

SPORT

Tigers one step closer

BISHWAJIT ROY

Zimbabwe lifted their game a little bit but in the end they embraced the same fate as the Tigers made it 4-0 by winning the fourth ODI of the five-match series by 21 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night.

The match started with both sets of players wearing black armbands and observing a minute's silence to mourn the untimely death of Australian batsman Phillip Hughes.

When the action started, the visitors, for the first time, threatened to upset the home side for their first win of the tour through a 106-run fourth-wicket partnership between Brendan Taylor and Solomon Mire. But debuting leg-spinner Jubair Hossain interrupted just in time to break the partnership and put the brakes on Zimbabwe's scoring. The tourists were eventually restricted to 235 for 8 in their 50 overs after Bangladesh had scored a seemingly below-par 256 for 8 in their quota of 50 overs.

Unlike the previous matches, Bangladesh made a poor start under overcast conditions after deciding to bat, but still Zimbabwe failed to capitalise on those chances as the home side moved another step closer towards the expected whitewash of the southern African nation. The fifth and final match will take place at the same venue on December 1.

Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur

- ➔ The 134-run stand for the fifth-wicket yesterday was Bangladesh's second highest overall.
- ➔ Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim have now put together 1022 runs among them.
- ➔ Mahmudullah remained unbeaten on 82 -- his highest ODI total and tenth half-century. This was the ninth time that he remained unbeaten after getting a 50-plus score.
- ➔ Shakib Al Hasan is now the highest wicket-taker against Zimbabwe. He has 60 wickets, one more than Muttiah Muralidaran.
- ➔ The 65-run stand for the eighth wicket between Mahmudullah and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is their second highest overall. Bangladesh have two more 65-run stands for the same wicket against Zimbabwe.
- ➔ Mushfiqur now has 202 runs in this series -- only the third time that he has crossed the 200-mark in a bilateral series. His highest is 208.

Rahim and captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza however deserved the kudos for their batting efforts that helped their side maintain the supremacy over the visitors. Riyad, who hit an unbeaten 82 for his highest score and his first ODI fifty in 18 months, played the anchor's role to stabilise the team twice.

Tamim Iqbal and Anamul Haque were nowhere near their hundred partnerships in the previous two matches and Imrul Kayes, who replaced Mominul Haque in the top order, probably gave the impression once again that he was not someone who could fulfil the team management's desire of taking a top-order place other than the opening slot and as a result Bangladesh were reduced to 4 for 32.

Mushfiqur joined Riyad to repair the damages to take the team into a

good position by adding 134 runs for the fifth wicket after making a 78-ball 77.

After another mini collapse, Riyad added 65 in just eight overs with Mashrafe, whose 25-ball 39 boosted the team to cross the 250-mark. He smote four boundaries and two big sixes.

In reply, Hamilton Masakadza and Vusi Sibanda made a confident start associating 48 runs in 10.1 overs but left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan dismissed both the openers and Jubair got the wicket of Timycen Maruma as Zimbabwe tottered at 60 for three.

Taylor and Mire brought some excitement but it seemed that it was just a matter of one wicket for the hosts to bounce back and Jubair did it. Then pacer Rubel Hossain picked up two wickets to seal the deal.



All-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad pulls out during his knock of 82 not out in the fourth ODI against Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD					
BANGLADESH		R	B	4s	6s
b Mire					
Anamul lbw b Madziva	5	12	1	0	0
Imrul c Taylor b Madziva	5	18	0	0	0
Mahmudullah not out	82	112	6	0	0
Shakib c Maruma b Mire	1	4	0	0	0
Mushfiqur c Chigumbura					
b Kamungozi	77	78	7	0	0
Sabbir c Chakabva b					
Kamungozi	4	10	1	0	0
Abul c Chigumbura b Mire	1	3	0	0	0
Mashrafe c Moor					
b Madziva	39	25	4	2	0
Rubel not out	7	5	1	0	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-4, w-13, nb-1)					
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs)	256				
Did not bat: Jubair					
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-31, 3-31, 4-32, 5-166, 6-175, 7-177, 8-242.					
Bowler					
Chatara	10	2	39	0	0
Madziva	10	0	60	3	0
Mire	10	0	49	3	0
Sibanda	1	0	7	0	0
Kamungozi	10	0	36	2	0
Chigumbura	3	0	19	0	0
H Masakadza	5	0	30	0	0
Maruma	1	0	11	0	0
ZIMBABWE					
H Masakadza b Shakib	28	40	4	0	0
Sibanda lbw b Shakib	17	27	3	0	0
Maruma b Jubair	6	19	0	0	0
Taylor c Mushfiqur					
b Rubel	63	69	7	0	0
Mire c Mahmudullah					
b Jubair	52	54	6	2	0
Chakabva c Jubair					
b Rubel	26	34	2	0	0
Chigumbura c Abul					
b Mashrafe	4	14	0	0	0
Moor run out	13	25	1	0	0
Madziva not out	3	4	0	0	0
Chatara not out	16	15	1	1	0
Extras: (lb-4, w-2, nb-1)					
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs)	235				
Did not bat: Kamungozi					
Fall of wickets: 1-48, 2-51, 3-60, 4-166, 5-172, 6-183, 7-211, 8-217.					
Bowler					
Mashrafe	10	0	34	1	0
Abul	10	0	48	0	0
Shakib	10	1	28	2	0
Rubel	10	1	48	2	0
Jubair	6	0	42	2	0
Mahmudullah	4	0	31	0	0

