

Nasir show goes on

SPORTS REPORTER



Nasir Hossain, the "Mr. Finisher", finished the game in style as Bangladesh A confirmed the three-match T20 Challenge Series victory against the Mushfiquir Rahim-led Bangladesh side with one match in hand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night.

Captaining the side, Nasir led from the front with an unbeaten 62 as the A team chased down the senior side's 167 with nine balls to spare to post a comfortable six-wicket victory and take a winning 2-0 lead after they won the first match by 12 runs.

However, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, playing for the national team, injured his knee during the second innings. But the paceman himself informed that the injury was not serious.

Right-handed Nasir displayed magnificent stroke-play in front of around 10,000 jubilant crowd as he smote seven fours and three sixes during his 31-ball essay. He made the maximum contribution to the undefeated 79-run fifth wicket stand with Sabbir Rahman, who added a 14-ball 15 with a six. Pacer Rubel Hossain came in for the second game and gave early breakthroughs by dismissing first match heroes Imrul Kayes and Jahurul Islam. But Mithun Ali and Mominul Haque steadied the ship by putting on 55 runs for the third wicket and after that Nasir toyed with the opponent bowlers to script the easy victory.

If it was a challenge thrown at the all-rounder to impress the selectors to recommend his name to the board for the job of national team's vice-captaincy, then he definitely grabbed it with both hands in the first two games. He not only played a match-winning knock after taking two wickets, but also used his bowlers brilliantly to make sure that their opponents would be at least twenty runs short.

There was another man who also put up some impressive performance from the second string side to drum up his claim for a recall to the national side and it was pace bowling all-rounder Forhad Reza who continued his impressive show with the leather. The right-arm paceman bamboozled opener Anamul Haque with a slower and he only gave 19 runs in his four overs but what may impress new chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who has an inclination for shaping a team with a pace bowling all-rounder, and his two other colleagues most was his variety in bowling.

The national side could only blame their batting for the series defeat. The loss of wickets at regular intervals dashed their hopes of reaching the 200-mark.

Soumya Sarker, who is considered as a good prospect for the shortest version of the game, was promoted to open the innings along with Anamul and the left-hander started impressively playing two eye-catching drives, but unwisely fell victim of run out for 13 runs. Mushfiquir then joined Anamul to repair the damage. Anamul was erratic though he made 39 but his skipper was fluent. A slog-sweep and a lofted boundary over the cover were the highlights of Mushfiquir's 38-run innings but he was dismissed at the wrong time. Mahmudullah Riyad was the other notable scorer with an unbeaten 38.

The third and final match will take place at the same venue tomorrow.

