



## 'I said I would be the first'

AL-AMIN from Dharamsala

Tamim Iqbal can't stop entertaining. An unbeaten 83 followed by a fine 47 and then the moment of truth for a Bangladesh batsman -- a maiden century. But ask the left-hander and he will tell you he did not think of that landmark until he reached the 90s.

"I started thinking about that only after hitting the six that took my score to 94. It feels very good to be Bangladesh's first batsman to score a T20 century. But I'm more happy that I'm contributing to the team," said Tamim, who is now Bangladesh's highest run-getter across all formats.

Tamim also became the first Bangladeshi to score 1000 runs in T20Is during his magnificent unbeaten knock of 103 in the Tigers' final ICC World T20 qualifier against Oman in Dharamsala yesterday.

"It is very pleasing that I have scored 1000 runs. I always have a competition with Shakib [Al Hasan]. He was the first to reach the 4000 one-day run mark before me. So it feels good to beat him in the race to 1000 runs. But I don't think I should sit on this. Probably I will play another six or seven years and the target will be to take my runs in all formats to a level that would be hard for someone to beat.

"Yes, I told my coach that I will be the first one to do that [score a century in T20Is]. But then you know I have said a lot of things I could not translate into deeds. I think Shakib, Mushfiqur [Rahim], Mahmudullah [Riyad], Soumya [Sarkar] and Sabbir [Rahman] all have the ability to do that and hopefully it won't take them long," added a beaming Tamim.

Asked what is next for him, he said that he wanted to continue his good form in the Super 10 stage.

"We are entering the real competition. Our next game is against Pakistan [on Wednesday]. And as a team we want to focus on that," added the left-hander who has recently been



RANGS ☎ 01755667707 (DHC.) 01755667077 (CTG.) Mahindra Rise

Bangladesh's two in-form batsmen, Tamim Iqbal (L) and Sabbir Rahman, joined forces for a 55-ball 97-run second-wicket partnership to turbo-charge Bangladesh's innings in the ICC World Twenty20 first-round match against Oman at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala yesterday. PHOTO: BCB

ধুলো ময়লার দ্বি শেষ! BERGER Trusted Worldwide

### THE NUMBERS

- 1** Tamim Iqbal became the first Bangladeshi to score a T20I century.
- 1000** He also became the first Bangladeshi to score 1000 T20I runs. Shakib Al Hasan is just four runs away.
- 11** He is only the eleventh batsman to score 100s in all three formats of the game.
- 4** Bangladesh's score of 180 is their fourth highest score in T20Is.
- 3** Sabbir Rahman and Tamim's stand of 97 runs is Bangladesh's third highest for the second wicket.

OLITALIA Globally No. 1 edible oil brand Made in Italy

## Netherlands win 6-over shootout

SPORTS REPORTER from Dharamsala

Six-overs-a-side cricket is quite popular in Bangladesh. Kids play it in every conceivable

ground. Besides, amateur tournaments involving corporate houses or even media houses are also popularly known as six-a-side cricket, involving six players with six overs per side.

But for professionals this kind of game is like a cruel hoax, apart from the little entertainment value it offers. It is as if you are playing a game of poker and run the risk of losing against an amateur hand. We

had a rain curtailed six-overs-a-side game at Dharamsala yesterday between the Netherlands and Ireland. Thankfully, both teams were playing only for pride and the Dutch triumphed with flying colours. It was a stipulation that suited both teams because the temperature out in the middle was 6 degrees Celsius and felt more like three degree.

The Netherlands, sporting their famed orange shirt, won by 12 runs defending a not too impressive 59 for five. In a short game, one very good over makes all the difference and right-arm pace bowler Paul van Meekeren actually bowled two good overs to turn the tide around after

Ireland were racing towards that 60-run winning target, amassing 28 runs in two overs when Meekeren had Kevin O'Brien magnificently caught by Pieter Seelaar with his second ball and then dismissed a menacing Paul Stirling with his next delivery.

He then returned to bowl the final over with Ireland needing 20 runs and two more wicket off successive deliveries to finish with four wickets for 11 runs in two over, his best T20 figures, surpassing his previous best of two for eight.

It was the Netherlands' only win in the ICC World T20 qualifiers after their eight-run defeat against

Bangladesh. Their other game against Oman was washed out. Ireland on the other hand had a forgettable tournament, losing two games including a stunning defeat against Oman.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**NETHERLANDS:** 59 for 5 in 6 overs (Myburgh 27, Barresi 8, Borren 14, extras 8; Dockrell 3-7)

**IRELAND:** 47 for 7 in 6 overs (Stirling 15, Sorensen 9, extras 9; Van Meekeren 4-11, Van der Merwe 2-3)

**Player-of-the-match:** Paul van Meekeren.

## Sunny rejoins camp, Taskin on his way

SPORTS REPORTER from Dharamsala

Bangladesh left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny rejoined the national camp in Dharamsala yesterday after completing his bowling test in Chennai. The team is expected to get the news regarding the result of his test by today.

Meanwhile, the other bowler whose action has been reported, Taskin Ahmed, will take a separate flight to Chennai today in order to test his bowling action at an ICC-accredited bowling centre. The rest of the team though will be flying to Kolkata where they are scheduled to play their first game of the Super 10s against Pakistan on March 16.

