



TERRIFIC TAMIM

This was Tamim Iqbal's first century in an ICC event and ninth overall. His previous best of 95 came against Scotland in a 2015 World Cup group stage match in Nelson.

Tamim's 128 is the highest score by a Bangladeshi in the ICC Champions Trophy. He goes past Shahriar Nafees' unbeaten 123 against Zimbabwe in Jaipur in 2006. He becomes only the second Bangladeshi to hit a hundred in the tournament.

The 166-run partnership between Tamim and Mushfiqur Rahim is the highest by the Bangladesh pair against England and it is also the highest by a Bangladeshi duo in the ICC Champions Trophy. The previous highest partnership was of 85 runs between Shahriar Nafees and Arbab Nisar.

The total of 305 for six is Bangladesh's highest in the ICC Champions Trophy. Their

Bowling wasn't up to the mark: Mash

STAR SPORT DESK



As England were centering to a win in what many thought would be a close game, questions began swirling around about whether Bangladesh had made the correct decision by including just four genuine bowlers in their squad for the Champions Trophy opener at The Oval yesterday.

After suffering the eight-wicket loss at the hands of the hosts, that same question made its way to Mashrafe Bin Mortaza at the post-match press conference.

"Actually, we took the decision so that the batsman could play with more freedom. The batsmen did well, but it's true that we could have taken another bowler from the team," the Bangladesh captain began.

"We wanted to see if we could score 330-340 with an extra batsman. Then even if our bowlers conceded 60 extra runs but picked up wickets we could have stayed alive. On the other hand, we felt that if we played with seven batsmen, we would have scored 260-270, which wouldn't have been enough for a win here, even with five genuine bowlers."

"We played according to how we planned but after we lost two set batsmen the next few failed to score runs. We should have done at least 320, and we would have done that if we batted properly, but we couldn't."

Another big talking point was the phantom catch which would have seen Eoin Morgan walk back to the pavilion leaving England with 100 runs to score in just under 14 overs. Tamim sprinted in and took what

appeared to be a brilliant diving catch, or for it to be waved off after the third umpire replied the decision.

"I just came from the field and haven't seen the replay so I won't say anything about that. The decision that the umpire takes is final," Mashrafe said. "Tamim was completely convinced that it was a catch. But maybe the umpires saw things more clearly. At the end of the day the fielder's feeling is very important. He [Tamim] still believes that it was a catch. It would have been better if they had taken a closer look, although I don't know if the decision was taken too quickly, but perhaps it would be better if they had taken a closer look."

The skipper also said that the Tigers fell short of the mark in their bowling department, from which most expected better.

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Bangladesh batsman Tamin Iqbal (L) and Mushfiqur Rahim stitched together a sublime 166-run partnership — the highest by a Bangladeshi duo against England — as the Tigers posted 305 for six in the first innings of their Champions Trophy opener against the hosts at The Oval yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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Tamim's prayers answered

AL-AMIN from London

Oval.

When he was about to leave he said: "Pray for us so we can have a good game tomorrow [Thursday]." This is something he always seeks, but what a wonderful "tomorrow" it turned out to be for Tamim at the Oval.

The left-hander hit a sublime 128 in a lightning Bangladesh total of 305 against England in the opening game of the ICC Champions Trophy. It was his ninth ODI hundred and first on English soil. Interestingly it was also his first century in an ICC flagship event since his limited-overs debut in 2007.

Tamim's 95 against Scotland in Nelson in the 2015 World Cup was his previous best. It was the year he started approaching the game more methodically — replacing his aggressive strokeplay with a more disciplined approach. And it has so far worked wonders for him and his team. It was actually his fifth ton in two years since his back-to-back centuries against Pakistan in April

2015.

Tamim's second century against England was an exhibition of flair combined with assurance. He was off the mark after facing 11 deliveries and his first scoring shot fetched him three runs — a flick off the pad off Chris Woakes. His first boundary might not have been a convincing one — a mistimed pull shot that went past the outstretched hand of England wicketkeeper Jos Buttler. But from that point onward, till he was eventually caught by the England keeper in the 45th over, he was in total command.

He was hit by a Mark Wood bounce but instead of being rattled, he dispatched the next delivery — an obvious short ball — for four. His little bad throw the third man for four made Ben Stokes so furious that it revived those overflowing moments of England's tour of Bangladesh last year.

He hit some eye-pleasing straight drives, a spectacular pull on his toes, a few savage square cuts with one of

those bringing up his fifty off 71 balls. He celebrated that with a magnificent six over extra-cover off Moeen Ali.

Tamim moved onto his century with three singles off Moeen. His ninth century contained 11 fours and a six. He celebrated it with a six over long — the victim was again off-spinner Moeen.

His 142-ball knock that featured 12 fours and three sixes ended when he top-edged Liam Plunkett. It also drew to close to a magnificent 166-run third-wicket stand between Tamim and Mushfiqur. It is the highest third-wicket stand on this ground and also Bangladesh's highest third-wicket stand outside the country.

Unfortunately Mushfiqur, who played so well along with Tamim, hauled out off the next delivery after scoring a 72-ball 79. It was an inauspicious shot, especially after Tamim's departure. If Mushfiqur was a good Bangladesh could have taken the total beyond 225.



England batsman Joe Root struggled over a calf injury and hit a superb unbeaten 133 to lead his side to an eight-wicket victory over Bangladesh in the Champions Trophy opener at The Oval yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'INDIA CLASH JUST ANOTHER GAME'

AFP, Birmingham

Pakistan batsman Azhar Ali has insisted his side will treat their Champions Trophy opener against title-holders India in Birmingham on Sunday as "just another game".

