



PHOTOS: BCB/COLLECTED

It was raining cats and dogs in Dharamsala and (INSET) the Tigers therefore decided to enjoy each other's company at the team hotel yesterday.

'I'm wiser now'

If you consider the fan following, Tamim Iqbal certainly does not enjoy the same loyalty like few of the other top cricketers of Bangladesh. When he is scoring runs everything looks fine, but when he fails his critics come out with all guns blazing, questioning his strike-rate, his mobility while fielding and his not-so-impressive running between the wickets. Despite all those criticisms, the left-hander from Chittagong has remained the most impactful batsman of the Tigers for over a decade.

He might not have lived up to that lofty standard in the World Cup down under last year, but he played a vital role in Bangladesh's three home series wins against Pakistan, India and South Africa. His performance in the shortest version of the game from the Bangladesh Premier League to the Pakistan Super League, from the Asia Cup final to the two ICC World T20 qualifiers against the Netherlands and Ireland at Dharamsala is not only an example of a batsman in sublime form but an epitome of aggression with calmness.

He is arguably the first Bangladesh batsman, who has learnt the art of playing T20 cricket. The left-hander, who hit a superb unbeaten 83 against the Netherlands and followed it up with a power-packed 47 in the abandoned game against Ireland, was sporting enough to comply with a short conversation with The Daily Star's Mohammed Al-Amin over phone on Saturday. Following are the excerpts of that interview.

TDS: You are the in-form batsman of the team now. What made you so consistent?

Tamim Iqbal (TI): I have been successful for the last six months, played well in the BPL and the PSL. Obviously, when you are successful you get the confidence to carry on. No one is perfect, but as cricketers it is our job to thrive for that. At the moment I'm happy that I'm contributing to the team.

TDS: Tamim playing a reverse sweep. Isn't it unlike Tamim?

TI: Actually that's a kind of shot I play in Tests than in ODIs or T20s. In a Test match it's more risk-free because of the field placement [laughs].

TDS: Tamim is now more of a sweet timer of the ball than a dasher. How do you reflect on that?

TI: You can say that Tamim is a lot calmer than excited now. Yes, sometimes you need to force things. But if you look around you, you will find batsmen playing cricketing shots are more successful in T20 cricket. You see Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma are very successful in all formats including T20s because they play according to the merit of the ball. It has nothing to do with your technique and I was never worried about my technique, which I think is okay. What you need is to work hard and learn through practice. I think I'm wiser now and slightly bit assertive with my shot selection.

TDS: You are a lot slimmer now. How has that helped?

TI: If you are ten kgs lighter then what you were you will feel fitter. I must thank our trainer Mario Villavarayan for the effort he has put in for that. When you gain weight you will feel a bit tired out in the middle. But now I'm feeling very agile, chasing those quick singles and pushing for doubles. It also helped me mentally. You know when you feel tired it affects you mentally, and in



the process it affects your batting.

TDS: How do you react to Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny being reported by the ICC?

TI: This is something related to the ICC. But from our perspective they are an integral part of a unit which has been playing clean and attractive cricket. It's a process Taskin has to go through and as a member of that unit I wish that he passes that test and joins us as soon as possible.

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Of rainy days and stranded journalists

SPORTS REPORTER from Dharamsala

It poured heavily the whole day in the hilly station of Dharamsala yesterday, forcing the Bangladesh cricket team to stay indoors. The players were mostly confined to the Pavilion Hotel as heavy rain till 2.30pm disallowed the scheduled training at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) Ground.

Left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny however left the hotel for Chennai at around 11.30am to go through the bio-metric test after being reported by the on-field umpires for suspect bowling action. The rain, which disrupted the life of the hilly station, ceased in the afternoon. Actually the amount of rain that Dharamsala experienced since Friday night could have completely turned Dhaka into a waterlogged city. But a good drainage system flushed the billions of gallons of water to the rocky canals, the constant murmur of those even in bright sunshine turned to roaring proportion due to rain.

