



THE DAWN OF T20-16

SPORT



Sabbir Rahman had a surprise in store for everyone during the second T20I against Zimbabwe at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday. While his unbeaten knock of 43 took Bangladesh to a big total, the three-wicket haul from the part-timer made the difference during Zimbabwe's chase.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Sublime Sabbir sinks Zim

NAIMUL KARIM from Khulna

Despite recurring batting issues Bangladesh raced to a thumping 42-run win over Zimbabwe in the second T20I at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday, taking a 2-0 lead in the four-match series.

In the end Bangladesh's traditional weapon, their spin attack, turned out to be too much for the visitors to handle as they were restricted to 125 for eight in their chase of 167.

Sabbir Rahman, who smacked an unbeaten 43 and finished with figures of three for 11, was the chief destroyer.

Zimbabwe begun their chase in an aggressive manner, smacking 45 runs in the first six overs without losing a wicket. That little period seemed to frustrate home skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as he ended up using five bowlers in the first five overs.

The captain himself got the breakthrough in the seventh over when he removed Vusi Sibanda, who played on to an incoming delivery. After that over, spinners Shuvagata Hom, Shakib Al Hasan and Sabbir Rahman bowled in tandem to further strangle Zimbabwe.

The decisive blows were struck between overs number eight and 12, when the visitors scored just 21 runs and lost three wickets, crumbling from 50 for one to 71 for four.

While Sabbir got two scalps -- that of the dangerous Hamilton Masakadza and Richmond Mutumbami -- Shuvagata got his maiden T20I wicket. The visitors just did not seem to know how to handle the spinners and attempted to smack them out of the ground; a tactic that led to the collapse.

Hamilton Masakadza, the man in form and standing in as captain in place of the rested Elton Chigumbura, was

comfortably caught at long-on. Sean Williams was trapped in front by Shuvagata while attempting an ill-advised sweep and Richmond Mutumbami top-edged one into the deep off Sabbir in the 11th over.

It was difficult for the visitors to recover thereafter, and to make things worse they had to deal with the likes of Mustafizur Rahman and Al-Amin Hossain at the death. Mustafizur took two wickets before stepping off the field due to a recurring shoulder issue, while Al-Amin scalped one.

Earlier, Bangladesh's innings followed a similar pattern to that of the last few T20Is with none of the batsmen able to make the most of their starts. While Mushfiqur Rahim looked good in the middle, he unfortunately suffered from a hamstring pull and had to retire hurt.

Tamim Iqbal and Soumya Sarkar started well, playing with a balance of caution and aggression and the Tigers had raced to 45 for no loss before Tamim top-edged one in the last over of the Powerplay. Sabbir Rahman arrived at the crease to join Soumya and while the pair struck a series of boundaries during the stand, there were many dot balls as well -- 27 in the first 10 overs and on the whole the number crossed 40.

In the 10th over Soumya was out for 43 while attempting to hit his fourth six. Things got worse as Mahmudullah nicked behind a well-flighted delivery from Wellington Masakadza two balls later.

Sabbir and Mushfiqur put on 52 runs in 35 balls for the fourth wicket. However, Mushfiqur retired hurt with just four overs remaining and that meant that Shakib, would have to hit the ground running, which he did with two fours and a six in his 17-ball 27. The main impetus, however, was provided by the player of the match Sabbir, who hit three



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BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH		R/B	A/6		
Tamim c Vitor b Muzarabani	23/17	3/1			
Soumya c Waller b Cremer	43/33	4/3			
Sabbir not out	43/30	1/3			
Mahmudullah c					
Mutumbami b W Masakadza	1/3	0/0			
Mushfiqur retired hurt	24/20	1/0			
Shakib not out	27/17	2/1			
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, w-3)		6			
Total: (For 3 wks in 20 overs)	167				
Fall of wickets: 1-45, 2-75, 3-76, 3-128.					
Bowler		O	M	R	W
Vitori	4	0	29	0	
Madziva	3	0	30	0	
Muzarabani	4	0	35	1	
W Masakadza	4	0	32	1	
Cremer	4	0	29	1	
Williams	1	0	9	0	
ZIMBABWE		R/B	A/6		
Sibanda b Mashrafe	21/17	2/1			
H Masakadza c					
Mahmudullah b Sabbir	30/28	3/2			
Mutumbami c Soumya					
b Sabbir	7/11	0/0			
Williams lbw b Shuvagata	7/6	1/0			
Waller c Soumya b Al-Amin	29/21	3/1			
Moor b Mustafizur	9/14	0/0			
Madziva b Mustafizur	0/4	0/0			
Cremer c & b Sabbir	8/12	0/0			
Masakadza not out	6/8	0/0			
Extras: (lb-5, w-2, nb-1)		8			
Total: (For 8 wks in 20 overs)	125				
Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-55, 3-65, 4-68, 5-105, 6-108, 7-109, 8-125.					
Bowler		O	M	R	W
Shuvagata	3	0	18	1	
Shakib	4	0	26	0	
Al-Amin	3	0	21	1	
Mustafizur	3.5	0	19	2	
Mashrafe	4	0	25	1	
Sabbir	2.1	0	11	3	

