

# SPORT



## Winning start for Tigers

NAIMUL KARIM from Khulna

In front of a highly enthusiastic crowd at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium, which rarely gets to see the Tigers in town, Bangladesh coasted to a four-wicket win in the first of the four T20I series against Zimbabwe yesterday.

It might have been a comfortable finish in the end with Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and co ambling past their target of 163 with four wickets and eight balls remaining, but the cracks in Bangladesh's T20 approach were on display yet again.

Make no mistake; yesterday's win holds plenty of value. This was the highest T20 score that the Tigers chased down at home and the second highest overall.

However, the way they went about their chase presented plenty of questions. The one aspect that the batters continue to keep struggling with is their inability to make the best of their starts.

Tamim Iqbal, Sabbir Rahman and Mushfiqur Rahim, despite having spent ample time at the crease, were all caught whilst trying to up the tempo, which just multiplied the pressure for the lower-order batsmen.

It's a problem that the team management is well versed with and that's the reason why they fielded eight batsmen, aside from Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, yesterday.

And all eight of them had to play in order to help Bangladesh over the line. While Tamim, Shakib Al Hasan -- who batted at

number six for the first time -- and Mushfiqur all contributed with a scores in the 20s, Sabbir top-scored with 46.

Promoted to number three, it seems as though the management wants to utilise Sabbir's hitting ability as much as possible in this format. He found his groove early on, reverse-sweeping and smacking boundaries, however it was one such attempt in the 15th over that saw him caught at the deep. This took place after he was dropped at long-on on 36.

Ultimately, Bangladesh needed 27 runs from the last three overs with debutant Nurul Hasan and Shakib at the crease. They got those runs in 18.5 overs, courtesy of the ten wides bowled by



After finishing with his worst bowling figures and dropping a catch, Shakib Al Hasan's day was not going according to plan. However, the ace all-rounder redeemed himself somewhat with an unbeaten 20 which took Bangladesh across the finish line. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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### BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

ZIMBABWE	R/B	A/G		
Sibanda c Tamim b Shakib	46/39	4/2		
H Masakadza run out	79/53	9/2		
Waller run out	14/8	2/0		
Raza c Mahmudullah				
b Al-Amin	6/8	0/0		
Chigumbura b Mustafizur	3/3	0/2		
Jongwe b Mustafizur	0/1	0/0		
Williams b Al-Amin	2/6	0/0		
Moort not out	7/2	0/1		
Extras: (lb-3, w-3)	6			
Total: (For 7 wks in 20 overs) 163				
Fall of wickets: 1-101, 2-127, 3-150, 4-153, 5-153, 6-155, 7-163.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	4	0	37	0
Al-Amin	4	0	24	2
Shakib	4	0	45	1
Mustafizur	4	0	18	2
Mahmudullah	2	0	20	0
Sabbir	2	0	16	0
BANGLADESH	R/B	A/G		
Tamim c Sibanda b Cremer	29/24	3/1		
Soumya run out	7/5	1/0		
Sabbir c Waller b Cremer	46/36	4/1		
Shuvagata b Williams	6/7	0/0		
Mushfiqur c Raza				
b W Masakadza	26/19	3/0		
Shakib not out	20/13	2/0		
Mahmudullah b Jongwe	7/3	0/1		
Nurul not out	7/5	1/0		
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, w-12)	18			
Total: (For 6 wks in 18.4 overs) 166				
Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-58, 3-74, 4-118, 5-125, 6-137.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
W Masakadza	4	0	25	1
Vittori	3	0	24	0
Raza	1	0	12	0
Jongwe	3.4	0	45	1
Cremer	4	0	32	2
Williams	3	0	22	1

**Result:** Bangladesh won by 4 wickets.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Hamilton Masakadza.

## 'We weren't up to the mark'

SPORTS REPORTER from Khulna

Shakib Al Hasan batting at number six; Shuvagata Hom at four; Nurul Hasan behind the stumps; the team management prior to the start of the series had said that they would conduct experiments and experiment they did. Shakib batting at six eventually worked out well for the Tigers, but debutant Shuvagata had a rough beginning to his T20I career.

While skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was happy with the end result, he believed that the hosts could have done much better.

"We were not up to the mark. I think had the wickets of Soumya [Sarkar], Sabbir [Rahman] and Mushfiqur [Rahim] not fallen, we could have reached our target much earlier," said Mashrafe while speaking to reporters

at the post-match press conference at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium.

"But still, at least we didn't panic and lose wickets in the end like in the past. We were quite comfortable. Also, with regards to the bowling, I thought we could have done a lot better up front. We need to do that for bigger challenges ahead," believed Mashrafe.

"So yes, we were a bit scratchy, but we overcame a huge target and we will all gain plenty of confidence from this," he added.

He also apologized for not being able to utilise Shuvagata appropriately. "Shuvagata played in this match as a bowling all-rounder but unfortunately I couldn't find a break to give him the ball. I trusted [Mahmudullah] Riyad instead. Shuvagata wasn't supposed to bat at four, but I sent him there to see how he could bat. It's too early to judge him. It was just his first match," said Mashrafe.

