



Virat Kohli showed all his class during a difficult match against Pakistan the other night. The stylish batsman will once again be at the centre of attention when India take on Sri Lanka in Mirpur today.

PHOTO: STAR



ধুলো ময়লার দ্বি শেষ!



Trusted Worldwide



Holcim

World's Most Preferred Cement Brand from Switzerland



Pace revolution in spinners' den

BISHWAJIT ROY



It is a little surreal that a country that has little or no history of encouraging pace bowlers now captures the imaginations of cricket fans the world over with exciting pace bowling. It is a country where pace bowlers inhabit teams in the domestic competitions apparently only to make up the number because their role is limited to taking the shine off the new ball for the slow bowlers to take charge, most pace bowlers have to beg for a team in domestic cricket. It is a country where the word bowling was not too long ago synonymous with left-arm spin.

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh's selectors have shown great faith in their quicker bowlers as they have included five pacers in the squad for the ICC World Twenty20 and Asia Cup T20 competitions. The Bangladesh team management have shown courage to play with a four-pronged pace attack in the ongoing Asia Cup. Taskin Ahmed, Al-Amin Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman and captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza have received accolades from laymen and cricket pundits alike. There may not be an express fast bowler -- Taskin tops out at around 145 kph -- but the attack has the

Was it an easy decision to change the age-old concept? Maybe it was Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha who started the process of change when he preferred pace-friendly wickets in the home series against India in June 2014.

It was then new skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who argued that only a good pace attack can bring more success and respect from the opponents, and that an attacking brand of cricket required at least three specialist pace bowlers in the team.

What Bangladesh did in the World Cup in Australia-New Zealand under the leadership of Mashrafe is now history. The success owed a huge debt to their pace-bowling prowess on conducive wickets. Memories of that World Cup cannot be related without mention of Rubel Hossain, who claimed four wickets to shoot England out of the tournament. Later on, the mysterious cutters and slower balls from Mustafizur compelled world cricket to pay serious attention to pace of the Bangladeshi variety.

"Bangladesh has never seen such a good pace attack before. I want to give credit to our coach [Chandika Hathurusingha] and captain [Mashrafe Bin Mortaza] for their proactiveness in bringing a change in the planning. The promise Mashrafe's arrival on the scene held for pace bowling is now being fulfilled through his captaincy," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.



YOUNG AND HUNGRY: After years of reliance on slower bowlers, Bangladesh have suddenly unearthed a young crop of fast bowlers who are already making their mark in world cricket and taking the team to the next level.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Pakistan survive Amjad scare Face Bangladesh on Wednesday

SPORTS REPORTER



What was expected to be an easy win for Pakistan turned out to be the most closely fought contest of the Asia Cup T20 so far. A three-wicket early burst from UAE skipper Amjad Javed threatened an upset, but a 46-ball 50 from Umar Akmal and a 49-ball 63 from Shoaib Malik gave Pakistan a seven-wicket win at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Pakistan will face hosts Bangladesh tomorrow in a must-win encounter for both the sides.

Despite Pakistan's relatively poor performance yesterday, coach Waqar Younis reckons that they will be the favourites heading into that game.

"I think so, I don't know if many people think the same but I feel that we are a force to reckon with in this tournament. In T20 there are times you are going to get into jail and then get out. What really matters is that we have finally opened our account," said Waqar after the match.

When asked if the absence of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who has been ruled out of the tourna-

ment due to an injury, would be an advantage for Pakistan, Waqar replied: "One can't really be worried about one individual. We have to think about our strengths. We are ready for the challenge."

Back to yesterday's match, after UAE scored 129 for six and pegged Pakistan back, the early focus of Malik and Akmal's 114-run fourth-wicket stand was on picking singles as the UAE bowlers maintained their discipline on a challenging, green-tinged wicket.

At the end of the 13th over Pakistan

16th over was taken at midwicket by Usman Mushtaq. That sapped UAE's spirits and a flurry of boundaries -- including three sixes and a four by Akmal in a 23-run 18th over bowled by skipper Amjad -- took Pakistan home with eight balls to spare.

Javed had a happier beginning however, rocking Pakistan's chase with a trio of wickets that cut them down to 17 for three by the fourth over. It all started in the second over when he was fortunate to see the umpire's finger go up after trapping Sharjeel Khan in the crease with a ball that replays suggested would have gone over the stumps. A ball later he dispatched Khuram Manzoor with one that seamed away and took the edge. An upset was on the cards when in his next over Amjad had experienced opener Mohammad Hafeez driving uppishly to cover. That however brought together Akmal and Malik, who had the experience and quality to quell the UAE uprising.

