

# SPORT

## Mehedis crush England

STAR SPORT DESK



Bangladesh Under-19s received a massive boost ahead of the ICC Under-19 World Cup by defeating former champions England U-19s by 97 runs in their final warm-up match at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

After Bangladesh's lower-middle order, led by Shafiqul Islam, shored up the innings following a collapse, the discipline of the hosts' bowling attack -- particularly miserly and incisive spells from captain Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Mehedi Hasan Rana -- proved too much for the English youths as they folded for just 149 in chase of 247.

England's chase got off to a disastrous start as they lost their first three wickets without troubling the scorers. Right-arm medium pacer Mohammad Saifuddin trapped opener Dan Lawrence in front in the fifth ball of the innings. Off-spinning skipper Miraz trapped Max Holden plumb in front and followed it up by having George Bartlett caught at first slip in the following over. Left-arm spinner Saleh Ahmed Shawon then bowled Jack Burnham to leave England at 15 for four in the eighth over.

Callum Taylor and Sam Curran then put on a 56-run partnership for the fifth wicket, but their resistance was followed by another flurry of wickets. Left-arm pacer Rana then had Ryan Davies and Curran caught in successive overs and England were in dire straits at 76 for seven. England skipper Brad Taylor lent the innings a semblance of respectability with a 52-ball 41, but his dismissal heralded a swift end to the innings. Miraz and Saifuddin cleaned up the tail to complete a handsome victory.

Earlier the hosts got off to a rocky start after choosing to bat first, losing their first five wickets with the score on 91. The blows were dealt by England opening bowler Saqib Mahmood -- who got rid of openers Saif Hassan and Pinak Ghosh -- and skipper Taylor who accounted for Joyraz Sheikh and Zakir Hasan. The young Tigers were then rescued by a 67-run stand between Shafiqul and Jaker. Shafiqul was the mainstay with his 89-ball 68 that featured six boundaries and a six, and he also constructed a 66-run stand with Saifuddin, whose 35-ball 46 was instrumental in the hosts reaching a competitive total.

In the day's matches, India beat Pakistan by five wickets at BKSP-4, Sri Lanka beat Nepal by 65 runs at BKSP-2, New Zealand edged out Afghanistan by 13 runs at BKSP, Zimbabwe got the better of Namibia by eight wickets at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong and Canada defeated Ireland by four wickets at BKSP-3.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGLADESH U-19s:** 246 for 8 (Shafiqul 68, Saifuddin 46 not out, Jaker 36; Mahmood 2-24, B Taylor 2-25, Lawrence 2-55)  
**ENGLAND U-19s:** 149 all out in 48.1 overs (B Taylor 41, C Taylor 36; Miraz 3-12, Rana 3-14, Saifuddin 2-17)  
**Result:** BD U-19s won by 97 runs.



Bangladesh U-19s skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz (2nd from L), who took three wickets to expedite his team's 97-run win over their English counterparts in the warm-up game, was at the centre of celebrations at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## 'Experiments weren't the problem'

Contrary to popular opinion, the Zimbabwe series did not turn out to be a mere walk in the park for Bangladesh. As a result of the defeats in the last two T20Is, the experiments that the team management attempted during the series received criticism from various corners. In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star's Naimul Karim yesterday national coach Chandika Hathurusingha explained the reasons behind the experiments and also elaborated on why the result of the series did not worry him. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What was the reason behind giving so many new players a chance in this series?

**Chandika Hathurusingha (CH):** The thing is I wanted to see most of the players who did well in the BPL in the international level because it's a different feeling altogether.

Also we have back-to-back games with the Asia Cup, the qualifiers and the World Cup. If you look at our schedule, it's very tight. We play one match and then take rest and then play another and then travel, so there are many games. I want more than 15 players ready for that period. If our players struggle to cope or if there's an injury, someone new coming and playing in the Asia Cup or World Cup -- it may not work. I just wanted the players to get a feel of things.

**TDS:** Many reckon that things would have been different had there not been so many changes. They say that it crossed a limit. Do you share that opinion?

**CH:** In cricket there's always a 'what-if'. What about if Imrul Kayes had performed to his capability? We lost the [third] match not because of experiments but because we did not execute well. It's not the experiments, because even after Tamim [Iqbal] played we still lost, so that does not make any sense to me. If you look at the third game, we did not field well. We also did not bowl in areas we were supposed to. In those terms, some of our main players did not perform; it's not about the new players. So that is where I cannot agree with what everyone or what



the fraternity of cricket is talking about. You don't see Shakib or Mashrafe go for more than eight runs an over regularly. So things didn't go as per plan. **TDS:** Is it a concern that your main bowlers like Shakib and Mashrafe didn't do well?  
**CH:** It's always a concern when your big players are not performing; not

just in cricket but in any team sport. They are players that the others fall back on to pull it back when things are not going well for you.

