

SPORT

BANGLADESH V PAKISTAN PCB
NEW ERA BEGINS HERE



TIGERS ON THE PROWL: Bangladesh were out for blood yesterday and they preyed on Pakistan with efficiency at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. Their opponents did battle back, but could not escape from the death-grip the Tigers had on them. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

It could have been better

SPORTS REPORTER



The match had begun on an inauspicious note for the hosts. Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had overstepped on his very first ball and was then comfortably hoisted over cover as a result of the free-hit. However, the strategies he followed from there on turned out to work brilliantly.

Pakistan had survived the early onslaught from Mashrafe and Taskin Ahmed and were poised at a relatively comfortable 29 for no loss after six overs. That's when the skipper brought about the first changes. He brought in Arafat Sunny and Rubel Hossain and the move worked like a charm. Rubel got Sarfraz Ahmed caught in the slips with his very first ball while Sunny's arm-ball duped the dangerous Mohammad Hafeez in the following over.

Mashrafe then brought in Nasir Hossain and Shakib Al Hasan. After getting introduced in the 16th over, Shakib struck with only his third ball, getting Azhar Ali caught behind. The following over saw Nasir bowl Fawad Alam.

The half-century of the first ODI, Mohammad Rizwan, arrived at the crease next and Mashrafe responded by placing close-in fielders. After facing 20-odd balls Rizwan was stifled with a straighter delivery from Shakib.

At 77 for 5 in the 22nd over, one would have expected the visitors to be done and dusted, but instead they recovered to post a respectable 239. While youngster Saad Nasim and the experienced Wahab Riaz did show plenty of grit, one would have thought that the Tigers skipper, who had been brilliant until then, missed a few tricks towards the end.

The one thing that he probably could have done was to allow his pacers finish their quotas for they clearly looked menac-

ing. Taskin was steaming in early on; the bouncer that banged on to Azhar's helmet in the sixth over displayed just how much the 19-year-old was enjoying himself.

In the same vein Rubel had begun his spell with a wicket and two maidens and looked daunting. However, both these bowlers had five overs remaining among themselves at the end of the innings.

After the 22nd over, Mashrafe, instead of bringing back his key bowlers, introduced Mahmudullah Riyad into the attack. It was a move which seemingly released the pressure. While Rubel was eventually brought back in the 28th over, he only got two overs. In a similar move, Taskin bowled over numbers 32 and 34

WE KEEP OUR PROMISE
ANWAR CEMENT

before the skipper introduced himself.

From the 35th over onwards, the bowling was dominated by Mashrafe, Shakib and Sunny. Mashrafe's death-bowling problems surfaced yet again, while the batsmen seemingly got used to the loopy deliveries from the slow left-armers and gave them a thud.

Incidentally, Rubel was given just one over in the powerplay and Taskin was handed the ball for the 48th and the 50th overs. While the 19-year-old did finish well, one reckons that the result could have been a lot better had he been given a longer spell early on.

At no point did the score of 239 look threatening for the Tigers. However, the events that followed in the latter half of the first innings yesterday could prove to be a learning experience for the aggressive skipper.



We have overcome

AL-AMIN

Just over three years ago the whole nation cried with their beloved Tigers after that heart-breaking 2-run defeat in the Asia Cup final. On that night the moribund Tigers sang in unison 'we shall overcome one day'.

The Tigers did sing the same song at the home of Bangladesh cricket in Mirpur on Sunday but this time with a slightly altered dialect -- We have overcome... And so did the whole nation.

The opposition in question on both occasions are Pakistan, a team that looked invincible for the Tigers for a long 16 years. It may be just another game and another win for any other team in the cricketing world. But Sunday's 7-wicket win against Pakistan, fresh after the 79-run triumph two days ago, meant more than just another win. Statistically it won the Tigers the series with a game in hand. But two wins in as many games and that too in such a dominating fashion, where the otherwise predators turned into Tigers' prey, gave a whole new meaning to this fledgling cricketing nation which is yet to stop celebrating ever since the start of the World Cup down under in mid February.

A dream passage into the World Cup quarterfinal followed by a historic series win against (an inexperienced) Pakistan. Yes, it's an inexperienced Pakistan team. We do feel for them because they were not up against the so called 'minnows' that world has bracketed the Tigers even after that quarterfinal defeat against India. We want to convey to our most decorated South Asian neighbours that it has so far been a series between an inexperienced side and a ruthless and committed professionals from the 'minnows' of Bangladesh.

I think we should keep on loving this unenviable tag because it will allow -- so far has done so -- the new breed of Tigers to make one statement after another.

The game in Mirpur yesterday, where the Tigers had hardly put a foot wrong apart from that first delivery, a no ball, from Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, was also a display of correcting some individual details. Let's take for instance a back-to-back century by opener Tamim Iqbal that not many among the loyal Tigers' fans, who did not like his 'stop blabbering' signals the other day, had expected, if not wanted.

We believe this process of correction should be more focused than on a whitewash, which is on the cards.

Tigers unchanged for third ODI

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh named an unchanged squad for the third and final ODI against Pakistan, due to take place on Wednesday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The selectors had earlier named a 14-member squad for the first two ODIs. While there were expectations of a slightly different squad for the third ODI, yesterday's announcement put that theory to rest.

SQUAD

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarkar, Rony Talukdar, Mominul Haque, Arafat Sunny, Mahmudullah Riyad, Rubel Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Nasir Hossain, Sabbir Rahman, Abul Hasan.



