

SPORT



Waiting in the shadows

SPORTS REPORTER



Tamim Iqbal stole the show with a hundred in the first warm-up match against Pakistan ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy campaign at Edgbaston in Birmingham yesterday. While Tamim showed consistency in his batting another left-hander, Imrul Kayes, took the opportunity to give the team management the message that he was ready to play whenever the team requires his service.

Imrul is not someone who can expect a place in the playing eleven even if he is in good touch. Imrul travelled with the team to Sri Lanka but didn't play in any ODIs, and he was also with the team in Ireland but was an onlooker.

In the yesterday's match, Imrul came to bat at number three as Sabbir Rahman was rested and the southpaw capitalised on the opportunity, making 61 off 62 balls with eight boundaries.

Imrul last played ODI cricket during the last New Zealand tour, where he made 16, 59 and 44. Apparently, the batsman now needs to beat Sabbir or Soumya Sarkar to find a place in the playing eleven, unless someone else horribly fails to deliver. Sabbir however made 35 and 65 in his last two outings while Soumya, who made 19 runs yesterday, has two good scores --- 61 and 87 not out, under his belt.

So when fate will smile on Imrul remains a big question.

THE 40-YARD BOUNDARY

Ahead of Bangladesh's first warm-up game against Pakistan at Edgbaston, the focus, especially on social media, was firmly focused on one side of the ground, where the boundary measured approximately 40 yards from the wicket. Bangladesh batsman Tamim Iqbal (R) certainly had an eye on that as well, hitting most of his nine fours and four sixes into the region as he made a commanding 102. However, the Bangladesh bowlers failed to keep their opponents, specifically Fahim Ashraf, from attacking the region as Pakistan won by a two-wicket margin.

PHOTOS: AFP/COLLECTED

BD-PAK SCOREBOARD

Bangladesh	R/B	4s/6s
Tamim c Junaid b Shadab	102/93	9/4
Soumya c Babar b Junaid	19/22	3/0
Imrul lbw b Shadab	61/62	8/0
Mushfiqur c Malik b Junaid	46/35	3/3
Shakib c Shadab b Hasan	23/27	1/0
Mahmudullah c Malik		
b Hasan	29/24	6/0
Mosaddek c Azhar b Junaid	26/15	3/1
Mehedi run out	13/16	0/0
Mashrafe c Fahim b Junaid	1/8	0/0
Sunzamul not out	0/0	0/0
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, w-16, nb-2)	21	
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	341	
Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-169, 3-219, 4-247, 5-296, 6-302, 7-331		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Hasan	10	0	73	2
Junaid	9	0	58	4
Fahim	6	0	35	0
Riaz	9	0	68	0
Hafeez	3	0	11	0
Shadab	9	0	55	2
Wasim	4	0	38	0

PAKISTAN

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Azhar Ali c Mushfiqur	8/14	1/0		
b Taskin				
Shehzad b Shakib	44/40	5/1		
Azam c Mushfiqur				
b Mashrafe	1/3	0/0		
Hafeez c Imrul b Shaiful	49/62	6/0		
Malik not out	72/66	6/2		
Sarfraz c Sunzamul				
b Mosaddek	5/8	1/0		
Wasim c Mosaddek				
b Mehedi	45/50	4/0		
Shadab run out (Mehedi)	7/10	1/0		
Fahim not out	64/30	4/4		
Hasan not out	27/15	2/1		
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, w-13, nb-1)	20			
Total: (For 8 wickets in 49.3 overs)	342			
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-19, 3-78, 4-157, 5-168, 6-227, 7-242, 8-249				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	9.3	0	68	1
Taskin	9	0	80	1
Shaiful	7	0	46	1
Soumya	5	0	25	0
Shakib	6	0	41	1
Sunzamul	3	0	17	0
Mosaddek	6	0	29	1
Mehedi	4	0	30	2

Result: Pakistan won by 2 wickets.

Gazi smile on Nasir's return

Abahani outclass Mohammaden to keep pace

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan surrendered meekly to Abahani and Prime Doleshwar continued their good run by beating Prime Bank but in yesterday's Dhaka Premier Division Cricket Super League's clashes, Nasir Hossain was the real hero.

Nasir returned home on Friday evening after playing the tri-series in Ireland and led from the front to return Gazi Group Cricketers to

after Dublin's chilled climate -- could stop him from playing a career-best knock of 134, which powered his team to a total of 350 for five against Sheikh Jamal DC in their second Super League match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

After the exchange, pacer Abu Hider destroyed Sheikh Jamal's batting with a six-wicket haul to give Gazi Group a massive 177-run victory.

