

SPORT



Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad pumps his fist in ecstasy following his side's 10-run victory against Australia in the third T20 international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Having already won the first two matches of the five-match series, the close win helped the Tigers clinch the series 3-0 – their first ever series victory in any format over the Aussies. (Inset) Left-arm pacer Shoriful Islam struck the decisive blow during the 18th over of Australia's chase with the dismissal of in-form batsman Mitchell Marsh.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Always felt we were a balanced side'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh required something extraordinary to earn a victory in the third T20I against Australia in defence of a small 127-run total and the Tigers did it in style to re-write history at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

It was the lowest total in the shortest format of the game that Bangladesh have ever successfully defended, coming courtesy of some disciplined bowling that restricted the Aussies to 117 for four and sealed a memorable 10-run win.

For Australia, it was a continuation of a poor run in T20Is, the series defeat against Bangladesh their fifth consecutive series loss in the game's shortest format.

After bringing down the equation to 22 required off the final two overs, Mustafizur Rahman conjured a special performance. The left-arm seamer gave away just one run in the 19th over, changing the course of the game.

Off-spinner Mahedi Hasan held his nerve despite Alex Carey smashing him for six off the first

ball of the final over, but things went his way thereafter and he conceded just five further runs.

Mustafizur ended with the most economical figures of his career, conceding just nine runs from four overs and picking up a wicket. It was also the most economical bowling performance by a Bangladeshi in T20Is over the past seven years.

Mahmudullah scored a vital fifty to help the Tigers post a winning total and the Bangladesh skipper was rewarded with a man of the match award.

The 35-year-old informed that he had a chat with the team after the series in Zimbabwe, urging the players to play with big hearts and to express themselves and that it had worked out.

"We had a chat in Zimbabwe after we finished the T20Is about needing to step up. We felt we were a very good side, but the rankings did not reflect that. We always felt we were a very balanced side. We just needed to play with big hearts and balanced minds while executing our skills,"



Australia pacer Nathan Ellis (C) is the toast of his teammates following the debutant's hat-trick against Bangladesh in the third T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh:

127 for nine in 20 overs (Mahmudullah 52, Shakib 26, Afif 19; Ellis 3-34, Hazlewood 2-16, Zampa 2-24)

Australia:

117 for four in 20 overs (Marsh 51, McDermott 35, Carey 20 not out; Mustafizur 0-9, Shoriful 2-29, Nasum 1-19)

Result: Bangladesh win by 10 runs and lead the series 3-0

Player-of-the-match: Mahmudullah

Mahmudullah said during the post-match presentation yesterday.

The Tigers T20I skipper waxed lyrical about his bowling unit and added that he wanted Shakib Al Hasan to have a chat with the team before going out to defend the low total.

"I think the boys stood up at important times. The way they fought tonight was incredible. But (our) bowlers did the job really well, lot of cutters and slower balls. When we were about to go back on the field, I wanted Shakib to have a chat with the team. He said that no matter what happened, we would have to take an early wicket and get the pressure up. Mustafizur did a brilliant job once again, he was outstanding tonight," he said.



IT'S OVER

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona's negotiations with Lionel Messi are over and the striker is considering other offers, the club's president Joan Laporta said on Friday.

Laporta said in a press conference he was not prepared "to put the club at risk" by renewing Messi's contract, with Barca facing huge financial problems ahead of the start of La Liga.

"Yesterday we realised it was over. I had the last conversation with Leo's father," said Laporta.

"I do not want to give false hope. The player has other offers and there is a time limit because La Liga starts soon and he needs time to assess his other options."

Messi reached an agreement with Barcelona to sign a reported five-year contract but with the trade-off that he would earn 50 per cent less per year.

But La Liga's financial fair play rules, which are expected to reduce Barca's salary limit to less than 200 million euros this season, led Laporta to conclude they were unable to complete the deal.

"We could not accommodate Messi's contract," said Laporta, who was re-elected

MESSI'S BARCELONA CAREER IN NUMBERS

778 GAMES

672 GOALS

305 ASSISTS

10 LA LIGA

7 COPA DEL REY

7 SUPERCOPA DE ESPANA

4 UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

3 UEFA SUPER CUP

3 CLUB WORLD CUP

6 BALLON D'OR

6 EUROPEAN GOLDEN SHOE

6 LA LIGA BEST PLAYER

as club president in March.

"The situation we have inherited is abominable and the sports salary bill represents 110 per cent of the club's income. We have no margin for salaries."

"La Liga's rules set limitations and we have no margin. We knew the situation since we arrived but the numbers we have seen are even worse than we thought."

Laporta said Barca could have registered Messi by agreeing to the deal but insisted it was a risk he was not prepared to take.

"We were not prepared to put the club at risk in this way," said Laporta. "Barça had to be in favour of a contract that would mortgage our television rights for half a century."

"I am not willing to mortgage the club for anyone. We have an institution that is above everyone, even the best player in the world."

Laporta said he felt "sadness and disappointment" but that he "did everything possible" to keep Messi, who joined Barcelona aged 13 and went on to score 672 goals in 778 appearances for the club.

"There is a before and after Leo," Laporta said. "Leo Messi has been an icon and has left some historic moments. We have eternal gratitude to him."

Right now it is not in our thoughts (to sign Messi), absolutely not. It looked like it finished well in terms of (Messi) continuing with Barcelona. In the end it was a surprise for everyone, me included of course, but I think Laporta was clear today the reason why.

PEP GUARDIOLA
MANCHESTER CITY MANAGER

We are focused on the club, which is working on the transfer window in a discreet way, and working to improve the team in whichever way possible to achieve the targets we set at the start of the season.

MAURICIO POCHETTINO
PSG MANAGER

OLYMPICS MEDALS TABLE (TOP FIVE)

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
China	36	26	17	79
USA	31	36	31	98
Japan	24	11	16	51
G. Britain	18	20	20	58
ROC	17	23	22	62



Shaunae Miller-Uibo of the Bahamas celebrates winning gold in women's 400 metres at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo yesterday. She clocked 48.36 seconds to retain her Olympic title as American Allyson Felix took bronze for a record 10th Olympic medal.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Kenya's Faith Kipyegon retained her title in women's 1,500 metres as she denied Dutchwoman Sifan Hassan her dream of winning an unprecedented Olympic treble. The Kenyan won in an Olympic record time of 3:53.11.

PHOTO: REUTERS

What to WATCH

BTV, T SPORTS & GTV
Bangladesh vs Australia
Fourth T20I
Live from 6:00 pm

BTV
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 7:15 am, 8:25 am & 11:00 am

TEN 1, TEN 2, TEN 3 & SONY SIX
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 8:00 pm & 4:00 am (Sunday)

SONY SIX & TEN 3
India vs England
First Test (Day 4)
Live from 4:00 pm

T SPORTS
THE HUNDRED
Men's
Southern vs Northern
Live from 12:00 am (Sunday)



Lionel Messi was recently pictured on a social media post alongside Neymar, Leandro Paredes, Angel di Maria and Marco Verratti – all of Paris Saint-Germain, the most likely destination for the former Barcelona star.

PHOTO: TWITTER