MSC, Abahani post big wins

SPORTS REPORTER



A five-wicket haul from young left-arm pacer Mostafizur Rahman led Abahani Limited to their fourth win in the Dhaka Premier League, as they cruised to a six-wicket win over Kalabagan Krira Chakra at Fatullah. After electing to bat first, Kalabagan KC were restricted to 189 for 9 courtesy of Mostafizur's 5 for 32.

In reply, unbeaten half-centuries from Chamara Silva and Nasir Hossain led Abahani home with eight overs to spare.

At the BKSP, big guns Mohammedan Sporting Club scored a 49-run win over bottom-placed Old DOHS. Batting first, half-centuries from Mithun Ali and Naeem Islam led MSC to 250 for 8 at the end of 50 overs. Old DOHS's poor run of form continued as they could only manage 201 after 50 overs, losing their sixth

consecutive match.

In the other game at the BKSP, an unbeaten 87 from Dhiman Ghosh led Victoria Sporting Club to an easy seven-wicket win over Partex Sporting Club.

SCORES IN BRIEF

- MOHAMMEDAN: 250 for 8 (Mithun 54, Naeem 51 not out; Saleh 3-46, Abu 3-52)
- OLD DOHS: 201 for 8 (Shahnaj 55, Ahsanul 48; Ariful 3-22, Murad 2-36)
- Result: Mohammedan won by 49 runs.
- KALABAGAN KC: 189 for 9 (Tasamul 40; Mostafizur 5-32)
- ABAHANI: 193 for 4 in 42 overs (Chamara 59 not out, Nasir 53 not out; Shahadat 2-26)
- Result: Abahani won by six wickets.
- PARTEX: 183 all out in 47.4 overs (Mehrab 65; Abu 4-28)
- VICTORIA: 186 for 3 in 45.4 overs (Dhiman 87 not out, Nadif 43 not out; Shafiqul 1-33)
- Result: Victoria won by seven wickets.

'Never wanted to be a hero'

Tigers dedicate win to Hughes

NAIMUL KARIM

Mahmudullah Riyad is not a traditional hero for Bangladesh.

In fact, for a team that has seen some of its more 'heroic' players get dropped for this series, the decision to stick to Riyad -- who had scored just a 115 runs in nine innings prior to this series this year -- seemed questionable.

However, the way he has carried his form from the Test series against the West Indies, suggests that the all-rounder might finally be paying back the management for their belief in him. His 82 yesterday, was an innings that helped turned the game around.

"I have never been a hero and I don't have that much interest in being one either," laughed Riyad when asked about his performance at the post-match press conference.

"I tried to win the match for the team and to grab a 4-0 lead, so that we have a chance at 5-0," he added.

For a player who generally bats down the order, runs don't come by easily and that's something that shows in Riyad's career statistics. This was his first half-century of the year. In the current team though, Riyad plays at number four, a role that he enjoys more.

"I need some time to get settled, that makes it easier for me. I am enjoying batting at this position at the moment. Hopefully I can continue this way," said Riyad.

"After losing four wickets, we realised that there was something in the wicket. Even a normal ball seemed suspicious. But I am happy with the way we managed to cope with the situation. Hopefully we can use this experience against bigger teams," the batsman said.

Speaking on behalf of the Bangladesh team, towards the end of the press conference, Riyad dedicated the win to Phillip Hughes, who had tragically succumbed to an on-field injury on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe captain Elton Chigumbura reckoned that they had lost a good opportunity to win a match.

"Our fifth bowler failed to bowl as tightly as our openers. That's why we did not manage to break the partnership. It could have been a different story had we got another wicket," said Chigumbura.

Sporting world mourns Hughes

AGENCIES, Sydney

Flags flew at half-mast and thousands of fans and players paid tribute Friday as Australia and the world cricket community united in an outpouring of grief for the tragic death of batsman Phillip Hughes.

Cricketers the world over paused to remember the player, and a spontaneous #putoutyourbat campaign received a massive response with thousands posting pictures of bats on Twitter.

Australia's stunned Test team comforted each other in a grief counselling session at the Sydney Cricket Ground, where Hughes was knocked unconscious while batting in a domestic game on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old died two days later on Thursday from massive bleeding in his brain, becoming one of the highest profile deaths in sport since Formula One icon Ayrton Senna in 1994.

Shock at the freak accident pulsed around the globe as Hughes featured on front pages worldwide and flags were at half-mast at Lord's, the home of cricket in London.

