



Although Bangladesh lost the third T20I against India in Nagpur on Sunday, the stunning performance of opener Mohammad Naim, who scored a team high 48-ball 81, showed promise of better things to come.

PHOTO: AFP

Promise in innings and outlook

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Naim welcomed India leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal by lifting a shot over the bowler's head, then smashed two more boundaries in successive deliveries through long on and behind point. The southpaw batsman from Faridpur skipped down the wicket and hit Washington Sundar over the long-on boundary and then swept the same bowler with the angle into the gap at deep backward square leg for a boundary. Then he stepped out and whacked Chahal straight down the ground to clear the boundary.

The 20-year-old left-hander thus showcased his dominance during a 48-ball 81 in the third and final T20I against India at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur on Sunday night. His valiant effort ultimately went in vain as the Tigers' fell to a 30-run defeat but the courage, calmness and prudence in shot selection in just his third international appearance provided a glimpse into Bangladesh's future.

It was more encouraging when he showed same kind of maturity while talking to reporters at the team hotel at Indore yesterday about his innings, his frustration at the defeat and his future plans.

The young man had no regrets for missing out on a hundred, but was frustrated about the defeat. "A lot [of regret]. If we could win the game and the series, then I would have felt much better. It is really disappointing that we did not win. If we had another good partnership, then maybe we would have won," he said.

"I think it [the one that got him out] was the best ball of the innings. And I was not playing to score a century. I played to see the team win. I was not successful in that regard and I feel very bad about that," he said when asked about missing out on a ton when a brilliant yorker from Shivam Dube in the 16th over saw his off stump uprooted. He also informed that he was discussing the importance of finishing the chase with Mohammad Mithun, his partner in a 98-run third-wicket stand.

"It felt good that we won the first match I played. I do not think about scoring more runs

or scoring the highest. I try to play and take it match by match," he said about his debut game in New Delhi where he scored 26 runs before making 36 in the second game in Rajkot.

That was why he was not happy despite such a wonderful knock in the final game and the many congratulations from teammates and opposition players.

"My teammates congratulated me and also a few of their [India] players. Harbhajan Singh was there and he said that if I could have played two more overs, we would have won. He said 'you played well; another partnership would have done it.'"

Regarding his style of batting, Naim said: "It is not an attacking style of play as I tried to pace my innings as per the target. I tried to play the way it was required."

It's too early to predict whether he will become a top batsman in the country but chances of that will increase if he is able to stick to the mindset expressed during the press meet.

"I am not thinking about it [future plans] right now. We have an emerging Asia Cup next and I am thinking about that."

Tigers face tough transition

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Indore

Bangladesh will have little time to reflect on the just-concluded T20I series, where they put up a fight but eventually lost 2-1. The Tigers arrived at Indore yesterday where they will begin their World Test Championship campaign with the first Test against top-ranked India from November 14. The transition from the shortest format to the longest format will be a difficult challenge especially without the boost that a T20I series win would have provided.

Liton Das, Mushfiquur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mohammad Mithun, Taijul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman and Al-Amin Hossain -- members of both the T20I and Test squads -- will have to make that transition pretty quickly. With newly-appointed captain Mominul Haque set to lead for the first time in the two-Test series, the series carries extra significance for Bangladesh after Test and T20I captain Shakib Al Hasan was banned from all forms of cricket by the ICC for two years for failing to report corrupt approaches from a bookie.

If that scenario in itself was not a worry for the Tigers ahead of facing India, the lack of a practice match ahead of the series will be of particular concern to Mominul and his men. It is usually a norm for visiting sides to play practice matches in the lead-up to a key series, but such has been the congested nature of Bangladesh's tour of India that it was difficult to arrange a practice match, even a two-day fixture, under the current schedule.

Asked about the absence of practice matches during the T20I series, Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo told this reporter: "Definitely would have liked a practice match ahead of the Tests."

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had requested before the series for practice matches to help the Test squad gel, but the jam-packed schedule did not allow for it.

"We couldn't get it [practice match] before the India series. We tried," BCB President Nazmul Hassan commented about the absence of practice match on November

10, following the end of the third T20I in Nagpur. "Even the India officials I had sat down with today, did not imagine that the series [T20] against Bangladesh would be this competitive."

After the Indore Test comes the Kolkata Test, which will be both country's first experience of a day-night Test with a pink ball, which tends to swing more under lights. Bangladesh's lack of experience with day-night Tests and the fact that they will not have a chance to prepare for it with a warm-up was already playing on the team management's mind.

"It would have been good if there was a two-day warm-up match before the pink-ball Test. When I was in charge of South Africa, we played a two-day warm-up match ahead of the Adelaide [pink-ball] Test. But like us, India will be facing the same challenge so we have to accept it," Domingo said after arriving in Delhi before the first T20.

With India's pace options, the challenge will be more difficult for the Tigers than for India. For now though, Mominul and Co will have to be content with what will be on offer at the Indore Test, which comes first.



