

# Tigers' consistency impresses Mahela

SPORTS REPORTER



Before the tournament began, Sri Lanka were considered one of the favourites, if not the favourite, to win the Asia Cup, having returned from a strong showing in the CB series in Australia. But it was a completely different picture as the league stage ended yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium with a game against Bangladesh. The Sri Lankans were winless after three matches, with Bangladesh's second consecutive win taking them through to the final against Pakistan.

Sri Lankan skipper Mahela Jayawardene was obviously disappointed after the match, especially by the contrast in results after having been runner-up in the CB series. But he was also fulsome in his praise of Bangladesh's newfound consistency.

"They are hungry for success, which is a good thing," said Jayawardene when asked whether he was seeing a new Bangladesh side in terms of attitude and self-belief. "It shows in everyone's attitude. I've played against them before as well, they had that

character in them, they keep fighting. But the consistency is something that we haven't seen but in this tournament, all three games they have played I think they have played really well."

Jayawardene hoped that Bangladesh continue to do well, but also cited his team's recent fluctuations in form as a cautionary tale.

"They played three consistent games, which is important," said the Sri Lankan skipper. "They are heading in the right direction but like I said what has happened to us in Australia and now, if you don't continue to play that well, it's tough to be consistent. So that is something that everyone is looking forward to, so just try and achieve."

With Bangladesh in the finals of a major tournament at home, the obvious question was who would win. The Lankan captain said that the toss will be important.

"It's a tough one. Like I said, they [Bangladesh] have played some consistent cricket," Jayawardene said. "There is a group effort, there are not too many individuals and I think everyone's contributing, which is a good thing. Both teams will be practising their tosses; the side batting second has a big advantage."

# BCB-PCB relations at a crossroads?

CRICKET

CRICINFO, Karachi

The relationship between the PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) and the BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) is likely to suffer if Bangladesh do not go ahead with the proposed tour to Pakistan in April because of security concerns, ESPNcricinfo has learnt.

An implicit deal had been reached by the two boards, according to which the PCB backed BCB president Mustafa Kamal as the nominee for the ICC vice-presidency and Bangladesh would tour Pakistan in 2012.

"Ultimately, it's Bangladesh's loss if they don't send their team," Zaka Ashraf, the chairman of PCB, told ESPNcricinfo. "We are helping them and want to have a positive relationship not only with Bangladesh, but all the nations. We want to strengthen our relationship. We have been sending our players to feature in their leagues and we expect them to respect our positive approach, after all everything is on reciprocal basis."

ESPNcricinfo understands that the BCB, despite being satisfied by the proposed security arrangements for the tour to Pakistan, is seeking some support from other countries, but none has been forthcoming. A nine-member delegation had been sent on a visit to Pakistan to observe a demonstration

of the security plan for the series, and Kamal had said he was positive about the tour going ahead.

But he then put the future of the tour in doubt by saying, "We won't go if everything doesn't happen within the standard practice, which is the allocation of match-referees, umpires and all things by the ICC."

While the PCB did not respond to Kamal's comments, a board official said the BCB was being leaned on by another country. "We are informed of a third-country pressure on BCB," a PCB official told ESPNcricinfo.

"We understand most of the member boards aren't keen to support our move, but we are very much clear of what would be required to give Bangladesh the confidence to come to Pakistan. And we did exactly what we have to do -- we have engaged the government at the superior level to satisfy Bangladesh with the security arrangements."

Since the attacks, Pakistan has played their home bilateral series at offshore venues such as New Zealand, England and the UAE but the PCB saw no commercial advantage in hosting Bangladesh at such venues.

Ashraf, who is now in Dhaka for the end of the Asia Cup, will make a final attempt to allay any doubts Bangladesh might have. The PCB also ruled out the possibility of talks with the Indian board. "There's no use of asking India any further," Ashraf said. "Their board doesn't want to play us and that's clearly understood."

# Aamer lying, Butt's dad

AFP, Lahore

The father of Pakistan's jailed former cricket captain Salman Butt on Tuesday accused disgraced bowler Mohammed Aamer of falsely pinning all the blame on his son in order to revive his career.

Zulfiqar, Butt's father, responded by accusing Aamer of lying.

"Aamer on record said before the ICC tribunal that Butt did not ask him to bowl no-balls and then before the UK court last year he said the same, so was he lying then or now? I definitely think he is lying now," Zulfiqar told AFP.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said last month it would rehabilitate Aamer and would consider him for selection once his ban expires.

