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Mashrafe's 17th over won it

SPORTS REPORTER from Dharamsala

We have used a lot of adjectives for inspirational Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, especially over the past two years when Bangladesh felled one frontier after another under his stewardship. Still, the experienced pace bowler, whose pace has diminished substantially and who drags his bad legs whenever he takes off from his bowling mark, cannot stop mesmerising his followers and foes. On Wednesday he drew his magic wand when the Tigers needed that to stop a rampant Dutch. His six deliveries in the 17th over at Dharamsala were a bolt from the blue for the Netherlands and a pleasant surprise for those who have been following him for a long time and wait with fingers crossed whenever he comes out to bowl at the death. His opposite number Peter Borren made no secret about the fact that that particular over, which yielded three runs and a wicket, played the biggest part in their defeat.

"He read the wicket very well and used it perfectly. I think that 17th was very crucial and it played a big role in our defeat which was very disappointing for us," said Borren about his opposite number at the post-match briefing.

Tamim Iqbal, who also appeared at the briefing with his captain, actually was searching for the proper words to describe how important that over was.

"I can't explain how important that over was and the next by Taskin [Ahmed]," said the opening batsman. It was actually not that

particular over but the four overs Mashrafe bowled that stood as an example of how a bowler compensates for his lack of pace with experience. He conceded 14 runs in his four overs and took one wicket.

When asked if that was one of his best overs in a long career, Mashrafe looked a bit perturbed. He only said that he was confident of bowling his fourth over after feeling good while bowling his third.

"I thought maybe Al-Amin [Hossain] or some spinner should bowl but then I decided to bowl because I could read the wicket and



the batsman more than anybody else at that moment."

Mashrafe also said that he did not plan to bowl a bouncer with Mushfiqur Rahim standing right behind the wicket.

"The ball kicked. The bowling was short I guess. That over gave me the confidence because I gave one run and I was confident. T20 is all about momentum and I wanted to bowl that over," said Mashrafe.

Asked if he was relieved, he said: "Yes, obviously. Winning is always a relief, doesn't matter who we're playing against. Good performance by Tamim and the bowlers. Obviously it will help in the next match when we play here."

RELIEVED: As the team around him celebrate, Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza heads straight for the dressing room after a closely contested win against the Netherlands at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

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Oman stun Ireland

AFP, Dharamsala

World Twenty20 debutants Oman stunned Ireland by two wickets in a thrilling last-over finish on Wednesday with lower-order batsman Aamer Ali's 32-run blitz achieving the target with two balls to spare.

Batting second, the team from the Gulf state scraped to 157 for the loss of eight wickets with two balls to spare after the Irish had put on 153 for the loss of five wickets.

Oman openers Zeeshan Maqsood and Khawar Ali provided a 69-run opening stand only to see the middle-order give it away with the side reeling at 90 for five after 14 runs.

Aamer, who hit five boundaries and a six in his 17-ball stay, then stitched a crucial sixth-wicket stand with Jatinder Singh as Irish medium-pace Max Sorensen failed to stop 14 runs from the last over.

It was indeed a great achievement for the Sultan Ahmed-led side, which mostly consists of Indian and Pakistani expats.

"We were trying to get boundaries every over. We have done a lot of hard work before coming to the World Cup, and finally it has paid off," 37-year-old Ali told espnricinfo.com through a translator.

Earlier, Ireland's innings saw regular wicket-falls, thanks to a three-wicket haul from pacer Munis Ansari, as the 38 runs from Gary Wilson was the top-score of the Irish innings.

Scotland will play Zimbabwe, while Afghanistan are slated to meet Hong Kong in the two Group B matches on Thursday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

IRELAND: 154 for 5 in 20 overs (Wilson 38, Potrerfield 29, Sterling 29; Ansari 3-37)
OMAN: 157 for 8 in 19.4 overs (Maqsood 38, Khawar 34, Aamer 32; O'Brien 2-25)
Result: Oman won by two wickets

BD-NED SCOREBOARD

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tamim not out	4	0	31	0
Soumya c Barresi b Van Meekeren	15	13	2/0	
Sabbir lbw b Van der Merwe	15	15	1/1	
Shakibc Myburgh b Borren	5	7	0/0	
Mahmudullah b Van der Gugten	10	9	1/0	
Mushfiqur b Van der Gugten	0	2	0/0	
Nasir c Mudassar b Van Meekeren	3	7	0/0	
Mashrafe c Cooper b Van der Gugten	7	5	0/1	
Sunny not out	8	4	0/1	
Extras: (lb-4, w-3)			7	
Total: (For 7 wks in 20 overs)			153	
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-60, 3-78, 4-111, 5-112, 6-127, 7-137.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mudassar	4	0	31	0
Van der Gugten	4	0	21	3
Van Meekeren	4	0	17	2
Van der Merwe	3	0	28	1
Van Beek	4	0	43	0
Borren	1	0	9	1

Result: Bangladesh won by 8 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Tamim Iqbal.

Indo-Pak clash shifted to Kolkata

STAR SPORT DESK

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Wednesday that the World Twenty20's Super 10 Group 2 match between India and Pakistan has been relocated from Dharamsala to Kolkata.

The evening match will take place as scheduled on Saturday 19 March. ICC CEO David Richardson said the decision was taken after consultation with the BCCI, Indian state associations and security authorities.

