



SIXES: 17
RUNS: 148
BALLS: 71

(Clockwise from L) England captain Eoin Morgan blazes his way to 148 with a world record 17 sixes hit while Joe Root and Johnny Bairstow played supporting roles scoring 88 and 90 runs respectively as England piled on 397 runs which included a world record 25 sixes in an ODI against Afghanistan during their World Cup group stage match at Old Trafford on Tuesday. England won by 150 runs.

PHOTO: REUTERS



WORLD CUP DIARY

SAKEB SUBHAN from Taunton

WALLPAPER IN THE FLESH, OR STONE
The miserable weather that has hit much of England over the past week is a bane for cricketers looking to practise ahead of matches, and when matches are abandoned themselves -- like Bangladesh's against Sri Lanka in Bristol on June 11 -- it only gets worse. For touring sports journalists it is a bane because without much cricketing action, practice or otherwise, there is not often a lot to write about. The good thing for touring journalists is that, without much cricketing action, practice or otherwise, there is not often a lot to write about.

That opens up possibilities to do a bit of sightseeing and Taunton offered the opportunity to make the 60-mile drive to the east to visit Stonehenge. For those old enough to remember, as well as being the subject of many documentaries and posters, the prehistoric monument in Wiltshire was an iconic wallpaper on Windows 95, which lent a nostalgic element to visiting a site and monuments that are up to 5,000 years old. The centrepiece of Stonehenge, the entirety of which covers an area of 26 square kilometres, is of course the ring of standing stones arranged in a circle that has engendered many theories surrounding its creation, including those of alien intervention.

Today, 13-feet high stones arranged in a circle may not immediately induce awe, but considering that the main site -- there are other simpler monuments dotted across the wide open landscape -- was built at around 2200 BC, the scale of the construction is awe-inspiring. The function of the stones, the method of creation is all up for debate. All that can be ascertained around 4,000 years later is that the structure is aligned to the sunset in winter solstice and the opposing sunrise in summer solstice. As with everything, the group of Bangladeshi journo were undecided about whether the trip was worth it based on just the stone circle, but there was

agreement that it was worth it to see a wallpaper in the flesh -- or stone.

THE DRIVE

For this reporter, however, getting to Stonehenge and back was almost as big a treat as seeing the prehistoric site because, having suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous Dhaka traffic, it was an opportunity to drive a car in a land where laws are actually obeyed. But by the end of the day, that had also proved to have its downsides. Making our way back to our hotel from Taunton town centre through the motorway was a veritable odyssey. Having completely surrendered ourselves to Google Maps, we were sent round and round because, as we realised after the second trip back



PHOTO: SAKEB SUBHAN

from nowhere, the motorway that serviced our hotel was shut down for repair work (even though it seemed perfectly fine earlier in the day). In Bangladesh, we would just have gone the wrong way.

Otherwise driving was a pleasure. The biggest adjustment, of course, was actually paying attention to red lights and sticking to a lane, failing which the dirty looks from fellow motorists hurt as much as verbal abuse from bus drivers back home.

The only worry is, when we get back home, I will have to cop the verbal abuse when I alone am halted in front of a red light on Bijoy Sarani.

'We were always behind Bangladesh'

ICC

West Indies assistant coach Roddy Estwick has warned his side the time for excuses is over after their latest World Cup defeat against Bangladesh.

Put into bat first in a pivotal clash with the Tigers in Taunton, the Men in Maroon posted 321/8 in their innings, only to be undermined by an under-par bowling display as Bangladesh cruised home with seven wickets to spare.

Seventh in the table with just one win from their opening five ICC Men's Cricket World Cup matches, captain Jason Holder was left frustrated with the ineffective implementation of the short ball and a low batting strike rate in his post-match press conference.

But while former Barbados player Estwick partially agreed with the skipper's assessment, he also stressed the importance of sticking together in the face of adversity.

"If you look at it, I thought we were 60 runs short on that pitch and on that size field. We then didn't take the opportunities that came our way," he said. "We were always behind Bangladesh once they got through to 70/1."

"The big players didn't kick on but saying that we made 321 runs and should have been able to defend that."

"But we can stand here, saying 'if this' and 'if that' - we didn't play well, we've lost the cricket game and that's that."

"We've got to come back stronger. We've still got four games left in the tournament and we can't point fingers or apportion blame to anyone."

"We have to stick together; that's how good teams pull through. We've got to stop looking for excuses and start finding solutions."

Defending a seemingly formidable total of 321, the West Indies appeared on course for victory until a stirring 189-run fourth-wicket partnership from Shakib Al Hasan and Liton Das dashed their hopes.