"Aamer's latest interview suggests that he wants to revive his career and that's why he is accusing my son. We have gone through hell and Aamer is trying to put more trouble on us," said Zulfiqar.

The family say Butt's youngest son -- born minutes after he was sentenced on November 3 -- has been refused a British visa needed to visit his father.

"We hope our bad days are over sooner than later," said Zulfiqar.

## BD-SL SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA				
Jayawardene b Nazmul	5			
Dilshan b Nazmul	19			
Sangakkara c Nazimuddin b Nazmul	6			
Kapugedera c Shakib b Razzak	62			
Thirimanne st Mushfiqur b Razzak	48			
Tharanga c Mushfiqur b Shahadat	48			
Maharoor c Mushfiqur b Shakib	3			
Kulasekara lbw b Shakib	1			
Senanayake not out	19			
Malinga b Mashrafe	10			
Lakmal run out	0			
Extras: (lb-3, w-8)	11			
Total: (All out in 49.5 overs)	232			
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-29, 3-32, 4-120, 5-169, 6-175, 7-183, 8-204, 9-230, 10-232.				
Bowler				
Mashrafe	9.5	1	30	1
Nazmul	8	1	32	3
Shahadat	8	0	51	1
Razzak	10	0	44	2
Shakib	10	1	56	2
Mahmudullah	4	0	16	0
BANGLADESH				
Tamim (Thirimanne b Senanayake)	59			
Nazimuddin b Kulasekara	6			
Jahurul c Kapugedera b Lakmal	2			
Mushfiqur b Kulasekara	1			
Shakib lbw b Senanayake	56			
Nasir not out	36			
Mahmudullah not out	32			
Extras: (lb-13, w-7)	20			
Total: (For five wks in 37.1 overs)	212			
Did not bat: Mashrafe, Razzak, Shahadat, Nazmul.				
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-39, 3-40, 4-116, 5-135.				
Bowler				
Malinga	8	0	29	0
Kulasekara	6	0	30	2
Lakmal	7	0	40	1
Senanayake	8	0	38	2
Maharoor	6	0	46	0
Dilshan	2.1	0	16	0
Result: Bangladesh won by five wickets (D/L method)				
Man-of-the-match: Shakib Ali Hasan.				
Toss: Bangladesh.				
Umpires: Paul Reiffel and Steve Davis.				

## PLAN SCHOOL FOOTBALL Marium drives Viquarunnisa

SPORTS REPORTER

Marium struck four goals to power Viquarunnisa Noon School to a massive 5-0 win over Motijheel T & T High School in their opening fixture of the Plan Metropolis Women's School Football Tournament at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Marium found the back of the net in the very first minute of the match before doubling the lead in the eighth minute. She completed the treble in the 31st minute and struck her fourth in the 44th minute after Nini widened the margin on the 40th minute.

State minister for Women and Children Affairs Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury declared the meet open.

## Best already

FROM PAGE 16  
Badrul, a police officer, was also among the fans reveling in joy that knows no boundary and recognises no uniform. "I come to watch matches sometimes. These days are few and far between. Since I am in uniform I can't really show my joy. I feel like jumping around like everyone else when they win," said the police officer, barely able to contain his joy.

As Nasir's straight drive found the boundary rope to signal a famous win, 'Joy Bangla' came on the loudspeakers, as if reading the hearts of everyone present. The prayers might have gone unanswered before, but this week, in which the Tigers have beaten the current world champions and World Cup runners-up, has been compensation enough. The week may get better yet.

## United in joy

FROM PAGE 16  
third consecutive fifty in ODI cricket; Nasir Hossain and Mushfiqur Rahim are the new match-winners; Mahmudullah Riyad was at his rock-solid best in yesterday's game; Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is now a walking tribute to his braveheart sobriquet; Nazmul Hossain came in and gave a professional pace bowler's performance, he took wickets. Abdur Razzak remained steady and cashed in on his good luck.

But above all, the team has thrived on tremendous bonhomie among itself. After all that has happened before Asia Cup, who would have thought this would happen?

Eleven brave souls thought this was possible and they made it, making those around them as proud as parents.

# Butt lured me: Aamer

Cricket

AFP, London

Disgraced Pakistan cricketer Mohammad Aamer said Monday that former captain Salman Butt had betrayed their friendship by involving him in the spot-fixing scandal that has seen him banned from cricket and serve time in a British prison.

And the talented Aamer again apologised to fans in cricket-crazy Pakistan for his role in the scandal by saying: "I ask for their forgiveness. I messed up."

The highly-rated 19-year-old was released from jail last month after serving half of a six-month sentence for his part in the scandal during the Lord's Test between England and Pakistan in 2010.

