

SPORT

The golden arm

SPORTS REPORTER

"I am still sweating. I really don't know what happened out there." These are the words that Mahmudullah Riyad used when asked to describe the story behind his unique feat. After defending seven runs off the last over against the Rajshahi Kings on November 9, Mahmudullah did the unthinkable by managing to repeat the heroics. He defended six against two set Chittagong Kings batsmen and led the Titans to their second unlikely win of the tournament. After the game against Rajshahi on Wednesday, he described that moment as something that happens once in a blue moon. After yesterday's win, he was exasperated. He did not have any words to describe what he had done. "I really don't know what happened. It just worked out. I don't know anything else. I was very nervous. I am still sweating," blurted Riyad at the start of the post-match press conference yesterday at Mirpur. "Six runs off six balls. They just needed one six to win the game and the wicket was good. It was always going to be tough. I don't know. My plan was just to keep [Mohammad] Nabi at the non-strikers end for as long as possible. Chaturanga's [De Silva] wicket was crucial and then there was a dot. That's when the confidence slowly started building. "There were no mental games. I just tried to bowl in the right areas. I told myself that the game was already out of reach. Now I just need to try my best and that's what I

did," added Riyad. Even Tamim Iqbal, who was extremely disappointed with the defeat, appreciated Mahmudullah's guts. "If you think of it, this can only happen once in ten occasions. We had two set batsmen and we needed just six runs. Yes, he definitely deserves credit for this win, but to me I think we lost this game because of our faults. "But no doubt, to win two matches from such a stage is not a joke. He defended seven runs one day and today he defended six. Today's was even more difficult. He is doing something right and that's why he is getting success," said Tamim. Going by Mahmudullah's performances, it won't be a surprise if he keeps bringing himself at the death in the coming days. However, it is something that he hopes he will not have to do time and again during the competition. "I don't want to bowl. Honestly, I don't. My best bowlers should be bowling the death overs. But I didn't have any options and that's why I had to take the responsibility. Thank God it's working out for me," said Mahmudullah. Towards the end of the press conference Mahmudullah was asked if yesterday's win would help heal the wounds of the defeat against India during the World T20 when Bangladesh needed two runs off three balls. To that Mahmudullah replied: "If you compare this match to that, then this is nothing. I don't know how I can overcome the World Cup defeat. That will always be a mark. But if God gives us a chance, we will, I will try to come out on the positive side."



In a repeat of his heroics from three days ago, Mahmudullah Riyad helped his side defend six runs off the final over against Chittagong Vikings during their Bangladesh Premier League match in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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Tamim Iqbal was furious with his team after their dismal batting performance, which saw them fail to score six runs off the last over. PHOTO: STAR

'Need to use our heads'

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Vikings skipper Tamim Iqbal lashed out at his batsmen after their four run defeat to the Khulna Titans at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. A disappointed Tamim sent a stern message to his batsmen and said that they needed to put up smarter displays if they wanted to win matches. "If we continue playing this way, we will continue losing. If you repeatedly give a batsman a message, more than 20 times, and even then if he doesn't understand that message, then there must be a problem with him. "He may not have a problem with his skills, but he may have a problem with his head. If you want to feed the idea of playing normal cricket like daal bhaat and then maybe he doesn't deserve to play in this place," an angry Tamim told reporters during the post match press conference yesterday. It was unclear who Tamim was referring to, but his entire top order, including him, had given in quite cheaply in yesterday's game. His top five batsmen struggled and were sent back to the pavilion with just 54 runs on the board. When asked who he was referring to Tamim said: "I don't want to name anyone in particular. I am talking about the general batting of our team." "What I am trying to say is that it's not a problem if we lose a game. We may lose many more games ahead, but if you don't follow a plan then that's a problem. "If you see, at one point all their main bowlers were bowling at the front, which meant that they would be two overs short eventually. But if you get out while attacking the main bowler, then there is no point. If you want to play at this level, you need to use your brain," added Tamim. The left-hander was probably referring to the fact that Shafiu Islam and Kevon Cooper, Khulna's two main bowlers, dismissed his top five. It was in the middle stages that Mohammad Nabi and Chaturanga De Silva managed to get them back in the game with a 41-runs stand in just 4.1 overs. The game would not have been close had these two not attacked the bowlers. Despite doing well during the difficult phase, the duo failed to take them home in the last over. "Had we managed to play a bit more smartly, it would have been difficult for Mahmudullah to defend six runs," said Tamim.

