



**Mushfiqur Rahim kept his penchant for suicidal scoop shots going while Bangladesh suffered an agonising defeat against West Indies -- their third defeat in the Super 12 stage of the T20 World Cup -- in Sharjah yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP

## A haunting case of butterfingers

MAZHAR UDDIN FROM DUBAI

Bangladesh's catching has emerged as the major area of concern for the team management at the ongoing T20 World Cup, where fielders have failed to support the hard-working bowlers by dropping some easy chances in crucial moments since the first round.

Liton Das two dropped catches in Bangladesh's opening Super 12 game against Sri Lanka proved decisive, providing reprieves to match-winners Charith Asalanka and Bhanuka Rajapaksa, as the Tigers lost by five wickets despite having the game in their hands at one stage.

The bowlers kept things tight against the West Indies batters and created opportunities, making it seem that restricting the Windies below the 120-run mark was a possibility in their do-or-die encounter that would have kept hopes of a semifinal berth alive.

But the Tigers' butterfingers once again fumbled the momentum and the alarming part was that even the best fielders, the likes of Mahedi Hasan and Afif Hossain, were guilty of dropping three catches yesterday.

Following some brilliant bowling in the Powerplay overs, the West Indies could reach only 27 for three after six overs as the pressure began to mount on the batting side. But Mahedi, who bowled brilliantly, dropped a return catch off Roston Chase when he was on eight, a firmly struck shot from the right-hander going through his palms.

The West Indies were still struggling on 64 for five after 13 overs and just when the Tigers gained the momentum and needed to go for the kill, Bangladesh's poor catching changed the momentum.

The Tigers could have dismissed Chase and Nicholas Pooran in the 14th over, but Mahedi dropped an easier chance than the one he put down. Chase, on 27, struck Shakib Al Hasan straight to deep mid-wicket but Mahedi dropped the straightforward catch.

Liton, replacing the injured Nurul Hasan, continued his lean patch, this time behind the wickets. He missed a stumping chance to send back Pooran off Shakib's when the left-hander had made just one run.

Chase and Pooran went on to add a crucial 57-runs stand off just 33 balls to shift the momentum. Chase ultimately scored 39 while Pooran scored forty off just 22 balls with four sixes and a boundary.

Pacer Shoriful removed both Chase and Pooran off consecutive deliveries but he was denied a third wicket in the 19th over of the innings as Afif, regarded as one of the best fielders in the team, dropped a sitter at deep cover when Jason Holder was on one.

He went on to smash two sixes in the final over to Mustafizur Rahman as the West Indies added 72 runs in the last six overs of the innings.

Unless the team management can find a solution with fielding coach Ryan Cook, opponents will continue to snatch wins from the Tigers' jaws on regular basis.



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## 'Liton's dismissal was the turning point'

SPORTS REPORTER FROM SHARIAH



Bangladesh have only themselves to blame yet again after falling to a third consecutive defeat in the Super 12 stage of the ICC T20 World Cup shattered their dreams of making it to the semifinals.

However, despite confirming their exit with a three-run loss to the West Indies in Sharjah yesterday, Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah Riyad believes there is still a lot the Tigers can gain in the next two games.

"There is still a lot to gain. Yes, after losing three games our hope of reaching the semifinal might have become slim, but we still have two more games to go. If we can win those games, it will be good for the team. We are trying desperately to give a hundred per cent but there were a few mistakes that we need to rectify over the next two games," Mahmudullah said during the post-match press conference yesterday.

It came as a surprise that Bangladesh tried to take the game deep. Liton Das, despite getting set at the crease, was looking for singles rather than going for big shots that could have simplified the equation.

With two set batsmen in the form of Liton Das and

Mahmudullah at the crease, Bangladesh needed 33 runs from the last four overs with six wickets in hand.

The right-hander was dismissed off the last ball of the 19th over after scoring 44 off 43 balls, featuring four boundaries, as Bangladesh needed 13 runs off the final over of the innings.

"I think we were both batting okay and if Liton's shot would have gone for six, things would have been different. I think Liton's dismissal was the turning point because he was set at the crease and if we had two set batsmen in the last over, we could have easily scored a couple of boundaries," he said.

Drop catches cost Bangladesh severely once again. They had the momentum for more than 70 per cent of their bowling innings before the West Indies batters cashed in on opportunities to score 58 runs in the last five overs and post a fighting total of 142 for seven.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh were left to rue at least nine dropped chances which have cost them immensely.