His former teammates Butt and Mohammad Asif are serving sentences of 30 and 12 months respectively, handed down by a British court in November, after the trio were found guilty of corruption and receiving illegal money.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) also banned all three players, with Aamer receiving the minimum five-year punishment after he was found guilty of deliberately bowling no-balls as part of a plan orchestrated by Butt and agent Mazhar Majeed, also now serving a jail sentence.

"I'm so angry with Salman," said Aamer, speaking publicly for the first time since his release in an interview with former England captain Mike

Atherton broadcast on Sky Sports on Monday -

"He used to call me 'innocent one'. Like how an elder brother would speak to a younger one," he added in comments translated by Sky into English from Urdu. "He should have helped me instead of involving me in all this."

Aamer was once considered the hottest property in international cricket. He emerged on the scene in 2009 and was regarded as a better left-arm paceman than Pakistan great Wasim Akram was at the same age.

With 51 wickets in just 14 Tests, Aamer was on the verge of getting the ICC emerging player award in 2010 -- but his career and life then derailed.

The charges were related to bowling deliberate no-balls by Aamer and pace partner Asif in the 2010 Lord's Test against England.

What none of the players or Majeed knew at the time was that the scam was part of a sting operation put together by now defunct British newspaper the News of the World.

Aamer said he became entangled in the Lord's plot the day before the Test because of fears over phone contacts he had with a businessman he knew as Ali, which Butt and Majeed exploited in a meeting in the car park of the team hotel.

"Suddenly he [Majeed] said 'oh bro, you've got yourself in big trouble, you're trapped, and your career is at stake'," Aamer recalled.

"I said 'Bro, what's happened?'. He told me that my calls and texts with Ali

had been recorded and had reached the ICC."

Majeed, who said a friend had told him about the ICC "probe" then explained to Aamer the way his name could avoid being linked publicly with that of Ali was if he did the agent the favour of bowling two no-balls to order.

Aamer added: "I said 'what?!' And here there's something crucial that I'd like to say at this point: I'd like to say how stupid I was."

"I mean on the one hand he was telling me that a report about me had gone to the ICC, and on the other that he wanted me to do two no-balls for him."

"I was panicking so much it didn't even occur to me how ridiculous it was."

"I knew that it was cheating cricket; that it was out of order, and that it shouldn't happen."

Reflecting on how he got into trouble, Aamer said: "I was stupid. I should have told someone."

"I didn't do it for money. Thanks to Allah, I trust myself to distinguish between right and wrong."

"They [Butt and Majeed] told me that I was in trouble for texting Ali and what was in those texts. And they said that ICC had managed to record them."

"There had been no need for these guys to make this story up."

Aamer, who faces an uncertain future, thanked his family and long-time mentor Asif Bajwa for their backing.

"It's a very difficult time but good people are boosting my morale and giving me courage."

# Impossible is nothing

FROM PAGE 16

Nasir Hossain screamed in delight after hitting the winning shot, Shakib was the first to run out of the dressing room and the team were taking a lap of honour of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium waving the country's flags amidst deafening chants of "Bangladesh, Bangladesh".

Believe it or not it was Shakib who could not find the right way how to celebrate this huge moment and that's the reason he took a green-and-red party hat from a fan and put it on his head.

But just take the words from the all-rounder to understand why it's called a new era of Bangladesh cricket. "We know that nothing is impossible and the way we are playing we will do well in the final. If we win in the final, it will be the best moment of my career. Everything is for the team, sacrificing for whom is not a matter," was the comment from Shakib that provided a glimpse into the future of Bangladesh cricket.

And Tamim almost echoed the same sentiment by saying: "It's a great achievement for the country, so far the biggest. We realise it's still not over, we have another very important game. We'll enjoy tonight, we'll party but tomorrow we'll be back to business. I hope we will fire on the 22nd."

So you can understand that these boys are here not to satisfy with only one achievement rather they have the big picture in their mind. It was still however impossible for Shakib to check his emotions after such a great success.

"A member of the crowd gave it (the

long hat) to me. I can't understand what my feelings are. Of course when I talk to the teammates I will realise what this is. I am very excited, very happy because we don't usually achieve such things. I am happy to be part of this team."

"When I went in after getting dismissed, Mushfiq (Mushfiqur Rahim) asked me what will happen. I said I don't know. But after 10-15 runs, I knew that it would happen today. Nasir's performance was vital, has been doing his job very well. Riyad was due for runs and he did so well. Their partnership was the turning point of the match," continued Shakib.