**TDS:** Your batsmen have not done well either...

**CH:** I think we haven't got the hang of playing T20 cricket, that's for sure. We still have to learn how to play T20 cricket. We think of hitting all the time. If you see, [Hamilton] Masakadza played to his strength and he knew where to hit. We are looking to improve our game and understanding T20 cricket. We have to improve in every department. Don't expect us to be favourites or anything. When people's expectations are too high, you look for other reasons [after defeats]. But really, there is no other reason. We are just not good enough in this format yet.

**TDS:** Having beaten bigger teams last year, would you describe this series as demoralising?

**CH:** I don't feel anything more than what I was feeling before the series because there is no difference for me. We are looking forward to the Asia Cup, so we took this opportunity to see what we can do. I was not worried about the outcome, but that does not mean that I didn't want to win. I would have liked to win. We would have, had we executed our plans. But I have no worries.

It depends on what your priorities are. If I play to win, for instance if we were playing Zimbabwe in the semi-finals of the World Cup, we wouldn't have made all these changes. If we had lost despite that, I would have been disappointed. But right now, I am not disappointed.

## Bodi banned for 20 years

AFP, Centurion

Former South African international cricketer Gulam Bodi was on Monday banned for 20 years after he admitted charges of contriving or attempting to fix domestic Twenty20 matches.

The ban, which will take immediate effect, was announced by Cricket South Africa (CSA) chief executive Haroon Lorgat during the fourth and final Test between South Africa and England at SuperSport Park.

Lorgat said aspects of the investigation were still ongoing. He refused to confirm or deny names of other players who have been reported to be under investigation, but said: "We are fortunate that several players rejected his approaches."

He said the South African police had been informed in terms of anti-corruption legislation. Lorgat hinted that some players might be charged with failing to report approaches by Bodi.

"Our code is clear on the obligation of a player to report any approaches. If it is found that a player has failed to report we would look at the facts and decide on a proportional sanction," he said.

Bodi, 37, played in two one-day internationals for South Africa, both against Zimbabwe, in August 2007. He played in a single Twenty20 international against the West Indies in December. His last appearance in a domestic game was in January 2015.

"There is no doubt that Mr Bodi's actions have threatened the integrity and image of the game we love and he must be handed a strong punishment. We have had many discussions with Mr Bodi and he accepts the folly of his actions," said Lorgat.



Temba Bavuma remained unbeaten on 78 as South Africa declared their second innings for 248, setting England a target of 382 late on the fourth day of the fourth Test at Centurion yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## England in a pickle

AFP, Centurion

First innings hero Kagiso Rabada struck two early blows as South Africa pushed for victory on the fourth day of the fourth and final Test against England at SuperSport on Monday.

England, set an unlikely target of 382 on a deteriorating pitch, were 52 for three at the close after South Africa declared their second innings on 248 for five.

Rabada, who took seven for 112 in the first innings, dismissed Alex Hales and Nick Compton, while new ball partner Morne Morkel claimed the wicket of England captain Alastair Cook for the second time in the match.

Hales made only one run before he received a virtually unplayable ball from Rabada which shot through low and trapped the batsman in front of his stumps. Cook did not last much longer before pushing back a return catch to Morkel after scoring five.

Compton was next to go, for six, edging a drive against Rabada to be caught behind by Quinton de Kock. Compton sought a review which showed a clear edge.

It could have been worse for England. With South Africa using two spin bowlers in fading light, Root, on ten, survived a stumping chance off Dane Piedt, with De Kock fumbling a ball which turned sharply.

Kyle Abbott, who had not been expected to bowl because of a hamstring injury, took the field and bowled one over.

Hashim Amla and Temba Bavuma batted South Africa into a virtually unbeatable position with a fifth wicket stand of 117.

Amla followed up his first innings of 109 with a resolute 96, while Bavuma struck an unbeaten 78. Amla was on 96 at tea and his approach in the first over after the interval suggested he was keen to get to his century quickly with a declaration imminent.

Amla chased a wide delivery and was caught behind after a 199-ball innings during which he hit 11 fours.

