



Bangladesh players celebrate the dismissal of a Zimbabwe batsman during the first ODI at the Harare Sports Club yesterday. Thanks to Shakib Al Hasan's five-wicket haul, the Tigers won the match by 155 runs after having posted 276 for nine.



SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH

279 for six in 50 overs (Liton 102, Afif 45; Jongwe 3-51)

ZIMBABWE

121 for nine in 28.5 overs (Chakabva 54; Shakib 5-30)

RESULT:

Bangladesh won by 155 runs
MAN-OF-THE-MATCH: Liton Das

PHOTO: AFP

Liton's steady hands make the difference

SPORTS REPORTER



The situation required a steady hand and Liton Das answered the call, stepping out of his comfort zone and compromising his natural stroke-making ability for a calmer approach. The right-hander, making a comeback to the ODI side, struck a well-paced century at a crucial stage to help a struggling Bangladesh post a fighting total of 276 for nine in the first ODI against Zimbabwe yesterday.

Liton, who lost his place in the third and final ODI against Sri Lanka in the previous series following a string of poor performances over his last eight games, realised the importance of his wicket when the Tigers needed it most.

The 26-year-old was ultimately dismissed for a 114-ball 102, which included eight fours, but not before recording his fourth ODI ton, three of which have come against Zimbabwe.

After being asked to bat on a greenish Harare pitch that offered purchase to seamers, Bangladesh were struggling at 74 for four, having lost skipper Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Mithun and Mosaddek Hossain inside 14 overs.

Considering the demands of the situation, Liton stepped away from his usual batting style and adopted

a rather a different approach. It took him ten balls to open his account and he only struck his first boundary in the 15th over of the innings as partners kept departing.

He reached his fifty off 78 balls -- his slowest fifty in ODIs -- but managed to accelerate his strike rate as the innings progressed.

The visitors desperately needed a partnership to post a challenging total, which was when Liton found Mahmudullah and the pair added 93 for the fifth wicket, mostly relying on singles and doubles. Although Mahmudullah departed after scoring 33, Liton then paired with Afif Hossain and looked to take the visitors to a comfortable position.

The right-hander also stamped his mark with two delightful pull shots to Tendai Chatara to reach his century off 110 balls. He was dismissed in the 42nd over of the innings while going for a pull to Richard Ngarwa, which was top-edged to the fielder at the backward square-leg region.

Afif and Mehedi Hasan Miraz's late blows helped Bangladesh capitalise on the momentum created by Liton as Bangladesh added 48 off the last five overs.

For Liton, it was an opportunity to show his consistency after scoring 95 in the lone Test against Zimbabwe and the right-hander has had that when the Tigers needed it most.



Tigers stamp their authority

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh proved to be vastly superior to Zimbabwe as the hosts faced a comprehensive 155-run defeat after Liton

Das struck a brilliant century to help the Tigers in taking the first foot forward in the first of the three-match ODI series in Harare yesterday.

In reply to Bangladesh's 276-run target, Zimbabwe surrendered on 121 for nine with tailender Timysen Maruma unable to bat. Shakib Al Hasan picked up his third five-wicket haul in ODI cricket conceding 30 runs from 9.5 overs.

With this win, Bangladesh registered 10 points in the ICC Men's World Cup Super League and sit in second position behind England with 60 points.

Before the game, Shakib was level with Tigers' former captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as the highest wicket-taker for Bangladesh in ODIs with 269 wickets. And when Shakib dismissed skipper Brendan Taylor to pick up his first wicket of the game, the champion spinner had



surpassed Mashrafe and thus added another feather to the crown of his illustrious career.

Regis Chakabva's 54 was the highest score for the Chevrons, whereas skipper Taylor who played his 200th ODI scored 24 runs, as the hosts kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

Earlier, Bangladesh were in a spot of bother after being sent in to bat on seaming conditions. The visitors faced the first blow when skipper Tamim Iqbal departed for naught, having edged a Blessing Muzarabani delivery in the third over. Tamim now holds an unwanted record for the most number of ducks for the Tigers in ODI (19

and across all formats (34) as well.