SCOREBOARDS

TITANS V VIKINGS				
	R/B	4s/6s		
Wessels b Razzak	28/17	4/0		
Hasanzaman c Jahurul b Nabi	8/6	1/0		
Shuvagata c Subashis b Nabi	3/4	0/0		
Mahmudullah c Tamim b Taskin	6/10	0/0		
Kapali c Taskin b Nabi	23/25	1/0		
Pooran run out	29/30	0/1		
Ariful not out	25/16	1/2		
Cooper c b Taskin	0/1	0/0		
Mosharraf not out	1/1	0/0		
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, w-1)		4		
Total: (For 7 wks in 20 overs)		127		
Did not bat: Shafiu, Junaid				
Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-38, 3-42, 4-52, 5-77, 6-125, 7-125				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Razzak	4	1	23	1
Subashis	3	0	27	0
Nabi	4	0	22	3
Taskin	3	0	17	2
Malik	4	0	23	0
De Silva	2	0	12	0

CHITTAGONG VIKINGS				
	R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim c Shafiu b Cooper	3/12	0/0		
DR Smith c Junaid b Cooper	3/10	0/0		
Anamul b w b Shafiu	14/21	1/0		
Malik b w b Shafiu	4/8	0/0		
Zakir c Wessels b Shafiu	8/12	1/0		
Jahurul c Junaid b Shafiu	25/18	0/1		
Nabi c Kapali b Mahmudullah	39/23	2/2		
Silva c Pooran b Mahmudullah	19/14	1/1		
Razzak c Shuvagata				
b Mahmudullah	0/2	0/0		
Taskin not out	0/0	0/0		
Extras: (lb-6, w-2)		8		
Total: (For 9 wks in 20 overs)		123		
Did not bat: Subashis				
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-20, 3-30, 4-33, 5-54, 6-78, 7-123, 8-123, 9-123				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shuvagata	1	0	2	0
Junaid	4	0	27	0
Cooper	4	0	17	2
Mosharraf	4	0	19	0
Shafiu	4	0	28	4
Mahmudullah	3	0	24	3

Result: Khulna Titans won by 4 runs
Player of the match: Mahmudullah

DYNAMITES V RIDERS

DHAKA DYNAMITES				
	R/B	4s/6s		
Mehedi c Afridi b Gazi	10/4	1/1		
Sangakkara c Soumya b Gazi	29/27	4/0		
Nasir c Rubel b Afridi	38/33	6/0		
Bopara lbw b Afridi	0/2	0/0		
Shakib c Rubel b Dawson	10/11	1/0		
Mosaddek not out	48/28	7/2		
Prasanna c Sunny	13/10	0/1		
Prasanna not out	13/5	0/2		
Extras: (lb-5, w-4)		9		
Total: (For 7 wks in 20 overs)		170		
Did not bat: Shahid, Alauddin, Sunzamul				
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-79, 3-79, 4-81, 5-120, 6-153				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gazi	4	0	31	2
Rubel	3	0	31	0
Gleeson	1.1	0	9	0
Sunny	2.5	0	31	1
Dawson	3	0	18	1
Afridi	4	1	22	2
Nasir	1	0	7	0
Muktar Ali	1	0	16	0

