

# Star SPORT

## Jose rockstar of the year

Who is more of a rockstar than an actual rockstar? Well, Jose Mourinho of course. Spain's Rolling Stone Magazine named Mourinho its Rockstar of the Year for 2011, citing his "controversial message, his brazen intelligence, and above all, the provocative attitude." Also because winning anything but the Copa del Rey is apparently for nerds. As deserving of this title as Mourinho is, it's hard not to weep for the state of rock and roll (or maybe the state of Rolling Stone) when a wealthy middle-aged sportsman known for wearing fancy suits is the Rockstar of the Year.



## Pakistan take winning lead

BISHWAJIT ROY



Nasir Hossain slammed his maiden international hundred but Pakistan still confirmed the series with a comfortable 76-run victory in the second one-day international to lead the three-match series 2-0 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The right-hander's knock came as a great relief for the home side when it seemed that they forgot the knowledge of battling against the formidable bowling attack of Pakistan. The match was virtually over for Bangladesh when they slipped to 19 for four in the 10th over in reply to Pakistan's 262 for seven.

But the young Nasir stood tall to give his teammates some confidence in the series and his effort helped the Tigers complete their 50-over quota for 186 for seven. The all-rounder from Rangpur showed during his 134-ball 100, the first century in the series, it's not impossible to play against the versatile Pakistan attack if someone has guts and determination.

Despite Bangladesh's pathetic batting performances in the one-off T20 and first one-dayer, a huge crowd still turned up at the stadium but another top order failure disheartened them before Nasir gave something to cheer in the match.

And on way to achieving their record sixth consecutive series victory, the inform Pakistan team executed another clinical display after captain Misbahul Haque had decided to bat.

But the home fans will remember the match for Nasir's heroic effort.

Nasir completed his hundred in grand style when he whacked leg-spinner Shahid Afridi for six over extra cover on the very first ball of the penultimate over to reach 92 and then smashed two boundaries, the second being a lucky one that sneaked through to third man, to reach the magical three-figure mark.

The match fate was already written on the wall after Bangladesh lost four wickets for 19 runs when Nasir joined former skipper Shakib Al Hasan to repair the damages, but the duo batted without any real purpose. Their 106-run fifth wicket stand only salvaged some pride for the home team but could not make any impact in the match. Shakib, who was dropped by Mohammad Hafeez when he was on two, played 90 balls to make 34 runs with one boundary while Nasir, surviving twice, smote eleven fours and one six.

The top four batsmen -- Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Shahriar Nafees and captain Mushfiqur Rahim -- were the main culprits behind another massive defeat as all of them threw away their wickets. Off-spinner Hafeez and pacer Umar Gul, who was the most successful bowler with four wickets, ripped through the top order sharing four wickets.

Earlier the Pakistani top order showed what should be the

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR: Nasir Hossain might be an answer to the problem of Bangladesh's brittle batting. Here the gutsy right-hander pulls one down to the square-leg fence on way to his maiden hundred in the second one-day international against Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Intriguing indeed! Nasir brings light to gloom

SHAHNOOR RABBANI



Thousands of fans dressed in Bangladesh garb with headbands reading "Shabash Bangladesh" and faces painted in red and green is quite a usual sight at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, rain or shine and regardless of the result.

But during the Twenty20 and two one-dayers so far against Pakistan, there has been quite a strange phenomenon.

The presence of people with Pakistani flags with their faces painted green and white has led to some believing that they are either Pakistani nationals who have travelled all the way here to watch the matches or who are currently residing in Bangladesh.

This has led to confusion among many who have claimed during the first two matches that these people are mostly locals who are supporting the opposition. And to bury the confusion this reporter of The Daily Star took a stroll outside

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MOHAMMAD ISAM



If nothing else, Nasir Hossain can bring the smile back to the Bangladesh dressing-room from yesterday evening.

The young all-rounder's maiden ODI century was the only bright spot in an otherwise terrible outing for the home team who conceded the one-day series 0-2 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

But the young all-rounder's energetic presence from then on and until the end of the game showed how quickly Nasir has adapted to the international game. The 134-ball century, which he curiously credited to an opposition

player, was also a triumph for players who get into the national fold after proper grooming in the domestic game.

But a delighted Nasir wasn't into anything serious, rather revealing how he thrives when the chips are down.

"When I had reached 75, Umar Akmal told me to go for a century. Until then, I was only concentrating on playing the 50 overs," he said during a press conference that was upbeat despite the sombre state of affairs in the Bangladesh team.

"I decided that it was time to go for it. When I reached the century, I asked 'Riyad bhai, how should I raise the bat?' He told me to just raise it so I did," he quipped.

But it was his innings that really took Bangladesh out of a desperately embar-

assing situation into one of respectability. When he won the man-of-the-match award, it was a throwback to those times when the country would have been pleased with just the individual award rather than the real thing.

Walking into bat with the Tigers reeling on 19 for four, Nasir immediately took to leaving as much as possible while also trying to work out how to play Pakistan's trio of off-spinners.

Among the three, Nasir said he found it troubling to tackle Saeed Ajmal, though he did hit the offie for three boundaries. Nasir was also severe on Shahid Afridi, hammering him for 31 runs from 24 balls including a six.

The 2½ innings would do a lot for his confidence, but it probably should be

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## Booters' Nepal test today

Coach to tinker with formation, line-up

ANISUR RAHMAN from New Delhi



Bangladesh will be looking to lift their game in a bid to advance to the semifinals of the SAFF Championship when they take on resurgent Nepal at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium today. A lacklustre draw against

Pakistan in their opening match leaves little option for Bangladesh but to win this crucial Group B encounter against a side they have won all six of their previous encounters.

However, the Red and Green can ill afford to bask on the memories of their past success, especially after the performance the Himalayan nation put on in their first match holding Maldives to a 1-1 draw.

Bangladesh's coach Nikola Ilievski

knows full well that this Nepal side are a dangerous proposition as he along with his charges watched the Nepal-Maldives match praised the Nepalese for their quick movement, ball control and the ability to create goal-scoring chances.

The Macedonian has drawn out a specific strategy to stop the speedy Nepal side from penetrating, especially through the left wing where they are comparatively stronger.

And that prompts Ilievski to shift to a 4-4-2 formation from usual 4-3-3, with left-back Nasirul Islam playing ahead of right-back Mamun Mia meaning that Ilievski will field five of his defensive players while leaving captain Mohammad Sujan on the bench.

"Nepalese players are quick and play fast and muster shots from long distance. They

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## India held, SL win

SPORTS REPORTER from New Delhi

Hosts and defending champions India were held to a 1-1 draw by Afghanistan in their Group A match of the SAFF Championship at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium yesterday.

The four-time champions India, who were expected to breeze past Afghanistan, were taken by a shock as the Afghans scored in the fifth minute of the game through Belal Arizu.

Taking advantage of a poor pass from India defender

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Bangladesh coach Nikola Ilievski will have his work cut out against Nepal today.

PHOTO: COURTESY





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