Bangladesh Test captain Mominul Haque and Co yesterday reached Indore, where the Tigers are set to face off against India in the first of a two-match Test series on November 14.

PHOTO: BCB

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SCORECARD

BD-IND SCOREBOARD

INDIA	R/B	4s/6s		
Sharma b Shafui	2/6	0/0		
Dhawan c Mahmudullah				
b Shafui	19/16	4/0		
Rahul c Liton b Al-Amin	52/35	7/0		
Iyer c Liton b Soumya	62/33	3/5		
Pant b Soumya	6/9	0/0		
Pandey not out	22/13	3/0		
Dube not out	9/8	0/0		
Extras: (w-2)	2			
Total: (For 5 wkts in 20 overs)	174			
Did not bat: Sundar, Chahal, Chahar, Khaleel.				
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-35, 3-94, 4-139, 5-144				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Al-Amin	4	0	22	1
Shafui	4	1	32	2
Mustafizur	4	0	42	0
Aminul	3	0	29	0
Soumya	4	0	29	2
Affif	1	0	20	0

BANGLADESH		R/B	4s/6s	
Liton c Sundar b Chahar		9/8	2/0	
Naim b Dube		81/48	10/2	
Soumya c Dube b Chahar		0/1	0/0	
Mithun c Rahul b Chahar		27/29	2/1	
Mushfiquur b Dube		0/1	0/0	
Mahmudullah b Chahal		8/10	0/0	
Affif c & b Dube		0/1	0/0	
Aminul b Chahar		9/9	1/0	
Shafiuul c Rahul b Chahar		4/6	0/0	
Mustafizur c Iyer b Chahar		1/3	0/0	
Al-Amin not out		0/0	0/0	
Extras: (lb-3, w-2)		5		
Total: (All out in 19.2 overs)		144		
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-12, 3-110, 4-110, 5-126, 6-126, 7-130, 8-135, 9-144, 10-144.				
Bowl	O	M	R	W
Khaleel	4	0	27	0
Sundar	4	0	34	0
Chahar	3.2	0	7	6
Chahal	4	0	43	1
Dube	4	0	30	3

Result: India won by 30 runs and clinched the 3-match series 2-1.

Player-of-the-match: Deepak Chahar.

Player-of-the-series: Deepak Chahar.

Umpires: CK Nandan (IND), Anil Chaudhary (IND)

TV Umpire: Nitin Menon (IND)

Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)



BEST FIGURES IN T20IS						
PLAYER	FIGURES	FOR	AGAINST	VENUE	DATE	
Deepak Chahar	6/7	Ind	Ban	Nagpur	Nov 10,19	
Ajantha Mendis	6/8	SL	Zim	Hambantota	Sept 18,12	
Ajantha Mendis	6/16	SL	Aus	Pallekele	Aug 8,11	
Yuzvendra Chahal	6/25	Ind	Eng	Bengaluru	Feb 1,17	
Rangana Herath	5/3	SL	NZ	Chattogram	Mar 31,14	
Rashid Khan	5/3	Afg	Ire	Greater Noida	Mar 10,17	

India's Deepak Chahar almost singlehandedly decimated the Bangladesh innings with awe-inspiring figures of six wickets for seven runs, including a hatrick, during the third T20I between the sides at Nagpur on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

A worrying lack of Fizz

SPORTS REPORTER from Indore

From the New Zealand series in early 2019, through the World Cup and now the T20I series in India, ace Bangladesh paceman Mustafizur Rahman has struggled to find the means to operate at the level expected of him. Even at the World Cup in England, where he was the third-highest wicket-taker, his haul of 20 wickets could not hide the fact that his effectiveness had decreased.

In the third T20I against India in Nagpur on Sunday, Mustafizur conceded 42 in four overs without a wicket. In fact, he remained wicketless throughout the series. His good deliveries were few and far between and he often lacked the zip that was once his strongest suit. Captain Mahmudullah Riyad, however, defended him after the match.

"I feel that in every cricketer's life there comes a time when he can't deliver the way his team wants him to. We all know that he is a champion bowler. I do not believe there is a reason to reevaluate him when he



can't meet expectations and the needs of the team. The way he is working hard and talking to the coach makes me feel that only one game is needed for his self-confidence to return," Mahmudullah said.

Questions had been posed by reporters about whether talent is enough justification for holding onto one's place, especially after a series of bad performances. Mahmudullah reiterated that it was up to the team management to decide who plays.

The problem in the third T20I was that Mustafizur banging it in too short. While talking to a few reporters, India's former left-arm paceman Irfan Pathan pointed out two factors that could help Mustafizur revive his form:

the length and the non-bowling arm's movement.

"Personally, I believe that his length just needs to be fuller. If you look at his career, he mostly got his wickets with fuller deliveries, that is where his variation comes in handy. The other thing which is very, very important is that he needs to make sure that he doesn't fall away from his body. So, when his non-bowling-arm is going away from his body, especially when he is delivering the ball, he needs to work on that and make sure it doesn't follow; that it doesn't just go towards the batsman. If he can do that, he will have more control over his bowling. If he can do this, he will be fine," Irfan said.