Result: Bangladesh won by 42 runs and led the 4-match series 2-0.

Player-of-the-match: Sabbir Rahman.

'Need to play bigger knocks'

SPORTS REPORTER from Khulna

Having ambled to a 2-0 lead in the series one would have expected a calm Mashrafe Bin Mortaza at the post-match press conference in Khulna yesterday.

Instead, the Bangladesh skipper seemed a bit tense and as he began taking questions one could understand why.

For starters, his team's best batsman Mushfiqur Rahim is likely to be sidelined for around two to three weeks due to a hamstring strain. His best bowler Mustafizur Rahman had minutes ago complained of a pain in his left shoulder. To add to that, he was not really satisfied with the way his batsmen applied themselves.

"I think we performed well as a bowling group. The batting wasn't bad. There were a few moments when we lost wickets at crucial times. The set

batsmen could have played bigger knocks," said Mashrafe.

"When bigger challenges come ahead those batsmen scoring 30s or 40s will need to play bigger knocks. These are a few areas where we need to improve," he added.

One of the reasons why Bangladesh's batsmen felt the pressure yesterday could have been because they barely took singles. The overdependence on boundaries led to the team playing 27 dot balls in the first 10 overs.

Mashrafe admitted that was an area his batsmen needed to focus on.

"It's difficult to play a perfect match in T20 cricket. There are times when you need to hit boundaries to make up for the singles. But then again, taking singles is the way to go, because singles along with the odd boundary eventually puts you in a good position. That's an area where we need to focus on," said Mashrafe.

Sabbir Rahman put in his second 40-plus score of the series and also

took three scalps yesterday to deservedly win the player-of-the-match award.

Mashrafe hopes to be able to use Sabbir's leg-spinners as a weapon in the World Twenty20 as well.

"He is in good touch ever since the semi-finals of the Bangladesh Premier League, where he played well. As a batsman he is up to the mark but I also asked him to look after his bowling because it can be an advantage for him and the team.

"He may not be a classical leg-spinner like Shane Warne and others, but he still is a wicket-taking option. If he can continue it will be great for us," said Mashrafe.

Zimbabwe's stand-in skipper Hamilton Masakadza was disappointed not to have been able to chase 167. He described it as a 'gettable total'.

"I thought the bowlers did well to restrict them to that score. We just needed a bit more with the bat," said Masakadza.



Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim suddenly pulled up in pain while running between the wickets during the second T20I yesterday. While that was alarming enough, the diagnosis made it worse; a hamstring strain that will keep him out for at least two weeks.

PHOTO: STAR

Maxwell leads Aus to series win

AFP, Melbourne

Glenn Maxwell blasted 96 from just 83 deliveries to lead Australia to a thrilling three-wicket win over India in the third one-day international Sunday and take the series.

After Australian captain Steve Smith won the toss at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and sent India in to bat, the visitors made 295 for six from their 50 overs thanks largely to a superb 117 from Virat Kohli.

The Indians were well in contention for their first win of the series when they had Australia in trouble at 215 for six. But Maxwell, who was out just one run short of victory, combined with James Faulkner to guide Australia home.

The win gives Australia an unassailable three-nil lead in the best-of-five series.

Openers Shaun Marsh and Aaron Finch attacked from the outset and cruised in the first few overs, punishing some wayward bowling.

When it looked like India would get a foothold, Maxwell remained in control and gradually lifted the scoring with a mixture of audacious boundaries and quick running.

Earlier, Kohli smashed his runs from just 117 balls, hitting seven fours and two sixes, to become the fastest man to reach 7,000 runs in one-day internationals, taking 161 innings to reach the milestone.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 295 for 6 in 50 overs (Dhawan 68, Kohli 117, Rahane 50; Hastings 4-58)

AUSTRALIA: 296 for 7 in 48.5 overs (Marsh 62, Smith 41, Maxwell 96; Yadav 2-68, Sharma 2-53, Jadeja 2-49)

Result: Australia won by three wickets and lead 5-match series 3-0.

