

Tigers let middle overs slip

SAKEB SUBHAN from Dambulla

Maintaining the level that they hit while bowling in the first ODI on Saturday was always going to be a tough ask, but yesterday in the second ODI the surprising thing was that Bangladesh's plans as well as execution were wide of the mark as Sri Lanka ran up a total of 311 all out.

The Tigers did pull things back quite effectively in the end, allowing Sri Lanka just 76 runs in the last 10 overs and taking six wickets, including a hattrick from Taskin Ahmed in the last three balls of the innings, but the main damage was done in the middle overs between the first drinks break till the dismissal of centurion Kusal Mendis by Taskin in the 38th over.

The pitch at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium was a flat one, but Bangladesh's tactics played into the hands of Sri Lanka's second and third-wicket pairs after the home side won the toss and did not repeat the mistake of choosing to field in the

Hasan, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Mosaddek Hossain -- had little choice but to bowl on a middle and leg-stump line and with the pitch offering neither turn nor dual pace, it became all too easy for two subcontinent batsmen to help the incoming deliveries into the gaps.

With three fielders on the boundary on the leg side -- at various times switching between deep midwicket, deep fine leg, long on and square leg -- there was only one man stationed inside the circle on the leg side, which meant that when they were not hitting boundaries, it became all too easy and risk-free for Sri Lanka to put their foot on the accelerator.

Even when Bangladesh's spinners pitched it a little outside off stump, the Sri Lankan batsmen -- knowing from the field set that the line would not be too far outside off -- during the middle overs stepped across the stumps and hit to leg. After Tharanga's freak run-out off a no-ball in the 25th over ended an 11-run stand with Mendis, the latter's ensuing partnership with Dinesh Chandimal that realised 83 runs in just 12.1

overs benefitted even more from this tactic.

While Chandimal worked the ball away for singles, Mendis hit seven boundaries and a six during the partnership as he raced to his maiden hundred. Six of those boundaries -- sweeps, sashays down the wicket to hit through and over the infield -- were on the leg side.

In his innings of 102 off 107

balls Mendis hit just two of his nine boundaries on the off side.

Even though it was a flat wicket, Bangladesh had made things too easy for a Sri Lankan side which was vulnerable, as shown by the late collapse when faced with some tight bowling, which may have been too little too late from Bangladesh.



Sri Lanka skipper Upul Tharanga (R) and one-down Kusal Mendis run between the wickets during the second ODI against Bangladesh in Dambulla yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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afternoon heat. Considering the conditions, Bangladesh had not done terribly when drinks were taken after 16 overs with the score on 85. After the break however, with spin often being bowled from both ends, four of the three fielders allowed outside the 30-yard ring were stationed on the leg side.

With the batsmen already in command, that meant that the spinners -- Shakib Al

ধুলো ময়লার দ্বি শেষ!

MOMENTS

SPORTS REPORTER

from Dambulla

MUSHFIQUR PULLS IT BACK

Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had said before the match that they needed to play the near flawless game that won them the first ODI if they were to win the series in the second match. Those words sounded very hollow when, off the fifth ball of the match, Mustafizur Rahman misfielded on the third man fence to allow a four to slip through off a bowler none other than his skipper.

But in Mashrafe's next over Bangladesh's standards seemed to have been brought back up by Mushfiqur Rahim. Danushka Gunathilaka was trying to hit every ball, and soon top-edged a hook off a slower bouncer bowled by the wily pacer. The ball went high up and was swirling away, but Mushfiqur, staring into the afternoon sun, called for it and ran from his wicketkeeping position all the way past short fine leg to complete a fine diving catch.

MUSHFIQUR LETS IT GO

Soon, however, things took a downward turn again. In the 12th over with eventual centurion Kusal Mendis batting on seven, an edge off Mustafizur Rahman went straight between two fielders, Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah Riyad. Mahmudullah was positioned at a very wide first slip, in other words a second slip, and neither he nor Mushfiqur moved as the ball shot through at catchable height towards the third man fence. Since Mushfiqur was the man wearing the gloves, he is probably the one who should have gone for the catch.

DHAKAR POLA DOES IT

The DJ in Dambulla who happens to sit in the press box, played a snippet of Bangla song 'Dhakar Pola' midway through Sri Lanka's innings yesterday, supposedly at the behest of some Bangladeshi nearby who had furnished him with the popular number. Part of the reason the song is so popular is because Taskin Ahmed had danced on stage to the song during a function in Bangladesh not so long ago, and the video went viral on social media. One need look no further for the inspiration for the pacer's hattrick an hour or so later.

Taskin fifth Bangladeshi to take an ODI hattrick

SPORTS REPORTER



Taskin Ahmed yesterday became the fifth Bangladeshi player, after Shahadat Hossain, Abdur Razzak, Rubel Hossain and Taijul Islam to pick up a hattrick in ODI cricket, doing so in the second ODI against Sri Lanka at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium.

The right-arm fast bowler achieved the feat when he dismissed Asela Gunaratne, the right-hander who was caught at mid-off off Taskin's third ball before Suranga Lakmal was caught at mid-wicket and Nuwan Pradeep, the number eleven batsman, was clean bowled by an off-stump yorker in the

final over of the Sri Lanka innings.

Taskin bowled with heart and ended with figures of four for 47 in 8.5 overs.

Sri Lanka could not keep up the pace with their good start as they lost five wickets in the last five overs of the match. Mushfiqur

the time he had started running back, Mushfiqur's throw had already connected with the stumps.