New South Wales authorities announced a public memorial service for Hughes, while next week's first Test against India hung in the balance.

Hughes' death dominated Australia's major newspapers on Friday, with sombre eulogies for the boy raised on a banana plantation whose life ended three days before his 26th birthday.

"Nation shares the agony of an innings

cut short." The Australian's front-page headline read above a picture of Hughes gazing above with an Australian flag in the background.

Sydney's Daily Telegraph blacked out its entire back page, except for a picture of Hughes, in his honour.

Four players in Australia's Test squad -- David Warner, Brad Haddin, Shane Watson and Nathan Lyon -- were on the field when he collapsed after being hit by a Sean Abbott delivery.

Both the Sydney Cricket Ground and the cavernous Melbourne Cricket Ground lowered their flags to half-mast, while club teams from Australia to India paused in a minute's silence.

Before play in the third Test against Pakistan, New Zealand's players lined up their bats and caps outside their dressing room in sombre tribute.

Both teams in Sharjah, who cancelled play on Thursday in shock at the news, also held a minute's silence and donned

black armbands.

Rank-and-file fans and superstars alike contributed to #putoutyourbat, posting pictures of bats leaning against front doors, stadiums and statues.

Previously anonymous Sydneysider Paul D. Taylor, who started the campaign, said he was "amazed and humbled by the outcome".

Google Australia joined the trend, decorating its home page with the poignant image of a single bat.



Bangladesh and Zimbabwe players observe a minute's silence before the start of the fourth ODI in Mirpur yesterday as mark of respect to Australian cricketer Phillip Hughes, who passed away tragically at the age of 25 on Thursday. (INSET) A bat is leaned against the stumps at the Adelaide Oval as part of the #putoutyourbat campaign which was marked around the cricketing world.

TWITTER TRIBUTES

Phillip Hughes Death is so incredibly tragic... Thoughts go out to his family and to Sean Abbott in this very difficult time for them all.

ANDY MURRAY

Shocked about the news of Oz's cricketer Phil Hughes. My thoughts with the family and the cricket fans.

RAFAEL NADAL

Horrible news to hear about Phillip Hughes today! Can't believe we also lost Gary Speed 3 years ago today.

GARETH BALE

So sad to wake up to the news about Phillip Hughes. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

HUGH JACKMAN

Just heard. In shock. My deep condolences to the family of Phillip Hughes.

DAV'S DISSECTION



DAV WHATMORE

As I was being driven to the ground in the morning, I was more relaxed than normal. Why was that? It then reminded myself that the series was won and the adrenaline that's usually evident was just not there.

The events that transpired early in the match -- Bangladesh's batting -- had suggested to me that the dreaded C word, Complacency, had reared its ugly head. Four for 32 was certainly not in the script. All of a sudden a repair job was needed and not for the first time in the series, a partnership of over a hundred (134 runs off 158 balls) by Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad was gladly taken by the full house of spectators.

However for me the turning point was another partnership, late in the innings, between Mahmudullah and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, which yielded 58 runs in 52 balls, providing the spark and impetus leading into the second half of the match.

I felt the top order failed to read the conditions of the pitch, which was providing assistance to the fast bowlers. Playing shots against the moving ball would always be dangerous given the Zimbabweans were regularly finding the right length and line. Perhaps Mashrafe rued his decision to bat first when he won the toss in overcast conditions.

For the first time in the series, Zimbabwe did not lose a wicket in the first ten overs which was a refreshing change for them. In fact, they did not lose a wicket in the third 10 over block either and, in that time, they made Bangladesh work for the first time in the series.

Without a doubt the turning points in the second innings were the dismissals of Solomon Mire and Brendan Taylor within seven balls of each other. From a position of strength -- 166 for 3, Zimbabwe lost both set batsmen just before the batting powerplay to reach 172 for 5, which was definitely a setback.

The only glimmer of hope rested with Elton Chigumbura, the in-form batsman, but when he departed cheaply, it was a procession.

This was a better game from Zimbabwe, but sadly for them, it was another loss in what must be a long series.

Perhaps Monday's game will be even closer. The writer is a former Australia cricketer and Bangladesh's coach and currently a TV commentator.

McCullum, Craig flay Pakistan

AFP, Sharjah

Opener Brendon McCullum smashed the fastest century by a New Zealand batsman to give his team an upper hand in the third and final Test against Pakistan in Sharjah on Friday.

The Kiwi skipper completed his tenth hundred off 78 balls and went on to reach 145-ball 153 when bad light ended play seven overs earlier with New Zealand 249-1, a strong position with just 102 runs away from Pakistan's first innings total of 351.

Earlier off-spinner Mark Craig took a career best 7-94 as Pakistan lost their last seven wickets for 70 runs to get bowled out for 351 after resuming at 281-3, with Mohammad Hafeez hitting a career best 197.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 351 all out (Hafeez 197, Azhar 39, Misbah 38, Yasir 25; Craig 7-94)
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 249 for 1 (McCullum 153 not out, Williamson 76 not out; Rahat 1-24)