"Politics in both countries means the Asian giants now rarely meet outside of International Cricket Council events. Such is the global and commercial appeal of the fixture, the ICC effectively admitted to 'doctoring' the draw to make sure the teams are paired together in the group phase of major tournaments rather than run the risk of them not meeting later on."

"Swing bowling could play a key role in deciding the destiny of the Champions Trophy and one concern for Pakistan is that Wahab Riaz has been struggling with a left knee injury."

"Wahab has recovered well so we have no doubt that he will be fit to play. It's international cricket and you have to be 100 per cent fit. He has practised today so we are hoping that by the time the first match comes he will be able to play," Azhar said.

Mathews doubtful for opener

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews has suffered a calf injury and may not play in their first Champions Trophy group match on Saturday, the cricket board said.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said he was "most likely to sit out" the 50-over match against South Africa at the Oval, in south London.

Mathews rejoined the team after a five-month layoff due to a hamstring injury that forced him to return home halfway through the tour of South Africa in January.

The board said Mathews, who turns 30 on Friday, had complained of stiffness and pain. A medical revealed a strain on the muscle.

"He had been declared fit for the 50-over encounter on the next few days but will most likely sit out the first group stage match against South Africa," SLC said in a statement on Thursday.

"We had been declared fit for the 50-over week-long high intensity training camp in central Sri Lanka. Mathews was upbeat when the Sri Lanka squad left for London two weeks ago to prepare for the tournament. But he warned: "We don't have time to hiccup in a tournament like this."

Aussies to resist allure of 'fearsome foursome'

AFP, London



Steve Smith said Australia were unlikely to field all their 'fearsome foursome' of fast bowlers against New Zealand in their Champions Trophy opener against New Zealand on Friday.

Injuries have meant the quartet of Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and James Pattinson have rarely all been fit at the same time.

It appears Australia have decided it's

skills throughout the middle as well.

For Cummins, whose career has been highlighted by several back stress fractures, just being in contention again is something of a relief.

Left-arm fast bowler Starc, arguably the world's leading ' Yorker' bowler, has recovered from a foot injury that cut out his tour of India, while Pattinson has returned from shin and back problems.

Australia also one of the most powerful top orders in ODI cricket, with captain Smith and opener David Warner outstanding batsmen in all formats.

They could add extra firepower by

Blackcaps pacemen Tim Southee and Trent Boult are proven performers in England, but Southie said: "We know the conditions, but you can't rely on that."

"The wickets over here are pretty good, and the bowlers are going to have to be at the very top of their game as a result."

This latest trans-Tasman clash takes place against the backdrop of a bitter pay dispute between Cricket Australia and their players. Asked if winning the Champions Trophy would bolster the players' cause, Smith said last week: "I think, if we win, almost certainly it would be really good for the playing group. We're



too much of a risk fielding all four in the same team, with Chris Lynn who has plenty of English county experience — also in the squad.

"I don't think we'll end up going with the 'four big guys', Australia captain Smith told reporters at Edgbaston on Thursday. "We've got a couple of options there as all-rounders."

"[Marcus] Stoinis did very well in New Zealand in the last series, and Smith told reporters at Edgbaston on Thursday. "We've got a couple of options there as all-rounders."



including Chris Lynn, who shot to worldwide prominence earlier this year with a sensational Indian Premier League campaign, averaging nearly 50 for the Kolkata Knight Riders.

New Zealand beat Australia in a thrilling pool match in Auckland at the 2015 World Cup only to lose to their trans-Tasman rivals in the final in Melbourne.

Friday's encounter at Birmingham's Edgbaston ground is set to feature several survivors, with New Zealand captain Kane Williamson the star turn in atop order that also includes Martin Guppitt.

BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH	R/B	45/65		
Tamim (Butler)				
p/Plunkett	128/142	12/3		
Soumya/Bainstone				
p/Stokes	28/34	4/1		
Haidil/Blood				
p/Plunkett	19/20	3/0		
Mushfiqur/Hales				
p/Plunkett	79/72	8/0		
Shakib/Colson/Ball	10/8	2/0		
Sabbir/Roy/Plunkett	24/15	3/0		
Mahmudullah/not out	6/6	0/0		
Mosaddek/not out	2/3	0/0		
Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-7)	9			
Total: (first-wicket in 50 overs)	305			
Did not bat: Mashrafe, Mustafizur, Rabul.				
Fall of wickets: 1-56, 2-95, 3-261, 4-261, 5-277, 6-300				
BOWLER	O	M	R	W
Wood	2	1	4	0
Wickets	10	1	58	0
Ball	10	1	82	1
Hayden	10	0	64	0
Plunkett	10	0	59	4
England	8	1	40	0
Root	3	0	18	0
Extras: (b-2, w-2)	4			
BANGLADESH	R/B	45/65		
Roy/Mustafizur				
p/Mashrafe	1/8	0/0		
Hales/Soumya				
85/86	95/86	11/2		
Root	133/129	11/1		
Morgan/not out	75/61	8/2		
Extras: (b-2, w-2)	4			
Total: (for 2 wickets in 47.2 overs)	308			
Did not bat: Stokes, Buttler, Ali, Wickets, Plunkett, Wood, Ball.				
Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-165				
BOWLER	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	10	0	56	1
Shakib	8	0	42	0
Mustafizur	9	0	51	0
Soumya	2	0	13	0
Mosaddek	7.2	0	47	0
Rabul	10	0	64	0
Sabbir	1	0	13	1
Toss: England, who chose to field.				
Player of the match: JE Root.				
Points: England-2, Bangladesh-0				