The skipper affected another run out after Dilruwan Perera was beaten comprehensively by Mustafizur Rahman's second ball of the 48th over. Similar to



কোটি বাহানীর স্বপ্নের পদ্মা সেতু
প্রকল্পে বিনিয়োগে গর্বিত অংশীদার

আমরা প্রমাণে বিশ্বাসি

Rahim first reacted brilliantly to run out the dangerous Thisara Perera after a Mashrafe Bin Mortaza delivery -- the fourth ball of the 46th over -- had hit the left-hander on the leg and gone behind. Perera initially set off but by

the run out before, Perera had set off, but he did not even bother to make his way back as Mushfiqur collected the ball and completed an inch-perfect throw, before Taskin wrapped up the hosts' innings in fine fashion.

HATTRICKS FOR BANGLADESH IN ODIS

PLAYER	AGAINST	VICTIMS	VENUE	DATE
Shahadat Hossain	Zimbabwe	Tafadzwa Mufambisi, Elton Chigumbura, Tawanda Mupariwa	Harare	02/08/2006
Abdur Razzak	Zimbabwe	Prosper Utseya, Ray Price, Christopher Mpofu	Mirpur	03/12/2010
Rubel Hossain	New Zealand	Corey Anderson, Brendon McCullum, Jimmy Neesham	Mirpur	29/10/2013
Taijul Islam	Zimbabwe	Tinashe Panyangara, John Nyumbu, Tendai Chatara	Mirpur	01/12/2014



Nasir Hossain's unbeaten century propelled Bangladesh to an 83-run victory against Nepal in their Max Emerging Teams Asia Cup match in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Nasir century leads hosts to semifinal

SPORTS REPORTER



Nepal made early inroads after deciding to bowl first as they reduced Bangladesh to 33 for four, but Nasir Hossain stood tall with an unbeaten hundred to confirm Bangladesh's semifinal spot in the Max Emerging Teams Asia Cup at the Sheikh Kamal International Stadium in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Avinash Karn instigated the early collapse in the Bangladesh innings by taking three wickets, before Nasir and skipper Mominul Haque took away the initiatives by stitching together a 78-run fifth-wicket stand to set a 258-run target.

Rahatul Ferdous and Mohammad Saifuddin then took the charge and wrapped up Nepal's innings for 174 to ensure the 83-run victory which saw the hosts qualify for the semifinal from Group B.

Nasir is looking to get his place in the national side back and his unbeaten 109 off 115 balls, which contained 12 fours and two sixes, will definitely serve his purpose.

"When we lost early wickets, Mominul and I planned not to force runs. Instead we played at ease to repair the damage. I enjoyed my batting when my team were in trouble and am happy that I could contribute. There was nothing wrong with the pitch

but Nepal bowled in the right areas," said Nasir.

"We have been playing this tournament with a plan and that's why our next target is to beat Pakistan, who are a very strong side," he added.

Pakistan also confirmed a semifinal spot from Group B after a thumping 248-run win against Hong Kong yesterday, courtesy of centuries from Imam-ul-Haq (120) and Imran Butt (108), and a seven-wicket haul by Usama Mir.

Bangladesh and Pakistan will face-off in the last group match at the same venue tomorrow.

Back to the Bangladesh match, the hosts lost Azmir Ahmed, Saif Hasan and Mohammad Mithun with the score on 15, before the departure of Nazmul Hasan saw the hosts tottering at 33 for four.

However Mominul and Nasir batted sensibly before Sandeep Lamichhane got rid of the former, who scored 61 off 78 balls and smashed seven fours.

Then a 76-run ninth-wicket stand between Nasir and Abul Hasan (29) ensured that the hosts put a challenging total up on the board.

After the exchange, Nepal also made a disastrous start as they lost three wickets for 16, but Dilip Nath and Dipendra Singh Airee brought their team in contention by adding 98 runs for the fourth wicket.

Rahatul broke the partnership, removing Dilip for 41, and then took three more wickets to

ensure an easy win for his team.

India also won their second match yesterday to romp into the semifinal from Group A as they beat Malaysia by seven wickets, while Sri Lanka beat Afghanistan by 35 runs in the other match.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 257-9 in 50 overs (Nasir 109 not out, Mominul 61, Hasan 29; Karn 3-46, Lamichhane 2-41)
NEPAL: 174 all out in 42.3 overs (Airee 56, Dilip 41, Bhandari 33; Javed 4-45, Saif 3-22, Hasan 2-40)
Result: Bangladesh won by 83 runs.
MALAYSIA: 163-9 in 50 overs (Aziz 53, Ahad 25, Fikri 20; Gani 3-27, Nagarkoti 2-14, Chahar 2-37)
INDIA: 167-3 in 30.1 overs (Gill 51 not out, Eswaran 42, Shaw 34; Rahim 2-42)
Result: India won by seven wickets.
PAKISTAN: 327-4 in 50 overs (Imam 120, Butt 108, Azam 44; Nawaz 2-68)
HONG KONG: 79 all out in 31.2 overs (Rath 27, Hayat 17, Mcaulsen 15; Mir 7/14)
Result: Pakistan won by 248 runs.
SRI LANKA: 320-6 in 50 overs (Asalanka 105, Perera 84, Jayasuriya 42; Naveen 2-66, Rahmani 2-70)
AFGHANISTAN: 285 all out in 47.1 overs (Najib 87, Kamal 53, Janat 53; Aposnu 3-40, Fernando 2-52, Karunaratne 2-65)