

SPORT



India seamer Mohammad Shami (R) celebrates the dismissal of Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim in their Champions Trophy warm-up at The Oval yesterday. India's bowlers hit their stride and victimised the Tigers to deliver a whopping 240-run win. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tigers have poor practice

AL-AMIN from the Oval



There were a few thousand fans in attendance at The Oval during Bangladesh's final practice game against India. Among the paying public, most were Indian expats in England. For them, the 15-pound ticket was worth its full value because their team tuned up for the ICC Champions Trophy with yet another resounding victory. But for the few hundred Bangladeshi expats in that mix, it turned out to be a nightmare.

While Bangladesh's presence in the game was as fleeting as the sun on a cloudy London day, the Indians made a big statement that they have come to England to defend the title. The contest was a total anticlimax of what was tipped as more than just a practice game. The Indians posted 324 for seven in 50 overs and that too without their key batsmen -- captain Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh and Mahendra Singh Dhoni. The famed batting trio did not come to the crease in an attempt to allow other batsmen some much-needed practice.

victim of a double-wicket maiden by Yadav when he missed a pitched-up delivery and was clean bowled for a duck. Imrul and Shakib Al Hasan pulled their way out of the ground against Bhuvneshwar and so did Mushfiqur Rahim. Mosaddek was undone too by a good delivery from Yadav while Mahmudullah was subject to a brilliant catch by Dinesh Karthik, who hit a brilliant 94 earlier in the day.

While Bangladesh were losing wickets very fast, a reporter quipped that Bangladesh were playing like England while referring to England's disappointing performance against South Africa in their ODI at Lord's where the home side were reduced to 20 for six.

England might have a case to blame the green Lord's wicket as they were batting first, but Bangladesh were certainly not mentally equipped and to some extent not patient enough to weather the early pressure on a wicket that assisted the pacers early on.

The demoralising performance is certainly a wake-up call for Bangladesh going into the tournament opener against England at the same venue on June 1. The Tigers are certainly not as bad as they looked out there yesterday. The batting discipline was missing in the absence of Tamim.

However in an otherwise forgettable encounter, there were two outstanding performers in pace bowler Rubel Hossain and off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

Rubel was fantastic with the new ball and made the early inroad by dismissing Rohit Sharma. He bowled his 10 overs in three spells and was aggressive and accurate. That makes him almost a certainty to start as third seamer when Bangladesh play the opening game against England. Taskin Ahmed also bowled in the match but he was wayward. Mehedi was the other bowler who impressed with 9-1-39-0. He also batted well and scored the team highest of 24.

But the most disturbing sign going into the tournament opener for Bangladesh was Shakib's poor run of form both with the bat and ball. Shakib scored seven and conceded 23 runs in the three overs he bowled.

'We'll be proper in a proper match'

SPORTS REPORTER from London



So Bangladesh played two practice games and lost them in contrasting fashion against Pakistan and India respectively going into the Champions Trophy opener against England in a couple of days' time.

They lost against Pakistan after posting a massive total courtesy of a late thunderstorm from a non-descript Faheem Ashraf. And yesterday they suffered a massive 240-run defeat at The Oval, chasing India's 324. The low point of the contest was a stunning Bangladesh collapse that saw them at one stage reeling at 22-6.

But Bangladesh coach Chandika

Hathurusingha, while taking to reporters in the mixed zone after the India game, tried to hide his frustration at the fact that it was understandably the worst possible way to start a big tournament after doing so well for the past month when they beat New Zealand in the Ireland tri-series.

"We have tried different combinations in both the practice games. Our target was to take the positives out of the two games and that's what we are going to do," Hathurusingha retorted when confronted with the question of how disappointed he was after the two practice games.

"We didn't score runs. They bowled well at the start. So it showed how important it is to have a good start that we had in the last

few games. I think they bowled well," said the coach.

He also ruled out the idea of a change in the wake of two demoralising defeats.

"There is nothing to change, it's only two practice matches. But once the tournament starts our approach is going to be different. Our preparation has been spot on over the past month. Even today except for our batting, which was wayward, we did well," the coach observed.

"I think we understand the conditions. We got 300-plus in the first practice game. We know this tournament will be a high-scoring affair because of the pitches," he continued.

Asked if he was angry at the shot selection by some of his players, he

said: "Me getting angry? No, some concern. They had to make good decisions in the middle and they could have been selective with some of their shots on a wicket where the bowlers were getting assistance in overcast condition."

"Then again it's only a practice game. When we will get into a proper game we will be proper in our approach," said Hathurusingha in a forceful voice.