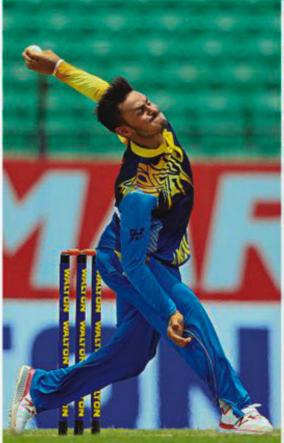
"I knew everything would change once Nasir joined the team and he proved his abilities again. He eventually succumbed to the scorching

to the pavilion as he retired hurt but before that, he put the opposition bowlers to the sword during his 113-ball 134 that contained seven fours and six sixes.

Nasir, who played the last match in the tri-series against New Zealand and contributed with two wickets in his side's five-wicket victory against the Kiwis, had made his earlier best score against Mohammedan in the first phase.

Gurkeerat Singh (74) and Mominul Haque (66) were the other notable scorers.

Gazi increased their tally to 20



Nasir Hossain's (R) 134-run knock, followed by Abu Hider's brilliant six-wicket haul against Sheikh Jamal in the Dhaka Premier Super League saw Gazi Group Cricketers end their three-game losing streak.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

winning ways after three consecutive defeats in the Dhaka Premier League.

Neither the fatigue from the long trip nor the sudden change in weather -- he faced extreme heat

heat, but not before playing a magnificent knock. Rony [Abu Hider] then did an excellent job with the ball," ecstatic Gazi Group coach Mohammad Salahuddin said.

In the 49th over Nasir returned

points, but Abahani ensured that they did not gain an edge as the defending champions outclassed archrivals Mohammedan by five wickets at the BKSP, where the teams had played a high-scoring

match in the first phase, to maintain their winning run in the Super League.

Left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib joined forces with pacer Abu Jayed to annihilate the top order, and Manan

SCORES IN BRIEF

MOHAMMEDAN: 100 all out in 33.4 overs (Shamsur 23, Sajedul 16; Jayed 2-23, Manan 4-21, Saqlain 3-24)

ABAHANI: 104-5 in 15.3 overs (Liton 50, Shadman 24 not out; Jubair 2-18, Shamsur 2-7)

Result: Abahani won by five wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Saqlain Sajib.

GAZI GROUP: 350-5 in 50 overs (Munim 35, Mominul 66, Nasir 134, Gurkeerat 74; Ziaur 2-56, Sunny 2-61)

SHEIKH JAMAL: 173 all out in 38.1 overs (Chopra 37, Mamun 25, Ziaur 46, Rajin 25; Abu

Hider 6-35, Gurkeerat 2-27)

Result: Gazi Group Cricketers won by 177 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Nasir Hossain

PRIME BANK: 241-8 in 50 overs (Maruf 44, Easwaran 71, Asif 62 not out; Sunny 2-40, Bhatia 3-50)

PRIME DOLESHWAR: 242-4 in 48.4 overs (Imtiaz 32, Nafees 78, Marshall 84, Bhatia 23 not out; Raihan 2-28)

Result: Prime Doleshwar won by six wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Marshall Ayub

Sharma did the rest by claiming four wickets to wrap up Mohammedan's innings for 100 runs.

Abahani's chase was highlighted by the devastating batting display of opener Liton Das, who smashed five sixes and four boundaries to make a 22-ball 50 as Abahani reached the target in 15.3 overs.

"Poor batting was absolutely the reason behind the massive defeat. I missed Rakibul [Hasan], who could not play due to a one-match suspension for [maintaining a] slow overrate in the previous match, and the injured Avishek Mitra," Mohammedan coach Sohel Islam lamented.

In another match at BKSP, Marshall Ayub and Shahriar Nafees hit fifties as Prime Doleshwar beat Prime Bank Cricket Club by six wickets.

Marshall scored an 89-ball 84 with ten fours and a six, while Nafees added 78 off 129 balls with six fours and a six as Doleshwar overtook Prime Bank's 241 runs with six wickets and eight balls to spare.

Many teams want to play us: Hassan

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan said yesterday that the board had confirmed programmes with New Zealand and England, adding that they were in talks with 'two more countries'.

Hassan said that neither the national team nor the High Performance or Under-19s would be touring Pakistan, before adding: "They will go elsewhere. We have confirmed programmes with New Zealand and England. We are in talks with two more countries. Within a couple of months, we will be releasing the specific schedules. Many of these series will be held at home."

"I am not too keen about the Pakistan tour. But if we need to play [in that time], we have four or five countries lined up to play against Bangladesh. It won't be hard to arrange matches, but right now we are not really keen on filling that gap either," Hassan was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Hassan said that he would rather the players rested in July, ahead of a busy schedule.

