



(L) Bangladesh opener Naim Sheikh falls to an ill-advised stroke for 30 as Bangladesh scored 132 in their innings before the bowlers, led by Nasum Ahmed (R), skittled out Australia for 107 to register their first T20I victory over the visitors.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A tough day at the office for batsmen

SPORTS REPORTER

One can hardly question the intent from the Bangladeshi batters which remained positive right from the start after Australian skipper Matthew Wade won the toss and elected to bat in the first

Talking about intelligence, Soumya Sarkar could hardly show any. The left-hander looked to make some room going away from the ball for a cut to pacer Josh Hazlewood and eventually chopped it onto the stumps on two.

Naim Sheikh on the other end looked solid and struck two

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH:

131 for seven in 20 overs (Shakib 36, Naim 30, Afif 23, Mahmudullah 20; Hazlewood 3-24, Starc 2-33)

AUSTRALIA:

108 all out in 20 overs (Marsh 45,

Starc 14; Nasum 4-19, Mustafizur 2-16, Shoriful 2-19)

RESULT:

Bangladesh won by 23 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Nasum Ahmed



Shoaib Ali Bukhari, popularly known as Tiger Shoaib, had to get to the top of a building adjacent to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur to enjoy the opener of the first-ever bilateral T20I series between Bangladesh and Australia yesterday. The enthusiastic fan, who paints his body like a tiger and has been attending most of Bangladesh's matches from the gallery over the years, had to stay content with waving the Bangladesh flag from afar as strict health protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic restricts spectators from entering the stadium premises.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

higher side with some expansive strokes but the Tigers were kept on a tight leash as the Aussies had the dot balls in their favour.

Mahmudullah did attempt to notch up a gear but the pressure kept mounting on him before he eventually departed on a run-a-ball 20 to become Hazlewood's second victim.

The Tigers were frustrated where all the batters looked to play the big shots and ignored taking singles and doubles and in the process, they had lost wickets at crucial stages.

When Nurul Hasan was dismissed in the 15th over, Bangladesh had already given away 42 dot balls out of ninety legal deliveries. The hosts had an uphill task of posting a big total from then on.

Top-scorer Shakib had to play the big shots since Bangladesh was struggling against the Aussie bowlers and was eventually dismissed on 36 off 33 balls to become Hazlewood's third victim.

Bangladesh did manage to score 27 runs in the final three overs and eventually posted a modest 131 for 7, courtesy of Afif Hossain's 24. Starc showed his class to pick up two wickets in the end and became the first Australian to pick 50 wickets in the shortest format.

For Bangladesh, it was probably a reality check, especially for the batters, who might have realised the magnitude of the quality of this opponent they rarely get to encounter.

Top orders to be tested as England face India

APP, LONDON



Batsmen on both sides are set to face a stiff examination when an England team without Ben Stokes face India in the first Test in Nottingham starting on Wednesday.

Although England captain Joe Root boasts an impressive Test average of 48.68, the next best in his side belongs to opener Rory Burns, with 33.23. Zak Crawley in particular has seen his Test returns decline dramatically since making a brilliant 267 against Pakistan, with a mere 123 runs in 12 subsequent innings.

Following England's 1-0 series loss to New Zealand in June -- their first home campaign reverse in seven years -- former captain Alastair Cook said the current top order "can't handle" the pressure of Test cricket.

There are worries too about India's batsmen ahead of a five-match campaign that comes 50 years after the tourists' first series win in England.

India captain and star batsman Virat Kohli has not scored a Test hundred in nearly two years, while opener Mayank Agarwal was ruled out of the first Test with suspected concussion after being hit on the head batting in the nets on Monday.

Cheteshwar Pujara, meanwhile, averages under 30 in England. And Ajinkya Rahane, since kick-starting India's stunning revival during their eventual series win in Australia last year with 112 in Melbourne, has passed fifty just once in 13

subsequent Test innings.

Just as India prepared pitches favouring their spinners during a 3-1 win at home to England earlier this year, it would be no surprise were a green surface designed to maximise the skills of veteran England new-ball duo Stuart Broad -- playing on his Nottinghamshire home ground -- and James Anderson to be on show this week.

Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, has an especially brilliant Test record at Trent Bridge, with 64 wickets in 10 matches at under 20 apiece.

India, however, also have an impressive seam attack featuring the likes of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma and Mohammad Siraj.

"We expect England to give us such wickets, this is their home conditions," said vice-captain Rahane, with India having been in England for several weeks since a World Test Championship final loss to New Zealand. "We are not too worried about what wickets they are giving us. We are ready."

The series may be decided by which team copes best with the Covid restriction surrounding players on both sides. It was announced on Friday that key all-rounder Stokes was taking an "indefinite break from all cricket" to prioritise his mental health.

