

BD-PAK SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN

Hafeez c Shafiul b Shahadat89

Jamshed run out54

Younis c Razzak b Shahadat12

Akmal c Razzak b Shakib21

Shafiq c Mortaza b Shahadat4

Misbah b Razzak8

Afridi c & b Shakib0

Sarfraz not out19

Gul b Mortaza39

Ajmal not out8

Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-5)8

Total: (For eight wkts in 50 overs)262

Did not bat: Cheema.

Fall of wickets: 1-135, 2-160, 3-169, 4-175, 5-192, 6-193, 7-198, 8-251.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mortaza	10	0	55	1
Shafiul	8	0	49	0
Shakib	10	0	41	2
Shahadat	8	0	53	3
Razzak	10	0	43	1
Mahmudullah	4	0	19	0

BANGLADESH

Tamim b Hafeez64

Nazimuddin c Gul b Cheema30

Jahurul b Afridi23

Mushfiq b Afridi3

Shakib b Gul64

Mahmudullah lbw b Hafeez0

Nasir b Gul47

Razzak b Ajmal1

Mashrafe b Ajmal1

Shafiul lbw b Gul1

Shahadat not out0

Extras: (lb-2, w-5)7

Total: (All out in 48.1 overs)241

Fall of wickets: 1-45, 2-90, 3-100, 4-135, 5-135, 6-224, 7-228, 8-230, 9-235, 10-241.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Hafeez	10	1	40	2
Gul	9.1	0	58	3
Ajmal	10	0	45	2
Cheema	9	0	47	1



POINT TO PROVE: A charged up Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal makes a pointed gesture after reaching his fifty in the Asia Cup opener against Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Tamim was dropped from the squad by the BCB president, before being picked again at the last minute.

Tamim makes his point

Mohammad Isam

Tamim Iqbal successfully drowned out the noise that was surrounding him like a traffic jam on a busy weekday in Dhaka. He figured a way out of the rut through the 20th ODI half-century, though the Tigers lost the game to Pakistan by 21 runs in the Asia Cup opener yesterday.

The left-handed opener was under tremendous pressure after being dropped by BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal from the original 15-man squad last week but the reinstatement has obviously served as a tonic.

Skipper Mushfiqur Rahim said that the message to Tamim was clear.

"Tamim proved today he is a high quality player," he said after the match yesterday. "Players like Tamim and Shakib, they always prove their quality. The message to him is that a cricketer like him could have made a comeback of this manner."

He added that it was Nasir Hossain's dismissal that was the turning point

after he and Shakib Al Hasan added 89 for the sixth wicket when all seemed lost at 135-5 in the 29th over.

"It seemed like they'd score 280-300 the way they started but our bowlers made a good comeback. When we batted, Nasir's dismissal was the turning point. Shakib and him were the well-set batsmen. We make mistakes in such situations. To beat big teams, you have to focus till the last ball," he said.

Opening the Bangladesh innings with fellow Chittagonian Nazimuddin after Pakistan made 262 for eight in 50 overs, Tamim took his time and let the right-hander take on the bowlers. Nazimuddin blasted 30 out of the 45 runs they added

for the first wicket but once he was dismissed in the eleventh over, Tamim got into second gear alongside a surprisingly aggressive Jahurul Islam.

Watching his Chittagong Kings teammate go on the attack, Tamim slanted a six over midwicket off his scourge Mohammad Hafeez. Some exquisite drives followed, each off Shahid Afridi and Umar Gul, both piercing the off-side field; the second one better as the drive beat a sweeper on the off-side fence. There were nicely-timed boundaries through midwicket and one through midwicket. Even an outside edge carried to the third-man boundary for Tamim. It was that kind of a day for the under



Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez pulls one during his knock of 89 against Bangladesh in their Asia Cup opener at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

How long must we sing this song?

Sakeb Subhan

And it happens again. Only the harshest of hearts would not have broken a little at the sight of Shakib Al Hasan standing with shoulders slumped by his shattered stumps, a defeated man after trying so hard to yet again pull off a victory single-handedly. What happened at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday in the Asia Cup opener between Bangladesh and Pakistan was nothing less than criminal.

40 balls left, 39 to win and five wickets in hand. Easy equation? Not for Bangladesh and the fans knew it all too well, because it has happened again and again that Bangladesh take a winning situation and conspire to lose. It has happened too often and no longer can it be said that it is a young team and they lack experience. That is just not true.

Yes, the key wicket of Nasir Hossain had fallen at that point. But that is no excuse, because it is not asking too much of professional cricketers to play sensible cricket. A run-a-ball was needed, and all that was needed for the

following batsmen was to give Shakib, who as usual was in full control of the situation, the strike and the match was in the bag. But sense is not a common thing in the Bangladesh camp.

