

SPORT



Tamim Iqbal (L) and Shakib Al Hasan provided the consolidation and then the kick in the middle part of the innings with a 144-run fourth-wicket stand to help Bangladesh set a massive total of 324 against Sri Lanka in the first ODI at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium yesterday. While Shakib got out for a fluent 72, Tamim made sure he reached three figures before eventually falling for 127.

Tamim picks his moment

SAKEB SUBHAN from Dambulla

When Mushfiqur Rahim departed for just one in the 23rd over, and Bangladesh had slipped from a promising 119 for one to 120 for three, it seemed that the recent trend of surrendering strong positions in away ODIs was set to continue. Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had talked about it the day before the first ODI against Sri Lanka, saying that although Bangladesh had improved in ODIs their most recent matches in New Zealand showed a worrying trend of wasting opportunities.

Sri Lanka seemed to realise that too. Although Tamim Iqbal had hit a glided boundary off chinaman bowler Lakshan Sandakan in the second ball of the 25th over, Sri Lanka kept their tight field and Tamim, on 49, played out four dot balls, three of which he tried in vain to work away for a single and the fourth which he defended, as if to say to the bowler: "I am giving you this over, but I am not going away."

While those may be words put into his mouth, the actions spoke louder. His eighth ODI century yesterday was probably his most accomplished innings, and certainly his best-paced. If Tamim's role is being the batsman who the others bat around, this innings can be held up as the operational manual for that function.

"When I was batting in the 40s, I thought I was struggling," Tamim said after the match when asked about that period. "But if I had gotten out then, we wouldn't have put up such a big score. You must have seen Mashrafe bhai coming outside [the dressing room] and telling me to play long."

After Soumya Sarkar's dismissal, Tamim allowed the effervescent Sabbir Rahman to take charge of their partnership. The 90-run second-wicket stand had 12 boundaries, and Sabbir hit 10 of them while scoring 54. Tamim, meanwhile, scored 28 runs off 45 balls.

But being the anchor also means control-

ling the game, giving the innings the direction that is desired. In this too, Tamim brought his experience and game reading skills into play by choosing exactly the right moments to open the release valve.

Danushka Gunathilaka, a part-timer, had bowled two overs for eight runs as Bangladesh reached 154 after 30 overs. Sri Lanka skipper Upul Tharanga's gamble to continue with Gunathilaka backfired. Tamim had judged him to be a non-threat and unleashed three inside-out cover drives for four.

Having corrected course, Tamim went on picking the singles. He must have been aware of Bangladesh's history of wasting strong positions and so delayed the charge until after he reached his century and Bangladesh had reached a position -- 229 for three after 42 overs -- from which even a

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I recalled Mehedi: Hassan

SPORTS REPORTER from Dambulla

Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka has faced two controversies so far. The first one was the axing of senior batsman Mahmudullah Riyad from the Test squad for the historic 100th Test in Colombo. The second and less controversial episode was the calling up of the then-uncapped Mehedi Hasan Miraz for the ODI squad after the off-spinner had already travelled back to Bangladesh after the Tests to play in the Emerging Nations Cup.

On both occasions, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan had said that the changes were his decision. On March 15, the

first day of the Colombo Test, Hassan said it was his decision to drop Mahmudullah. And after two days of speculation about why Miraz was hurriedly sent back to Sri Lanka at the eleventh

"Basically we wanted to keep him as an option because they have a number of quality left-handed batsmen. Miraz has been bowling well in the Tests and this is a very important series for us. But when I sat with the team this morning, it still wasn't decided if Miraz or Sanjamul [Islam] would be playing in the first ODI. It was finalised after they came to the ground."

Hassan also talked about the scheduling for Australia's planned tour of Bangladesh in August this year.

"They have wanted a time slot from us for some time now, but nothing specific has been finalised yet," said Hassan. "There is an Eid break in the middle [first week of September]; they don't want to sit for five days. They feel it is impossible. We said that we will start the match on the 4th, hoping that the Eid is held on the 1st or 3rd."



hour, during the innings break of the first ODI yesterday, Hassan said: "I called up [chief selector Minhazul Abedin] Nannu to send over Miraz. I found out he is in Khulna, and told him that he must get back to Sri Lanka."

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY
TAMIM IQBAL



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal picked up, in the first ODI in Dambulla yesterday, from where he left off in the second Test in Colombo last week. A match-winning 82 in the second innings following a few decent knocks had paved the way for Bangladesh's Test victory in Colombo. Yesterday it was his patient 127 which laid the platform for Bangladesh's massive score of 324. It wasn't the aggressive Tamim of old, rather a very matured and calculated left-hander that made things much easier for the rest of the batting line-up. The Chittagonian hit 15 fours and a six in his 142-ball vigil, and even though at times he looked like slowing down, he soon shifted gears and upped the ante so as not to let the opposition bowlers get on top.

10k for Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal became the first Bangladeshi to reach the 10,000-run landmark during the course of his brilliant 127-run knock in the first ODI against Sri Lanka at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium yesterday.

The left-hander started the match on 9,999 runs and reached the landmark off the third ball that he faced. After defending for two balls, Tamim pushed Suranga Lakmal for two and reached the landmark.

The Chittagonian also struck 15 fours and a six on his way to his eighth ODI century and shared two valuable partnerships. He first put on 90 runs with Sabbir Rahman, before sharing a 144-run partnership -- Bangladesh's highest against Sri Lanka -- with Shakib Al Hasan as Bangladesh reached their highest total in Sri Lanka.