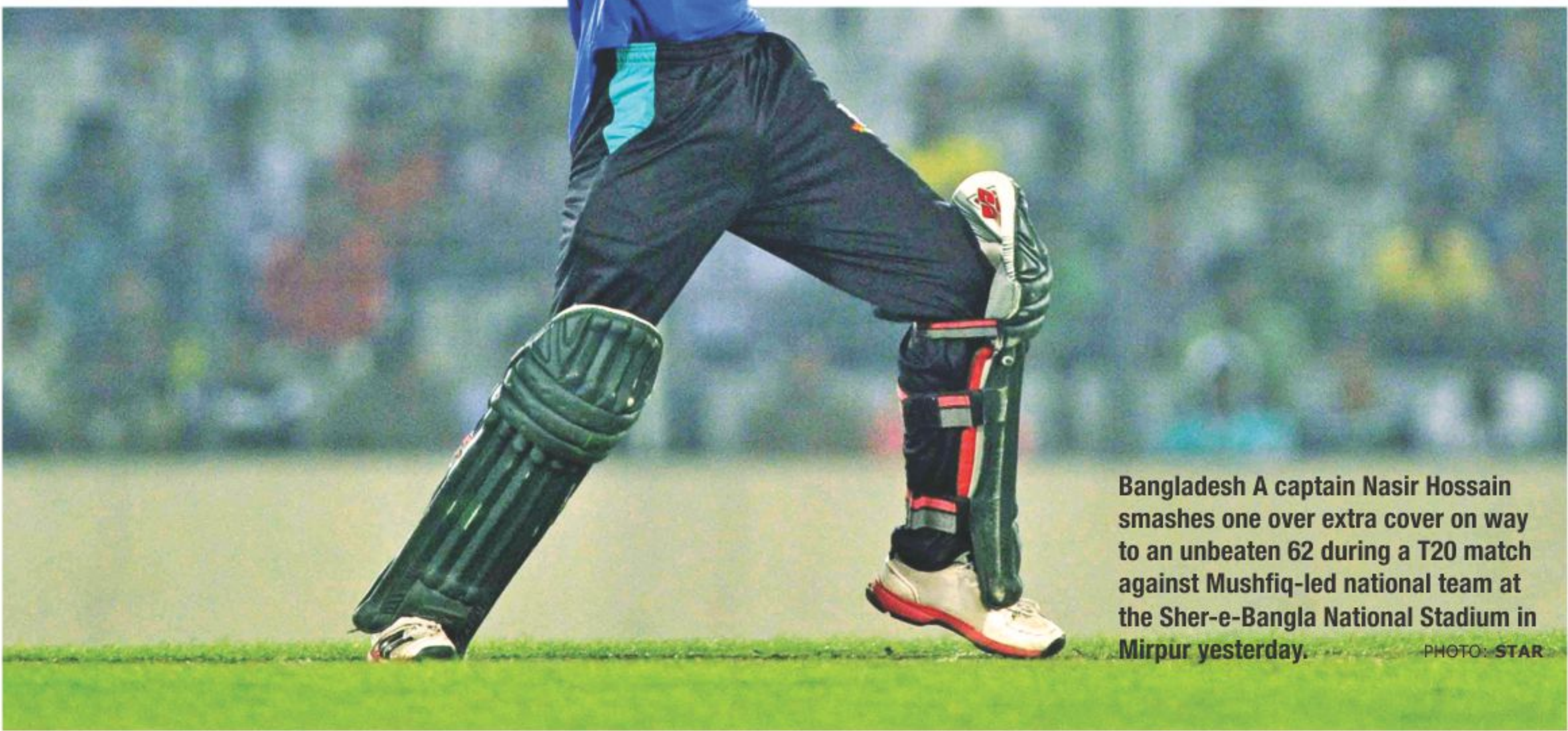
SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 167-9 in 20 overs (Anamul 39, Soumya 13, Mushfiquir 36, Riyad 38 not out, Ziaur 21, Arafat Sunny 2-42, Forhad 1-19, Elias Sunny 1-20, Nasir 2-21)

BANGLADESH A: 171-4 in 18.3 overs (Imrul 16, Mithun 37, Mominul 24, Nasir 62 not out)

Result: Bangladesh A won by six wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Nasir Hossain.



Bangladesh A captain Nasir Hossain smashes one over extra cover on way to an unbeaten 62 during a T20 match against Mushfiq-led national team at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

It's Sony vs Muktijoddha

Federation Cup final today

SPORTS REPORTER



Can Muktijoddha Sangsad stop an unstoppable Haitian hitman Sony Norde when the All Reds face a formidable Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in the Federation Cup final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today?

Norde has been the singular demolition man for Sheikh Jamal in the season's curtain-riser so far, hammering seven goals in four games including two each against Mohammedan and Abahani to help the new leviathans dispatch the two popular giants in the knock out stages.

And if the All Reds stand a chance

to win the Federation Cup after nine long years, their coach Shafiqul Islam Manik must come up with a formula to defuse the curly-haired entertainer despite the fact that football is played by 11 players and that was what Sheikh Jamal's Nigerian coach Joseph Afusi tried to portray in a pre-final mind game.

"If I put only Sony Norde against Muktijoddha tomorrow (Friday), then Sheikh Jamal will probably lose 100-0. So in that case, it's eleven versus eleven," said the Nigerian in an attempt to reduce the pressure on Sony.

Sheikh Jamal, who lifted the title in 2011, are making their fourth straight appearance in the final. The have also won the last three Federation Cup meetings with

Muktijoddha and that too without Sony, who joined the club this season after leading Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra to hattrick of titles last season.

Sony has made his mark ever since he joined Sheikh Russel last season. And since then he has become the chief entertainer and a brand name with his scintillating performance. He enthralled approximately 7,000 spectators at the Big Bowl last Friday in Sheikh Jamal's 3-0 demolition of Abahani.