During the long talk with some reporters, Hassan also spoke about certain players' technique and performance, including Soumya Sarkar and Shakib Al Hasan.

He also expressed his optimism that Shakib would be back to his best in the upcoming Champions Trophy.

ADVANTAGE HOSTS?

Lara betting on England

PTI, London

Former West Indies captain Brian Lara has tipped England to win the Champions Trophy beginning next week.

While disappointed not to be watching the West Indies in action at this year's tournament, Lara -- who led his country to Champions Trophy glory in 2004 -- insists England have what it takes to go all the way on home soil.

"The ICC Champions Trophy was always one of the high points of my career, especially playing in the final at The Oval in 2004," said Lara. "I understand that this year's tournament is going to be bigger and better than ever, so it's going to be an awesome experience for the fans and us former cricketers to see who is going to lift the trophy."

"I think in these conditions, England will be my firm favourites. After losing out to the West Indies in the World T20, you look at the team now and they have some exciting players."

"England, in the past, would have maybe an Ian Botham or a [Andrew] Flintoff, but now you can look at the entire team and it's very one-day cricket oriented."

"Today, you look at the England team and you've got players playing in the IPL, and players who are astonishing with both the bat and ball."

Former England batsman Trott was a member of that squad who just missed out on success at Edgbaston, but, like Lara, is confident the 2017 team can right the wrongs of years gone by.

'Never thought we'd lose to Bangladesh'

AGENCIES, New Delhi

Legendary Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar admitted that he never imagined his side would lose to Bangladesh, something which became a reality in the 2007 World Cup.

In his recently-released bio-pic, Sachin says that he had warned BCCI officials about the team being out of shape and not up for the tournament. He also said that senior members of the team had reservations about the appointment of Greg Chappell as head coach.

India endured a terrible time at the event, being knocked out in the group stages after defeats to both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

"We were there as a team, but weren't a team. I had even told a Board official that the team wasn't in great shape. I had never thought that we could lose a match against Bangladesh," Tendulkar adds.

Stokes makes Proteas pay

AFP, Southampton



England beat South Africa by just two runs to win the second one-day international at Southampton on Saturday to take an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

South Africa, set 331 to win, finished on 328 for five, with Quinton de Kock making 98.

The world's top-ranked ODI side needed 20 off the last two overs when David Miller (71 not out) struck Jake Ball for a six and a four off successive deliveries.

Yet with a mere 10 now wanted off as many balls, South Africa -- often accused of 'choking' in pressure situations -- saw Miller and Chris Morris fail to score the runs they required as Ball and fast bowler Mark Wood both held their nerve.

Earlier, Ben Stokes made 101 and Jos Buttler a dashing 65 not out as England posted a total of 330 for six after losing the toss.

The series, a warm-up for the Champions Trophy tournament in England and Wales that starts next week, concludes at Lord's on Monday.

Ben Stokes made South Africa pay for dropping him twice in his first two balls with a century that powered England to 330 for six.

There had been some doubt over whether Stokes would play Saturday after briefly leaving the field with left knee trouble during England's 72-run win at Headingly on Wednesday.

But ahead of next week's Champions Trophy tournament in

England, the all-rounder showed no discomfort with the bat.

His 79-ball innings, just his second century in 55 matches at this level, featured 11 fours and three sixes.

Stokes, the Indian Premier League's record two-million-dollar man, shared stands of 95 with skipper Eoin Morgan and 77 with Jos Buttler.

After Stokes fell, Buttler kept up the attack with a dashing 65 not out

as England looked to go 2-0 up with one to play in this three-match series.

South Africa had an early success when Jason Roy was bowled trying to whip a Kagiso Rabada yorker legside.

Alex Hales, dropped on 18 when a six off Maharaj went straight through Rabada's hands at long-on, was still on 24 when well caught by wicket-keeper Quinton de Kock, standing up to the stumps, off Pretorius.

The luckless Maharaj bowled much better than figures of one for 72 in 10 overs suggested.

Proteas captain AB de Villiers opted to field first after winning the toss in overcast conditions that promised to aid swing movement.

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SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: 330 for 6 (Stokes 101, Buttler 65 not out, Morgan 45; Rabada 2-50)

SOUTH AFRICA: 328 for 5 (de Kock 98, Miller 71 not out, de Villiers 52; Plunkett 3-64)

Result: England won by two runs
Player of the Match: Ben Stokes



After being dropped twice, Ben Stokes put South Africa to the sword by smashing 11 fours and three sixes as he scored a 79-ball 101 at the Rose Bowl in Southampton yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS