



The one-off Test against Afghanistan was intended to be a chance for redemption for Bangladesh following a disappointing World Cup campaign. However, the Tigers trailed by 374 at the end of the third day in Chattogram yesterday. With defeat seemingly imminent, it was fitting for the Tigers to leave with their heads held low. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'70% hopeful of winning'

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

OBHA 17-year-old Afghanistan opener Ibrahim Zadrán was agonisingly close to smashing a maiden Test hundred on debut before being dismissed for a well-made 87 that helped his side take a commanding position against Bangladesh after the third day of the one-off Test in Chattogram yesterday.

Afghanistan go into the fourth day at the at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium with a huge lead of 374 runs after ending the third day on 237 for 8 and the visitors are certainly sensing a historic win.

Although forecasts suggest there is a high possibility of rain over the next two days in Chittagong, Ibrahim said the visitors could not control the weather, adding that they were 70 per cent hopeful of winning the Test match.

"They played only 64 overs in the first innings so we hope to get them out again as well. We cannot say anything about the weather but the conditions are definitely changing. It is raining sometimes, and it is cloudy at times. We are 70 percent hopeful of winning the game," he added.

The right-hander had impressive outings in Bangladesh in July this year, scoring 209 runs for Afghanistan A in their four-day games and helping his side win the series 1-0.

"Having played in Bangladesh a month ago, I had information about the conditions here. This is why I played well. We had a good camp in Abu Dhabi as well as the two-day match in Chattogram. So, with good preparation and the result from that game, we were hopeful of playing well," he added.

Ibrahim said that their aim was to get a 400-run lead as he feels it will be difficult for the hosts to reach that in the fourth innings.

'It's not like we have never won a Test'

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

The media were made to wait quite some time for a Bangladeshi cricketer to show up to the mandatory post-day press conference following yet another disappointing showing on the third day of the one-off Test against Afghanistan yesterday.

The atmosphere in the Bangladesh dressing room was similar to the skies above the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram, which had turned gloomy and dark. The home side will be looking for a miracle or hoping for rain, which is in the forecast for the next two days, to save face against a side playing just their third Test.

After securing a 137-run first-innings lead, Afghanistan are now leading by a huge 374 runs after finishing the third day on 237 for 8. Ibrahim Zadrán's 87

was the highlight of the day, which was eventually called off early due to bad light after a power failure at the venue led to the floodlights going out.

Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan had tried to overshadow his team's poor performance the previous day by blaming the pitch, which according to him behaved completely opposite to what they had expected. However, that didn't look convincing after the Tigers' dismal performance continued on the third day as well.

Finally, one of the members of the Bangladesh team appeared but only to explain the dismal showing in typical manner -- saying that the Tigers were still hoping to make a comeback. There were also attempts to defend the team with time-worn logic -- cricket is a game of great uncertainty and anything can happen.

Bangladesh may have never scored more

than 217 runs in their second innings and no team may have ever managed to win a game at this ground in chase of more than 317, but the spokesperson for the Tigers -- Mehedi Hasan Miraz -- followed the same pattern when asked if there was a chance for Bangladesh to win this game.

"Anything can happen in cricket. We will try our best because we still have two days left. Our first job is to pick their two wickets quickly and then our batsmen need to take the responsibility in the second innings. Obviously, I believe that anything can happen in cricket. A team can lose a game from a winning position or a side from a losing situation can go on to win the game easily. There are a lot of instances like that in cricket," an optimistic Miraz said.

When asked if the Tigers had ever thought they would be in such a position after the third day, that too against newcomers to

Test cricket like Afghanistan, the 21-year-old credited the opposition batsmen for showing a great amount of patience.

He added that Afghanistan were able to quickly adapt to playing Test cricket, which gave them success so far in the game, and that they were better prepared for the challenge.

After that answer, a bouncer came towards Miraz. He was asked what Bangladesh had learned after completing 19 years in the Test arena and, as he tried to duck awkwardly, he said: "They have just started playing Test cricket so the excitement will work for them more. They want to prove themselves to world cricket and they came here mentally prepared for that. Our preparations were also good. We managed to beat Australia and England. It's just that we are having a bad time but it's not like we have never won a Test match."



Afghanistan opener Ibrahim Zadrán struck a cool and collected 208-ball 87 to help the visitors take a commanding lead against Bangladesh on the third day of a one-off Test in Chattogram yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

World pays homage to 'the maestro'

AGENCIES

The cricket fraternity has come together in unison to pay tribute to former Pakistan leg-spinner Abdul Qadir, who passed away at the age of 63 due to cardiac arrest on Friday night.

From Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan to legendary Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, all took to their social media handles to pay tribute to the late cricketer.

The Pakistan Cricket Board announced his demise on their official Twitter account, calling him a "maestro".

Former Pakistan leg-spinner Abdul Qadir was widely regarded as the man who brought wrist-spin back from the dead in the 1970's and 80's.

Qadir was also a pioneer of the art of wrist-spin in limited-overs cricket. Long before it became the fad that it is today, Qadir was letting googlies rip in ODIs. He played important roles in Pakistan's World Cup campaigns in 1983 and 1987, during both of which they made the semifinals, picking up 24 wickets in 13 matches.

Qadir made his Test debut against England in Lahore in 1977 and went on to play 67 Tests, taking 236 wickets with a best of nine for 56 against the same side in 1987.

Those figures are still the best by a Pakistan bowler in a Test innings.

He also took 132 wickets in 104 one-day internationals, with former Pakistan captain turned Pakistan Prime Minister Imran using him as an attacking weapon in the 1983 World Cup held in England.