Despite the superb performance against eight-time champions Abahani, Afusi refused to accept the favourites tag, terming the final a fifty-fifty chances for both sides.

"I think my Muktijoddha counterpart is a very good tactician. He is intelligent and understands the

game very well. I have played against him last season and every time I played against him I found it difficult. So tomorrow (Friday) it will not be easy for us," said Afusi.

Muktijoddha, a team not as balanced and high-profile as Sheikh Jamal, however are optimistic to end a title drought against heavy odds.

Asked whether Muktijoddha Sangsad can stop Sony, coach Manik responded: "We are not thinking of stopping only Sony Norde, rather we are thinking of stopping Sheikh Jamal to win the Federation Cup."

Known as a good tactician who loves to absorb and attack on the break, Manik said: "Sheikh Jamal are an outstanding side with a composition of good foreign and local players and coaching staff. To beat them is

Zia shares 2nd place

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman was sharing the second position along with 18 players in the 5th London Chess Classic FIDE Open at close of fifth round at the Olympia Conference Centre at Kensington in London on Wednesday.

Zia beat IM Ansell Simon of England to earn four points from five matches. He was scheduled to play his sixth round game against Russian GM Boris Grachev last night.

GM CHESS

FM Debaraj Chatterjee drew against Indian Harsha Bharathakoti in the eighth round match of the SREI International GM Chess tournament in Kolkata yesterday.

Debaraj has now four points from eight matches while Saidul Islam Masum and Sharif Hossain have 3 and 2.5 points respectively.

Victory Day hockey from Saturday

SPORTS REPORTER

Walton, one of the country's leading electronic goods manufacturers, has earned the right to sponsor the Victory Day Hockey Tournament, which starts tomorrow with the participation of four sporting clubs and three services teams.

Walton will provide whole of the estimated expenditure of 2.8 lakh for the 10-day tournament where the top two teams from each of two groups will advance to the semifinals, billed for December 21 before the final on December 23 at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium, disclosed the organisers at a press conference yesterday.



Players of Muktijoddha (L) train at the Military Museum Ground while Sony Norde and Co. of Sheikh Jamal (R) stretch at their Dhanmondi ground yesterday, ahead of the final showdown of the Federation Cup today.



PHOTOS: STAR

World Cup comes closer to Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

The most coveted trophy in football is set to make an appearance in Bangladesh as for the very first time the original FIFA World Cup trophy is coming here on December 17, thanks to soft drinks giant Coca-Cola.

The trophy arrived in Qatar yesterday after a three-day stay in Saudi Arabia. It will move to the UAE for a two-day visit on December 15 before touching down at the Hazrat Shahjalal Airport. Like a true superstar, the trophy is touring on its own branded jet and will be kept guarded under heavy security at the Radisson Hotel during its stay in Dhaka.

A replica had toured Bangladesh before, but this is the first time the actual trophy is travelling around the world covering 149,576.78 kilometres, which is more than three times the Earth's circumference, on the FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour.

The trophy will be displayed at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on December 18 and 19 when the lucky fans will have the opportunity to have a souvenir photo taken of themselves with the trophy, view a special hologram animation showcasing memorable moments of the FIFA World Cup, participate in interactive displays and enjoy other entertainment.

Just in case a football aficionado still have not secured a ticket, there is still time. The Daily Star is giving away 50 free tickets for the trophy tour through a quiz competition, brought by Coca-Cola, in its sports page which ends on the 14th of December.



SCHOOL FOOTBALL

MoU signed between BFF, edn ministry

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education to ensure the participation of maximum schools from Upazila level in the upcoming National School Football Championship.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and education secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury signed the MoU at the ministry as the competition involving around 5,000 schools across the country is expected to get underway in the last week of December at Upazila level.

"I am really pleased that the boys of different schools are getting another opportunity to play the school football through the MoU signing and our colleagues will be trying to provide the maximum support to make the tournament a success," said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid.

Kiwis gain upper hand

AFP, Wellington



New Zealand claimed the upper hand in the second Test on Thursday with the West Indies on 158-4 and key batsmen Darren Bravo and Shivnarine Chanderpaul back in the pavilion.

At the end of the rain-abbreviated second day, in which only 63.1 of the scheduled 90 overs were bowled, the West Indies trailed New Zealand's first innings of 441 by 283.