Particularly effective against short balls, the Bangladesh duo made short shrift of the West Indian pace attack to seal victory in the most emphatic of fashions.

But instead of criticising his bowlers, Estwick instead paid tribute to the ever-improving Tigers as they kept their own World Cup hopes alive, while also promising his own side would come again with renewed vigour.

"Four years ago, everyone was saying how exciting and refreshing West Indies cricket looked," he added.

"Hindsight is a wonderful thing. If we'd bowled spin against Bangladesh, everyone would have said that we should have stuck to our strengths."

"Four games down the road, it's the worst tactic in the world."

"Give Bangladesh credit. They played well and they're an improving side."

BEST QUOTE



রেড ভেলভেট মিষ্টি স্বাদে ভরবেই মন!



(Shakib is) probably the world's best allrounder and a left-arm spinner. One of our values is professionalism and (it's beneficial) to draw on someone like Ashton Agar to come in and give us a like for like (spinner).

Justin Langer, Australia coach



ASHRAF GHANI

Afghan president drops in to cheer on side

REUTERS, Manchester

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani dropped in at Old Trafford on Tuesday to watch his side take on hosts and pre-tournament favourites England in a Cricket World Cup group stage match.

Ghani, in suit and tie, could be seen waving to the crowd from high in the stands, surrounded by other guests. The Afghanistan Cricket Board tweeted photographs of him together with Afghanistan Cricket Board chairman Azizullah Fazi.

Afghans have looked largely at sea in the tournament so far but are still hoping to pull off an upset, skipper Gulbadin Naib said ahead of the match.

The Afghans made their World Cup debut in 2015, when they notched up one win against Scotland. But they are without a victory after four matches in their second appearance.

The rise of Afghan cricket has been a remarkable by-product of decades of turmoil that forced millions into refugee camps across the border in Pakistan, where young men uprooted from home began to learn the sport.

It has been a rare source of pride and unity in a nation split by bitter political divisions.

Aussies summon spinner to prepare for Shakib

STAR SPORT DESK

Shakib Al Hasan is in red hot form at the 2019 World Cup, picking up back-to-back tons to become the highest run-getter in the tournament so far. Bangladesh are in confident mood after their tremendous chase against the West Indies and have Australia as their next assignment on June 20 at Nottingham.

Such has been Shakib's form that Australia have summoned a spinner just to negate Shakib, wrote Cricket Australia website. Left-arm spinner Ashton Agar was summoned to their training session two days out from a World Cup encounter at Trent Bridge.

"Shakib, one of the greatest allrounders of the modern era, took a 10-wicket match haul in Bangladesh's historic Test victory against Australia two years ago."

"He faces the Aussies again in form this time around, fresh off a match-winning unbeaten 124 from just 99 balls against West Indies on Monday."

"A second ton of the tournament fired him to the top of the World Cup's run-scoring charts and, more importantly, kept Bangladesh in the hunt for a semi-final berth," the report read.

While Shakib's bat has sparked concerns for opposition, his bowling too has come good in this tournament. Australia wanted to recreate facing a left-arm spinner in order to be ready for the upcoming match against Bangladesh.

"(Shakib is) probably the world's best allrounder and a left-arm spinner," said coach Justin Langer.

"It was great of Ash to come down and great to have him here. This time last year he was in the Australian one-day side."

"One of our values is professionalism and (it's beneficial) to draw on someone like Ashton Agar to come in and give us a like for like (spinner)," he said.

Agar is expected to feature for Australia A this Thursday but still showed up to the national team's training session to give them an upper hand when they face Bangladesh's ace all-rounder.

Australia's pace attack will be key in their pursuit to thwart Bangladesh but Shakib, who cut and pulled Windies pacers with aggression had already mentioned that he did not hold any fear for pace duo Mitchell Stark and Pat Cummins.



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The crowds gathered at Old Trafford were treated to a magnificent batting display from England skipper Eoin Morgan during their World Cup match against Afghanistan yesterday. Morgan made it rain sixes as the left-hander and broke the world record for most sixes hit in an ODI innings in the process. It was during the 47th over, being bowled by Gulbadin Naib, when Morgan struck consecutive sixes off the first two balls to equal the previous record, which belonged to Rohit Sharma with 16 sixes. Perhaps the England captain even intended to score a hundred runs on the day by solely hitting sixes as he launched a flat maximum over the bowlers head to smash his 17th six of the innings and register a new world record in style. Courtesy of Morgan's blistering ton, England posted 397 for six in 50 overs, the highest total so far in the ongoing World Cup.