THE FINE ART OF BAKING

BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN	R/B	4s/6s
Azhar c Mushfiqur b Shakib	36/60	5/0
Sarfraz c Soumya b Rubel	7/11	0/0
Hafeez b Arafat	0/6	0/0
Sohail c & b Mashrafe	44/61	1/1
Fawad b Nasir	0/6	0/0
Rizwan lbw b Shakib	13/22	2/0
Nasim not out	77/96	6/1
Riaz not out	51/40	5/2
Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-5, nb-2)		11
Total: (For 6 wks in 50 overs)	239	
Did not bat: Junaid, Ajmal, Rahat.		
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-37, 3-58, 4-59, 5-77, 6-154.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	8	0	52	1
Taskin	8	1	41	0
Arafat	10	0	41	1
Rubel	7	2	27	1
Nasir	5	0	17	1
Shakib	10	0	51	2
Mahmudullah	2	0	6	0

BANGLADESH	R/B	4s/6s
Tamim not out	116/116	17/1
Soumya c Sarfraz b Junaid	17/11	4/0
Mahmudullah b Ajmal	17/28	2/0
Mushfiqur c Fawad b Rahat	65/70	8/1
Shakib not out	7/5	1/0
Extras: (lb-2, w-15, nb-1)		18
Total: (For 3 wks in 38.1 overs)	240	
Did not bat: Sabbir Rahman, Nasir Hossain, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Arafat Sunny, Taskin Ahmed, Rubel Hossain.		
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-100, 3-218.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Junaid	9	0	61	1
Rahat	7	0	57	1
Riaz	8	0	36	0
Ajmal	9.1	1	49	1
Azhar	3	0	20	0
Nasim	2	0	15	0

Result: Bangladesh won by 7 wickets and lead the 3-match series 2-0.
Player-of-the-match: Tamim Iqbal.
Toss: Pakistan

Muted celebration disappoints Mash

SPORTS REPORTER



After Shakib Al Hasan nudged a single down to third man to score the winning run and snatch a historic series-victory against Pakistan last night, the Tigers were expected to have broken out in emphatic celebrations.

But curiously the Tigers were as businesslike and calm in their celebrations as they were during the course of the match. Shakib went on to hug centurion Tamim Iqbal as the latter raised his bat while walking back to the dressing room. Coach Chandika Hathurusingha greeted Tamim and patted him while the players exchanged pleasantries. And that was about it.

The muted nature of celebration was unlike the Tigers, known for animated nature of celebrating, and it took quite a few by surprise including the skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza himself.

When asked about the mode of celebration in the post-match press conference, the Bangladesh skipper leader expressed his disappointment

and felt the team should have showed more emotions to reflect what they had achieved.

"I think the players should feel proud," said Mashrafe, cutting a rather dejected figure.

"Maybe they shouldn't show off but they should feel proud because the way the team won the match was something to be proud of. If we don't celebrate the win, the win won't feel good. So we have to celebrate," added the Tigers' skipper.

The 31-year-old pace bowler, who came back into the side after missing out on the first ODI due to a suspension, recalled an incident from Bangladesh's tour of Australia in 2003 to make his point.

"In 2003, I witnessed how wildly Australia celebrated their success after beating us within two-and-a-half days (in a Test match in Darwin). The win against a team like ours was an expected one for Australians but still they celebrated it wildly. I don't know what happens outside, but the players need to celebrate this win," opined Mashrafe.



The home of cricket in Mirpur yesterday had another capacity-crowd who witnessed Bangladesh put up a masterful display against Pakistan in the second ODI.

PHOTO: STAR

SUPERCRETE CEMENT

SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY

Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

TAMIM IQBAL



Tamim Iqbal's manner of celebration may be debatable, but there is no arguing the fact that the left-hander has turned a corner in his career. The 26-year-old opener had to wait more than two years to move from his fourth

to fifth hundred in one-day cricket, but it took him only a day to move to his sixth. With the confidence-boosting 132-run knock in the first ODI against Pakistan on Friday, the Chittagonian walked in to the crease yesterday as Bangladesh needed 240 to win the second match and snatch the series. Aggressive from the start, Tamim took 31 balls for his 50 before going on to reach the three-figure mark off 108 deliveries. But he wasn't finished there; the opener remained unbeaten on 116 to guide Bangladesh to a seven-wicket victory.

'A big blow for Pakistan'

SPORTS REPORTER



Pakistan skipper Azhar Ali has described the first-ever series loss to Bangladesh as a 'huge blow'.

Speaking to reporters at Mirpur after their seven-wicket defeat to the Tigers Azhar said, "It's a huge blow for us. I know we are in a rebuilding process, but we didn't expect to lose here, we had come here to win."

"It's definitely a big win for them [Bangladesh]. No matter what you say about our team, Pakistan is still one of the best sides in the world. We were outplayed in every form of the game," he added.

The skipper further stated that they were way short of the par score.

"The wicket was really good to bat on. We just lost quick wickets at the wrong time. This was a wicket where you could score 300 runs because it was coming on to the bat well," he opined.

Despite the defeat, Azhar and co is confident that the visitors can turnaround the game in the last and final ODI on April 22.

"We can't just put our head down. We have got to work and play better cricket. That's the simple message to the team. We have two days to go and as a young unit every game will be a learning curve for us," said Azhar.