salahuddin top-scored for Victoria with 49. Ayub got rid of the last three wickets in quick time to skittle Victoria for 191 in 47 overs. His spin partner Nabil Samad also chipped in with

three important wickets.

Ayub then played out an unbeaten knock of 71, partnering with Aftab Ahmed who scored 53, to see his side home, scripting a five-wicket win with 8.5 overs to spare.

Mohammedan's bitter rivals and defending champions Abahani who come in to the league on the back of the T20 triumph, hardly had to break a sweat as they swept past Kalabagan by eight wickets at BKSP.

Winning the toss, Abahani sent Kalabagan in to bat and got them out for just 110 in 39.5 overs. Their two fast bowlers, Shubhashis Roy and Rabiul Islam utilised the conditions to good effect, bagging four wickets each, while Zubaer Ahmed played a lone hand for the hapless Kalabagan with his knock of 57 in 99 deliveries.

Abahani batters romped past the meagre total in 20.5 overs, losing only two wickets in the process. Opener Rony Talukder stayed unbeaten on 66 to ensure the comfortable victory.

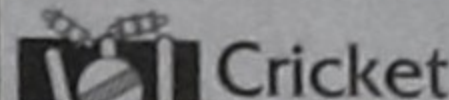
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Former Bangladesh opener and ex-national selector Dr. Asaduzzaman Misha getting introduced to players of Mohammedan and Victoria at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium before the opening of the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League 2009-10.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Wright in NZ frame



Martin Snedden, the former New Zealand Cricket chief executive, believes John Wright must be installed as the team's coach following the removal of Andy Moles. Wright, the country's high-performance manager, has been mentioned whenever the side has had a vacancy at the top, but has never done the job.

"I'm going to put my hand up and say John Wright's time is now, he would be great," Snedden told the Dominion Post. "Right at the heart of this is John Wright has the know-how. So much of what he brings is required. The skill of batting, the passion, he was so nationalistic as a player, we need that right now."

The options for New Zealand have been reduced after the Australians Tom Moody and Greg Shipperd said they were not available. Stephen Fleming, the former captain, has also

ruled himself out. However, Steve Rixon, who has held the post before, is interested in a reunion.

"The timing is quite good," he said. "I think that the job that needs to be done is very similar to the job that had to be done in 1997 and the challenge is appealing. They need to get back to simple basics, be more disciplined and possibly look at the make-up of the side."

Wright spent four years with India and has been the high-performance manager for two years without showing the necessary interest in another full-time international role. "There is talk of perceived shortcomings -- if that's the case you cope with that," Snedden said. "It is far better to have a coach with John Wright's skills and know-how than someone else who might have that (an ability to organise) and very little else."

"Currently our batting is a problem. We have the raw talent with guys like Ross Taylor, Jesse Ryder and Tim McIntosh, but they are still to learn the skills how to survive. John has all of that knowledge and the desperation."

Arambagh start with a bang

SPORTS REPORTER

Arambagh Krira Sangshad got their campaign off to a flying start as they emerged as the big winners in their opening match of the Bangladesh League yesterday hammering Chittagong Mohammedan by 6-1 at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

After a disappointing show in the curtain-raising tournament of the Federation Cup, where they exited in the first round, the boys of Wazed Gazi finally came to the party with a fine display of attacking football.

Striker Nicodemus was the star of the show as he bagged a hat-trick, while ex-national striker Alfaz bagged a late brace to add gloss to the scoreline. Dominic grabbed the other for the winners. Chittagong Mohammedan's only reply was a 67th minute penalty converted by Farhad.

In the day's other match Farashganj SC and Chittagong Abahani fought out a dull goalless draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Pollard to play for Redbacks

AFP, Sydney

Explosive West Indian all-rounder Kieron Pollard has signed for South Australia to play in their Twenty20 "Big Bash" campaign in December-January, team officials said on Thursday.

Pollard, 22, joins Pakistani all-rounder Shahid Afridi in the Redbacks' ranks for the series of matches against the other Australian state sides.

The towering Pollard is a big-hitting right-hander who also bowls medium pace and was impressive in the recent Twenty20 Champions League for Trinidad and Tobago in India.