England and India, two of world cricket's biggest drawcards, have made little concession to the coronavirus by continuing to pursue packed schedules that can be especially onerous for multi-format stars such as Stokes.



AFP, Tokyo



Norway's Karsten Warholm shattered the world record to claim gold in an epic 400m hurdles at the Olympics on Tuesday. One of the most eagerly anticipated events of the Olympic track and field programme, the 400m hurdles lived up to its billing as world champion Warholm produced a jaw-dropping performance in fierce midday sun at Tokyo's Olympic Stadium.

The 25-year-old stormed over the line in an incredible 45.94 seconds, slicing a massive 0.8sec off his own

world mark of 46.70 set in Oslo last month.

Long-time USA rival Rai Benjamin pushed Warholm hard in the home straight and took silver in another blistering time of 46.17sec, the second fastest in history.

Brazil's Alison dos Santos narrowly missed ducking inside the old world record, clocking 46.72sec to take bronze.

Warholm roared in apparent disbelief as he spotted his winning time, dropping to his knees and ripping open his running vest. "I always say that the perfect race doesn't exist, but this is the closest I've come to a perfect race," Warholm said.

Spain to meet Brazil in final

REUTERS, Saitama



Marco Asensio struck in an extra-time winner as Spain ended Japan's hopes of Olympic gold in men's football with a 1-0 (aet) victory, setting up a clash with Brazil in Saturday's final.

Defending champions Brazil also had to struggle to make the final, beating Mexico 4-1 on penalties after the game ended goalless after extra-time.

Japan had matched Spain throughout the game, playing with creativity and invention going forward and tenacity without the ball and they were five minutes away from taking the match to a penalty shootout.

After a cagey first half, Spain thought they had a great chance to go in front when referee Kevin Ortega of Peru pointed to the penalty spot after Mikel Merino went down under challenge from Maya Yoshida. But the VAR ordered Ortega to go to the pitchside monitor and he saw the clear images that Yoshida had made a perfectly fair and well-timed challenge.

That overturned penalty sparked both sides into life and it was a lively second half with openings at both ends. Japan keeper Kosei Tani did well to race out quickly and smother Rafa Mir as the ball broke to him close to goal while at the other end Takefusa



Kubo's blast at the near post was parried by Unai Simon. Both teams were unable to make the most of half-chances, however, and the game followed a similar pattern into extra-time before Real Madrid forward Asensio picked the ball up in the inside right channel, glanced up and curled the ball into the far corner.

Spain are looking to repeat their gold medal success from the Barcelona Games in 1992 but will have to beat the Rio winners from five years ago.

"They are a quality side, we know that and we know that if we are going to win the gold medal we are going to have to play the best teams here," said Spain defender Eric Garcia.



Jamaican Elaine Thompson-Herah completed a second successive sprint double as she was in total control of the 200m final, roaring home in a 21.53 seconds. [Inset] World record holder Mondo Duplantis of Sweden won men's pole vault gold medal after clearing a height of 6.02 metres on his first effort.

PHOTO: REUTERS

High-scoring thriller in BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Chattogram Abahani survived a late scare against Uttar Baridhara Club before handing them a 4-3 defeat in a thrilling encounter of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

The other match at Bangabandhu National Stadium saw Rahmatganj MFS repeat their first-leg performance to beat Brothers Union 2-0, thanks to Christ Remi and Felix Chidi who struck for Rahmatganj after a goalless first half.

Chattogram Abahani carried the momentum from their previous match -- a win over leaders Bashundhara Kings -- into the match and left the ground on a high, courtesy of a brilliant performance by Brazilian Nixon Gulytherme.

Nixon first cancelled out Baridhara's 10-minute lead given by Evgeniy Kochnev with a header in the 23rd minute before giving the port city side a lead in the 43rd minute with a soft touch from Monaem Khan Raju's assist.

Further ahead, he had set up Nigerian Chinedew Mathew for the third goal in the 50th minute while Baridhara defender Saidoston Fazilov struck his own net while attempting to clear Rakib Hossain's cut-back in the 59th minute.

Later, Suman Reza and substitute Maruf Ahmed struck in the 67th and 80th minute respectively but eventually failed to find the equaliser. Overall, 10 victories took Chattogram Abahani to the fourth position of the 13-team table while Rahmatganj, Baridhara and Brothers Union resided at the ninth, 10th and 12th positions, respectively.

Previously, BPL had resumed at two separate venues after a 14-day break following the Eid-ul-Adha and Lockdown.

OLYMPICS MEDALS TABLE (TOP FIVE)

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
CHINA	32	21	16	69
USA	24	28	21	73
JAPAN	19	6	11	36
AUSTRALIA	14	4	15	33
ROC	13	21	18	52