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BD women end on winning note

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh finished ninth in the Women's World Twenty20 by beating Ireland by 17 runs in the place-deciding match at the Sylhet Cricket Stadium. Batting first, Bangladesh set a below-par score of 106 for seven with opener Sharmin Akhter playing a crucial knock of 35 off 46 deliveries. The Irish kept things tidy as Lucy O'Reilly, the 14-year-old medium pacer took three crucial wickets conceding just 14 runs in her four-over spell.

Bangladesh turned the smallest total look big by bowling a tight line and length and striking from the very beginning. Eventually the Irish resistance was over in 19.3 overs as they were skittled out for 89. Pacer Panna Ghosh took three wickets for 25 runs while Skipper Salma Khatun took two for eight.

Earlier, Pakistan beat Sri Lanka by 14 runs to seal the seventh place. Pakistan set up 122, thanks to an unbeaten 62 from Bismah Maroof, before they restricted the Lankans to 108.



The hat of umpire Rod Tucker (R) is sent for a ride by strong wind, which was followed by hailstorm and heavy rain, during the ICC World Twenty20 first semifinal between Sri Lanka and the West Indies at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

It probably was for Sanga, Jaya

NAIMUL KARIM

No matter how disappointed Darren Sammy gets, he always manages to leave a press conference with a vibe that leaves almost everyone happy and wishing that the West Indies were not eliminated. When asked as to how disappointing it was to exit the tournament through a rain-curtailed game, Sammy said something that not many expected.

"I took it like, you know what, we have won a World Cup. But today I guess two gentlemen who have given a lot not only to Sri Lankan cricket but cricket on the whole... I guess the Almighty want them to leave on a high. They have one more game to leave on a high and I guess that's the reason why God put a hand on this game," said the West Indian captain, while referring to Sri Lankan legends Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene who are retiring from T20s following this tournament.

"I am sure we will have another shot to play in T20 World Cup. We are looking forward to win it in the near future," added a smiling Sammy.

Sammy felt that they had given away too many runs in the final overs and that's what cost them the game.

With the batting too, they began slowly with their openers, Chris Gayle and Dwayne Smith, consuming plenty of dot balls. He however refused to criticise them.

"When you lose a cricket game, people tend to point a finger at all kinds of areas. Yes there were dot balls, it's not ideal for this format of the game, but I guess we have developed a formula in which that works for us. We know we got to improve on rotating the strike.

"The way Gayle plays, he normally gives himself some time, and then catches up. Marlon is probably not batting well for us as of now. But he is one of our better batsmen and people have a few dips in form, hopefully we can dust ourselves and come again," said Sammy, adding that he thought the West Indies, who needed 81 runs off the last 37 balls before rain intervened, had a chance to win the game.

It was something that the player-of-the-match, Angelo Mathews, too agreed to.

"It would have been great if it was 20 overs, and a close game as well. We deserve to be in the final, because we

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 106 for 7 (Sharmin 35, Rumana 16; O'Reilly 3-15, Joyce 2-17)
IRELAND: 89 all out in 19.3 overs (Cecilia 19, Melissa 16; Panna 3-25, Salma 2-8)

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When Sri Lanka's two stalwarts Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene departed cheaply in the first semifinal against the West Indies a big total looked a distant reality. However, Lahiru Thirimanne and Angelo Mathews provided the late thrust to take their side to a challenging 160-6. Thirimanne struck a 35-ball 44 while a more aggressive Mathews hammered

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Aussies grind into final

SPORTS REPORTER

Two-time defending champions Australia eked their way into the third straight final of the Women's World Twenty20 when they tamed a fearless West Indies side by eight runs in the first semifinal at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The Southern Stars defended a par score of 140, thanks to some accurate death bowling and good work in the outfield. It was third time unlucky for the West Indians, who also got out from the same stage on the previous two occasions and lost the 50-overs World Cup final against the same opposition last year.

Defending 140 on a wicket which assisted batswomen more than the

bowlers, Australia gave themselves a chance when they got talismanic West Indian Stefanie Taylor run out on the first ball of the eight over. Taylor had moved to 23 off 24 when she tried to steal a second run on a mis-field from Sarah Coyte. But as she dived to get back in the popping crease, her bat was not in touch with the ground and wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy took the bails off on a flat throw from Sarah. The next two overs yielded just three runs, and the other opener, Kycia Knight, after scoring 21, succumbed under the pressure and was cleaned up by the off-spinner Erin Osborne.