Taskin, Sunny reported?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed and left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny have been reported for suspect bowling actions during the side's ICC World Twenty20 first round match against the Netherlands in Dharamsala yesterday, it has been learnt from sources.

Even though no official confirmation was available as none of the Bangladesh team officials agreed to make any comments regarding this issue, the news in the air last night was that both the bowlers had invoked suspicion of the umpires during the match, which Bangladesh won by eight runs.

Sundaram Ravi of India and Rod Tucker of Australia were the two on-field umpires officiating in this match.

Under ICC regulations for bowlers reported during international matches, Taskin and Sunny will have to have their actions tested within 14 days of being reported, but will be able to continue playing international cricket during this period.

Taskin, who had a brilliant Asia Cup campaign finishing earlier this week, continued his good work in the World Twenty20 as he conceded only 21 runs in his four-over spell. Sunny, on the other hand, bowled two overs for 10. Both the bowlers, however, remained wicketless in the match.

'Tried to bat long and stay calm'

AL-AMIN from Dharamsala

When Tamim Iqbal hit the second ball of the last over hard down to the long-on boundary and ran for a single, the wait for Bangladesh to have its first century in the shortest version of the game lingered.

The dashing opener was not within touching distance of that magical three-digit mark when he smashed the first ball of the final over for a towering six over long-on -- it took him to 82. But there was a possibility and it was a matter of three more sixes. However, it was not to be and the left-hander had to be content with an unbeaten 83 -- his second-best knock in T20s. It may be his second-best knock on paper, but in the context of the game and the manner he

constructed his innings it will go down as his best T20 knock till date. He may have smilingly rejected that it had nothing to do with his fatherhood, but it was an innings like a caring father when others around him were trying to play spoilsport.

"No, no. I batted the same way in the PSL [Pakistan Super League] and BPL [Bangladesh Premier League], I wasn't a father then and it had nothing to do with that," said Tamim with a broad smile on his face at the post-match press briefing.

Actually it was an innings of assurance and maturity that the Netherlands skipper Peter Borren rightly portrayed. "He was some sort of a lone man playing beautifully."

And one must accept that it was not an easy



Tamim Iqbal and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza address a press conference after winning their opening World Twenty20 qualifier against the Netherlands yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

Tigresses warm up against SL today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national women's cricket team will begin their journey in the ICC World Twenty20 in India with a practice match against Sri Lanka today in Bangalore.

Although it is just a warm-up game, it will give the women in green an opportunity to test themselves in the Indian conditions. The Lankans will have an edge over Bangladesh, having played a series in India in February. They are also considered to be a much stronger team than their Bangladeshi counterparts.

So far the two teams have met twice, with Sri Lanka winning on both occasions.

If Jahanara Alam and Co can pull off a win today, it will no doubt give their team an immense amount of confidence ahead of the ICC World Twenty20.

But that will not be an easy task. The Sri Lankans have a number of in-form cricketers in

their side and one of them is Dilani Manodara.

The wicketkeeper, who bats at the top has been in phenomenal touch recently. In her last four games she posted scores of 27, 41 not out, 23 and 43 not out. The 33-year-old also has an unbeaten 50 in T20s.

The other player the Bangladeshis will be aware of is Shashikala Siriwardene, the captain of the side. An all-rounder, she has been among the runs and has been scalping wickets regularly.

From Bangladesh's perspective, a lot will depend on their 18-year-old wicketkeeper-opener Nigar Sultana. She is at the moment their most trusted batter with scores of 41 and 30 against Ireland and Pakistan in her last few games.

When it comes to the bowling, the team will hope their key strike bowlers Jahanara and Salma Khatun do well today. The advantage for Bangladesh is that they have a number of all-rounders. They will hope they can win this game and make a statement at the start of the tour.

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wicket to bat on.

"It wasn't the easiest wicket. Earlier, it was holding on and it was also spinning. I had to take my time and set myself before playing big shots. I tried to bat long and stay calm, didn't want to push too hard. That was my plan and I got success," said the left-hander, adding that he was more focused on taking the score past the 150-mark instead of thinking of his century.

It is true that Tamim is better known for playing in one gear -- hitting the ball hard and focusing on fours and sixes instead of looking for quick singles. But when asked what made him play differently, he said: "I've been talking a lot to team management, players, coaches on how to go about T20 cricket. I wasn't doing justice to my talent -- I wasn't scoring too many runs in T20s honestly. So I had to find new ways to score runs in T20s and I've been quite successful at home and in Dubai [PSL]. Just wanted to bat that way and I'm happy with my performance today."

He said that he wanted to carry on his good form in the World Cup. Tamim may have missed his century, but the way he has been playing for the last six months, a century is not far away for the mercurial batsman.

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

TIMELY TAMIM

Tamim Iqbal was the epitome of the mature T20 opening batsman. He took his time at first and once he gauged the pace and bounce of the Dharamsala pitch, he started hitting his trademark shots. His first was a beautifully placed back foot punch through point. He hit six fours and three sixes as Bangladesh kept losing wickets at the other end. Needless to say, his unbeaten 83 made all the difference between a pressure-easing win and a crushing loss. Most impressive, perhaps, was his placement which enabled him to pick up no less than seven twos, which proved particularly useful when the Dutch were bowling tightly.