RANGPUR RIDERS				
	R/B	4s/6s		
Shahzad c Nasir b Sunzamul	11	0/1		
Soumya b Nasir	2	0/0		
Mithun b Shakib	0	0/0		
Dawson lbw b Prasanna	16	2/0		
Nasir c S'Kkara b Shahid	26	1/0		
Afridi c Bopara b Shakib	6	0/0		
Gazi c Sunzamul b Babu	8	0/0		
Muktar c Bopara b Bravo	10	2/0		
Arafat c S'Kkara b Bravo	2	0/0		
Rubel not out	2	0/0		
Gleeson absent hurt				
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, w-5)		9		
Total (all out; 19.2 overs)		92		
FOW: 1-12, 2-13, 3-23, 4-50, 5-65, 6-67, 7-80, 8-85, 9-92				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bravo	3	0	21	2
Nasir	1	0	2	1
Shakib	4	0	17	2
Sunzamul	4	0	18	1
Prasanna	4	0	17	1
Shahid	2	0	8	1
Bopara	1	0	3	0
Babu	2	0	2	1

Result: Dhaka Dynamites won by 78 runs
Player of the match: Mosaddek Hossain

Mahmudullah does it again

SPORTS REPORTER

The phrase 'lightning never strikes the same place twice' is one that researchers have seen nature defy quite often. Khulna Titans skipper Mahmudullah Riyad joined that bandwagon yesterday when he helped the Titans defend six runs in the last over against two set Chittagong Vikings batsmen. For the second time in three days Riyad revived Khulna in the last over and brought them back from the dead. The last time he did something similar was on November 9 when he scalped the last three Rajshahi Kings wickets and defended seven runs. Yesterday's task against the Vikings was a lot more difficult. Having been set a rather easy target of 128, the Vikings struggled during the chase. They lost Tamim Iqbal early in the third over and failed to

move along. Their top five batsmen were sent back to the pavilion by over number 12 by pacers Shafiu Islam and Kevon Cooper. After 12 overs, Chittagong were struggling at 54 for 5. However a 45-run stand, smashed off just 4.1 overs, between Mohammad Nabi and Chaturanga De Silva brought them back into the game. In fact, it not only brought them back, but took them to the brink of victory. Nabi smashed two sixes and two fours for his 20-ball 38 while De Silva hit one six and one four during his 13-ball 19. With just six more required of six balls and both these batsmen at the crease no one would have given Mahmudullah a chance. However, the Khulna Titans skipper defied the odds yet again. He first let Nabi hit the ball down the ground and take a single. He bowled a wide long hop on the second, but fortunately De Silva edged that to the keeper, Nicholas Pooran. Both the keeper and the

bowler were lucky. For starters the bad ball had gotten an edge and secondly that edge ricocheted off the keeper's gloves and then his leg before he finally held it. Veteran Abdur Razzak arrived at the crease next. The game is over, many thought, it is going to end with a boundary, Razzak-style. However, the left-hander missed a straighter one from Mahmudullah and, although it seemed to be hitting the stumps, the umpire believed that he was hit outside off. Regardless of the decision, Mahmudullah had bowled a dot ball and the pressure was slowly building. With five required off three, Razzak moved his leg aside and attempted to hit one for a six, but the mighty heave went straight up in the air and landed into the safe hands of the long off fielder. With the equation now at five off two with Nabi on strike, Chittagong were still favoured to win this game.

However, the odds were torn apart once Nabi failed to pull a short, flat, quick delivery. The Afghani, who had dispatched much more difficult deliveries moments before, was shell shocked to have missed that. And that was it. With five required off one, all Mahmudullah needed to do was hold his nerve and the result was theirs. And that is exactly what happened. Mahmudullah bowled a similarly flat delivery, which was holed to mid-wicket. Khulna had won their second game by four runs. Shafiu Islam, who recorded his best T20 figures of 4 for 28, was one of the key reasons why the game went down the wire in the first place. Earlier, crucial twenties from Alok Kapali, Nicholas Pooran and Ariful Haque helped Khulna recover from 52 for 4 in 8.4 overs to post 127. Number seven Ariful, who smacked two sixes and a four during his 16-ball 25, was the key aggressor.

