

SPORT

What to
WATCH

SONY SIX

England vs India
Fourth Test (Day 5)
Live from 4:00 pm
STAR SPORTS

SELECT 1 & 2

US Open
Live from 9:00 pm &
3:30 am
(Tuesday)Mahmudullah's trials
far from complete

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudullah Riyad played his 100th T20I for the Tigers yesterday and, in the time since his debut against Kenya in Nairobi in 2007, Bangladesh's T20I captain has come leap and bounds and established himself as a vital member in the game's shortest format. The third T20I against New Zealand was Riyad's 350th match overall and although he could not mark the occasion with a victory, his task of leading the Tigers through challenges remains the same despite their recent spate of T20 successes.

Only Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim and Tamim Iqbal have more matches under their belt across all formats for Bangladesh, but no one has been as prevalent in the shortest format as Riyad, who featured in 100 of the Tigers' last 109 T20Is.

Despite being one of the team's stalwarts in all formats with the bat, his contribution has often remained inconspicuous due to the role he has had to play. Usually coming in to bat at number six, his position in the batting order does not match his calibre. It has often been a sacrificial role or one that is geared towards disaster management but it is also while playing such roles that Riyad was able to shine, chiefly due to his ability to take on pressure.

Being in the Tigers' T20 lineup for so long and being under the constant duress of managing batting collapses and accelerating late in the innings also honed his ability to think of the team's approach and the greater good. Riyad's journey to becoming Bangladesh's most successful T20I captain – which he secured by winning 12 out of 25 matches as captain at a 48 per cent success rate – is not a small one and becomes more significant given the Tigers' record in T20 cricket.

His T20 calibre was on full show in the Nidahas Trophy in Sri Lanka back in 2018. It all went haywire in the final group match at

Colombo that evening as the Tigers ousted hosts Sri Lanka and made it into the final thanks to Riyad's unbeaten 18-ball 43. Having captained the Tigers in the tournament till that game, Riyad relinquished the role to Shakib for that match. But on the field, when chaos took over and Shakib started calling his players back because he felt wronged by an umpiring decision, Riyad held firm and calmed others. He made them believe that something could be done and his flicked six off Isuru Udana off the penultimate delivery to win the game went down as one of Bangladesh cricket's great moments.

MOST MATCHES IN T20I CAREER

PLAYER	MAT	RUNS	AVE	WKTS	AVE
Shoaib Malik (PAK)	116	2335	31.13	28	23.53
Mohammad Hafeez (PAK)	113	2429	26.40	60	22.26
Rohit Sharma (IND)	111	2864	32.54	1	113.00
Eoin Morgan (ENG)	107	2360	28.78	-	-
Kevin O'Brien (IRE)	104	1822	20.94	58	19.55
Martin Gupthill (NZ)	102	2939	32.29	-	-
Ross Taylor (NZ)	102	1909	26.15	-	-
Mahmudullah (BAN)	100	1705	23.68	33	27.90

However, his task of making the Tigers more resilient is not at an end as he leads them to the upcoming T20 World Cup. The third T20I at Mirpur yesterday saw the Kiwis come back into the series with a thumping 52-run victory that reminded the Tigers of old wounds.

A below-strength New Zealand showed continuous improvement since arriving here but Bangladesh's reply with the bat was calamitous yesterday. When New Zealand showed more application, the Tigers did not come up with the answers even on friendly conditions. If the team is to continue in the same vein of success it found only recently, for Riyad, the task remains the same: show the Tigers how not to break down when faced with even slightly challenging scenarios.

'It was a good day'

SPORTS REPORTER



New Zealand managed to bounce back to keep their hopes alive in the five-match T20I series as they handed Bangladesh a thumping 52-run defeat in the third T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Attempting to chase 129, Bangladesh were bundled out for 76 – their joint second-lowest T20I total, and the lowest at home as well – while the Black Caps on the other hand, successfully defended their third-lowest total in the shortest format.

Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel has been the chief destroyer for the Black Caps as he ended up picking four wickets conceding 16 from his four overs. "Quite happy, tried to control out there and the surface was something for the spinners. Obviously, I tried to read the batsmen and knew that they'd look to come hard against me. It was a good day overall and every one of us did their job well," said Patel.

Bangladesh's approach remained questionable right from the start despite the fact that the Tigers were flying on 23 inside three overs when Liton Das, after striking two boundaries, went for one too many in the same over from Cole McConchie and departed after scoring 15.

Since then it all spiralled downhill for Bangladesh as they kept losing wickets in



SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND

128 for 5 in 20 overs (Allen 15, Ravindra 20, Young 20, Nicholls 36 not out, Blundell 30 not out, extras 2; Mahedi 1-27, Mustafizur 1-29, Saifuddin 2-28, Mahmudullah 1-10)

BANGLADESH

76 all out in 19.4 overs (Naim 13, Liton 15, Mushfiqur 20 not out, extras 3; Patel 4-16, McConchie 3-15)

RESULT: New Zealand won by 52 runs
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH: Ajaz Patel

clusters and were never able to get back in contention. Mahedi Hasan, promoted to number three, departed on one while Shakib Al Hasan, while going for a big heave in the same over, became Ajaz Patel's second victim and headed back to pavilion without troubling the score.