Man-of-the-match Shakib also believes that this success will change Bangladesh cricket.

"We never played well in the Asia Cup so it is really big. We beat the current world champions and runners-up, which is a huge achievement for us. It gives us a lot of confidence and teaches us a lot of things. This change will take us a long way," he observed.

Regarding the revised target Shakib said: "Oh we thought its 100 in 20 overs, 112 in 20 overs. Honestly, I think when we talk in the dressing room its like, 100 runs in 20 overs is nothing. This is the sort of confidence that we have now. Cricket is a mental game so this confidence is very important. If a player goes down the wicket and thinks he'll get stumped, he will. If he thinks he will hit a six, he'll be successful most times," said Shakib praising the contribution of pacer Nazmul Hossain and Nasir Hossain highly.

The all-rounder also admitted that

they never thought that Bangladesh will qualify for the final.

"I didn't think we will, I said that winning a game was our target. It is great that we won and we are through to the final. After the first loss to Pakistan, we all sat and discussed that if we can't cross the final hurdle, we'll stay the same. I think we have almost learned to cross the last barrier."

Tamim praised Shakib highly for great support in the middle.

"The guy (Shakib) sitting next to me is a game-changer. When he came to bat I knew that if he played his natural game, we'll win this game. He was giving me enough support and encouragement, which is a very, very rare thing while batting. I thank him for doing that because he told me a lot of positive things. It helped me a lot. I am disappointed I couldn't finish the job but hats off to the boys," said Tamim adding that the controversy surrounding him before the tournament gave him extra motivation.

In the end captain Mushfiqur Rahim applauded the team effort behind the success and he gave the impression that the total team is waiting for much bigger achievements.

"It has been a great tournament for us. Everyone chipped in. Nazmul Hossain did well, that set up the game. We had a stiff target after the rain, but Shakib and Tamim batted well. There are five or six people performing in every game. The final is one of the biggest achievements in our cricketing history. Hopefully we will cross that hurdle. It is a great boost to have the crowd supporting you," said Mushfiq.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	36 Snapshots, for short	DOWN	20 Standard
1 "OK"	37 Ph. bk. data	1 Village	21 Adventures of a sort
5 Unruly crowd	38 Inexpensive	2 Count's counter-part	22 Catch some rays
8 Trail	41 Atmosphere	3 Malaria symptom	23 Pod dweller
12 Creche trio	42 Eggs	4 — and hers	24 Spring mo.
13 Flightless bird	45 Highway	5 TV, radio, et al.	25 Twitch
14 Great Lake	46 Soldiers' "pine-apples"	6 Portent	26 — de deux
15 Important campaigns	48 Differently	7 Greyhound vehicle	27 Insult (Sl.)
17 Streamlet	49 And so on	8 Convinces	28 Dine
18 Beerlike beverage	50 Sweater eater	9 Met melody	29 Crafty
19 Triumph	51 Drenches	10 Work the soil	31 Annoy
20 Choir's rendition	52 Old soap ingredient	11 Steerer's place	34 Party bowlful
21 Historic time	53 Helen's home	16 Wrong	35 Ripped
22 Greek cross			37 Family member
23 Sucker			38 Coxswain's group
26 Processions			39 Pit
30 Grand story			40 Right on the map?
31 Moving truck			41 Bohemian
32 Use an old phone			42 Stench
33 Videogame parlors			43 No from the White House
35 Irritable			44 Wan
			46 Toothpaste type
			47 Qty.

Solution time: 21 mins.

I	M	P	S	H	E	W	A	I	L
R	E	T	N	P	E	W	I	D	L
T	O	T	A	A	R	E	D	O	L
S	W	A	R	M	B	R	A	E	
R	I	B	S	T	R	A	F	E	
C	A	J	O	L	E	D	M	E	D
A	V	O	L	D	U	G	C	A	N
L	E	V	E	E	D	I	V	E	R
F	R	E	S	N	O	L	E	I	
C	E	L	L	E	V	I	C	I	
F	L	E	A	D	A	B	E	R	I
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A	G	U	E	N	E	T	N	O	T

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51					52			53		

## CRYPTOQUIP

E V A O X C B L F E I I R X O P T V R  
A O B R W V W U Q X C B E L X M W B  
T O R J C I J H X E E I P I E I H W O C I C M :  
R V R I W U - F C X Q B E H X T X E .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OLD TV SHOW ABOUT PEOPLE WHO FAVOR A CERTAIN BRAND OF TRANSPARENT PLASTIC. "I LOVE LUCITE."  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals N