



Pacer Al-Amin Hossain's dismay depicts the helplessness of the Bangladesh bowlers against India skipper Rohit Sharma, who was in murderous mood and put the visitors to the sword with a 43-ball 85 in the second T20I in Rajkot yesterday. India won by eight wickets to level the series 1-1.

PHOTO: AFP

# Nagpur will be similar: Sundar

SPORTS REPORTER from Rajkot

India all-rounder Washington Sundar said that his side were confident of clinching the series after the resounding eight-wicket win in the second T20I in Rajkot yesterday levelled the three-match series 1-1. Bangladesh were buoyed by their win in Delhi -- their first-ever T20I win against India -- but Sundar believed that his side had the edge in the series decider as the Nagpur wicket will be similar to the one from Rajkot.

"Definitely. We've lost one game and it was a close one. Couple of things here and there and that game could have gone our way as well. We won convincingly today and we can expect a similar track and boundaries in Nagpur so definitely we will look to win the next game," he said when asked if India were in the driving seat leading up to the third T20I in Nagpur on Sunday.

Sundar mentioned that things went in their favour right from the toss, up to skipper Rohit Sharma hitting 85 off 43 balls. Bangladesh had wasted a good start from openers Liton Das and Mohammad Naim to be restricted to a sub-par 153 for six.

"We were lucky with the toss in this game and we thought the wicket was beautiful. We would definitely have liked to bowl first and felt that if we could restrict them to anywhere around 160 then we have done a good job," he added.

The off-spin of Sundar, which yielded one wicket for just 25 from four overs, and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal's two for 28 were crucial in tying the Tigers down.

"They batted very well and we thought the spinners' role was important. It was important to take the pace off the ball and we did a very good job in the middle overs."

For Sundar, the Delhi wicket favoured Bangladesh, mostly due to its slowness, but the Rajkot one was more straightforward and it helped the Indian batsmen.

"If we look at our batting lineup, all the batsmen would like to go aggressive right from the start since there is so much talent in there. At times in the game in Delhi, it wasn't easy to start middling the ball right from the off. But on wickets like this, you can expect India to go right from the off," he said.

"It happens in this format. Even in the Bangladesh Premier League, they have similar tracks as Delhi's so it suited them better and they played well that night."

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SCORECARD

BD-IND SCOREBOARD				
Team	R/B	4s/6s		
<b>BANGLADESH</b>	29/21	4/0		
Liton run out	36/31	5/0		
Naim c Iyer b Sundar	30/20	2/1		
Soumya st Pant b Chahal				
Mushfiqur c Pandya				
b Chahal	4/6	0/0		
Mahmudullah c Dube				
b Chahal	30/21	4/0		
Affir c Sharma b Ahmed	6/8	0/0		
Mosaddek not out	7/9	0/0		
Aminul not out	5/5	1/0		
Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-3)				
Total: (For 6 wks in 20 overs)	153			
Did not bat: Shaiful Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Al-Amin Hossain.				
Fall of wickets: 1-60, 2-83, 3-97, 4-103, 5-128, 6-142.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Chahal	4	0	25	1
Khaleel	4	0	44	1
Sundar	4	0	25	1
Chahal	4	0	28	2
Dube	2	0	12	0
Pandya	2	0	17	0
<b>INDIA</b>				
Sharma csub (Mithun) b Aminul	85/43	6/6		
Dhawan b Aminul	31/27	4/0		
Rahul not out	8/11	0/0		
Iyer not out	24/13	3/1		
Extras: (lb-1, w-5)	6			
Total: (For 2 wks in 15.4 overs)	154			
Did not bat: Pant, Dube, Pandya, Sundar, Chahal, Chahal, Khaleel.				
Fall of wickets: 1-118, 2-125.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mustafizur	3.4	0	35	0
Shaiful	2	0	23	0
Al-Amin	4	0	32	0
Aminul	4	0	29	2
Affir	1	0	13	0
Mosaddek	1	0	21	0
<b>Result:</b> India won by 8 wickets.				
<b>Player-of-the-match:</b> Rohit Sharma.				
<b>Umpires:</b> Chettithody Shamshuddin (IND), Nitin Menon (IND)				
<b>TV Umpire:</b> Anil Chaudhary (IND)				
<b>Match referee:</b> Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)				

