

SNAPSHOTS FROM A TAUNTON CRUISE



(Clockwise from Bottom L) After opting to bowl, Bangladesh began their World Cup match against West Indies with a brilliant fielding effort, highlighted here by some fantastic efforts from Mohammad Saifuddin and Tamim Iqbal. They were backed by vociferous cheers from their ever-loyal supporters, which this time included centurion Shakib Al Hasan's wife, Umme Ahmed Shishir. The Tiger plushie waving supporters were, of course, a given and Shakib showed his appreciation with a friendly wave. Meanwhile, West Indies captain Jason Holder was left wondering where it had all gone wrong amid scenes of celebration from Bangladesh in both innings.

Tigers gang up on Windies

AL-AMIN

Beware of the Tigers when they are on the prowl.

They have just completed a famous hunt of the once mighty West Indies, whose pace-packed bowling unit tried to scare them off with a barrage of short stuff but succumbed to a ruthless counter-attack.

The margin of victory -- by seven wickets and a mind-boggling 51 balls to spare -- that too chasing a stiff 322, only speaks volume about how ruthless the Tigers were in what was a crucial World Cup fixture to keeping them alive in the race for a semifinal berth.

It was not only the second-highest successful run-chase in World Cup history, but also by far the best batting display by the Tigers in Taunton, where champion all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was the superhero with a majestic unbeaten 124 off 99 balls.

It was a battle between brute force and skill, and the craft triumphed over raw power. West Indies muscled their way to 321 for eight thanks to hitting from their 'H trio' -- Shai Hope (96), Shimron Hetmyer (50 off 26) and Jason Holder (33 off 15). Opener Evin Lewis also chipped in with a robust 70 off 67 balls.

There was a time when it looked like the

West Indies innings, which ebbed and flowed, would hit the 360 mark on the smallest ground. But Bangladesh bowled well at the death to arrest that surge. However, at the end of the day the Tigers showed that that even that would not have been a safe total for the Caribbeans to defend.

Some might argue that another 40-odd runs would have made a lot of difference, but if you look at the pace at which Bangladesh started the chase -- at just over seven runs an over at the onset -- and maintained that intensity till the end, you

THIRD EYE

can safely say that the Tigers should have jettied past that target.

Shakib was the epicenter of a chase that even the Indian batting juggernaut would envy. The left-hander, it seemed, had decided to make the World Cup his own. That he has already is topping the leading scorers' chart with a staggering 384 runs in four games is only a mere statistic in the context of the tournament.

For Bangladesh, they have finally got their best batsman batting at number three. He has been a revelation since he has been

allowed to come up from number five. A back-to-back World Cup century after an imperious 121 against England has not only brought the best out of him, but also provided that balance to becoming a dangerous batting unit.

For those who have watched Shakib growing over the years, the most pleasant sight for them would be watching him hold the fort till victory was achieved. Shakib's new-found responsibility when the temptation was there to err is the biggest positive and something Tigers can treasure in years to come.

If Shakib was the superhero of Bangladesh's daredevil run-chase, there were also a few heroes in the match that had enough twists and turns to keep the fans on edge.

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza not only won the toss but also bowled very well with the new ball. His decision to keep faith on the spinners and bringing in Liton Das for Mohammad Mithun were masterstrokes. His partnership with Mohammad Saifuddin with the new-ball effectively doused West Indies' desire of a flying start.

Saifuddin was the first of many heroes of the match. He did something any pace

bowler would cherish -- he dismissed big-hitting Chris Gayle for a 13-ball duck. Pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman put the breaks on the West Indies surge with key wickets, including getting Andre Russel for a duck. Tamim's diving catch to dismiss a menacingly poised Hetmyer was a brilliant example of how well Bangladesh fielded. Everyone seemed to have got a spring in their step and they did not spill a single chance on offer.

A sublime Soumya Sarkar got a start and so did Tamim. The experienced left-hander was looking to come out on the big stage in a big way after a spell of three unimpressive games before he was undone by a brilliant piece of fielding.

After Mushfiqur Rahim was caught the down the leg side, Bangladesh fans had a few butterflies in their stomach. But Liton more than justified his inclusion with a superb unbeaten 94 on his World Cup debut.

Bangladesh's next assignment is against the mighty Australians in three days' time. They have never beaten the Aussies on a World Cup stage. But so, what? They also had no wins in the World Cup against the West Indies prior to last night. If the Tigers are on the prowl, you can have to write about another famous hunt.

Shakib reaches 6000 runs

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan, who has been in tremendous form in the ongoing World Cup, reached the landmark of 6000 runs in ODI cricket during the Tigers' match against West Indies at the Cooper Associates County Ground in Taunton yesterday.

He started the game against the Caribbean side just 23 runs shy off the personal achievement. Bangladesh's premier all-rounder then reached the milestone in the 15th over of the innings when he chopped a length ball outside off which went past the keeper to take a double off the Oshane Thomas delivery.

The left-hander, who became only the second Bangladeshi to score a hundred in the World Cup when he struck a brilliant 119-ball 121 against hosts England, smashed an unbeaten 99-ball 124 yesterday to help the Tigers chase down West Indies' mammoth 321 for eight total with seven wickets to spare.

The 32-year-old ace all-rounder averages 36.66 in ODIs with nine tons and 45 fifties to his name.

INFO					
Matches	Runs	Ave	HS	100s	50s
202	6101	36.66	134*	9	45

Saif made to work for win against Brothers

SPORTS REPORTER

Saif Sporting Club posted their tenth win in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-0 victory against visiting Brothers Union at the Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh yesterday.

Saif, who played a 1-1 draw to Arambagh in their previous match, had to sweat it out against a struggling Brothers before Alessandro Celin gave them the lead in the 50th minute with a glancing header off a cross from Uzbek forward Otabek Zokirov. Celin wrapped up the victory tapping in a rebound from inside the six-yard box after Brothers goalkeeper only half-blocked a close-range shot from substitute Sajjad Hossain in the stoppage time of the second half.

At Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium

in Gopalganj, visitors NoFeL SC earned a valuable point by holding hosts Muktiyoddha Sangsad to a 1-1 draw.

NoFeL broke the deadlock on the half-hour mark when Ashrafal Islam headed home a cross from Jamiruddin and the visitors went to the break with the one-goal lead. However, Muktiyoddha Sangsad equalised in the 64th minute when Guinean Yamoussa Camara drove home from inside the box after a corner kick came to him with a deflection.

The outcomes did not change the standings as Saif remain fourth with 33 points from 15 matches, 16 points ahead of eighth-placed Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

NoFeL raised their tally to 10 points from 15 matches, stay just above of the relegation zone, with Brothers on nine points from 15 outings.

WHAT TO WATCH

GTV, BTV & MAASRANGA
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP
AFGHANISTAN V ENGLAND
LIVE FROM 3:30PM



Uruguay star Luis Suarez celebrates his only goal in a 4-0 win over Ecuador in their Copa America Group C encounter at the Mineirao Stadium in Belo Horizonte on Sunday.

JFA U-14 FOOTBALL Hattricks galore on opening day

SPORTS REPORTER

Five hattricks were recorded on the opening day of the JFA U-14 National Women's Football Championship at two different venues yesterday.

Tinni Tripura and Eli Ching shared 11 goals between them as hosts Khagrachari overwhelmed Laxmipur 14-0 at the Khagrachari Stadium. Tinni scored six goals while Eli bagged five goals.

At the Shamsul Huda Stadium in Jashore, a treble from Anika powered Magura to a 3-1 win over Satkhira while Barguna outplayed Patuakhali 10-0, with Sharmin and Laila Akter scoring four goals each.