According to Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo, the approach from the Tigers' batsmen was to stay ahead of the asking run-rate and the target of 129 was within their reach where he also added that they expected the Mirpur surface to get better

as the innings progressed but things didn't go Bangladesh's way. "The boys have been fantastic, playing a lot of cricket in recent times, and I can't alter after the way things went over the last one-two months. We know we had a bad day today but we can't think about it too much and can only focus on our next game," he added.

Before the series started, Domingo informed that Mushfiqur Rahim and Nurul Hasan will split the wicket-keeping duties for the first four games. However, it was Nurul who was seen behind the stumps in yesterday's game too and according to Domingo, Mushfiqur informed that he does not want to keep wickets anymore in T20Is.

"There has been a change. Initially, after speaking to Mushy (Mushfiqur Rahim) he was going to keep after the second game but he told me that he doesn't want to keep wickets in T20 anymore. So we've got to move on and I don't think Mushfiq's desire to keep is great in this format anymore. So we have to focus on Sohan, and possibly Liton, while going forward in this competition," added Domingo.

BOOTERS LOSE 2-0
against Palestine

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh made a losing start to the Three Nations Cup, suffering a 2-0 defeat to Palestine at the Dolen Omurzakov Stadium in Kyrgyzstan yesterday.

Forward Layth Kharoub gave Palestine a 33rd-minute lead before defender Yaser Hamd wrapped up the win in the second half, repeating the 2-0 scoreline that Bangladesh were on the end of in the last two meetings between the sides in Bangladesh as well.

Jamie Day's team improved in terms of holding the ball and interchanging passes compared to their efforts in World Cup qualifying matches, but they could hardly penetrate and were forced to play long balls to forwards Matin Mia and Saad Uddin, who failed to make inroads against the physically imposing Palestinians.

Palestine, ranked 102nd in the world, dominated as expected, but Day's five-man backline – marshalled by centre-backs Tapu Barman, Tariq Raihan Kazi and Rezaul Karim flanked by left-wing-back Yeasin Arafat and right-wing-back Bishwanath Ghosh – dealt well until a long ball behind the backline and a well-judged cross caused havoc twice.

Although Day tried to adopt a new playing system ahead of October's SAFF Championship, his wing-backs were pinned

back by a team that enjoyed the tactical and technical superiority throughout.

Forward Mahmoud Eid came close to breaking the deadlock within the first 20 minutes but his powerful drives went inches wide, much to the relief of goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Soheli, who later made some brilliant saves between after one error of judgement.

In the 33rd minute, Mahmoud received a long ball on the edge of the box and shrugged off Rezaul before chipping the ball over a hesitant Soheli to Layth Kharoub, who simply tapped home for the lead. Soheli then made amends, standing tall to thwart two close-range efforts from Mahmoud and Fady Zeidan in the 39th and 42nd minutes respectively.

In the 44th minute, Rakib ran down the left flank and whipped in a cross in front of the Palestine goal, but lone striker Matin arrived too late to connect.

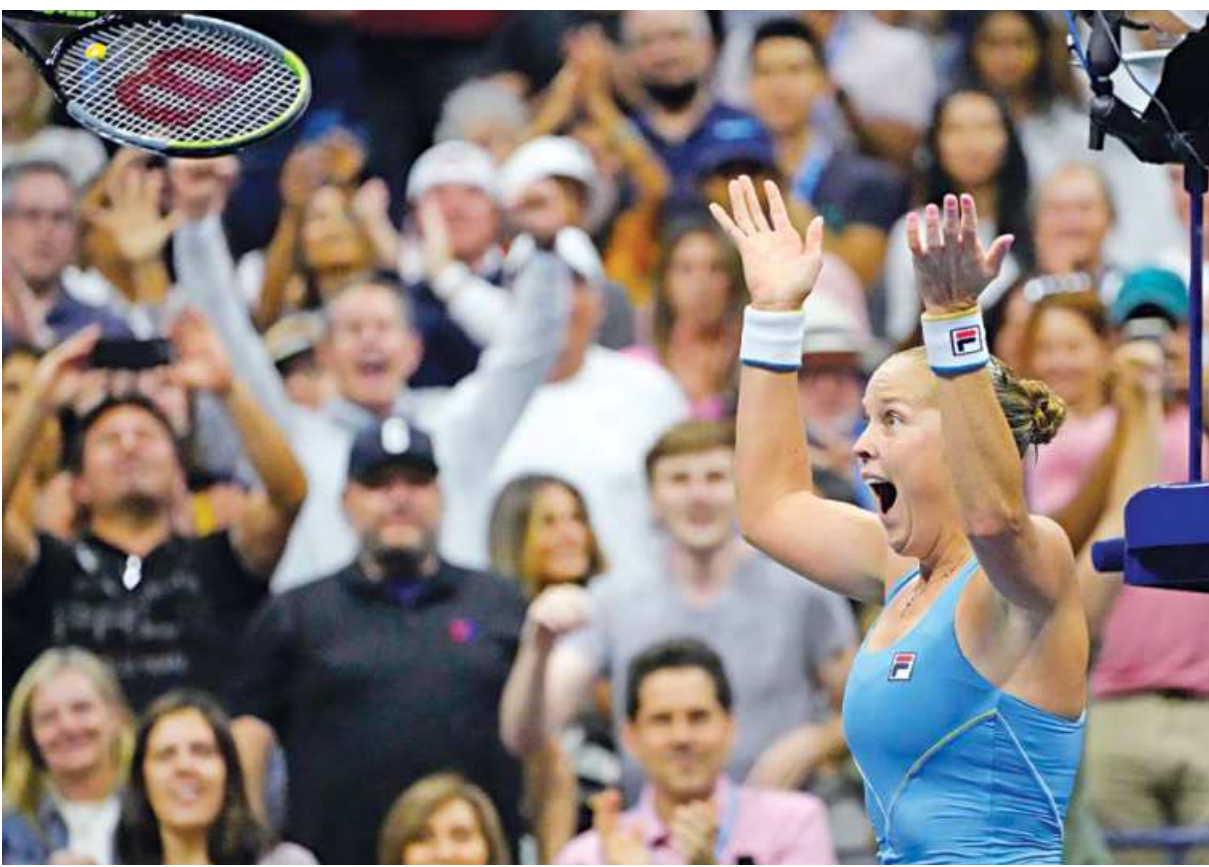
Palestine exerted tremendous pressure at the start of the second half and doubled the lead two minutes in when Hamd nodded home a well-judged cross from Mahmoud at near post.

