



**Sylhet Thunder opener Andre Fletcher lets out a roar after scoring his maiden T20 hundred in the BBPL match against Khulna Tigers yesterday. The 32-year-old hit an unbeaten 57-ball 103, laced with five sixes and eleven fours to help Sylhet post an unassailable total of 232 for five.** PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'It takes two games to go from 360 to 0 degrees'

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

Despite being absent for the post-match press conferences after three straight wins, Khulna Tigers skipper Mushfiqur Rahim was keen to face the media after his team suffered their first defeat in the BBPL against Sylhet Thunder. The wicketkeeper-batsman also spoke about not being picked by any team in the India Premier League players' draft along with a few other topics, including the role of the media towards promising players in the BBPL so far. Excerpts of that post-match press conference at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday are below:

**Q:** What went wrong? Your team was flying high after the straight three wins.

**Mushfiqur Rahim [MR]:** Every team wants to maintain momentum but it's not easy to win every game in the T20 format. Still, I would have wanted us to put up a better fight after the way we played the first three games. 232 is always a tough ask to chase and it was always going to be difficult after we were unable to do well in the Powerplay. Hopefully we will return to winning ways the next game.

**Q:** Your coach James Foster termed you a 360-degree batsman after your 96-run knock against Chattogram Challengers. What's your take on that?

**MR:** It doesn't take two games to go from 360 to zero degrees. I really don't believe in such things and I don't think that I am that great a player. I think if you can bat freely it's easy to play strokes all across the ground. You can take risks on such wickets and I think the curator should get the credit for that as well.

**Q:** How disappointing it was for you to not be picked in the IPL draft?

**MR:** To be honest I didn't send my name initially because I knew they wouldn't pick me so I thought there was no point sending my name. But when they requested me to send my name, I thought there was a chance but it didn't happen. It's not in my hands. It is not a big thing for me because there is nothing greater than the pride of playing for Bangladesh and I never take this as a headache. There was hope but life moves on and as the BPL is ongoing, I would like to focus on that.

**Q:** Quite a few youngsters have caught the eyes in the BBPL so far. Is that a good sign for Bangladesh?

**MR:** Pitches always play a big role in T20s and for bowlers I would like to say that only a few matches have taken place so far, so they deserve more chances. Don't rate them so highly now and allow them to play freely as they are young, that's my request. Don't give them the extra pressure by saying there is World Cup coming and they can get a chance in the national team. Let them enjoy the game and let them think as a team member rather than an individual so that they can come to the national team as the full package.

It's not bad to come into the limelight because it helps them become responsible. On the other hand, if you talk about Mustafizur Rahman, he is not in his best form but if I was his captain, I would still give him the ball if we needed to defend four runs from the final over. Everyone is saying Mustafizur is gone, which is not right. Obviously, it's a good sign that the young bowlers are coming through and it will help us prepare backup options if someone gets injured. I think we should give some time to the youngsters and show proper respect to the more experienced players as well.

# Fletcher thunders Sylhet to win over Khulna

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

Andre Fletcher blazed the first hundred of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) to help Sylhet Thunder emerge from four straight defeats with a massive 80-run win over Khulna Tigers at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. Courtesy of Fletcher's unbeaten 57-ball 103, which featured five sixes and eleven fours, Sylhet posted a huge total of 232 for five. Mushfiqur Rahim's Khulna, who had been undefeated so far after making a flying start and winning their first three on the trot, were ultimately bowled out for 152.

After being sent in to bat, Sylhet lost opener Abdul Mazid in the first over, but Fletcher and his Caribbean teammate Johnson Charles produced a record 150-run partnership for the second wicket to help post the unassailable lead.

Charles played the role of the aggressor and kept the fielders busy fetching the ball from all over but his effort fell ten runs shy of a second

T20 century after he was dismissed for a 38-ball 90 that saw five sixes and eleven fours.

In reply, a shaky Khulna lost Afghan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz for a golden duck off the first ball before skipper Mushfiqur departed cheaply after making twelve.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SYLHET THUNDER:** 232-5 in 20 overs (Fletcher 103 not out, Charles 90; Frylinck 2-37)  
**KHULNA TIGERS:** 152 all out in 18.3 overs (Rossouw 52, Frylinck 44; Monir 2-31, Santokie 3-37)  
**Result:** Sylhet Thunder won by 80 runs.  
**Man-of-the-match:** Andre Fletcher.

Although in-form Rilee Rossouw got another half century in the BBPL with a 32-ball 52 and Robert Frylinck added 44 off 20, it never looked like being enough for Khulna to chase down the huge total.

Left-arm pacer Krishmar Santokie picked up three while Ebadot Hossain and Monir

Hossain took two wickets each for Sylhet.

The 32-year-old Fletcher complimented Johnson but the cricketer from Grenada was also ecstatic about registering his maiden hundred in the format.

"It is my first hundred [in T20] and I am happy. It was a case where I never had to take any chances because of the way Johnson was batting. We batted well in tandem and it is actually good to see that we can do our best and execute the team's plan as a batting unit," Fletcher said.