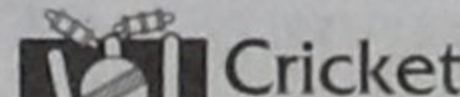
He was largely responsible for Trinidad and Tobago's preliminary match victory over the New South Wales Blues with 54 runs off 18 deliveries.

Pollard clubbed 14 sixes overall in the competition and has an impressive Twenty20 strike rate of 143.

"We have been talking with Pollard for a while, even before his match-winning efforts in the Champions League, and we were thrilled to secure his signature," South Australia Cricket Association high performance manager Jamie Cox said.

"The addition of both SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Afridi ready to step down



ANI, Karachi

The captain of Pakistan's T20 squad, Shahid Afridi, has said he is willing to step down from his post if Younus Khan decides to come out of retirement in the bang-bang version of the game.

Afridi said he would be pleased to have Khan, who is the captain of the one-day and Test squads, back in the T20 team ahead of the next year's ICC T20 World Cup.

"If Younus wants to play (T20) he is more than welcome. I will even step down from the captaincy and play under him," The News quoted Afridi, as saying.

He rebuked reports regarding him having differences with Khan, but pointed out that some of his teammates had some issues with the skipper.

"The players informed me about their problems. I told them it was better if they directly communicate their problems to Younus, an idea that they didn't like. The problem with our players is they don't speak their heart out and that's where the communication gap comes in," said the flamboyant all-rounder.

Earlier, Khan had given a hint that he may come out of retirement, four months after quitting the shortest version of the game after leading his side to win the coveted ICC World T20 Championship in England.

"Yes, I have given it some thought," Khan said.

Khan said he considered himself 'too old' for the fast-paced format of the game, however, if his teammates and his fans want, he is ready for another stint.

"If my fellow players accept me and the nation wants me then I will come back to play Twenty20 internationals," he said.

Warne leads Shepherd tributes

ANI, London

Former Australia leg spinner Shane Warne led the tributes for late Test and one-day umpire David Shepherd, who died of cancer on Tuesday at the age of 68.

"He was an absolute beauty and the world will miss him. I remember sitting up for four hours drinking with him in the bar after the World Cup final in 1996. He was a gentleman and great company," The Independent quoted Warne, as saying.

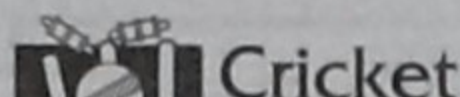
Simon Taufel, the Australian umpire, said that Shepherd taught him that "in order to be a good umpire, you needed to be a good person first".

THE MCC flag was flying at half-mast over the pavilion at Lord's on Tuesday as cricket mourned the loss of one of its most popular characters.

Shepherd, known to most people as 'Shep', saw his playing career end in 1979 and made his international debut at the 1983 World Cup. He would go on to stand in 92 Tests and 172 ODIs before retiring in 2005.

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Aussies now lose Paine



AFP, New Delhi

World champions Australia said Thursday they were struggling to focus on the ongoing one-day series in India because the team had been decimated by a string of injuries to key players.

With the seven-match series tied at 1-1, the injury-plagued tourists are down to the bare bones for the third international at the Feroze Shah Kotla on Saturday.

"With a few little niggles around, the focuses do tend to go towards that," said left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Johnson, himself battling an ankle injury. "But we have got to regroup, sit in our team meetings and talk about what went wrong in Nagpur and what we thought we did right out there."

Australia won the first match, in Vadodara on Sunday, by four runs, before crashing to a heavy defeat in Nagpur on Wednesday after India piled up a mammoth 354-7 and bowled out the tourists for 255.

Ricky Ponting's men came to India depleted by the absence of four one-day regu-

lars, vice-captain Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Nathan Bracken and Callum Ferguson.

Pace spearhead Brett Lee (elbow) and all-rounder James Hopes (hamstring) missed Nagpur, while Johnson only just made it.

In a further blow, wicketkeeper Tim Paine -- a replacement for Haddin -- broke a finger during the demolition in Nagpur and has been asked to return home.

The selectors, who flew in young all-rounder Moises Henriques to reinforce the injury-stricken squad, have now called up Graham Manou to replace Paine.

If Manou arrives in New

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PHOTO: AFP

Injured Australian fast bowler Brett Lee listens to a question during a press conference in New Delhi yesterday.