Fizz had exerted himself to attain more pace but with his abilities he perhaps does not need to be express.

"It's not all about pace; it's about bowling in the right areas," Irfan remarked.

It is perhaps time for Mustafizur to take a good look at what has gone wrong, because his non-performance seems less of a blip and more of a trend.

Rubel's best dominates pacers' day

SPORTS REPORTER



Pacer Rubel Hossain registered his career-best bowling figures of seven for 51 to help Khulna Division bundle out Rajshahi Division for just 151 on the third day of the fifth-round National Cricket League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Tier-1 leaders Khulna ended the day with a three-run lead and with six wickets in hand.

After the majority of the first two days were washed out, Rajshahi resumed the third day on 36 without loss before Rubel rattled through the batting line up and registered his fourth five-wicket haul in first-class cricket.

Rubel utilised the overcast conditions brilliantly and removed both Rajshahi openers Avishek Mitra (9) and Mizanur Rahman (43) in his first spell.

Seamer Ziaur Rahman then dismissed Junaid Siddique for 23 while Abdur Razzak dismissed skipper Farhad Hossain (9) and Shakhir Hossain (0) as Rajshahi were struggling on 85 for five.

Since then it was all Rubel, who started off by dismissing Sabbir Rahman and Muktar Ali, before removing Forhad Reza just before lunch to complete his

SCORES IN BRIEF

RANGPUR V DHAKA
RANGPUR: First innings 234 and second innings 200 for 5 (Nasir 104 not out, Ariful 30, Naeem 26 not out; Arafat 2-36, Taibur 2-27)
DHAKA: First innings 222 all out (Mazid 52, Raqibul 67, Taibur 34, Nadif 29; Alauddin 2-44, Mukidul 5-37)
RAJSHAH V KHULNA
RAJSHAH: First innings 151 all out (Mizanur 43, Junaid 23, Sunzamul 48; Rubel 7-51, Razzak 2-60)
KHULNA: First innings 154 for 4 (Amit 59, Tushar 58; Mohor 2-32, Muktar 2-26)
DHAKA METROPOLIS V SYLHET
DHAKA METRO: First innings 311 for 8 declared and Second innings 245 for 4 (Azmir 80, Shamsur 37, Marshall 73 not out; Enamul 2-80)
SYLHET: First innings 351 all out (Imtiaz 33, Amite 125, Kapali 32, Galib 59, Rahatul 39, Enamul 20; Taskin 2-54, Shahidul 3-69, Sharifullah 3-86)

five-wicket haul. He then returned for the wickets of Sunzamul Islam and Sujon Hawlader to single-handedly crush the Rajshahi batting line-up.

In reply, Khulna were in a spot of bother as pacer Mohor Sheikh removed openers Robiul Islam (12) and Anamul Haque (7) before Amit Majumder and Tushar Imran struck fifties and steadied the ship. In the final hour of the day,



Khulna Division pacer Rubel Hossain scalped seven wickets for 51 runs against Rajshahi Division on the third day of the ongoing National Cricket League match between the sides in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

another seamer in Muktar Ali dismissed both Amit and Tushar as Khulna ended on 154 for four.

In the other Tier 1 game, Rangpur were in the driving seat against Dhaka Division courtesy of a five-wicket haul from pacer Mukidul Islam. That was followed by an unbeaten hundred from Nasir Hossain as they took a second-innings lead of 212 runs with five

wickets in hand.

Resuming on 195 for five, Dhaka lost their last five wickets for just 27 runs and were bundled out for 222, giving Rangpur a 12-run first-innings lead.

Mukidul, who had taken three wickets on the previous day, scalped two more to bring up the 19-year-old's maiden five-for in first-class cricket, ending with figures of five for 37 from 17 overs.

In reply, Rangpur lost three early wickets and were struggling on 42 for three before Nasir and Ariful Haque added 59 for the fourth wicket. But Ariful too departed after scoring 30, while Nasir held firm at the other end and went on to register his seventh first-class hundred.

He remained not out on 102 off 205 balls with 11 boundaries. Skipper Naeem Islam was not out on 26 at the other end. Left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny and Taibur Parvez bagged two wickets each for Dhaka.

In Tier 2, Dhaka Metropolis were leading Sylhet Division by 205 runs with six wickets in hand in their second innings, riding on fifties from Azmir Ahmed and skipper Marshall Ayub. Dhaka ended the day on 245 for four.

Resuming the day on 322 for six, Sylhet were all out for 351, having taken a first-innings lead of 40.

Dhaka rode on opener Azmir's 80 off 113 balls, with eight sixes and four boundaries, while skipper Marshall remained unbeaten on 73 off 137 balls.

Play in the other Tier 2 game between host Barishal and Chattogram was abandoned without a ball bowled for the third consecutive day due to a wet outfield.