Bangladesh continued to struggle as Shakib carried his shaky form with the bat, and despite starting off the innings with a gorgeous straight drive, he was dismissed for 19.

Then Mohammad Mithun, coming in at number four in place of Mushfiqur Rahim also failed to utilise the opportunity and departed for 19 as well.

The visitors were in deep trouble on 74 for four before Liton paired up with Mahmudullah Riyad to add 93 runs for the fifth wicket. Although Mahmudullah departed for 33, Liton went on and slowly accelerated his innings and paired with Afif Hossain as Bangladesh were eyeing to post a big total.

Liton was eventually dismissed, after reaching his fourth hundred, for 102 off 114 balls. However, the wicket-keeper batsman had hurt his wrist while batting and that meant Nurul Hasan had to feature as the substitute wicket-keeper.

Afif then played a cameo of 45 runs off 35 balls while Mehedi Hasan Miraz scored 26 off 25 balls as Bangladesh added 48 runs in the last five overs of the innings.



Ninety-seven and still in the game

REUTERS, Kharkiv

For 97-year-old Leonid Stanislavskyi, a Ukrainian who has been playing amateur tennis for over half a century, it is next to impossible to find a worthy adversary in his age group.

That has not stopped him from participating in the world and European championships for seniors and outplaying younger competitors, although he is not moving around the court as fast as he used to.

Stanislavskyi was 30 when his colleague, then a Soviet champion in gymnastics, introduced him to tennis. Since then, he has trained three times a week in his hometown of Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine.

"It is an elegant type of sport. It is good physical exercise. It is a beautiful game. And there is one more thing about tennis -- you can play no matter what age you are," he told Reuters.

A Guinness World Record holder as the world's oldest tennis player, Stanislavskyi has been training hard ahead of the 2021 Super-Seniors World Championship due to be held in October in Mallorca, Spain.

For the first time, the International Tennis Federation has introduced a 90-and-over age group in the 2021 tournament after Stanislavskyi sent a written request to the federation asking for the new category to be added.

"When I was 95 years old, I felt much better than now," said Stanislavskyi, who moves at his own pace trying to return every shot. "It is even hard to walk when you are 97 years old."

"People under 70 say: 'Thank goodness I lived another year.' People between 70 and 90 say: 'Thank goodness I lived another month.' I count every day and say: 'Thank God I lived another day.'"

Stanislavskyi said the secret to his longevity was a mixture of good genes and regular sport.

He starts each morning with gymnastics and a series of push-ups and pull-ups. Besides tennis, Stanislavskyi is a passionate fan of swimming and skiing and dreams of making a parachute jump.

He says his ultimate goal is to live to 100 years old and take on Roger Federer.

'All 60 have ability to win medals'

SPORTS REPORTER



Since the first Olympic appearance in 1984, Bangladesh, one of most populous countries in the world, never won an Olympic medal in

nine appearances of the world's most showcased event. Up until the 2016 Rio Olympics, the Olympics has always been a matter of token participation for Bangladesh. However this time, Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) sees its participation in Tokyo Olympics as the journey with a new dream, the foundation of which has been laid by the international performances of shooter Abdullah Hel Baki and archers Ruman Sana and Diya Siddique. On the eve of their departure for Japan yesterday evening, Baki talked to The Daily Star about his preparation, performance and target for the Tokyo Olympics.

Baki, who started his shooting career in 2001 through air rifle

before grabbing the match rifle in 2008, have never won an individual 10m Air Rifle event's gold medal in any international tournaments, although he won silver medal thrice -- two in the Commonwealth Games and one in the South Asian Games and became ninth in the World Cup once. Even though the lad from Gazipur could not ideally prepare for Tokyo Olympics following the coronavirus pandemic, the 31-year-old shooter will still be in focus in Tokyo as far as the potential first breakthrough for his nation is concerned.

