



## Tigers set for short break

SPORTS REPORTER



Having returned from the ICC World Twenty20, Bangladesh are set to take a slight breather from international cricket after three months of nearly continuous cricket. Their next tour is likely to take place in August when they are supposed to go to India to play a one-off Test.

Following that series, England are scheduled to arrive in Bangladesh in October for a month-long tour. In the meantime, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to arrange another series, which could be a tri-nation tournament, before England's arrival. However, the plan is still in its primary stage. After the England series, Bangladesh are scheduled to tour New Zealand in December.

In between all that there are individuals who will be taking part in competitions abroad. Shikib Al Hasan and



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PHOTOS: STAR  
The Tigers returned home yesterday from a World Twenty20 campaign that ended in disappointment, but Shikib Al Hasan (L) and Tamim Iqbal (R) put in some sparkling performances, while Mustafizur Rahman showcased his brilliance on the world stage.



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# Three months of steady T20 progress

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ICC World T20 campaign might not have been as memorable as the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand last year. Two of their main bowlers' actions were adjudged to be illegal, they failed to win a game in the Super 10 and were even bundled out for their lowest ever T20I score in their last game against New Zealand.

Their performance levels throughout the tournament were inconsistent. They were, for instance, hammered against Pakistan on a flat track. In the next two games they came back well. They were a bit shaky against Australia but managed to create a fright. And against India, they put in a near-perfect performance. Having failed to ace that challenge, they crumbled against the Black Caps.

If one were to map out Bangladesh's performance levels on a graph, there would be as many valleys as peaks. However, if one looks at this team from a wider perspective, the amount of progress that they have made in the last two months becomes clear.

Barely three months ago Bangladesh had struggled to beat Zimbabwe. In between November 2015 to January 2016, they played the African nation six times at home and lost on three occasions.

Despite putting in firm performances in the ODIs in 2015, they failed to replicate those heroics in the T20 format. They

lost the T20I series 2-0 against South Africa in July last year.

Going into the Asia Cup and the ICC World Twenty20, one of the most notable aspects was that the players barely had any experience in this format. In 2015, for instance, they had played just five T20Is. Their lack of experience was something that had reflected on the players' numbers as well.

Prior to the Asia Cup, one rarely saw a Bangladeshi batsman carry his bat through a T20I innings or even put on a mighty score.



Before the Asia Cup, there were only three players who had posted 80-plus scores for the Tigers in T20Is. Nazimuddin had scored 80 back in 2007, while Shikib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal crossed the landmark in 2012.

The last time a Bangladeshi bowler scalped a four-wicket haul, before the Asia Cup, was back in 2013 when Shakib

recorded figures of 4 for 21 against Zimbabwe.

These numbers though have changed quite a bit in the last three months. Tamim, for instance, was a gem with the bat, scoring an unbeaten 83 against the Netherlands and following that up with a century against Oman. Sabbir Rahman scored a brilliant 80 against Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup and almost singlehandedly took the Tigers to a winning score.

On a similar note, Shakib and Mustafizur Rahman broke barriers and scalped four and five-wicket hauls in the ICC World Twenty20. Look at the bowling averages of Al-Amin Hossain and Mustafizur this year and you will find them right there at the top alongside the best in the world.

Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur have boasted economy rates of just 6.16 and 6.12 respectively. Amongst bowlers from full-member nations who have bowled at least 12 overs this year, these economy rates are currently the second and third best. Only Angelo Mathews has recorded better numbers.

Considering that Bangladesh have historically been an unstable T20I team, which is currently ranked 10th, the way they performed in the last three months is very commendable.

They reached the final of the Asia Cup and they almost beat the favourites of the ICC World Twenty20 in their own den; the last three months have helped the Tigers set a foundation for themselves in this format, one which they can use to launch from in the near future.

## Roy, Willey fined

AFP, New Delhi

England opener Jason Roy and fast bowler David Willey have been fined at the World Twenty20 after emotions spilled over during their win over Sri Lanka on Saturday.

Roy was fined 30 percent of his match fee for swearing and then throwing his bat and helmet upon leaving the field, after being given out lbw for 42 off 39 balls.