First it was Abdur Razzak, a veteran of 130 ODIs. Instead of taking the single, he wanted to hit one out of the park, only to have his stumps splayed by Saeed Ajmal. Then Mashrafe Mortaza, with nine matches fewer than Razzak and a man dear to most cricket supporters in the country, who did the same when all he had to do was play out one ball and Shakib would have the strike next over. Two wickets in one over, the forty-fifth, and the dream shattered.

There is no conceivable justification for the way these two got out. Their first job may be bowling, but so is Pakistan pacer Umar Gul's. What did he do? He rescued Pakistan from the travails of 198 for seven to lift them to 262. There again Mashrafe was culpable. After Gul had done the sensible thing and played himself in before launching into glory-grabbing shots, he was served a spate of full tosses by Mashrafe in the penultimate over, which cost 16 runs. All the good work was undone.

Mashrafe will take the defeat harder than most; he is a passionate cricketer who is fiercely proud to play for his country. It was his comeback match, but the least that can be asked of such an experienced cricketer is some common sense in crunch situations. All the experience in the world is not worth a dime without that. The same, sadly, is true of Razzak.

Credit must be given where due. It was a match in which the Tigers were on an even keel with a strong Pakistan side and even dominated parts of it. The bowling was disciplined till the death overs, and the fielding was largely good. Nazimuddin and Tamim Iqbal gave the team a good start in a challenging chase, and the brightest spot was Shakib and Nasir's 89-run sixth wicket partnership that put the team in a winning position from the difficult situation of 135 for five.

But neither the scoreline nor the Asia Cup standings will reflect any of that. Not even Shakib's role as the tragic hero, the last of seven batsmen to be bowled when the summit was visible but the rope had run out. Cricket is a

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Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (R) runs towards skipper Mushfiqur Rahim to celebrate one of his two dismissals during the Asia Cup match against Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Mash shines, then fades

Sports Reporter

It was the occasion of Mashrafe B i n Mortaza's much-awaited return but another paceman stole the wickets, if not the show, during the Asia Cup opener loss to Pakistan on Sunday.

Shahadat Hossain picked up three wickets for 53 runs from eight overs while Mashrafe grabbed one late scalp in a display of bowling that began well but tapered off towards the end, especially on part of the latter.

Bowling in an international game for the first time since April last year, he bowled skilfully at the top, glimpses of his past coming through but at the end of his spell, the Narail Express looked undercooked. After bowling five good overs, he was hit for ten runs in his sixth before skipper Mushfiqur Rahim gave him a breather. Immediately brought back after Pakistan had slipped to 197 for seven, it was expected that Mashrafe would mop up the tail; instead it was the old Mashrafe, bowling poorly with the old ball.

In his last four overs, he gave away 32 runs including the final over that went for 16, Umar Gul hitting him for a couple of boundaries and a six before being cleaned up for a quickfire 39. That eighth wicket partnership between Gul and Sarfraz Ahmed went on for 53 runs, enough to take Pakistan past trouble.

Mushfiqur however said that for a comeback game, Mashrafe did quite well. "Mashrafe bhai bowled well in the first 8-9 overs but gave away some runs towards the end. I think for a man who is returning, it is slightly difficult," he said at the end of the game.

The ending put a dampener to what could have been a fine performance by the pace attack, though Shafiul Islam neither finished his ten overs, nor picked up a wicket. In fact Shahadat too wasn't asked to complete his full quota, the last time he's done such a thing being back in 2008 (when he also took three very expensive wickets against Pakistan).

But it could have been so much better from the three pacemen, especially since the "weak link" Shahadat delivering three lucky wickets --

Younis Khan miscuing a flick and Mohammad Hafeez and Asad Shafiq miscuing pull shots. On the day however, Shafiul Islam remained the weaker man, neither finishing his quota of ten overs nor taking a wicket.

Mushfiqur defended his choice of three seamers by calling it an ideal combination.

"We chose to field after winning the toss. The pacers did well early on, their batsmen didn't get to play too many shots. We wanted 1-2 early wickets to put them under pressure.

"If we had taken an extra batsman or a spinner, the part-timers would have been used and that would have taken the total past the 280-mark.

"The six batsmen, if they had all batted well, would have been enough for the chase. But me, Tamim and Riyad all got out in a quick span. This combination of three seamers is quite good," he explained.

It's not often that the Tigers employ three fast men (last time was against Zimbabwe in 2011 with Shafiul Islam, Rubel Hossain and Nazmul Hossain) so it's their responsibility to make use of such occasions rather than wait for luck.