# 'Important that a set batsman stays'

SPORTS REPORTER from Rajkot

Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad had suggested before the second T20I against India that they would take the field with a positive and aggressive approach. While the Tigers did get off to a good start, regular fall of wickets saw them fall short of a par score on a good wicket. After the thumping eight-wicket loss, Mahmudullah rued the fact that set batsmen gifted wickets yesterday after showing maturity during the last T20I in Delhi on Sunday.

"The openers gave us a great start. It was a 170-180 wicket. When we lost Soumya's wicket, we took a bit of time in the middle. I think that cost us in the middle overs," he cited, referring to the loss of two wickets -- those of Mushfiqur Rahim and Soumya -- in the 13th over that turned the tide of the game towards India.

Liton Das was connecting well from the off and looked to be in control as Bangladesh reached 54 without loss in the Powerplay. Despite getting two lives, Liton fell to a rash run-out.

"Liton always plays aggressively and on his day, he will probably carry the team by himself. I am hopeful that we will get that day very soon. It's not that he isn't consistent. He's an opener and we expect that he will play a big innings. I hope he will realise his mistakes and score better in the next match," Mahmudullah said.

The story of Bangladesh's innings was that batsmen got starts but did not go on to contribute in a big way. Even on a flat wicket, it was difficult to score runs quickly without getting in, thus new batsmen could

not come in and provide the thrust.

"It is important that a set batsman stays at the wicket for 15 to 16 overs on this kind of wicket. If you look at their batting, Rohit [Sharma] carried them with 85 today. If an innings like that came from our top order, maybe we could have scored more.

"Yes, in the last five overs we did have five wickets in hand and we didn't score runs. We have to commend how they bowled as well.

If we could pierce the gaps, given the fast outfield we could have had some more," Mahmudullah said.

After showing a calm demeanour in the previous match and the ability to take the game deep, the Tigers lost the plot in this game. They often looked to score off Yuzvendra Chahal, India's main strike bowler.

"We didn't recognise what we needed to do in that particular moment and fell short."

Mahmudullah was not thinking negatively yet and said Bangladesh must keep their heads up and recover from this defeat. "Obviously, their [India's] confidence will be high after this performance but I don't think we will be lacking in self-confidence. We have shown in the first match that we can play well and it's important not to lose that self-confidence. We have to believe that and think of ways we can win the next game."



Young Bangladesh opener Mohammad Naim (R) tries to slog Washington Sundar over deep midwicket only to see his nifty 36-run knock, the highest score in Bangladesh's modest 153 for six, come to an end during the second T20I against India in Rajkot yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# 'Hopeful because of our preparation'

## Bangladesh's Test players depart for India today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz said yesterday that preparations for the upcoming two-match Test series against India have been going smoothly as Bangladesh try to push the formidable Virat Kohli-led India in their own backyard.

The young off-spinner exuded confidence after Tigers' T20I squad got off a flying start on tour by winning the first T20I in New Delhi.

Mehedi, along with new Test captain Mominul Haque, Shadman Islam, Imrul Kays, Saif Hasan, Nayeem Hasan, Abu Jayed and Ebadot Hossain will leave today to join the team in Nagpur, where the Tigers will play the third and last T20I against India, who is being led by Rohit Sharma in place of the rested Kohli. The first Test of the two-match series will start in Indore from November 14 and the final Test will take place in Kolkata from November 22.