Taskin has been in brilliant touch lately. It was something that was evident in Bangladesh's last two games and the entire team is holding their breath for a positive outcome with regards to Taskin's test.

Meanwhile, the national selectors have kept a number of players in Bangladesh ready as replacements for the two players in case their bowling actions are deemed illegal by the ICC.

According to sources, the selectors have asked slow left-arm bowlers Mosharraf Hossain, Sanjamul Islam and Saqlain Sajib to remain ready. If Sunny's action is found to be illegal, then it is likely that either of the three will replace him.

At the same time, it was also learnt that pacers Kamrul Islam and Mohammad Shahid have also been asked to stay prepared. They will replace Taskin if required.

All of the above-mentioned players are currently taking part in the Bangladesh Cricket League, the domestic four-day competition, and have enjoyed plenty of game time.

## Two-horse race for title begins today

SPORTS REPORTER



The final round of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL), the country's premier first-class competition, will start today with league leaders Walton Central Zone and second-placed Islami Bank East Zone in pursuit of the league title.

Mosharraf Hossain's Central Zone have 58 points while the Mominul Haque-led East Zone have 49. Central will take on BCB North Zone in Dhaka while East Zone will play Prime Bank South Zone at Fatullah today.

A team can obtain a maximum of 19 points from one game and therefore both Central and East have a shot at the championship. If a team wins the four-day encounter, they will be awarded 10 points. The remaining points, termed as 'bonus points', will be awarded based on the performance of the respective team.

For instance, if a team posts more than 400 runs within the first 110 overs of the first innings, it will be awarded five points. If a team manages to bowl the opposition out in the first innings, it will receive three points. A team will also receive one point if they manage

to take a lead in the first innings.

The scenario remains quite complex. As a result, the captains of both sides are targeting outright wins in the last round of the competition.

"We know that we still have a chance to win the tournament even if we lose the final game. We just need to get the required number of bonus points and at the same time we need East Zone to either draw or not get the bonus points," said Central skipper, Mosharraf Hossain.

"However, if we think about all that, it's going to become a lot more confusing. At the moment we are just thinking about a win and nothing else," he added.

Back in 2013, during the first edition of the competition, Mosharraf had led Central to the title. He hopes he can repeat the feat over the next five days.

"Our players are confident. It has been a good league so far. We hope to finish it well," he said.

The skipper of East Zone, Mominul, echoed a similar sentiment. "Anything can happen in the final round. It's best not to talk about it and just give your maximum on the field," said the left-arm batsman.

"The good part is that there has been plenty of competition in our team this season. We are in good spirits and we are confident," he added.



Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bilal	4	0	16	0
Amir	4	0	28	0
Lalcheta	3	0	35	1
Ansari	4	0	50	0
Mehran	1	0	11	0
Khawar	3	0	24	1
Kaleem	1	0	15	0

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taskin	2	0	8	1
Al-Amin	2	0	10	1
Hider	2	0	15	0
Shakib	3	0	15	4
Mashrafe	2	0	10	1
Sabbir	1	0	5	1

**Result:** Bangladesh won by 54 runs (D/L method).  
**Player-of-the-match:** Tamim Iqbal.



ARAFAT SUNNY

blessed with a baby boy. With his mentor and Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza sitting next to him, Tamim said that the treatment from his followers when he is not performing is an issue he has stopped thinking about.

"I have previously reacted to criticism. But my mentor Mashrafe bhai advised not to react to any criticism. It helped me a lot. I know they love me very much. They react when I get out early because they expect me to score. I'm cool now; it's helping to take the pressure out of me," explained the left-hander.

He was however not interested to come up with a straightforward answer about their next target.

"Our team ethic is to focus on our next game. At the moment we are not thinking beyond the Pakistan game," said Tamim.

Mashrafe echoed the sentiment while jokingly saying that 'he needs someone else to do the toss' after losing a fifth straight toss last night.

"In every tournament the first game is very important. In that context Pakistan is very important. And if we can win, it will be easier to set a target," said Mashrafe, adding that the Asia Cup win over Pakistan will count for nothing in different conditions.

"Kolkata is not far away from us. But you must accept that we have not played there before," said the Bangladesh captain.

His side may get the added fillip of having main strike bowler Mustafizur Rahman back for the Pakistan game. Mashrafe said that there is a chance that Mustafizur -- who recently suffered a side strain -- will play, and he was also seen bowling in the nets yesterday.

Sealed Maintenance Free Batteries  
**PERFORMER OF THE DAY**  
**IMPERIOUS IQBAL**  
It has been one upward graph for Tamim Iqbal in his recent T20I outings, and the left-hander reached the zenith yesterday. A batsman who not long ago struggled to gauge the pace of a T20 match has now become the consummate T20 opener. That he recorded Bangladesh's first T20I hundred is merely incidental, the real story is how it now seems inevitable that he will leave his stamp on a 20-over innings. Faced with a disciplined start from the Oman bowlers, there was no sign of panic in the left-hander. He kept going at a steady rate until, after the sixth over, he realised that he had the measure of the pitch and the bowlers, and from 16 off 15 balls he scored 87 runs from the next 48 balls he faced. Each of his 10 fours and five sixes were a delight and they were hit to all parts of the ground -- deft touches to third man, cover drives along the ground, down-the-wicket bludgeons and pulled sixes formed the tapestry of a masterful knock.