Player-of-the-match: Glenn Maxwell.



Australia batsman Glen Maxwell's 96 saw his side through a difficult phase against India in the third ODI at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday, with the hosts eventually reaching their target with just seven balls to spare.

PHOTO: AFP

SA GAMES FOOTBALL BD grouped with Afghans

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Bangladesh and runners-up Afghanistan have been drawn in Group B of the men's football event of the 12th South Asian Games as the draws of both men's and women's events were held in India yesterday.

Nepal and Bhutan are the other teams in Group B while Group A features hosts India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

The men's football event will get underway through the match between India and Sri Lanka at the Nehru Stadium in Guwahati on February 6.

Bangladesh will play their opening match against Nepal on February 7 before taking on Afghanistan and Bhutan on February 9 and 11 respectively. Both the semifinals are scheduled for February 13 while the final will take place on February 15.

In the women's event, Bangladesh have been pitted with hosts India and Afghanistan in Group A while Group B comprises Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The matches will be held in Shillong.

Bangladesh women's team will start their campaign against Afghanistan on February 9 before playing against India two days later. The two semifinals will be held on February 13, with the final scheduled for the following day.

Mushy out for two weeks

SPORTS REPORTER from Khulna

Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim strained his right hamstring while batting in the second T20I against Zimbabwe yesterday in Khulna and has been ruled out of the rest of the series.

"Mushfiqur will undergo a scan in Dhaka on Monday. Generally it takes around two to three weeks to recover from such injuries. However, we will be able to assess his condition better after receiving the scan report," said national team physio Bajjedul Islam Khan.

Pace bowler Taskin Ahmed has been brought in as Mushfiqur's replacement for the third and fourth T20Is due to take place on January 20 and 22 in Khulna.

The other injury concern following yesterday's match surrounded pacer Mustafizur Rahman who left the field seemingly complaining of shoulder pain after bowling the penultimate delivery of the match.

BCB team manager Khaled Mahmud stated that Mustafizur's injury was not serious. The bowler reportedly felt a sudden pain in his shoulder and left the field as he did not want to take any risk.

According to the team management, the pain decreased after he spent some time with the physio in the dressing room.

Mustafizur's shoulder pain, of course, is not a new phenomenon. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) sports physician Debashish Chowdhury said it is an issue that he has had to deal with in the last couple of months.

"He had been undergoing several shoulder-related exercises during training in Khulna because of a shoulder problem," Debashish said.

Mustafizur's injury though will not affect Bangladesh's immediate plans as he was not meant to play the last two T20Is of the series.

The BCB has also decided to remove Al-Amin Hossain and Shuvagata Hom from the 14-member squad for the last two T20Is, which was announced yesterday. In their place pacer Mohammad Shahid, batsman Mosaddek Hossain and allrounder Muktar Ali have been drafted into the squad.

The changes made are a part of the Bangladesh team management's attempt to find the best possible squad for the ICC World Twenty20 to be played in March-April in India.

SQUAD

Masrafe Bin Mortaza (Captain), Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Soumya Sarkar, Sabbir Rahman, Mahmudullah, Arifat Sunny, Taskin Ahmed, Qazi Nurul Hasan, Mohamamd Shahid, Abu Haider Rony, Mosaddek Hossain Saikat, Muktar Ali.

Record stand powers Kiwis

AFP, Hamilton

A world-record T20 partnership by Martin Guptill and Kane Williamson gave New Zealand a comprehensive 10-wicket win in the second Twenty20 against Pakistan in Hamilton on Sunday.

Set a target of 169, Guptill finished the match with a boundary to take the New Zealand total to 171 with 14 balls remaining and all wickets intact.

His stand with Williamson eclipsed the previous best Twenty20 partnership of 170 set by South Africans Graeme Smith and Loots Bosman against England in 2009.

New Zealand's dominance in Hamilton, after Pakistan won the first game in Auckland on Friday, means the three-match series will be decided in Wellington next Friday.

Guptill, who uncharacteristically trailed Williamson for much of the match, finished with a flourish to be 87 not out from 58 balls with nine fours and four sixes.

Williamson faced 48 balls for his 72, which included 11 fours.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 168 for 7 in 20 overs (Hafeez 19, Maqsood 18, Malik 39, U Akmal 56 not out; McClenaghan 2-23)

NEW ZEALAND: 171 for no loss in 17.4 overs (Guptill 87 not out, Williamson 72 not out)

Result: New Zealand won by 10 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Martin Guptill.