"It's a very important tour for us and we have to take up the challenge. Mental preparation is very important because it would not be an easy task to play Tests on Indian soil. I am hopeful because of the way we are preparing for the series. We are now confident as we made a good start in this series. It is possible to do something if everybody steps up," Mehedi told the reporters yesterday.

The 22-year-old all-rounder, who has so far played 20 Tests since making his debut against England in Chattogram in October 2016, also said that he will miss bowling in partnership with ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan.

"I really enjoy the partnership with Shakib bhai. He helps me a lot during my bowling as he always advises me about what I need to do. So, I have to be prepared as I will not get his assistance this time. But we have our [spin] bowling consultant Daniel Vettori and I hope I can learn many things from him," said Mehedi.

"His [Shakib's] absence also puts additional pressure on other spinners, but we have to take that pressure and face that challenge," he added.



Mehedi Hasan Miraz, a part of Bangladesh's Test squad, was seen practising in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTIVE

## RAJKOT REVELRY

SPORTS REPORTER from Rajkot

### Sun smiles on cricket-crazy Rajkot

The prayers from the cricket fans were answered as Rajkot saw sunshine from early yesterday morning. The sunshine raised hopes that the second T20I between Bangladesh and India would take place without a hitch despite Cyclone Maha being a constant threat in the lead-up to the match.



The Tigers had seen bright and sunny days ever since arriving in Rajkot but a storm gathered in the early evening on Wednesday, raking in gusts of wind. The power went off at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium that evening. The storm had reportedly subsided and turned into a deep depression but the day was bright and sunny.

The city was abuzz as the sun shone throughout the day. Rajkot had only hosted two T20Is before this game and expectant crowds had gathered outside the stadium. While riding through the city, a taxi driver informed this reporter about cricket-crazy Rajkot.

"We are a small town but you know what, we are the craziest about cricket in all India," he said. Asked about his favourite cricketer, he replied: "We don't have a favourite here, we support India and that's how we see the game."

Pressed on who he sees as favourites, the cabbie said: "There is a huge chance India won't

win unless Rohit [Sharma] does something. Bangladesh are the team in form."

### Riding with future stars

The cricket-crazy state is making huge strides in producing their own heroes. There are 22 academies in Rajkot which provide optimum support to both boys' and girls' age-level cricket teams. 15 to 20 ball-boys were selected from such academies in Rajkot for yesterday's match. It was an opportunity to inspire the next generation of stars. The parents dropped them off at a predetermined location from where they were picked up by a BCCI bus which also accommodated reporters from Bangladesh.

Afjal, a student of class seven from a local school and one of the ball-boys, informed that only the best academy students are given the opportunity.

"Getting the chance to be a ball-boy is huge for us because you won't get any chance without

hard work as only the best students of these 22 academies are chosen as ball-boys for international cricket," said Afzal.

"There is very stiff hard competition among us. First, we have to learn the basics for six months before going for the next course, which varies for batsmen, bowlers and keepers," he said.

"These academies are also involved with some leading schools and we play with these school teams according to respective age groups," he added.

Jahir, a fast bowler from one of the academies, said that he was admitted to the academy because he wanted to get into the school team.

"We usually go to the academies to make sure that we can get into the school team as we consider that to be our first step in competitive cricket."

With an infrastructure like that, the cabbie and indeed the whole of Rajkot can someday even have their own home-grown favourite cricketer.

## Bond keen on England coaching role

AGENCIES, London

Former New Zealand fast bowler Shane Bond has set his sights on the role of England's bowling coach. With Chris Silverwood taking the role of the head coach, England roped in Darren Gough to work with the bowlers in the lead-up to the two-Test series in New Zealand. However, on a full-time basis, the post remains vacant.

"I know all the English guys. I caught up with them in Christchurch when they were down for their pre-season tournament [T20 warm-up fixtures]. I really enjoyed being with the team and liked the guys," Bond said.

"I think you look at everything that's put in front of you, wherever the opportunities come up."