He said that despite the defeat he was very impressed with pace bowler Rubel Hossain, who picked up three wickets.

"He has been bowling well since Ireland. He has bowled well today [Tuesday]. I think this is a positive we can take and it will help us in our bowling combination."

BD-IND SCOREBOARD

INDIA	R/B	45/65
Sharma b Rubel	1/3	0/0
Dhawan c Mehedi		
b Sunzamul	60/67	7/0
Rahane		
b Mustafizur	11/21	1/0
Karthik retired out	94/77	8/1
Jadhav		
b Sunzamul	31/38	2/1
Pandya not out	80/54	6/4
Jadeja c Shakib		
b Rubel	32/36	0/1
Ashwin b Rubel	5/4	1/0
Kumar not out	1/1	0/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-7, nb-1)		9
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs) 324		
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-21, 3-121, 4-196, 5-208, 6-294, 7-315.		

Bowling	O	M	R	W
Mustafizur	8	0	53	1
Rubel	9	0	50	3
Taskin	6	0	45	0
Soumya	1	0	10	0
Mehedi	9	1	39	0
Sunzamul	9	0	74	2
Mosaddek	5	1	29	0
Shakib	3	0	23	0

Bangladesh	R/B	45/65
Imrul c Yadav	7/17	1/0
b Kumar		
Soumya c Karthik		
b Yadav	2/7	0/0
Sabbir b Yadav	0/3	0/0
Mushfiqur		
c Jadeja b Shami	13/18	2/0
Shakib c Sharma		
b Kumar	7/7	1/0
Mahmudullah		
c Karthik b Kumar	0/2	0/0
Mosaddek		
c Karthik b Yadav	0/3	0/0
Mehedi c Karthik		
b Bumrah	24/34	4/0
Sanjamul c Sharma		
b Ashwin	18/37	2/0
Taskin not out	1/9	0/0
Rubel c Rahane		
b Pandya	0/7	0/0
Extras: (lb-2, w-9, nb-1) 12		
Total: (All out in 23.5 overs) 84		
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-11, 3-11, 4-21, 5-21, 6-22, 7-47, 8-77, 9-83, 10-84.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Kumar	5	0	13	3
Yadav	5	1	16	3
Shami	6	0	17	1
Bumrah	5	0	32	1
Pandya	1.5	0	2	1
Ashwin	1	0	2	1

Result: India won by 240 runs.

ICC ODI RANKINGS Fizz, Mash rise again

SPORTS REPORTER



Mustafizur Rahman continued his climb up the ICC ODI bowler's rankings as he reached 15th place in the latest rankings released yesterday.

The 21-year-old now has 600 rating points and is one point behind his skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who moved one spot up to 14th place.

Mustafizur claimed five wickets in the tri-series in Ireland, including a haul of four wickets against the hosts.

Mashrafe meanwhile, took six wickets in the same series. Shakib Al Hasan also moved up one place, to 9th, displacing New Zealand's Matt Henry, who moved to 11th, with Mitchell

Santner coming in at 10th. The left-hander also remains the best all-rounder in the world in ODIs.

Meanwhile, South Africa's Kagiso Rabada moved up to the number one spot for the first time in his blossoming career.

The 22-year-old has been in fine fettle lately, the highlight of which was his four-wicket haul against England in the third and last ODI of their series, which saw him finish the series with seven.

The pacer moved up four spots, overtaking Imran Tahir (2nd), Mitchell Starc (3rd) and Sunil Narine (4th). He has 724 rating

points. In the ODI batting rankings, Soumya Sarkar dropped from 27th to 30th place. Tamim remained the highest-ranked at 19th, making no moves. Sabbir Rahman moved up eight spots to 65th.



Bangladesh pacer Rubel Hossain (2nd from R), who took three wickets, was the lone bright spot in their unfortunate outing in the Champions Trophy warm-up game against India at The Oval yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

SANGAKKARA BACKS INDIA TO RETAIN

PTI, London

Former Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara wrote yesterday that defending champions India were capable of retaining the Champions Trophy title as they were a better balanced unit with "real firepower in their fast bowling".

"This year we have four Asian teams in the tournament and clearly India is current the pack-leaders in the region. It won in 2013 and it has a team capable of winning this year too," Sangakkara wrote in his column on the ICC website.

"In fact, the team is arguably stronger, better balanced with real firepower in its fast bowling. Its spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are exceptional in ODI cricket and I am sure Virat Kohli is going to be desperate to bounce back after a disappointing IPL," he added.