With a forecast of more rain today, there is a strong chance of yet another washout at the picturesque HPCA Ground, which is an extreme plight if you are a reporter and have to work till late night for a rain-induced curtailed-over match. Friday night was a hell of an experience for the army of Bangladeshi journalists, who could not get a hired taxi last night. Although taxi drivers are normally very cooperative, when it rains, especially on a chilly night, they prefer to switch off their handsets. The ICC media wing was very kind to arrange transport for the stranded journalists. But by the time they had reached the waiting vehicles, they had a full shower. The venue may be a beholder's joy and its drainage system is as good as in Mirpur, but it desperately lacks a good traffic system. And if it rains again today, be prepared for a long night.

'We planned for Tamim'

Qualification at stake as Tigers face Oman today

SPORTS REPORTER



The main concern prior to today's final World Twenty20 first round encounter between Bangladesh and Oman was whether the weather gods

would allow the game to be completed. If the match does go on, then everyone's focus will be on whether Tamim Iqbal can continue on his great run of form. Oman were also wary of Tamim, but they said that they have made plans to contain the southpaw.

"We will have a game plan for Bangladesh and the danger man Tamim Iqbal," Oman skipper Sultan Ahmed was quoted as saying.

At the official pre-match press conference, Oman vice-captain Aamir Kaleem reiterated his captain's sentiments, saying: "Tamim [Iqbal] has been playing great cricket for a few months now and he is in great rhythm. However, we have a plan for him. Obviously our main focus will be send him back early, but as long as he is at the crease, we will have to contain him."

Oman coach Duleep Mendis also men-

tioned the plans to target some of the hard-hitters of Bangladesh, including Tamim.

However, Kaleem said that they had already exceeded expectations, and a win tomorrow would be icing on the cake.

"It is a win-win situation for us. If we win we go through to the next round, but unfor-



tunately if we can't do that we have still achieved a lot in this tournament," he said.

He also said that it would be possible to get a win over Bangladesh, adding that anything could happen in a T20 match.

In the same vein, Oman's captain said that Bangladesh would not get any leeway, as they would go all out to get a result.

"There will be no let up on our aggression," warned skipper Sultan, referring to their impressive display against Ireland.

Afghans dump Zim, reach Super 10s

AFP, Nagpur



Mohammad Nabi's brisk fifty and a clinical bowling show helped Afghanistan knock Zimbabwe out of the World T20 with an emphatic 59-run win to storm into the

Super 10s in Nagpur Saturday.

Batting first, Afghanistan rode on a 98-run stand between Nabi (52) and Samiullah Shenwari (43) to post 186 for six, a score which proved to be a winning total after Zimbabwe were shot out for 127 in 19.4 overs.

In-form opener Mohammad Shahzad provided a blazing start to the innings with a 23-ball 40 but his departure saw Afghanistan lose their way to 63 for four.

Medium-pacer Tinashe Panyangara grabbed three wickets to rattle the top-order after left-arm spinner Sean Williams got dangerman Shahzad back in the dugout.

Nabi, who registered his highest T20 score, and Shenwari then got together to turn things around in the knockout encounter, with some precise powerhitting.

The duo combined the right dose of caution and aggression and took a particular liking to medium-pacer Tendai Chatara and Donald Tiripano, whose economy-rates went for a toss.

"Very happy with my performance, especially in this main match and it was a tough game in the qualifying round," said Nabi.

Zimbabwe, who remain winless against

the Asghar Stanikzai-led side in five attempts, were never in the chase after losing their openers early.

Burdened by the increasing run-rate the Zimbabwe batting failed to get going with Sikandar Raza top-scoring with 15.

Leg-spinner Rashid Khan turned on the heat with a three-wicket haul as medium-pacer Hamid Hassan contributed with two scalps.

