



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.

THE MARK OF ARISTOCRACY **WALTON** Smart Fridge

'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.



SINGER LED TVs
Buy SINGER TVs and Get Free TVs Every Day
6 Months Replacement Guarantee

SCORES IN BRIEF

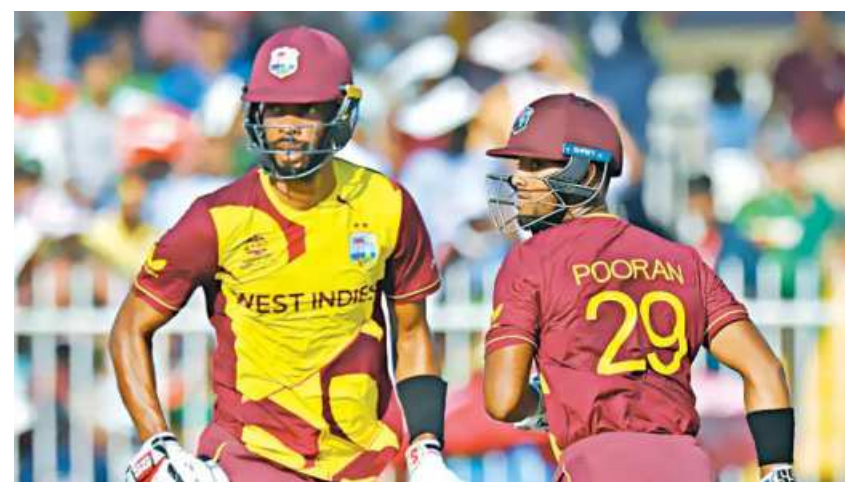
WEST INDIES
142 for 7 in 20 overs (Pooran 40, Chase 39; Mahedi 2-27, Mustafizur 2-43, Shoriful 2-20)

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.

কনকা ওয়াশিং মেশিন ও মাইক্রোওয়েভ ওভেন-এ চলছে ১০০% পর্যন্ত মূল্য ছাড়!

KONKA
Washing Machine & Microwave Oven



'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.

Asif smashes Pakistan to THRILLING VICTORY

AFP, Dubai

Asif Ali smashed four sixes in the penultimate over to help Pakistan achieve a hard-fought five-wicket win over Afghanistan in the Twenty20 World Cup in Dubai on Friday. With Pakistan needing 24 runs off the final two overs, Asif lifted paceman Karim Janat's first, third, fifth and sixth balls over the boundary to help Pakistan overhaul a tricky 148-run target.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN
147 for 6 in 20 overs (Nabi 35 not out, Naib 35 not out; Imad 2-25, Shaheen 1-22)

PAKISTAN
148 for 5 in 20 overs (Babar 51, Fakhar 30, Asif 25 not out; Rashid 2-26, Mujeeb 1-14)

Result: Pakistan won by 5 wickets
Player-of-the-match: Asif Ali

Asif finished with 25 off just seven balls with four sixes and a single, leaving Janat and all the other Afghan players frustrated.

The win gave Pakistan a third win in as many games in Group 2 of the Super 12 stages, almost assuring a semi-final place, needing just one more win from their last two games. Afghanistan scored a fighting 147-6 in their 20 overs with Gulbadin Naib and skipper Mohammad Nabi scoring 35 each.

Skipper Babar Azam anchored



Pakistan's Shadab Khan (L) embraces Asif Ali after the latter hit four sixes in the penultimate over from Afghanistan pacer Karim Janat to seal a five-wicket victory in their Super 12 match of the ICC Twenty20 World Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan's innings with a 47-ball 51 but his dismissal -- bowled by spinner Rashid Khan -- turned the game on its head in the 17th over with Pakistan needing 26 off the last three overs. Paceman Naveen-ul-Haq conceded just two runs in the 18th over and dismissed Shoaib Malik for 19 but Asif quashed all hopes of an Afghanistan win.

Pakistan's task was to handle spinners Rashid and Mujeeb Ur Rahman in their chase with the evening dew making life tough for bowlers. Mujeeb dismissed Mohammad Rizwan (eight) while Nabi accounted for Fakhar Zaman (30) before Rashid's wickets of Mohammad Hafeez (10) and Babar.

Earlier, Gulbadin Naib and Nabi lifted Afghanistan from a wobbly start. Naib smashed a 25-ball 35 not out while Nabi scored an undefeated 32-ball 35 as they helped Afghanistan recover from 76-6 with an unbroken seventh wicket stand of 71 after they won the toss and batted.

All six top Afghanistan batsmen were caught playing rash shots but Nabi and Naib added 54 runs in the last five overs to give their team a fighting total.

Naib hit two fours and a six off paceman Hasan Ali to take 21 off the 18th over and the pair scored 15 in the 19th bowled by Haris Rauf.

Left-arm spinner Imad Wasim was the pick of Pakistan's bowlers with 2-25, dismissing dangerous opener Hazratullah for a five-ball duck. Najibullah Zadran (22) and Janat (15) were other contributors.