Earlier, UAE decided to bat first on a green pitch and despite losing early wickets managed their highest score of the tournament, courtesy of Shaiman Anwar's 42-ball 46 and Amjad's 18-ball 27. Mohammad Amir was once again phenomenal and finished with figures of 2 for 6 in four overs.



still required 66 runs and the match was in the balance. It was then that the tide turned in Pakistan's favour. Malik hit Mohammad Naveed for a four and a six in the 14th over which yielded 11 runs and a six in the following over brought the equation down to an achievable 46 runs from five overs. The match could still have been UAE's if the top-edged pull from Malik in the

IMPACT MAN



AMIR'S STING

Mohammad Amir returned astonishingly economical figures of two wickets for just six runs from his four overs. The left-arm speedster did not quite blow away the UAE batsmen as expected, but he bowled with a venom that made the batsmen retreat into a shell. With figures of 3-1-2-1 at one stage, only a four in his last over kept him from recording the most economical four-over spell in T20Is. He compensated for that with a searing yorker to bowl Mohammad Usman. Without his incisive and economical spell, Pakistan would have been looking at a total substantially higher than the one they had to chase.

Struggling Lankans face red-hot India

SPORTS REPORTER



Historically speaking there should be nothing in it when Sri Lanka and India square off in the Asia Cup T20 match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today. The two countries have won the Asia Cup five times each since its inception in 1984. But what should be anticipated as the match between the two Asia Cup giants in reality may turn out to be a bit of a mismatch, with India streets ahead of Sri Lanka on current T20I form.

Defending champions Sri Lanka in fact have the edge in Asia Cup encounters, winning 10 out of the 19 so far, and are also the reigning World Twenty20 champions. But while India have hit a rich vein of form in the shortest format -- winning the series in Australia and also beating Sri Lanka 2-1 last month -- Sri Lanka's form has taken a nose-dive since the start of 2015, winning only three and losing eight matches.

Sri Lanka will have their work cut out playing against a fine batting order, especially if it is without their standout bowler and captain Lasith Malinga who sat out of Sunday's 23-run loss against Bangladesh due to a nigggle. Stand-in skipper Angelo Mathews said after the defeat that he is not sure whether Malinga would play the rest of the matches. With the World Twenty20 in

India to follow hot on the heels of the Asia Cup, he may well not be risked for the remainder of the tournament.

"Malinga is a champion bowler and it will help any team playing Sri Lanka without him," said India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin while speaking to reporters yesterday.

Another aspect that stacks the odds in India's favour is that their bowling attack, so long a weak link, has matured into a reliable and versatile unit, most notably with the recall of old warhorse Ashish Nehra and the inclusion of the youthful and pace of Jasprit Bumrah.

"We know Ashish [Nehra] is an experienced candidate. He has got good ability to do well in the death and Bumrah is able to bowl the Yorkers -- which we might have been missing in the past few years," Ashwin said about India's newfound bowling prowess.

Sri Lanka's batting, meanwhile, has lost much of its venom after the retirements of Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene. But Ashwin, perhaps with memories still fresh of the 2014 World Twenty20 final at the same ground where the Lankans spoiled an in-form India's best-laid plans, sounded out a cautionary note about their opponents.

"One thing we are wary about with Sri Lanka is that they will always punch above their weight and in big games -- they raise their standard; they are a very good team."



Evening Outpatient Services

has been extended till **10PM** for your convenience

CALL 10678 for appointments

INDIA

V

SRI LANKA

HEAD TO HEAD IN ASIA CUP

M

W

L

19

9

10

M

W

L

19

10

9

IN ALL T20IS

M

W

L

9

5

4

M

W

L

9

4

5

Last meeting: Vishakhapatnam, Feb 14, 2016, India won by nine wickets with 37 balls remaining after bowling Sri Lanka out for 82.

KEY PLAYERS



SURESH RAINA

47

1137

31.58

134.39

101

3

1

Inns

Runs

Ave

S/R

HS

50

100



TILLAKARATNE DILSHAN

71

1658

27.18

120.05

104*

11

1

Inns

Runs

Ave

S/R

HS

50

100

PAK-UAE SCOREBOARD

UAE	R/B	4/6		
Mustafa c Afridi b Sami	1/5	0/0		
Kaleem b Amir	1/11	0/0		
Shahzad c Sarfraz b Irfan	5/3	1/0		
Anwar c Sarfraz b Irfan	46/42	5/2		
Mushtaq c Nawaz b Afridi	9/19	1/0		
Usman b Amir	21/17	2/1		
Javed not out	27/18	3/2		
Naveed not out	10/5	1/1		
Extras: (lb-2, w-7)	9			
Total: (For 6 wkts in 20 overs)	129			
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-5, 3-12, 4-41, 5-72, 6-118.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Amir	4	1	6	2
Sami	4	0	28	1
Irfan	4	0	30	2
Afridi	4	0	24	1
Nawaz	3	0	26	0
Malik	1	0	13	0
PAKISTAN	R/B	4/6		
Hafeez c Tariq b Javed	11/12	2/0		
Sharjeel lbw b Javed	4/3	1/0		
Manzoor c Patil b Javed	0/2	0/0		
Akmal not out	50/46	2/3		
Malik not out	63/49	7/3		
Extras: (w-3)	3			
Total: (For 3 wkts in 18.4 overs)	131			
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-11, 3-17.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Naveed	3.4	0	28	0
Javed	4	0	36	3
Shahzad	4	0	19	0
Raza	3	0	20	0
Mustafa	3	0	20	0
Tariq	1	0	8	0
Result: Pakistan won by 7 wickets.				
Player-of-the-match: Shoaib Malik.				