"We expect our best fielders to grab those chances, especially in crucial situations. But because we are consistently missing those chances, it's obviously a big concern. I think we need to improve our catching," said a sorry-looking Mahmudullah.

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**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**WEST INDIES**  
142 for 7 in 20 overs (Pooran 40, Chase 39; Mahedi 2-27, Mustafizur 2-43, Shoriful 2-20)

**BANGLADESH**  
139 for 5 in 20 overs (Das 44, Mahmudullah 31\*; Rampaul 1-25, Russel 1-29, Bravo 1-36)

**RESULT**  
West Indies won by 3 runs.  
Player-of-the-match: Nicholas Pooran.



## Milne hopes to make impact against India

REUTERS

New Zealand's Adam Milne is hoping to make a difference in Sunday's must-win clash against India at the Twenty20 World Cup after being left frustrated on the sidelines for the opening loss to Pakistan.

The reserve pacer had travelled to Sharjah for the Pakistan match but upon arriving was told he would have to sit out because the International Cricket Council had not approved him as an injury replacement for Lockie Ferguson.

New Zealand went with legspinner Ish Sodhi instead, and the ICC's approval arrived shortly before Pakistan completed a five-wicket win.

Milne's late clearance left a sour taste in coach Gary Stead's mouth, and the bowler said he might have helped New Zealand do better against Pakistan.

"I think if you'd looked at the way the pitch played throughout the course of the IPL (Indian Premier League), the faster guys that had been able to hit the wicket hard and create some uneven bounce had

caused some problems for the batters," the 29-year-old told reporters.

"I think I would have been able to add something to the team, but it wasn't meant to be, and I thought our guys bowled really well and unfortunately for us, they came out and batted really well towards that end part of the game."

Milne has struggled with injury in recent years but his omission from the 15-man World Cup squad named in August raised eyebrows at home given his form in Australia's Big Bash League, the Indian Premier League and The Hundred in England.

"I definitely feel like this has been the best period of cricket that I've had in a long, long time," he said.

"I'm excited to hopefully make a difference with the ball in these games here and really prove that this period has been influential for me."

India will look to rebound against New Zealand after having suffered a 10-wicket thrashing by Pakistan in Dubai.

## 'It was phenomenal'

AGENCIES

Andre Russell bowled an immaculate final over to help West Indies pip Bangladesh in a low-scoring thriller by three runs for their first Super 12 win yesterday that kept their Twenty20 World Cup title defence alive.

Jason Holder said later in a post-match briefing that Russell's last ball, a perfect yorker, was the best and sweetest moment in the match for them. "It was phenomenal," he added.

Both sides came into the contest with two defeats from as many matches and Bangladesh needed 13 in Russell's final over to chase down West Indies' 142-7 - which was built on Nicholas Pooran's 40 off 22 balls - on a low and slow wicket at Sharjah.

West Indies earlier promoted Chris Gayle to open the innings after dropping Lendl Simmons but their batting woes continued as the side were reduced to 32-3 after being put in to bat.



Captain Kieron Pollard also failed to get going and walked off retired hurt and on the next ball Russell was run out without facing a delivery.

The arrival of Pooran to the crease provided the spark that the West Indies innings required and the left-handed batter smashed spinners

Shakib Al Hasan and Mahedi Hasan for two sixes each in his knock.

The 26-year-old provided the late flourish during a stand of 57 with Roston Chase, who made his T20 international debut for West Indies.

"We talk about batsmen taking responsibility and doing what's needed for the team. The batting hasn't clicked yet and we needed to put our hands up. I felt as a cricketer and a batsman I needed to put my hand up. We were missing Polly too. I have been working very very hard for the last couple of months, things just hadn't gone my way. I hadn't been doing myself justice, giving away my wicket. I'm always confident and positive about my attitude and skills," said player-of-the-match Pooran.

"Unfortunately, we didn't really take all our catches, but the belief was there. We backed our experience to close out the game. (Russell last over) He's a big player and executed for us," he added.



**Pakistan pacer Hasan Ali celebrates the wicket of Rahmanullah Gurbaz during their Twenty20 World Cup match against Afghanistan at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai yesterday. Imad Wasim, Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf and Ali jolted Afghanistan with six early wickets after skipper Mohammad Nabi won the toss and opted to bat.**

PHOTO: AFP