



## 'We were 20 runs short'

SPORTS REPORTER



While one can't be completely disappointed with the way the Tigers played at the Blacktown Olympic Park yesterday, the three-wicket defeat though is bound to leave the players reeling.

Tamim Iqbal (81) and Mahmudullah Riyad (83) posted 168 for the third wicket, Bangladesh's second highest stand for that position, and helped the Tigers recover. With 190-odd runs and eight wickets in hand in the last eleven overs, the middle order had the perfect foundation.

However, Bangladesh's most dependable batsmen failed to lead the charge. While Mushfiqur Rahim was out for a duck, Shakib Al Hasan left after scoring 31. A score of 246 at the medium-sized ground was never going to be enough.

Tamim, who played his first competitive match after returning from injury, reckoned that the Tigers were 20 runs short.

"I think it was a tight game. For a moment it seemed as though we could win this one. We may have lost, but if we continue playing such tight matches the result will not always be against us. It was a positive outcome.

"It made us realise that if we do our jobs properly, we can win matches abroad," Tamim told reporters after the match yesterday.

The collapse towards the end, which saw Bangladesh lose eight wickets for just 62 runs, brought Pakistan back into the game. "We were 20 runs short on that ground for sure," said Tamim.

Bangladesh's bowling witnessed a similar following. While the pacers took early wickets and gave the Tigers a good start, Pakistan's batsmen capitalised towards the end. When Taskin Ahmed bowled Misbahul Haq for 10, Pakistan were at a precarious 199 for 6 in 42.2 overs. However, any chance of a comeback was destroyed by Shahid Afridi (24) and a few late hits from Sohaib Maqsood (93).

The left-hander admitted that the death bowling could have been better from the Tigers. "We bowled quite a few boundary deliveries towards the end and that hurt us," he rued.

On a personal note, the batsman, despite being disappointed on missing out on a century, was happy with his comeback.

"Scoring a hundred gives you a different feeling all together but I am quite happy that I managed to get a good start. The kind of confidence that I received after this innings, I think is good enough to help me in the World Cup," reckoned the opener.

The way Bangladesh played yesterday's game provided an insight with regards to the team's strategies. For one, they are yet to find a number seven. It seems to be a battle between Soumya Sarkar and Sabbir Rahman. If both players are taken, then the Tigers may have to go in without either of their specialist spinners, Arafat Sunny and Taijul Islam.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGLADESH:** 246 all out in 49.5 overs (Mahmudullah 83, Tamim 81; Irfan 5-52, Shah 2-42)

**PAKISTAN:** 247 for 7 in 48.1 overs (Maqsood 93, Akmal 39; Taskin 2-41, Mashrafe 2-50)

**Result:** Pakistan won by three wickets.

Young pace bowler Taskin Ahmed (C) gave Bangladesh a chance to upset the Pakistan appalcart by dismissing Misbahul Haq during their World Cup warm-up match at Blacktown Olympic Park in Sydney yesterday. The Tigers however lost the game by three wickets.

PHOTO: AFP

## Rony stands for runs

SPORTS REPORTER



With two double centuries to his name, a batting average of nearly 200 and an astonishing 591 runs in three innings, Rony Talukdar is living his dream in the National Cricket League at the moment. His 201 against Chittagong on the second day of the third round of the NCL yesterday put Dhaka in a position of strength.

Add to that is his sublime performance in the Dhaka Premier League last year, where he comfortably topped the runs chart, and you might find yourself

asking that tingling question: "Why isn't he playing for the national team yet?"

The batsman in question though isn't worried about all that. At the moment he is busy preparing his plans for his next match against Rangpur; another double perhaps?

"My self-belief is at a really good place right now. This is obviously the best cricket that I have played in my career. But I want this to continue. I don't know what will happen in the future, all I am looking forward to is how I bat in my next game," Talukdar told The Daily Star.

The 24-year-old has had to go through a series of changes for his good run. For instance, he spends an extra hour in the nets, compared to his teammates and challenges the net bowlers to get him out.

He even likes to spice things up a bit with a few friendly bets. "I tell them that they will receive a gift if they can get me out within an hour. It's just so that they give their best," chuckled Talukdar.

While it wasn't clear as to how many gifts he had to give away, the result of his hard work however is quite visible.

Of all the modifications though, it's the change in his attitude that the player reckons helped him most.

"Players are scoring so many centuries in international cricket at the moment. [AB] de Villiers and [Virat] Kohli, they are doing so well. I told myself that if they can do it, why can't I? I don't know how this change happened, but right now all that I focus on is the next ball."

SCORES IN BRIEF	
<b>CHITTAGONG:</b> 155 v <b>DHAKA:</b> 518 for 4 (Rony 201, Abdul 113; Nayeem 2-68)	
<b>DHAKA METRO:</b> 400 all out in 141.3 overs (Shadman 140, Asif 86; Al-Amin 5-49) v <b>BARISAL:</b> 141 for no loss (Shahriar 79 not out, Saif 55 not out)	
<b>RANGPUR:</b> 310 all out in 106.2 overs (Ariful 68, Tarik 63; Ziaur 2-17) v <b>KHULNA:</b> 213 all out in 66 overs (Imrul 94; Mahmudul 5-76, Sanjib 4-35)	
<b>RAJSHAHI:</b> 482 all out in 149.3 overs (Myshukur 158, Junaid 102, Forhad 87; Enamul 4-137) v <b>SYLHET:</b> 96 for 4 (Alok 28 not out; Saqlain 2-49)	



## Holder urges team to go on

AFP, Sydney

West Indies captain Jason Holder Monday described the loss of Dwyane Bravo and Kieron Pollard as "huge" but wanted the former champions to move on during the World Cup.