"It was also a big decision to make

Shakib bat at six and thankfully that worked out," he added.

The major positive for the Tigers yesterday was the way they bowled in the death overs. Mustafizur Rahman and Al-Amin Hossain gave away just 21 runs in the last four overs and it was something that impressed Mashrafe.

"Before Al-Amin was flagged for his action he was our best T20 bowler. We know that he is one of the best at the death as well. And Mustafizur is almost always unplayable.

"If we can give them some space up front, then we can definitely have a good balance on the end," said Mashrafe.

Meanwhile, player-of-the-match Hamilton Masakadza lamented the way his side batted in the last four overs.

"We missed out on 15 to 20 runs at the end. We were looking at a score of at least 180 from the position we were in. It would have been a different game had we reached that score," said Masakadza.

## Taijul clears the way

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam overshadowed his senior lookalike Abdur Razzak to secure a 74-run victory for

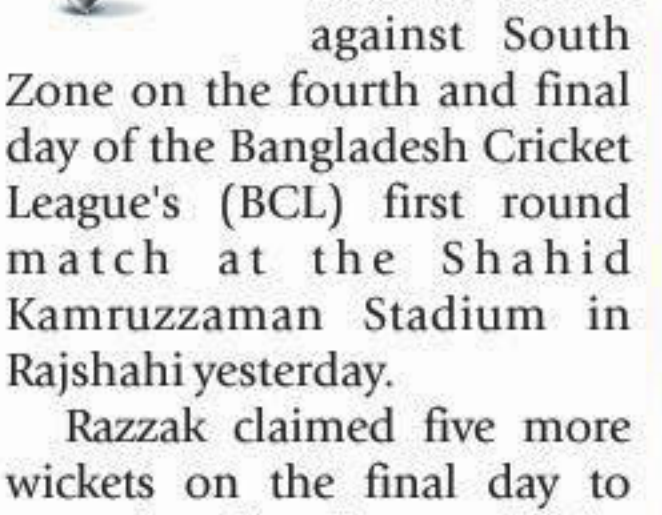
North Zone against South Zone on the fourth and final day of the Bangladesh Cricket League's (BCL) first round match at the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

Razzak claimed five more wickets on the final day to return bowling figures of 7 for 58 and his success saw North Zone add only 26 runs at the loss of six wickets to their overnight score of 156 for 4. That set a 231-run winning target for South Zone.

South Zone made a good start in their chase as Shahriar Nafees and Mahedi Hassan scored 43 runs in nine overs, before Taijul started the carnage by removing Mahedi for 26. After losing wickets at regular intervals, Nafees, who top-scored with 74, was the ninth batsman to return to the pavilion as South Zone were bundled out for 156 runs.

Taijul took five wickets for 38 runs and Nasir Hossain's off-spin played a big part in staggering the top-order as he picked up three vital wickets.

At the Shahid Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Central Zone were all out for 168 runs in their second innings, which set East Zone with a 208-run winning target in 46 overs. East Zone were on course with opener Tasamul Haque batting at one end for 91 runs to overtake the target but bad light ended the match early as



TAIJUL ... 5 for 38

## Gabba error leaves fans guessing

AGENCIES, Brisbane

Fans trouping in for the second India-Australia ODI in Brisbane were in for a surprise when retired former captain Michael Clarke's name showed up at the top of the home team's line-up on the Gabba's giant scoreboard.

Fans were left bewildered, while some were overjoyed, as they anticipated a surprise return by Clarke.

As it turned out, there was no dramatic comeback for the talismanic batsman, who quit the game last year, and the display of his name was just an error which was soon rectified.

Clarke tweeted a picture of the scoreboard with his name at the top of the Australian line-up and wrote: "Never say never...hahaha... Love the Gabba."

## Tigers hunting for new keeper



Nurul Hasan keeps wickets in the first T20I against Zimbabwe yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

SPORTS REPORTER from Khulna

For the first time in 44 T20Is, Mushfiqur Rahim took the field yesterday without his keeping gloves. They were instead handed over to a younger Nurul Hasan, a player who many consider to be the best wicket-keeper in the country at the moment.

The move didn't surprise many. The 28-year-old had to give up his gloves in both Tests and ODIs a number of times last year. However, yesterday's decision must have been a bit difficult for Mushfiqur to make.

The signal from the team management seemed quite clear. Despite his love for keeping, there is a chance that he may not be the first-choice behind the stumps in any of the formats in the near future.

Speaking to The Daily Star on the issue, former national skipper Khaled Mashud believed that it was a good move to promote Nurul.

"The entire idea of the team management, whether they are trying to find a backup or a successor, is something that I believe works well for the team. Mushfiqur is undoubtedly the best batsman in our team and this can only help him.

"In addition, I have seen [Nurul Islam] Shohan in domestic cricket and I think Bangladesh have found an excellent keeper. He is tall, athletic and also a very good batsman," continued Mashud.