Only Kirk Edwards and Marlon Samuels provided any stern resistance with well compiled half centuries. Samuels was not out 50 and Narsingh Deonarine was on 11.

New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson, in only his fourth Test, made the crucial breakthroughs for his team, removing first Test double centurion Darren Bravo for four and Edwards for 55.

The West Indies made a positive start as Edwards and Kieran Powell progressed to 46 with New Zealand new-ball partners Trent Boult and Tim Southee moving the ball around and finding plenty to

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 307-6)

Fulton c Ramdin b Sammy	6
Rutherford c Ramdin b Best	11
Williamson c Sammy b Best	45
Taylor c Shillingford b Gabriel	129
McCullum c Edwards b Deonarine	37
Anderson c Powell b Shillingford	38
Watling b Gabriel	65
Southee c Bravo b Sammy	21
Sodhi c Ramdin b Best	27
Wagner c Sammy b Best	0
Boult not out	38
Extras: (b-16, lb-6, nb-2)	24
Total: (All out in 115.1)	441

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-24, 3-112, 4-189, 5-257, 6-296, 7-334, 8-383, 9-383

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Best	21	1	110	4
Gabriel	25.1	5	86	2
Sammy	25	3	92	2
Shillingford	28	4	92	1
Deonarine	16	2	39	1

WEST INDIES: First innings

Edwards c Rutherford b Anderson	55
Powell lbw Southee	21
Bravo c Fulton b Anderson	4
Samuels not out	50
Chanderpaul c Anderson b Boult	6
Deonarine not out	11
Extras: (lb-6, w-1, nb-4)	11
Total: (For 4 wickets in 37 overs)	158

Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-67, 3-103, 4-119

To bat: Ramdin, Sammy, Shillingford, Best, Gabriel

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Boult	9	3	25	0
Southee	9	1	40	1
Wagner	7	1	37	0
Anderson	7	1	20	2

appeal about but nothing that impressed the umpires.

Southee was eventually rewarded with an lbw decision against Powell on 21 while Boult came back in his second spell to remove Chanderpaul.

Bravo, unable to reproduce his marathon innings of the first Test, faced 12 balls before he edged Anderson to second slip Peter Fulton.

Edwards, who had looked assured on his way to a half century, was undone by a full Anderson delivery which he tried to turn to the leg side but sent a leading edge to Hamish Rutherford at cover. Anderson, who has figures of two for 20, was again in the play to remove Chanderpaul for six when he took a fine catch at cover point.

New Zealand resumed the day at 307-6 and cracked a rollicking 134 runs to be all out on the stroke of lunch.

It was an impressive total on a wicket rated favourable to the quick bowlers, although the West Indies were guilty of too many short, wide, deliveries.

Wicketkeeper BJ Watling was the mainstay of the late attack which ended when he was removed for 65.

Century for Clarke, Cook

3rd Ashes Test from today

REUTERS, Perth

In a neat moment of sporting synchronicity, both Australia captain Michael Clarke and his English counterpart Alastair Cook will play their 100th Test in the third Ashes contest this week.

It is a great achievement for two master batsmen but given their competitive nature, only a win at the WACA will allow either to really enjoy passing what was once the rarest of milestones.

For Clarke, victory would secure a 3-0 series triumph and the return of the coveted urn after three consecutive Ashes defeats at the hands of his country's greatest sporting rival.

"I think that's why it's most special for me, that we have the chance to win the Ashes," Clarke told reporters at the WACA on Thursday. "It's obviously fantastic that I've been able to play 99 Tests for my country, something I'm certainly proud of, but in regards to it being my 100th Test match, it's not my focus, there's enough other reasons why this match is special to me and this team."

For Cook, a first win for the tourists in Perth since 1978 would arrest an alarming decline in the fortunes of the England team since they arrived in Australia charged with confidence after a dominant 3-0 win back home earlier this year.

"It's a huge honour to join the hundred club and one I thought I'd never get to," the 28-year-old told reporters.

"It is a special day and it will make it an even more special week if we can produce the sort of performance we know we're capable of."

That they both reach the milestone in what could be the decisive moment of an Ashes series should not detract from the achievement of two players who will one day go down in the record