Drafted in surprisingly as captain just two months before the World Cup, Holder said selection matters were beyond his control.

"They are two players who have done well in world cricket," Holder said when asked what effect will the dropping of the two key players will have on his team.

"I am not the selector. It's out of our control. Not having them would be a huge loss to any side. But it's beyond our control and we have to accept it and move on."

The 23-year-old became the youngest man to lead the West Indies in the wake of a players' strike over a payment row with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

The tussle resulted in West Indies abandoning the tour of India in October last year.

Bravo and Pollard were the leading players behind the strike and their axing was described as "vengeance" by former West Indian paceman Michael Holding.

## Woakes wallops WI

AFP, Sydney



Seamer Chris Woakes geared up for the World Cup with a five-wicket haul to help England demolish the West Indies by nine wickets in a warm-up match in Sydney on Monday.

Woakes took 5-19 in 7.3 overs of skilled swing bowling to dismiss the West Indies for a paltry 122 in 29.3 overs. England chased down the target for the loss of just one wicket in 22.5 overs.

Woakes dismissed dashing opener Chris

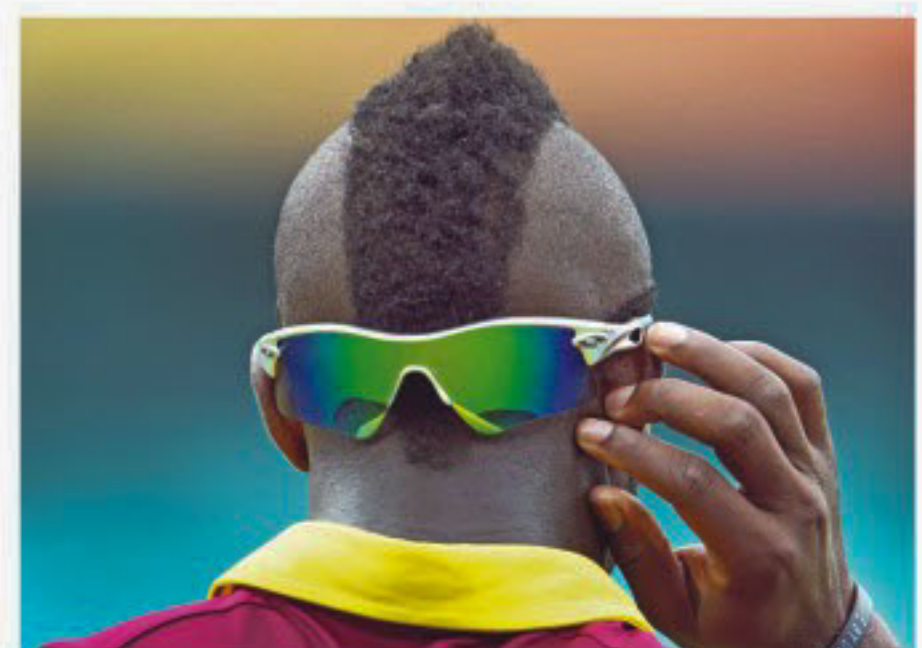


PHOTO: AFP

**Guess Who? It's West Indies' Andre Russell with his new mohawk.**

Gayle off the third ball of the first over for a duck and off the very next ball had Darren Bravo, who also failed to score.

He then dismissed Dwayne Smith (21) in his fourth over to leave the West Indies reeling on 35-3.

Lendl Simmons top-scored with 45 with four boundaries and a six before Woakes returned for his second spell to dismiss Simmons and Andre Russell to cap an impressive day.

**PROTEAS EDGE OUT LANKANS**

South Africa beat Sri Lanka by five wickets

with just three balls to spare in a thrilling rain-interrupted World Cup warm-up on Monday.

Sri Lanka smashed 279 for seven in their innings, which was reduced to 44.4 overs after rain stopped play at Hagley Oval in Christchurch.

Opener Tillakaratne Dilshan laid the foundations for a big Sri Lankan total when he belted exactly 100 off just 83 deliveries, which included 15 boundaries and two sixes.

He was well supported by the Sri Lankan captain Angelo Mathews, who made a quickfire 58 off 49 balls, and Dimuth Karunaratne, who chipped in with 46 off 61 deliveries.

Kyle Abbott was the pick of the South Africa bowlers, taking 3-37 while all-rounder Wayne Parnell bagged two wickets.

When the rain stopped and the South Africans started their reply, they were initially set 230 to win off 30 overs under the Duckworth-Lewis method.

