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THE AFRIDI SUPREMACY: This picture perhaps best encapsulates the scenario of the ICC World Twenty20 match between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday. As Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi -- who scored a 19-ball 49 and took two wickets -- celebrates with his teammates, a defeated Tamim Iqbal (R) walks off after being dismissed.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Not up to the mark in batting or bowling'

AL-AMIN from Kolkata



The build-up to Bangladesh's opening Super 10 fixture against Pakistan was intense and to some extent exciting. Kolkata turned into Little Dhaka with the arrival of so many Bangladeshi fans. The famous Park Street and New Market were abuzz with so many people sporting shirts of their national team. It also led to a sharp rise in hotel fair. The Peerless Inn, which is not far away from Eden Gardens, actually charged five times of its normal room rent.

The mood before the game was vibrant and most of the locals we have come across on our way to the venue gave an impression that they would be rooting for the Tigers. But once you were in and the game had started, you would have felt a bit betrayed. Apart from a few thousand Bangladeshi supporters, the half-packed Eden audience rooted for quality batsmanship and to some extent for Pakistan, just to prove that Shahid Afridi was spot on when he made his now-infamous 'more loved in India' comment. For Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza it was deceiving in every aspect. When he looked at the green wicket he thought it would help his bowlers.

"When I saw the green wicket I thought it will help our fast bowlers. But I was proved completely wrong. It was a good wicket to bat on and the Pakistani openers used it very well. I think 200 is a big score to chase", said Mashrafe at the post-match briefing, adding that they dropped Mustafizur Rahman at the last moment due to fitness issues.

"Mustafizur was very close [to playing the game]. But we could not include him at the last moment. We desperately wanted him to play because it was a crucial game for us. Maybe we did not want to risk him. Maybe we will be able to play him in the next game," said the Bangladesh captain.

He said that it would have been easier for

his batsmen to chase something like 170. "He [Afridi] played well and he deserves credit for that," said Mashrafe while responding to a question of how important Afridi's 19-ball 49 was. He also refused to blame his batsmen for failing to chase down that big total on a very good batting pitch despite admitting that a defeat by 55 runs was too big for comfort. "We were not up to the mark in batting and bowling. But I must say it was very tough to chase down 200. We were doing well when Sabbir was in the middle. But



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Tigresses eager to move on Bangladesh women play England today

SPORTS REPORTER



There seems to be no end to the challenges that the Bangladesh national women's team are facing. In their first game, an extremely strong Indian outfit readily defeated them. Today, they will meet another top-ranked side, England, at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore.

In their first game against India, they were playing in front of television cameras after a long time and they seemed a bit overawed by the occasion. However, captain Jahanara Alam ahead of the match said that the side was confident of putting up a better show against England.

"We want to forget everything and move forward," said Jahanara, when asked if her team was overly nervous when it faced India on Tuesday. "We have the confidence to bounce back and are thinking only about playing England tomorrow."

"We misfielded a lot, our bowlers bowled the wrong line and the batting line-up did not click. So we are looking to improve in all three departments against England and perform better," she said.

"We know that if we apply all we know -- not to misfield, to bowl in the right channel, and to look to score off every ball and put away the loose delivery -- things will work out. Nothing is impossible," she added.

Jahanara hopes that the players

learn from the mistakes they committed in the last game.

"We just want to learn from our mistakes. Before every match, any team wants to win so we will go into the match with that attitude. England are a very good side, but we are not thinking about that. We are thinking simply about playing our game," stressed Jahanara.

England skipper Charlotte Edwards expects to face a lot of spin today.

"The pitches have probably taken a bit more spin than we thought, but our seamers have been just as effective in these conditions. This competition is going to be about adapting to the conditions as quickly as possible and hopefully we'll look to do that come tomorrow," said Edwards.

BD-PAK SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN	R/B	4/6
Sharjeel b Sunny	18/10	1/2
Shehzad c Mahmudullah		
b Sabbir	52/39	8/0
Hafeez c Soumya b Sunny	64/42	7/2
Afridi c Mahmudullah		
b Taskin	49/19	4/4
U Akmal c Shakib b Taskin	0/2	0/0
Malik not out	15/9	2/0
Wasim not out	0/0	0/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-1, nb-1)		3
Total: (For 5 wks in 20 overs)	201	
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-121, 3-163, 4-175, 5-198.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taskin	4	0	32	2
Al-Amin	3	0	43	0
Sunny	4	0	34	2
Shakib	4	0	39	0
Mashrafe	3	0	41	0
Sabbir	2	0	11	1

BANGLADESH	R/B	4/6
Tamim c Wasim b Afridi	24/20	0/2
Soumya b Amir	0/2	0/0
Sabbir b Afridi	25/19	5/0
Shakib not out	50/40	5/1
Mahmudullah c Sharjeel		
b Wasim	4/5	0/0
Mushfiqur c Sarfraz b Amir	18/21	3/0
Mithun c Amir b Irfan	2/4	0/0
Mashrafe not out	15/9	2/1
Extras: (lb-4, w-4)		8
Total: (For 6 wks in 20 overs)	146	
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-44, 3-58, 4-71, 5-110, 6-117.		

'Afridi showed character'

SPORTS REPORTER



After a comfortable victory against Bangladesh in their ICC World Twenty20 Super 10 Group 2 match yesterday, Pakistan batsman Mohammad Hafeez said that skipper Shahid Afridi had showed his character in guiding the side.

Afridi -- who has had heavy criticism levelled his way and has also had cases filed against him for 'treason' over recent comments -- led the way at Eden Gardens with a 19-ball 49 as his team eased to a 55-run win yesterday.