Day made six substitutions, including the introduction of Canada-based midfielder Rahbar Wahed Khan, who showed good control when he came on for the last 10 minutes. Coupled with his timely long balls to the left flank, Rahbar may have given Day some food for thought.



India's number eight batsman Shardul Thakur smashes one during his 60-run knock on the penultimate day of the fourth Test against England yesterday. Shardul's effort helped India post 466 in their second innings, setting a target of 368 for the home side. England ended the day on 77 for no loss, with Haseeb Hameed batting on 43 and Rory Burns on 31.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Nobody beats Shelby Rogers
six times in a row

REUTERS, New York



American Shelby Rogers was possibly searching for some inspiration when she watched a 41-year-old video of compatriot Vitas Gerulaitis before her third round match against world number one Ash Barty on Saturday.

"And let that be a lesson to you all. Nobody beats Vitas Gerulaitis 17 times in a row," the former world number three famously told reporters after beating Jimmy Connors in the semi-finals of the January 1980 Masters.

That was Gerulaitis' first win against Connors after losing 16 matches in a row against his fellow American. Rogers was to play Australian Barty on Saturday for the sixth time in her career having lost all five previous meetings, including four in the 2021 season.

HIGHLIGHT



After tackling two U.S. Open debutants, Novak Djokovic faced an old foe on Saturday, reaching the fourth round with a 6-7(4), 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 win over Kei Nishikori to stay on course for a record 21st major title that would complete the calendar Grand Slam. "So far the toughest match of the tournament for me," said Djokovic. "The opening two rounds obviously felt well, played good. But the pace of the ball and the speed of Nishikori's tennis today was just higher than the opening two rounds' opponents that I had."

Things seemed to be following a similar pattern when the 28-year-old trailed 5-2 in the deciding third set but she then scripted one of the sport's most incredible comebacks to force a tie-break and beat the two-time major winner from Australia.

"This morning I was watching a video of Vitas Gerulaitis when he said, 'Nobody beats me 17 times in a row'. I was only at six, so," Rogers said in her post-match interview on court before breaking into laughter.

Rogers is currently ranked 43rd in the world and many a time this season has seen her progress stalled at the hands of the gritty Australian, who has won five singles titles in 2021. But the American decided to do things a bit differently. "I guess I have to thank her for teaching me a lot of lessons," Rogers, the only American left in the U.S. Open women's draw, told reporters before another round of laughter.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Golfing action
back at KGC

Professional golf in Bangladesh is set to make a return today following a second Covid-induced break through the Mujib Borsho Trust Bank Open Golf Tournament at the Kurmitola Golf Club.

The Trust Bank Open Golf Tournament will offer a prize purse of 12 lakh taka and will feature top 80 professional golfers alongside 10 amateur golfers of the country. This will be the first event of the season and the first professional event since the 5th Paragon Open, which was held in February this year at the same venue. While the Paragon Open champion Siddikur Rahman is currently in USA and runner-up Zamal Hossain Mollah is in India, the four-day event will feature all the other top golfers from across the country.

This event is expected to be the first in line in a host of professional and amateur golfing events to be held over the season as the scourge of the third wave of Covid nears an end.

France's winless
run continues

France's winless streak stretched to five games as Les Bleus were held to a 1-1 draw away to Ukraine in their World Cup qualifier in Group D on Saturday. The world champions fell behind when Mykola Shaparenko found the back of the net after 44 minutes before Anthony Martial restored parity early in the second half. France still top the group on nine points from five games after a 1-1 draw against Bosnia on Wednesday and three days before hosting second-placed Finland, who beat Kazakhstan 1-0.