"Qadir's bowling statistics do not do justice to his genius. Had he been playing cricket now with the modern DRS system, where batsmen can be given out on the front foot as well, Qadir would have gotten as many wickets as the great Shane Warne," said Khan.

A national icon, Qadir was Pakistan's hero during their tour of England in 1987, when they picked up their first series win in the country. His contributions included a match haul of 10 for 211 in the fifth Test that helped Pakistan keep their lead intact and win the series.

England had always been left

mystique and further beguile the Englishmen. By the time he finished his career, Qadir had 21 wickets in England, his most in any country outside home, and 82 wickets against them overall -- almost double the number of wickets he got against his next favourite opposition, Australia, against whom he had 45 wickets in 11 Tests. Qadir also enjoyed great success against the legendary West Indies team of the 1980's, winding up with 42 wickets against them. Qadir kept the torch alight for a generation of leg spinners to come, among them a man no less than Warne, who himself went on to become a leg-spin wizard. Warne took time out to visit him at his home in Lahore after being advised to do so by his captain Steve Waugh during their tour of Pakistan in 1998-99. In his book, Shane Warne's Century: My Top 100 Test Cricketers, Warne had written of Qadir: "One of the most interesting nights of my life was at Qadir's house when we sat on the floor and flipped an orange to each other with different grips and forms of spin and discussed tactics and how to sum up batsmen. That was an education and a very good night between two spinners."

spellbound by Qadir's magic, so much so that ahead of their 1982 tour of the country, Imran Khan, the then Pakistan captain, and the man under whose leadership Qadir produced many of his finest Test performances, urged a then-26-year-old Qadir to grow a goatee as a way of adding to his

Tigresses retain title with record win

SPORTS REPORTER

ICC WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP AUSTRALIA 2020 The Bangladesh women's cricket team retained the title of the Women's T20 World Cup Qualifiers with a record-equalling 70-run win over Thailand in the final at Dundee, Scotland yesterday.

Batting first after winning the toss, the women in red and green posted 130 for five in their allotted 20 overs -- the highest score of the tournament -- before restricting the Thais for a paltry 60 for seven, ensuring their second successive title in the event. The win also helped them equal their highest-margin of victory, with the previous one being by 70 runs against Malaysia in 2018.

Both Bangladesh and Thailand had already sealed their qualification for Women's World T20 in 2020 following their semifinal victories over Ireland and Papua New Guinea respectively.

Bangladesh made a brisk start to their innings with the two openers Sanjida Islam and Murshida Khatun scoring 68 runs in the first 10 overs. Murshidha was dismissed for a 34-ball 33, but Sanjida held one end up and stayed till the end to ensure the

highest score of the tournament. Right-hander Sanjida, who scored an unbeaten 32 in the semi-final against Ireland on Thursday, scored 71 off 60 deliveries, with her innings featuring three sixes and six fours.

In doing so, Sanjida became the top run-getter in an innings for Bangladesh, beating the previous highest of 66 not out by Fargana Haque.

Although the Tigresses lost a few wickets towards the end of their innings, Sanjida's big-hitting ensured they posted the highest total of the tournament.

The Bangladesh bowlers then broke the backbone of the Thailand innings, reducing them to four for 17 in nine overs before eventually restricting them to 60. Nahida Akter and Shailla Sharmin took two wickets each while Salma Khatun and Khadija Tul Kubra chipped in with a wicket apiece. Salma was the most economical of the bowlers, conceding only four runs in her four overs.

Sanjida won the player-of-the-match award while Thailand's Chanida Suthiruang was adjudged the best player of the tournament.



The Bangladesh and Thailand women's cricket teams celebrate together in a huddle after their Women's T20 World Cup Qualifiers final in Dundee yesterday. Bangladesh won the title but both sides qualified to the Women's World T20 in 2020. PHOTO: STAR

WHAT THEY SAID

Abdul Qadir was a genius, one of the greatest leg spinners of all time. And he was also the life of the dressing room entertaining the team with his wit & humour.

--Imran Khan
Pakistan Prime Minister and former Pakistan captain

I think a lot of people who bowled leg-spin, like I did, he was the guy who we looked up to in the eighties. He was the main leg-spinner in that era. He was a terrific bowler who bamboozled a lot of batsmen. His record is a terrific one.

--Shane Warne
Australia's legendary leg-spinner

They called him the magician for many reasons but when he looked me in the eyes & told me I was going to play for Pakistan for the next 20 years, I believed him. A Magician, absolutely. A leg spinner & a trailblazer of his time. You will be missed Abdul Qadir but never forgotten.

--Wasim Akram
Former Pakistan captain

Remember playing against Abdul Qadir, one of the best spinners of his times. My heartfelt condolences to his family. RIP.

--Sachin Tendulkar
Former India captain

A champion bowler, Great human being, you will be missed forever.

--Harbhajan Singh
Indian off-spinner

Sad news mate! Loved watching him bowl.

--Brett Lee
Former Australia bowler

Extremely saddened by the demise of Abdul Qadir the spin bowling stalwart from Pakistan. My heart goes out to his family and friends.

--Ravichandran Ashwin
India spinner

Sad to hear about the demise of Abdul Qadir. Was always mesmerised by his unique style of bowling and he was one of the best leg-spinners to play the game. Heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones.

--VVS Laxman
Former India batsman

Legendary leg spinner Abdul Qadir sb passed away. Just got this sad news. The revival of leg spin in cricket is completely credited to him. He inspired a generation of bowlers to take up leg spin.

--Shoaib Akhtar
Former Pakistan speedster