But, with heavy clouds rolling in, South Africa batted on until rain stopped play half an hour after tea.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SOUTH AFRICA:** 475 and 248 for 5 dec (Amla 96, Bavuma 78 not out; Anderson 3-47, Broad 1-33)  
**ENGLAND:** 342 and 52 for 3 (Root 19 not out, Taylor 19 not out; Rabada 2-15)

## MSC back with a bang

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan SC hogged the spotlight on the second day of the players' transfer for the upcoming Premier Hockey League after singing up 13 players, including four current national players, at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan, who boycotted the competition for two seasons following the demand of reconstruction of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation's executive committee, turned up at the stadium amid great fanfare featuring a procession that included a band, dancing supporters and an elephant donning the club's black and white flag.

The players however were not so cheerful following the gentlemen's agreement among the clubs that forced them to sign up at nominal wages.

"We are not satisfied with the payment at all because we are being paid what we were 10 years ago. It is not acceptable; we are just

playing because we are involved with hockey. If it continues, then there is no future for hockey as players will not come to play," said national forward Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, who reportedly got Tk 3 lakh whereas he received the highest Tk 7 lakh in the 2012-13 season.

"It is fine that the system has been introduced to restrict players from services teams but what fault of the players who are not in services teams?" questioned Jimmy. "I have been playing top-level hockey for the last 15 years but we played only seven leagues and we don't know whether the league will take place in next seasons. That's the reason behind the players' joining the services team."

Mohammedan manager Ariful Islam Prince said that they will target a win in the league, so they are trying to rope in a Pakistani trainer as well as Pakistani players.

Ajax SC, Bangladesh SC, Azad SC and Mariner Youngs Club also signed up a few players on the penultimate day of the transfers.

## Russia bans four athletes

AFP, Moscow

Russia's Olympic Committee (ROC) has banned four athletes for doping, as the country struggles to overturn a suspension on its track and field team that could see it miss the Rio Olympics.

The Olympic Committee said Irina Maracheva, an 800-metres medallist at the 2012 European championships, had been banned for two years, along with race walker Anna Lukyanova, for doping violations based on documents handed over by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

Officials have also confirmed a four-year ban for the runners Yelena Nikolina and Maria Nikolayeva, the Olympic Committee said in a statement dated Sunday.

## Sher-e-Bangla Cup from late Feb

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday decided to hold the Sher-e-Bangla Cup national football championship in the last week of February.

The national championship, which was last held in 2006, will be held with the participation of 64 districts, services teams and the public universities who are affiliated with the game's governing body.

The committee of the Sher-e-Bangla Cup national football championship took the decision yesterday and sought directives from the game's governing body on whether the professional footballers would be allowed to represent their respective districts.

## Nicholls leads Pak rout

AFP, Wellington



A solid 82 by Henry Nicholls followed by a ninth-wicket batting blitz carried New Zealand to a convincing 70-run victory in the opening one-day international against Pakistan in Wellington on Monday.

In reply to New Zealand's 280-8, Pakistan were skittled out for 210 with four overs remaining.

Nicholls apart, New Zealand's recognised run-makers struggled against a fired-up Pakistan attack, with the other six batsmen in the top seven contributing just 47 in total.

The hosts were in a perilous position at 99-6 before Mitchell Santner joined Nicholls in a 79-run stand for the seventh wicket.

Matt Henry and Mitchell McClenaghan then added 73 off 33 balls in a closing onslaught to ensure a target which eventually proved too much for Pakistan.

After Azhar Ali (19) and Ahmed Shehzad (13) fell early, Mohammad Hafeez and Babar Azam lifted Pakistan's confidence. They cruised past the 100 mark in the 23rd over, the same as New Zealand, but with only two wickets down.

However, the brittle nature of the

Pakistan batting was highlighted as Kane Williamson broke their stand when he had Hafeez caught at long on for 42.

Azam, without attempting to boost the run rate, continued on to 62 off 76 deliveries before he miscued an attempt to hook Corey Anderson and sent the ball straight to Nicholls at deep midwicket.

Sarfraz Ahmed (30) and Anwar Ali (16) put on 35 for the seventh wicket but their partnership ended when they tried to lift the scoring and Ahmed was well caught by Anderson on the boundary.

Where the New Zealand tail had exploded, Pakistan's fizzled out -- with the last four wickets falling for five runs.

Trent Boult finished with four for 40 while Grant Elliott, who removed openers Ali and Shehzad as well as Sohaib Maqsood, took three for 43.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**NEW ZEALAND:** 280 for 8 in 50 overs (Nicholls 82, Santner 48, Henry 48 not out; Irfan 2-43, Amir 3-28, Anwar 3-66)  
**PAKISTAN:** 210 all out in 46 overs (Azhar 19, Hafeez 42, Azam 62, Sarfraz 30; Boult 4-40, Elliott 3-43)  
**Result:** New Zealand won by 70 runs.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Henry Nicholls.