Willey, meanwhile, who took 2-26, was fined 15 percent of his fee after giving a colourful send-off to Milinda Siriwardana when the Sri Lankan was dismissed immediately after hitting the seamer for six.



The Afghans ended their World Twenty20 campaign on a high, claiming their first win of the Super 10 and handing the West Indies their first defeat of the tournament in Nagpur yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Afghans end with a blast

AFP, Nagpur



Afghanistan downed the powerful West Indies by six runs in a historic World Twenty20 match in Nagpur on Sunday, handing the never-say-die underdogs their first ever Super 10 victory.

Afghanistan had failed to qualify for the semifinals heading into Sunday's match, but were determined to take home a consolation victory against the West Indies, who had already made the final four.

After being sent into bat, Asghar Stanikzai's side posted a respectable 123 for 7, with Najibullah Zadran smashing an unbeaten 48 against the 2012 World T20 champions.

The West Indies, who had a perfect record heading into the match with

three straight wins, warned that they were not going to let up against Afghanistan.

But their run chase got off to a shaky start, with opener Evin Lewis dismissed for a duck, and some excellent Afghanistan spin bowling led by 17-year-old Rashid Khan meant the wickets kept falling.

With the West Indies needing 10 runs from the final over, Najibullah sprinted several metres along the boundary to take a spectacular, tumbling catch and claim Carlos Braithwaite for 13, just when he looked like bringing the West Indies home, as he had done against South Africa on Friday.

Samuel Badree and an injured Andre Fletcher could only manage to push the total to 117 in the three remaining deliveries.

Despite the loss, the West Indies

still finish top of Group One, and will play either Australia or India, who clash later Sunday in Group Two, in the semifinals.

After being sent in to bat, Najibullah top scored for Afghanistan, striking four fours and one six in his 40-ball knock to bring cheers from the small but vocal crowd.

Afghanistan had lost all of their previous Super 10 matches, but they have won new admirers in India with their aggressive and carefree brand of cricket that has caused some anxious moments for their opponents.

Asghar Stanikzai also made a handy 16. The skipper shuffled down the wicket to smash a six over long on, but was caught the next ball by Dwayne Bravo off Badree attempting the same shot.

## SA to play for pride

Take on SL today

AFP, New Delhi

Skipper Faf du Plessis said his South African side will try to salvage some national pride against Sri Lanka in their final World Twenty20 match in New Delhi today.

Both teams have failed to qualify for the semifinals after disappointing performances in the group stages, and will be looking to head home with a win under their belts at the Feroz Shah Kotla stadium.

The Proteas' hopes of clinching a first international trophy were dented in their opening game, when England chased down a record 230 runs to win.