The wicketkeeper-batsman, however, felt that India's selection was a "little conservative". "The only slight concern I have for India is that its selection was perhaps a little conservative, but it is still very strong," he said.

The 39-year-old picked India as one of his favourite teams to make the semifinals of the upcoming tournament, starting on June 1.

"I think picking finalists is too tough, but my favourites for the semi-finals would be Australia, England, India and South Africa," Sangakkara, who won the Champions Trophy 2002 and World Twenty20 2014 with Sri Lanka, said.

Sangakkara, who quit international cricket two years ago having scored a total of 28,016 international runs across all formats, said the competition was going to be very tough with 4-5 teams having the potential of making it to the final.

"There was a time, not so long ago, when one or two countries dominated the format, but in the past few years we have seen several teams develop tremendously and now we have four to five teams who are very evenly matched, all with realistic ambitions of winning major tournaments."

Heaping praise on the hosts, Sangakkara said that English team has been a revelation.

"England ODI team's progress in the past two years has been a revelation. It used to trail behind other teams in terms of its strategy and approach, but now it is one of the most progressive teams.

"England is playing an aggressive and exciting brand of cricket and it has some world-class players driving that," Sangakkara said.

SA loss was a timely 'lesson'

REUTERS, London

England will learn from their early collapse on Monday's ODI defeat to South Africa at Lord's, captain Eoin Morgan said ahead of their Champions Trophy opener against Bangladesh on Thursday.

England's top order crumbled to 20 for six in five overs as they were dismissed for 153 before the Proteas cruised to a seven-wicket victory.

"It's a lesson with the bat and ball... our bowlers to be disciplined and to our batsman that, sometimes, you have to sit in," Morgan told reporters. "They made us play a hell of a lot and managed to get the ball moving around. Certainly, it's not down to a lack of trying."

England coach Trevor Bayliss believed that the humiliating loss would ensure his team remained level-headed for the eight-team Champions Trophy.

The result ensures we go into the Champions Trophy without big heads," he said.

Abahani keep winning

SPORTS REPORTER



Ziaur Rahman smacked nine sixes and six fours during his blazing 103-run knock, but his individual brilliance could not save

Sheikh Jamal DC from a five-wicket defeat at the hands of Mohammedan SC in their Dhaka Premier Division Super League clash at BKSP yesterday.

Ziaur's brilliant batting effort went in vain as there were no other notable contributors, with number 10 batsman Mahmudul Haque making the second-highest, an unbeaten 22, as Sheikh Jamal were bundled out for 197.

In reply, an 86-run opening partnership between Shamsur Rahman and Saikat Ali provided the foundation for Mohammedan to reach the target comfortably. Shamsur made 59 off 58 with six fours and two sixes while Saikat added 37 off 36 with six fours and one six. Rony Talukdar (32) and Bipul Sharma (38) were the other notable scorers.

While Mohammedan moved to 16 points after the win, defending champions Abahani continued their winning run with a seven-wicket victory over Prime Doleshwar at BKSP and remain on top with 22 points.

Marshall Ayub scored a team-high 57 off 83 balls, hitting just one boundary, as Prime Doleshwar scored a meagre 189 runs.

In reply, Abahani lost opener Liton Das

for only nine but a 132-run second wicket partnership between Shadman Islam and Saif Hassan helped the team reach the target with ease. Shadman hit 65 off 78 balls, smashing four boundaries and a six, while Saif contributed 80 off 97 balls with nine fours and two sixes.

The result saw Prime Doleshwar remain on 20 points, while Jamal stayed rooted to the bottom with 14 points.

The match between Prime Bank and Gazi Group Cricketers at Fatullah was washed out after just four balls being bowled. The match will resume today with Prime Bank coming to bat at zero for one. Abu Hider sent Mehedi Maruf back to the dressing room after the start of the match, which was delayed by almost two hours due to rain.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PRIME DOLESHWAR: 189-9 in 50 overs (Imtiaz 27, Marshall 57; Jayed 3-42, Saifuddin 2-31, Manan 2-30)
ABAHANI: 193-3 in 36.3 overs (Shadman 65, Saif 80; Habibur 2-66)
Result: Abahani won by seven wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Saif Hassan
SHEIKH JAMAL: 197 all out in 45 overs (Ziaur 103, Mahmudul 22 not out; Shubhashis 2-25, Sajedul 2-37, Taijul 3-49)
MOHAMMEDAN: 201-5 in 30.2 overs (Shamsur 59, Saikat 37, Rony 32, Bipul 38; Sunny 2-48)
Result: Mohammedan won by five wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Ziaur Rahman.