"Olympics is the biggest stage compared to any competition because all 60 shooters, of whom the first 30 shooters qualified directly and the rest 30 have come depending on the results of different tournaments, are special and have the ability to win medals, I believe," said Baki yesterday.

Baki has not promised anything regarding breaking the disappointment of Bangladesh in Olympics but he is more focused

on transforming his performance of the practice sessions into the main competition in Tokyo.

"As a sportsman, everyone has a target to play the Olympics. Last two years, there was almost no practice and competitions including some Olympics qualifying events due to the pandemic. However, I tried



my best under local coach Golam Safuddin Shiplu."

"Generally, I am scoring 626 to 627 and sometimes it goes beyond 630. If I can replicate these scores in Tokyo, I hope I can qualify for the eight-man final round," Baki expressed his optimism.

"And the final is anyone's game. I qualified for the final

in the Bangladesh Games as a number one but I finished eighth. Whereas I finished second in the Commonwealth Games while moving to the final as the fifth shooter. So, the final is different."

The former BKSP shooter's nervousness also played a key role in downing his performances as he often broke down mentally in the international tournaments by scoring much lower than what he had scored in practice sessions.

Baki, however, claimed he improved on this issue a bit after getting a job in Bangladesh Navy which has been providing him with all expenditures to take part in all international tournaments except for Olympics, Asian and South Asian Games.

"The game pressure is a really different thing. It doesn't matter whether I have a permanent job or enough financial support. I think I have developed myself mentally in this aspect. And now I am in more control of myself unlike before," said Baki, who also believes he can achieve anything on the given day.

T20 WORLD CUP ROUND 1

BANGLADESH POOLED with Scotland, PNG, Oman

AGENCIES

Bangladesh were placed in Group B alongside Scotland, Papua New Guinea and Oman Round 1 while hosts India were placed in the same group as arch-rivals Pakistan in the Super 12 stage of the Twenty20 World Cup to be held in the United Arab Emirates and Oman later this year.

The Tigers will have to either win the group or at least manage to be runners-up in order to make it through the first round before they can be slotted with the top eight teams in the Super 12 stage.

The groups, selected on the basis of team rankings as of 20 March 2021, see defending champions the West Indies pooled along with former champions England, Australia and South Africa in Group 1 of the Super 12s, with two qualifiers from Round

ROUND 1
Group A: Sri Lanka, Ireland, the Netherlands, Namibia
Group B: Bangladesh, Scotland, Papua New Guinea, Oman

SUPER 12s
Group 1: England, Australia, South Africa, West Indies, A1, B2
Group 2: India, Pakistan, New Zealand, Afghanistan, A2, B1.

1 joining them.

India and Pakistan -- the bitter neighbours, who play each other only in International Cricket Council (ICC) events, are joined in Group 2 by reigning world test champions New Zealand, Afghanistan and two qualifiers.

The Super 12 stage of the tournament will be played between October 17 and November 14.

"There are some great match ups offered by the groups and it starts to bring the event to life for our fans as our first multi-team event since the onset of the global pandemic draws closer," ICC acting chief executive Geoff Allardice said in a statement.

The ICC was yet to announce the tournament fixtures with matches scheduled in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Oman.

The tournament was moved out of India last month because of the COVID-19 situation in the country and related travel restrictions.

"It is good to get Oman in the frame of world cricket with the hosting of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," Indian board president Sourav Ganguly said.

"It will help a lot of young players take an interest in the game. We know it will be a world class event in this part of the world."



Ronaldo tells Juve he's staying

AGENCIES

According to La Gazzetta dello Sport, Cristiano Ronaldo has confirmed he will stay at Juventus while his agent Jorge Mendes is pushing for a one-year contract extension.

Ronaldo's contract at the Allianz Stadium expires in June 2022 and his future in Turin appeared to be in doubt after the end of 2020-21.

According to La Gazzetta dello Sport, the star has informed his club that he will return to Continassa on July 25 to begin pre-season. Ronaldo is currently on holiday after EURO 2020.