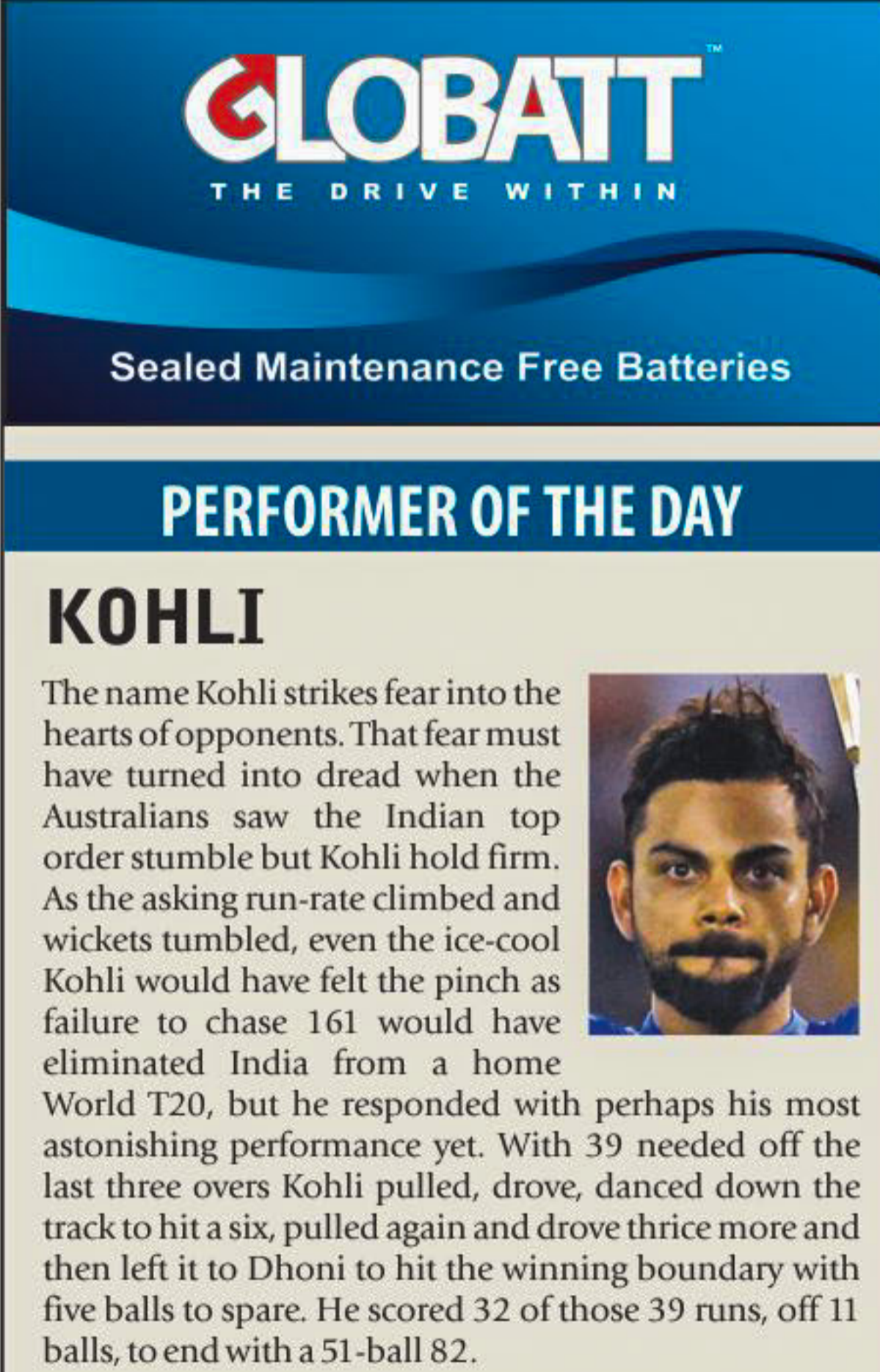
They comfortably beat minnows Afghanistan by 37 runs as expected, but lost a thriller when the West Indies successfully chased 123 with just two balls to spare and Sri Lanka's defeat to England on Saturday sealed their fate.

"The difference in getting across the line in big games is when big players step up," du Plessis said.

"I am a fighter and I know we've got a lot of fighters in our team. We are playing for South Africa, we are wearing the Protea badge."

Title holders Sri Lanka also suffered two out of three losses, further evidence of the team's decline over the last two years, a process accelerated by the retirements of Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene.

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

KOHLI

The name Kohli strikes fear into the hearts of opponents. That fear must have turned into dread when the Australians saw the Indian top order stumble but Kohli hold firm. As the asking run-rate climbed and wickets tumbled, even the ice-cool Kohli would have felt the pinch as failure to chase 161 would have eliminated India from a home World T20, but he responded with perhaps his most astonishing performance yet. With 39 needed off the last three overs Kohli pulled, drove, danced down the track to hit a six, pulled again and drove thrice more and then left it to Dhoni to hit the winning boundary with five balls to spare. He scored 32 of those 39 runs, off 11 balls, to end with a 51-ball 82.



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SCORES IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN: 123 for 7 in 20 overs (Shahzad 24, Stanikzai 16, Naib 8, Najibullah 48 not out, Nabi 9, Rashid 6 not out; Russell 2-23, Badree 3-14, Braithwaite, Benn 1-18, Sammy 1-17)

WEST INDIES: 117 for 8 in 20 overs (Charles 22, Fletcher 11 not out, Ramdin 18, Bravo 28, Russell 7, Sammy 6, Braithwaite 13; Hamza 1-9, Nabi 2-26, Hassan 1-19, Khan 2-26, Naib 1-14)

Result: Afghanistan won by 6 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Najibullah Zadran.



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