### RAIN RUINS NZ-ZIM WARM-UP

Opener Martin Gupthill hit a fighting hundred before rain saved New Zealand's symbolic batting in a World Cup warm-up game against a spirited Zimbabwe on Monday.

Gupthill hit the 86-ball century as New Zealand wilted to 157-7 in 30.1 overs after winning the toss, before heavy rain washed out the match.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**WEST INDIES:** 122 in 29.3 overs (Simmons 45; Woakes 5-19)

**ENGLAND:** 125-1 in 22.5 overs (Moeen 46) **Result:** England won by nine wickets.

**SRI LANKA:** 279-7 in 44.4 overs (Dilshan 100, Mathews 58; Abbott 3-37) **SOUTH AFRICA:** 188-5 in 24.3 overs (De Kock 66; Herath 3-22)

**Result:** South Africa won by five wickets on D/L method.



## WORLD CUP COCKTAIL

Australia captain Michael Clarke will play in the warm-up game against the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday as he intensifies his push to be fit for the World Cup and potentially Australia's opening match against England on Saturday at the MCG.

Coach Darren Lehmann said that if Clarke gets through training Tuesday he will play against UAE in the final warm-up game before the World Cup starts.

"Michael, if he gets through training tomorrow hopefully, he will play the trial game on Wednesday so that is a pleasing thing for us. He is training the house down on the training track so now it's a case of getting him up to speed with the fielding and away he goes from there," Lehmann said.

### FAULKNER DOUBTFUL

Australian selectors are bracing for James Faulkner to miss the pivotal

World Cup match away to New Zealand on February 28.

Since the all-rounder suffered a side strain on February 1 the team's medical staff have not given a firm estimate of his expected recovery time, other than it was of the "typical" severity suffered by fast bowlers. They said his rate of improvement in the first fortnight, which concludes on Sunday, would "determine when he can return to batting and bowling".

Faulkner is staying with the Australian squad but in Adelaide was limited to walking laps of Adelaide Oval.

While it was expected the left-armner would miss both the February 14 opener against England and the February 21 match against Bangladesh, selector Mark Waugh suggested Faulkner's stint on the sidelines could stretch beyond that.

### SOHAIL SIDELINED

Pakistan were hit by a fresh World Cup injury scare on Monday when fast bowler Sohail Khan was sidelined by a calf problem during a warm-up game against Bangladesh.

The 30-year-old, a surprise inclusion in the squad, bowled six overs and took one wicket before he walked off the field at Sydney's Blacktown Olympic Park Oval.

Although the injury is not thought to be serious, it comes after frontline pacemen Umar Gul and Junaid Khan were forced out with knee and thigh problems respectively.

On Sunday, opener Mohammad Hafeez also withdrew from the 15-man squad with an ankle injury as fitness problems mount for the 1992 champions. -COMPILED

## A party of discord

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo drew criticism in the changing room by partying for his 30th birthday hours after a 4-0 defeat by rivals Atletico, media reported Monday.

Leading sports daily Marca called the Portuguese striker's birthday bash after Real's Madrid derby defeat in the league on Saturday "The Party of Discord."

"Pictures of the celebration did not go down well with Real Madrid's captains" Iker Casillas and Sergio

Ramos, Marca wrote on Monday.

Ronaldo hosted teammates including second-choice goalkeeper Keylor Navas, defender Pepe, Fabio Coentrao, Luka Modric, Sami Khedira and James Rodriguez, who recently had foot surgery, newspapers reported.

Participants including Colombian singer Kevin Roldan, who was invited to entertain guests at the party, posted photographs on social networks of Ronaldo and various grinning teammates.

"The online social networks were on fire with fierce criticism from fans," reported Madrid sports newspaper AS.

## Murali's money not on spin bowlers

STAR SPORT DESK

Sri Lankan spin legend Muttiah Muralidaran doesn't believe that the slow bowlers will be holding the keys to succeeding in the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

"If your hope is for spin to play a major role at this World Cup, then I believe you are likely to be disappointed," said the world's highest wicket-taker both Tests and ODIs in a write-up on the ICC Media Zone yesterday.

"It is true the tournament in Australia and New Zealand is taking place at the back-end of the season and normally you might expect to see dry and tired pitches offering turn for the slow bowlers.

"But, while the very best spinners have a chance of featuring near the top of the wicket-taking charts, I am not holding my breath for them to dominate that chart.

"Why? Well to start with, I am not expecting pitches to be all that tired and worn. Remember several of the Australia venues have now switched to drop-in surfaces and even in the cases of those that have not, I am sure curators will be keeping their pitches for the tournament fresh as this is cricket's ultimate showpiece and they will not want to be seen to produce conditions that are anything less than perfect," opined the off-spinner.

"My experience of both countries is that, although both are very different, neither will offer very much assistance to spinners, especially in matches where, in 100 overs, you are unlikely to see much deterioration in the pitches."

## Chameera in for Prasad

INTERNET

Pacer Dushantha Chameera has been named as Dhammika Prasad's replacement in Sri Lanka's World Cup squad.

Prasad was ruled out of the World Cup with a broken hand suffered in training.

Chameera only made his international debut against New Zealand in January. He has taken 25 List A wickets at 33.12.