"It's great to see someone who was under pressure from the media and others to come up with this kind of performance. It shows the character that he [Afridi] has," Hafeez said at the post-match press conference.

"He was under pressure because of his performances, but he always comes up with these performances and brings a smile back to his fans' faces and contributes in the team's wins," Hafeez, who himself scored a half-century, said about his captain.

"It's great to see him play shots everywhere. The fans love it and we love it. We know he can take the game away from the opposition. It's great to see him return to form with the bat and ball also."

"It was an important game. We came here late but we played a good game and got our confidence back. This was the start we wanted," he concluded.

South safe after Mosaddek ton

SPORTS REPORTER



South Zone's Mosaddek Hossain smacked his seventh first-class century on the third day of the Bangladesh Cricket League final-round match against East Zone yesterday.

Playing his 18th match, the 20-year-old Mosaddek was unbeaten on 102 at the end of day three yesterday and looked extremely good at the Fatullah wicket. It was because of his century and a crucial 72 from Forhad Reza that South Zone managed to push the game into safety.

With just one more day to go, South Zone are just 22 runs behind East Zone and this is just the first innings. With an entire inning still to be played, the match is expected to end as a draw. At 420 for six, the southerners will hope to score as many runs as possible and probably go for one last attack with the ball in the last two sessions of the final day.

Meanwhile, Walton Central Zone are in

danger of losing their game against BCB North Zone. Currently in pole position to win the championship, a loss in the final round could jeopardise their chances, although a draw for East Zone -- their closest rivals -- may help Central.

Three wickets apiece by Ariful Haque, Shafaq Al Zabir and Mahmudul Hasan helped them bundle out Central for just 306 in reply to North Zone's first innings total of 378. After the exchange, North Zone finished the day on 133 for three and took the lead past the 200-run mark. With one more day to go, they will hope they can post a huge target for Central.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NORTH ZONE: 378 and 133 for 3 (Nazmul 50 not out, Farhad 33; Tanveer 1-3, Sharif 1-27) v **CENTRAL ZONE:** 306 all out in 91.2 overs (Rakibul 63, Shuvagata 51, Mosharraf 47; Ariful 3-43, Mahmudul 3-53, Shafaq 3-55)

EAST ZONE: 442 v South Zone: 420 for 6 (Mosaddek 102 not out, Nafees 90, Forhad 72; Nazmul 2-130, Kamrul 1-54, Tasamul 1-17)

Gayle storm blows England away

REUTERS, Mumbai



Chris Gayle smashed the first hundred of the sixth World Twenty20 to underline his reputation as cricket's most destructive batsman and powered West Indies to a six-wicket win over England in their Super 10 match on Wednesday.

The tall left-handed opener made mockery of a seemingly steep 183-run target in the Group One match, carrying West Indies to victory with 11 balls to spare on a hot and humid evening at the Wankhede Stadium.

Gayle's century was his second in the format and he remained unbeaten on 100 off 48 balls with his innings studded with 11 sixes and five fours. Marlon Samuels (37) took the early lead of smashing the England bowling while Gayle took his time to settle down and the pair added 55 for the second wicket to lay down the foundation for a West Indies victory. It was the sparse crowd at the stadium overlooking the Arabian



ANWAR ISPAT
FASTEST T20I 100s

PLAYER	BALLS	OPPOSITION	VENUE	DATE
Richard Levi (SA)	45	NZ	Hamilton	19 Feb 2012
Faf du Plessis (SA)	46	WI	Johannesburg	11 Jan 2015
Chris Gayle (WI)	47	Eng	Mumbai	16 Mar 2016
Aaron Finch (AUS)	47	Eng	Southampton	29 Aug 2013
Chris Gayle (WI)	50	SA	Johannesburg	11 Sep 2007
Brendon McCullum (NZ)	50	AUS	Christchurch	28/02/2010

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 182 for 6 in 20 overs (Root 48, Buttler 30; Russel 2-36)
WEST INDIES: 183 for 4 in 18.1 overs (Gayle 100 not out, Samuels 37; Rashid 1-20)
Result: West Indies won by 6 wickets; **Player-of-the-match:** Chris Gayle

Sea who were at risk once Gayle decided to open his arms and swat away everything that was in his zone over the boundary. Both England spinners Adil Rashid and Moeen Ali were at the receiving end of Gayle's blitzkrieg with the latter suffering the ignominy of being hit for three consecutive sixes in a 22-run over. Dinesh Ramdin and Dwayne Bravo threw away their wickets in a brief period of worry for West Indies but England captain Eoin Morgan and his team mates could do little to stop the 36-year-old Gayle.

Earlier, a measured 48 from Joe Root helped England to 182-6 after West Indies won the toss and opted to bowl on a green-tinted wicket.



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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

BOOM!

The last time Shahid Afridi crossed 10 in a T20I was in New Zealand in January, which for any other player would have been an indicator of bad form. But when he promoted himself to number four at the fall of Ahmed Shehzad's wicket, no one knew what to expect -- the standard fare for an Afridi innings. It was time for the ticking time bomb to explode. His 19-ball 49 contained the usual wild swipes, but they were characterised by what once made him a near-consistent threat -- a clear mind and bat speed rivalled only by Brendon McCullum. A Mashrafe beamer was deposited nonchalantly over the square leg boundary, before arguably the shot of the match -- a Taskin half-volley that was creamed inside-out over extra cover for six. As if that was not enough, Afridi also took the wickets of Tamim Iqbal and Sabbir Rahman to complete a spectacular all-round display.



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