The right-hander, who played his last T20I for the West Indies in 2018 against Bangladesh, said he was hopeful of making a comeback to the national side and added that wanted to score more centuries in coming days.

"I would love to score as many hundreds as I can. Unfortunately, I did not [score any before]. I am grateful for it now and I hope that I can get as many more as possible. Unfortunately, I am not playing for the West Indies currently but hopefully I can continue to score as many runs as possible and get back into the team," he added.



**RANGPUR CRUISE TO FIRST WIN:** Mustafizur Rahman shoots a snide look at Lendl Simmons after dismissing the West Indies batsman in the first over. The left-arter bowled brilliantly before Liam Plunkett punished him in the last over to take Chattogram Challengers' to 163-7. After the exchange, Rangpur Ranger's Lewis Gregory took charge with a blazing unbeaten 76 off 37 to help his team win by six wickets in Chattogram yesterday. PHOTO: BCB

## 'Legend' Abid and Shan turn the tables

AFP, Karachi

Abid Ali and Shan Masood became only the third opening pair for Pakistan to hit centuries in the same innings as Pakistan turned the tables on Sri Lanka in the second and final Test in Karachi yesterday.

Abid, nicknamed "legend" in Pakistan's dressing room, hit 174 for his second hundred in as many Tests -- becoming the first Pakistani and ninth batsmen overall to score two centuries in his first two Tests.

When the third day's play ended Pakistan were in a strong position with 395-2, having an overall lead of 315 after conceding an 80-run lead in the first innings.

Skipper Azhar Ali was unbeaten on 57 -- his first fifty in 14 innings -- and Babar Azam on 22 not out.

It was a day of batsmen's dominance as Pakistan added 338 runs after resuming at 57-0 on a National stadium pitch which dried up to help batting.

Masood blasted 135 for his second century in 19th Test as the duo put on 278 for the opening wicket, just 20 short

of equalling the highest opening stand for Pakistan of 298.

Amir Sohail and Ijaz Ahmed had set that record against the West Indies at the same venue in 1997.

Masood batted for nearly five hours for his 135, which included three sixes and seven fours. Abid struck 21 boundaries and a six in his 398-minute batting.

Abid, 32, completed his century with a sweep off-spinner Lasith Embuldeniya for two to follow his 109 in the drawn first Test in Rawalpindi -- his debut. He had scored 112 in his first ODI, against Australia in Dubai earlier this year.

It was pacer Lahiru Kumara (2-88) who broke the opening stand when he had Masood caught hooking just five minutes from tea before he trapped Abid with the second new ball.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 191 and Second innings 395-2 in 103 overs (Shan 135, Abid 174, Azhar 57 not out; Kumara 2-88)  
**SRI LANKA:** 1st innings 271 (D. Chandimal 74, D. Perera 48; Shaheen Shah Afridi 5-77, Mohammad Abbas 4-55)

### HIGHLIGHTS

Pakistani opener Abid Ali joined the elite club of batsmen who have hit hundreds in consecutive matches in his first two Tests. That hundred in the first Test had made Abid the first batsman ever to score hundreds on both Test and one-day debuts.

Abid becomes the ninth batsmen and first Pakistani in the history of Test cricket to achieve the feat of consecutive hundreds in their first two Tests.

India's Mohammad Azharuddin scored three hundreds in his first three Tests after making his debut against England at home in December 1984.

William Ponsford, Doug Walters and Greg Blewett of Australia, Sourav Ganguly and Rohit Sharma of India, Alvin Kallicharran of the West Indies and Jimmy Neesham of New Zealand are the others who hit two consecutive centuries in their first two Tests.

## Akbar to lead U-19s at WC

SPORTS REPORTER

The BCB announced a 15-member squad yesterday for the upcoming ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup, scheduled to be held in South Africa from January 17, 2020.

The Akbar Ali-led team will leave on January 3 for Potchefstroom, where they will play two practice matches, scheduled for January 7 and 9.

Bangladesh, who were drawn in Group C with Pakistan, Scotland and Zimbabwe, will play warm-up matches

against Australia and New Zealand on January 13 and 15 before playing Zimbabwe in their opening game on January 18 at the Senwes Park.

Bangladesh go into the event on the back of some impressive performances.

The young Tigers agonisingly lost by five runs against their Indian counterparts in the final of the Under-19 Asia Cup in September before romping to the final unbeaten.

After that, they recorded a dominant 4-1 series win against hosts New Zealand in September-October. And although Bangladesh drew a two-match youth Test series at home to Sri

Lanka in November, they won the five-match youth ODI series 4-0 after the first match was abandoned.

Going into the World Cup in such form, Bangladesh will surely want to do better than their sixth-place finish in the previous edition in 2018.

**SQUAD:** Akbar Ali (Captain), Tawhid Hridoy (Vice Captain), Tanzid Hasan, Mohammad Parvez Hossain, Prantik Nawrose Nabil, Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Shahadat Hossain, Shamim Hossain, Mohammad Mirtunjoy Chowdhury, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Avishek Das, Shoriful Islam, Mohammad Shahin Alom, Rakibul Hasan, Hasan Morad.



SHAN... 135



ABID... 174