Ranked ninth in world T20 rankings, Afghanistan will now meet defending cham-



pions Sri Lanka, South Africa, England and West Indies in Group 1 of the Super 10s.

In the second match of the day, Scotland won the battle of pride against Hong Kong by eight wickets via Duckworth/Lewis (D/L) method in an inconsequential Group A tie.

Chasing a revised target of 76 in 10 overs in the rain-hit match, Scotland cantered home with 12 balls to spare and registered their first win in an ICC tournament.

Earlier, the Preston Mommsen-led side bowled well to restrict Hong Kong to 127 for 7 in 20 overs.

Tigresses thump Ireland

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national women's cricket team beat their Irish counterparts in a warm-up game at the M Chinnawswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday.

During the ICC World Twenty20 Qualifiers, Jahanara Alam and co were beaten by Ireland in the final of the tournament and as a result, yesterday's thumping eight-wicket win will definitely provide Bangladesh with plenty of confidence.

Bowling first, Bangladesh spinner Rumana Ahmed scalped four wickets and helped restrict Ireland to 74 for 9.

It was the spinners who made life difficult for the Irish with the slower bowlers grabbing seven out of the nine wickets.

Bangladesh breezed to their target in just 12.3 overs and lost just two wickets. Sharmin Akter scored a 37-ball 36, an innings which included five fours while skipper Jahanara cashed in with a 9-ball 16.

There were a number of positives for Bangladesh in this game. For starters, they scored at more than six runs an over, which is something that one doesn't often get to see with this side.

Secondly, the way Sharmin anchored the innings -- seeming both calm and aggressive at the same time -- would provide the women in green with a great boost considering that it is not often a player manages to get set in this team.

In addition, Jahanara actually smacked a six during her nine-ball 16, which goes on to show the immense power that she possesses.

SCORES IN BRIEF

IRELAND: 74 for 9 in 20 overs (Joyce 16, Garth 11, Delany 17; Rumana 4-12, Jahnara 1-3)

BANGLADESH: 79 for 2 in 12.3 overs (Sharmin 36 not out, Ayasha 11, Sanjida 10, Jennifer 16 not out; Lucy 1-23, Ciara 1-12)

RESULT: Bangladesh Women won by 8 wickets.



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SCORES IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN VS ZIMBABWE
AFGHANISTAN: 186 for 6 in 20 overs (Mohammad Shahzad 40, Shenwari 43, Nabi 52; Panyangara 3-32)

ZIMBABWE: 127 all out in 19.4 overs (Raza 15, Panyangara 17 not out; Rashid 3-11, Hassan 2-11)

Result: Afghanistan won by 59 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Mohammed Nabi.

HONG KONG VS SCOTLAND
HONG KONG: 127 for 7 in 20 overs (Chapman 40, Rath 21, Niazkat 17; Machan 2-26)

SCOTLAND: 78 for 2 in 8 overs (Munsey 19, Coetzee 20 not out, Cross 22, Machan 15 not out; Cambell 14-0)

Result: Scotland won by 8 wickets (D/L method)

Player-of-the-match: Matt Machan

SA clinch a thriller

AFP, Mumbai

South Africa defeated hosts India by four runs in their World T20 warm-up match in Mumbai on Saturday.

The Proteas won the toss and opted to bat, going on to make 196 for 8 in 20 overs. In reply, India fell agonisingly short of their target.

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY
RAMPANT NABI
Afghanistan weren't exactly struggling when Mohammad Nabi arrived at the crease. But they were a bit nervous at 63 for 4 in eight overs. Zimbabwe, it seemed were pulling it back after a horrendous start. Upon his arrival, Nabi merely watched first dozen deliveries and once he set his eye in, he unleashed himself. He smacked two sixes and four fours during his 32-ball 54 and took Afghanistan from 109 for 4 in 15 overs to a 186. He also contributed with the ball, with miserly figures of 1 for 14 in three overs.