TAMIM'S 10,000					
FORMAT	MAT	RUNS	HS	AVE	100 50
Test	49	3677	206	39.53	8 22
ODI	163	5247	154	33.00	8 34
T20I	55	1202	103*	24.04	1 4

'New attitude will take us a long way'

SPORTS REPORTER from Dambulla



It seems from yesterday's performance in the first ODI against Sri Lanka that the wrestling of destiny that Bangladesh's players showed in their history-making win in last week's Test in Colombo has continued into the ODI format as well. Opener Tamim Iqbal, player of the match in both wins, said after his press conference yesterday following Bangladesh's 90-run win just as they had done before the Test match, the players of the team had a closed-door meeting yesterday morning as well. It so happened that for a second international match in a row, Bangladesh put in a clinical team performance to go 1-0 up in the three-ODI series.

"We did outstandingly today in the field," Tamim said at the post-match press conference. His 142-ball 127 had set up the match, but it was Bangladesh's aggression on the field and their refusal to let up standards, even when the match was all but in the bag, that sealed it. "Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza] bhai's fielding effort was fantastic. We probably won't win games all the time but this attitude will make things easier. This new attitude of being involved in everything and supporting each other will take us a long way."

This win was all the more important because it arrested a trend of surrendering the advantage after working their way into good positions in away matches. "In the last few matches, we have played good cricket but it didn't show in the results. But it is more pleasing to win more matches. Our progress is shown in the small things that we are doing properly," Tamim opined.

And those small things were evident throughout the match. From Tamim himself resetting his innings after the twin dismissals of Sabbir Rahman and Mushfiqur Rahim, the likes of Shuvagata Hom, substituting in the field for Tamim

Iqbal, taking two crucial catches, Mehedi Hasan Miraz performing like a pro on debut to even Mustafizur Rahman, one of the weaker fielders, affecting a direct-hit run-out when the ninth-wicket partnership was growing to be a headache, Bangladesh were a well-oiled unit greater than the sum of its parts.

But it all comes back to Tamim and the 144-run partnership he had with Shakib that took Bangladesh from 120 for three in the 23rd over to 264 for four in the 46th.

"I am happy that I got my first 100-run stand with Shakib in this game, because the partnership was the key to the match. We didn't take

a lot of risks but we still scored runs," Tamim said of the partnership. "They were bowling well during a period, and we rotated the strike and looked for the odd boundary. We planned our innings very well. Getting the hundred, and winning the game is the best feeling you can ever get."

In the course of his innings, Tamim also became the first Bangladeshi to accumulate 10,000 international runs. But it was the team and the immediate future he was focused on. "Winning the series is very important. We are in a position to win the series. It will be a huge achievement to beat Sri Lanka in their backyard. It won't be easy,

and we have to work harder in the next match."

There was also a special moment for Tamim just after he had spoken at the prize-giving ceremony. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan came to him with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the phone.

"The Prime Minister had called, we were talking to her. After the Test win, I couldn't talk to her; she spoke to Shakib and Mushfiqur. After we won today, she called the board president. Many of us got to speak to her. She congratulated all of us; it is a great feeling when the country's Prime Minister wishes you well."



Mehedi Hasan (2nd from L) can't stop impressing all and sundry. Here the young Bangladesh off-spinner celebrates the wicket of Sri Lankan Kusal Mendis in what was his one-day debut at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

BD-SL SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH		R/B	A/6	
Tamim c Gunathilaka		127/142	15/1	
b Kumara				
Soumya c Chandimal				
b Lakmal		10/13	2/0	
Sabbir c Tharanga				
b Gunaratne		54/56	10/0	
Mushfiqur c b Sandakan		1/2	0/0	
Shakib c Sandakan b Lakmal		72/71	4/1	
Mosadddek not out		24/9	3/1	
Mahmudullah not out		13/7	0/1	
Extras: (lb-10, w-13)		23		
Total: (For 5 wickets in 50 overs)		324		
Did not bat: Mehedi, Mashrafe, Taskin, Mustafizur.				
Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-119, 3-120, 4-264, 5-289.				
BOWLER				
O	M	R	W	
Lakmal	8	0	45	2
Kumara	8	0	74	1
Perera	8	0	63	0
Pathirana	5	0	27	0
Sandakan	8	0	43	1
Gunaratne	10	0	40	1
Gunathilaka	3	0	22	0
SRI LANKA				
R/B	A/6			
Gunathilaka lbw b Mashrafe		0/3	0/0	
Tharanga c Mashrafe b Taskin		19/29	3/0	
Mendis c sub (Hom) b Mehedi		4/17	0/0	
Chandimal c Soumya				
b Mehedi		59/70	6/0	
Gunaratne c Mosadddek				
b Shakib		24/40	2/0	
Siriwardana c sub (Hom)				
b Mustafizur		22/25	1/1	
Pathirana c Mahmudullah				
b Mashrafe		31/32	3/0	
Perera c Mahmudullah				
b Mustafizur		55/35	4/2	
Lakmal c Sabbir b Mustafizur		8/9	1/0	
Sandakan run out (Mustafizur)		3/7	0/0	
Kumara not out		0/4	0/0	
Extras: (lb-5, w-4)		9		
Total: (All out in 45.1 overs)		234		
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-15, 3-31, 4-87, 5-121, 6-153, 7-171, 8-208, 9-232, 10-234.				
Bowler				
O	M	R	W	
Mashrafe	7	2	35	2
Mehedi	10	0	43	2
Taskin	9	0	41	1
Shakib	8	0	33	1
Mustafizur	8.1	0	56	3
Mosadddek	3	0	21	0
Result: Bangladesh won by 90 runs and lead the 3-match series 1-0.				
Toss: Sri Lanka, who chose to field				
Player-of-the-match: Tamim Iqbal.				
Umpires: MA Gough (England) and REJ Martinesz				
TV umpire: S Ravi (India)				
Match referee: AJ Pycroft (Zimbabwe)				
Reserve umpire: RRWimalasiri				

PHOTO: AFP