Australia flattened

AFP, Hobart

Mitchell Starc offered Australia a lifeline with an inspired spell after a record low home total against South Africa on an opening day of carnage in the second Test in Hobart on Saturday. The left-arm pace spearhead put the brakes on the Proteas with three wickets in 10 balls post-tea after the Australians were skittled for 85 off 32.5 overs. The tourists reached stumps at 171 for five and pushed their lead to 86. Temba Bavuma was unbeaten on 38 with Quinton de Kock on 28. Up until Starc's intervention South Africa had seized control with a total of 15 wickets tumbling for 256 runs under cloudy skies. Vernon Philander powered the Proteas with five for 21 as Australia folded to their lowest total at home against South Africa to revive memories of recent batting collapses. The capitulation revisited the nightmares of their miserable 47 in Cape Town in 2011 and England's demolition of them for 60 last year.

STATS

England (9 times), West Indies (2), India (1) and now South Africa (1) are the only visiting sides to dismiss Australia below 100 runs.

This was Australia's lowest at home since their 76 at Perth against West Indies in November 1984.

South Africa needed just 197 balls to dismiss Australia, making this Australia's second shortest innings at home in terms of balls faced since 1936.

Skipper Steve Smith provided backbone with his unbeaten knock of 48. "It was a bit of a reminder of Trent Bridge the way the ball was going around. At the end of the day 85 is not good enough from an Australian cricket team," coach Darren Lehmann lamented. **SCORES IN BRIEF**
AUSTRALIA: First innings 85 all out (Smith 48 not out; Philander 5-21, Abbot 3-21)
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 171 for 5 (Amla 47, Bavuma 38 not out; Starc 3-49)



South Africa pacer Vernon Philander bagged a fiver on the opening day of the second Test as Australia were bowled out for just 85 in their first innings in Hobart yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Openers give England edge

AFP, Rajkot

Teenage debutant Haseeb Hameed struck his maiden half-century as England took firm control on the fourth day of the first Test against India in Rajkot on Saturday. Hameed was unbeaten on 62 with skipper Alastair Cook on 46, the duo taking England's lead to 163 at the Saurashtra Cricket Association ground, hosting its first Test ever. At stumps, England were 114-0 in their second innings in reply to India's 488 all out. With three sessions to go on a batsman-friendly wicket, England put themselves in a position to dictate terms to their top-ranked rivals. Hameed, watched by his Indian-born father in the stands, batted confidently, hitting five fours and a six during his 141-minute stay at the wicket. The home side owed much to Ravichandran Ashwin, who struck a crucial half-century to restrict India's first-innings deficit to 49 runs. Ashwin, who came in to bat when the hosts were placed on a shaky 349 for five, made 70 off 139 balls. Adil Rashid took 4-114 to emerge as the most successful bowler while his spin partner Zafar Ansari picked 2-77. Ashwin shepherded the tail to frustrate the visitors who posted 537 in their first knock, their third highest total in the country, thanks to centuries from Joe Root, Moeen Ali and Ben Stokes. Ashwin completed his seventh Test half-century in the process, underlining once again his all-round skills. When England last toured India in 2012, Ashwin had proved to be a thorn in their flesh, averaging over 60 with the bat. It was also the last time that a visiting team took a first-innings lead in a Test in India. Ashwin hit Rashid for a delectable boundary before Mohammed Shami added some entertainment to the otherwise dour proceedings with a huge six in the same over. **SCORES IN BRIEF**
ENGLAND: First innings 537
INDIA: First innings 488 (Vijay 126, Pujara 124; Rashid 4-114, Ansar 2-77)
ENGLAND: Second innings 114 for no loss (Cook 46, Hameed 62)