"Mushfiqur may feel a little bad, but what he needs to understand is that this move is in no way a threat to his position. He is the most consistent batsman we have and this move can only help him grow," he added.

Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza also spoke highly of Nurul but indicated that it was still too early to expect the youngster to don the gloves permanently.

"If you look at the decision, it is obviously a bit difficult because Mushfiqur has been keeping for the last ten years in all the levels. But it's a good thing that senior players like him and Shakib have changed their positions for the team.

"It's not necessary that we will follow the same format in every game though," said Mashrafe.

"[Nurul Hasan] Shohan did his job. He rotated the strike, hit the odd boundary and remained relaxed at that point of time, which I think is very important. He is an exciting prospect. He kept and kept outstandingly. He is young and we feed off his enthusiasm," the skipper concluded.

## Root leads Eng charge

AFP, Johannesburg

Joe Root hit a thrilling century for England as he and Ben Stokes transformed the third Test against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday.

England were 238 for five when the threat of lightning brought an early close on the second day, 75 runs behind South Africa's first innings total of 313.

Root was on 106 not out, his ninth Test century.

A fifth-wicket partnership of 111 in 78 minutes off 97 balls with Stokes (58) swung the match dramatically in England's favour after a four-pronged South African pace attack had reduced the tourists to 91 for four.

Root and Stokes counter-attacked, posting a fifty partnership off only 35 balls in a match where the average scoring rate had hovered at around three an over on a pitch offering help to the fast bowlers.

Root reached the first half-century of the match off 77 balls with nine fours. Stokes, who hit a dazzling 258 in the drawn second Test in Cape Town, got a hostile welcome from Morne Morkel, fending a bouncer off his glove for a single.

But in the next over Stokes pulled a short ball from Rabada for six. He reached his fifty off 46 balls and his innings lasted 54 deliveries before he offered a caught and bowled chance to Morkel off a leading edge.

Root continued to bat aggressively and reached his century off 126 balls when he punched Chris Morris through the covers for his 16th four.

Nick Compton survived a chance to AB de Villiers at second slip on six and went on to add 52 for the third wicket with Root before edging Rabada to Dean Elgar at second slip for 26.

**SCORES IN BRIEF SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 313 (Elgar 46, Amla 40, De Villiers 36, Bavuma 23, Vilas 26, Morris 28, Rabada 24; Broad 2-82, Finn 2-50, Stokes 3-53)

**ENGLAND:** First innings 238 for 5 (Cook 18, Compton 26, Root 106 not out, Stokes 58; Rabada 2-44, Morkel 2-63)

## Perera, Herath to be quizzed

AGENCIES, Colombo

Sri Lankan players Kusal Perera and Rangana Herath have been questioned by the Financial Crime Investigation Division (FCID) over an alleged match-fixing scandal, a police source said Friday.

Opening batsman Perera had alerted the officials about an approach made by bookies to him and left-arm spinner Herath to underperform during the Test against West Indies at Galle in October.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) sources also revealed that captain Angelo Mathews and team manager Jerry Wouters are due to be interviewed by the FCID.

The FCID investigation began following a complaint lodged by Sri Lankan Sports Minister Dayasiri Jayasekera.

Jayasekera earlier said a practice net bowler in the national training squad and a coach are also being suspected of having links to match-fixing operators.

Jayasekera has also initiated a probe into Sri Lanka's dismal showing in the tour of New Zealand, which concluded this week.



Indian opener Rohit Sharma jumps for joy after scoring his second consecutive hundred. PHOTO: AFP

## Sharma ton in vain again

AFP, Brisbane

Australia set a new record run chase at the Gabba in Sydney on Friday as they cruised to a seven-wicket victory over India in the second one day international.

After Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni won the toss and chose to bat, the visitors finished their 50 overs at 308-8, thanks largely to a second successive century from opener Rohit Sharma (124), following his 171 not out in the first ODI in Perth on Tuesday.

But the total always looked too small to defend on a flat Gabba wicket and once Australia's openers Aaron Finch and Shaun Marsh put on a 145-run stand, the result never looked in doubt.

Finch and Marsh both scored 71 while captain Steve Smith (46) and George Bailey (76 not out) continued their good form as they guided Australia towards the victory total.

India had some hope when Smith was bowled by Umesh Yadav going for an ugly heave with the score on 244, but Bailey and Maxwell put on 65 runs from only 49 balls to see Australia home with six balls to spare.

**SCORES IN BRIEF INDIA:** 308 for 8 in 50 overs (Sharma 124, Kohli 59, Rahane 89; Faulkner 2-64) **AUSTRALIA:** 309 for 3 in 49 overs (Finch 71, Marsh 71, Smith 46, Bailey 76 not out, Maxwell 26 not out; Jadeja 1-50) **Result:** Australia won by seven wickets and lead 5-match series 2-0. **Player-of-the-match:** Rohit Sharma.