Deandra Dottin and Stacy-Ann King calmed the nerves with a few lusty blows and they needed 21 runs from the last two overs, with eight

wickets in hand. But match changed complexion after the third delivery of the nineteenth over when Dottin, having made 40 off 35 balls, holed out to Coyte's full toss at deep midwicket boundary. Osborne, who had helped keep the scoring rate in check with a mean spell off 1 for 18, kept her calm and grasped it. That was the longest boundary and a yard or two over and it would have gone for six. But Osborne made sure she held on to the most crucial catch of the match. There on, it was Australia turning the screws on a shell-shocked West Indies. King was stranded unbeaten on 36 at one end, but Australia had done enough to take the match.

Earlier, the world champions had scored 140 for five -- after deciding to bat, thanks to a crucial 30

unbeaten off 21 from Healy. Healy came in to bat when Australia were in a spot of bother. They were five down for 92 and their best batter Meg Lanning was back in the pavilion for 29. Healy sent the first ball she faced from spinner Anisa Mohammed to the third-man boundary, and then cleared the fence three more times in the next three overs, to take Australia to a fighting total, which they defended manfully.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 140 for 5 (Villani 35, Lanning 29, Healy 30 not out; Anisa 2-24, Taylor 1-19)
WEST INDIES: 132 for 4 (Dottin 40, King 36 not out, Taylor 24; Osborne 1-18)
Result: Australia won by 8 runs.

WOMEN'S WORLD T20 SEMIFINAL: ENGLAND V SOUTH AFRICA

Perennial finalists up against new-comers

SPORTS REPORTER

Former champions England will look to confirm their third final in four editions when they take on first-timers South Africa in the second semifinal of the Women's World Twenty20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The two sides came into this tournament with perhaps different agendas -- England looking to wrestle back the title they won in 2009 and came ever so close to regaining in 2012 but for the four-run defeat against Australia in the final, and South Africa looking to make an impression and go as far as they can.

Both have done reasonably well so far -- albeit with one hiccup on the way through. England lost their very first match against West Indies, but since then they have comfortably beaten India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. South Africa started the tournament with a bang, beating Pakistan in style before being thumped by Australia. But they defeated Ireland in the next match earning their semifinal rights with a nerve-wrecking win over favourites New Zealand.

Having gone thus far and having accounted for one of the pretournament favourites, South Africa will feel that they can

cause one more upset, with the all-round players that they have got. Even though openers Dane van Niekerk and Lizelle Lee have done the bulk of scoring, the brilliant innings from skipper Mignon du Preez against New Zealand and the power-hitting of Sune Luus, Chloe Tryon and Marizanne Kapp has shown that their batting runs quite deep. Kapp and Shabnim Ismail have spearheaded their pace attack while van Niekerk has been more than useful with her legbreaks.

England, on the other hand, will rely heavily on their three-pronged pace attack of Natalie Sciver, Anya Schrubsole and Jenny Gunn -- who have delivered, sharing 23 wickets among them. Off-break bowler Danielle Hazelle has only taken four wickets, but the pitch in Mirpur will probably be more to her liking than the ones in Sylhet.

England's batting has not been tested yet in true sense, apart from the match against West Indies, because most of the times their inspirational skipper Charlotte Edwards has successfully shouldered the responsibility of scoring big and batting through the innings. The middle order, when they got the chance to bat, has done reasonably well. Sarah Taylor's bat hasn't yet done too much, but if she can bat to her potential, South Africa have

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have played very good cricket. After the first half, we heard there might be bit of rain. But one can't play according to that. We just had to keep them tight because they have some big hitters," said Mathews.

Mathews was key to Sri Lanka's fighting total. He came in towards the end and helped them score 40-odd runs in the last three overs.

"I never got a signal. We just had to calculate who to attack. We had to choose our options and [Sunil] Narine wasn't one of them. We wanted to get 7-8 runs off Narine and look for runs from the other end. From the 16-over mark, we just had to take the risk," said Mathews.



PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED/ INTERNET
 Australian women cricketers celebrate their close 8-run win against the West Indies in the ICC Women's World T20 first semifinal at Mirpur yesterday. (Inset) Aussie fast bowler Mitchell Starc keenly follows the team where his partner Alyssa Healy is the wicketkeeper.