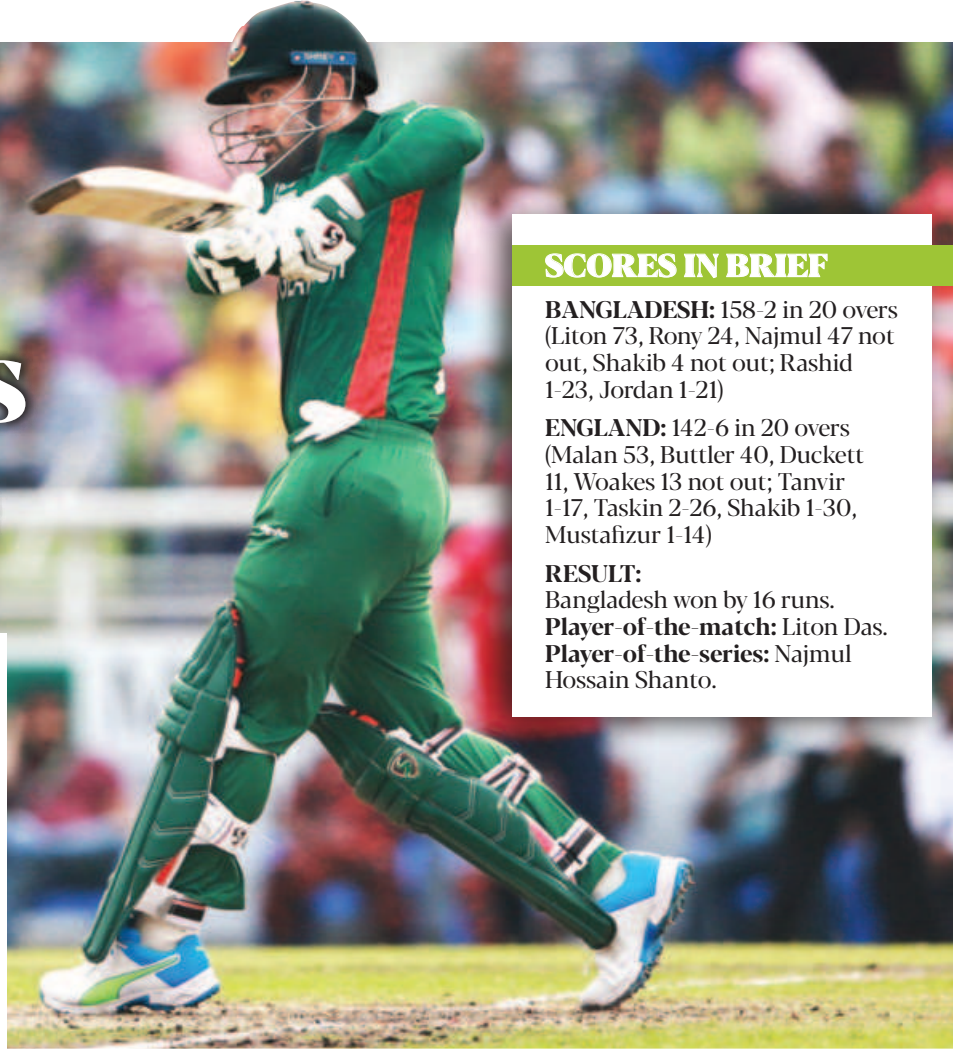


We have never played like this before: Shakib



SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 158-2 in 20 overs (Liton 73, Rony 24, Najmul 47 not out, Shakib 4 not out; Rashid 1-23, Jordan 1-21)

ENGLAND: 142-6 in 20 overs (Malan 53, Buttler 40, Duckett 11, Woakes 13 not out; Tanvir 1-17, Taskin 2-26, Shakib 1-30, Mustafizur 1-14)

RESULT: Bangladesh won by 16 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Liton Das.
Player-of-the-series: Najmul Hossain Shanto.

After disappointing with scores of 12 and nine in the first two games, opener Liton Das finally proved his worth in the third and final T20I against England on Tuesday in Mirpur. Liton's career-best T20I score of 73 off 57 deliveries and a brilliant piece of fielding from Mehedi Hasan Miraz [inset] were some of the highlights of the Tigers' 16-run victory yesterday that helped the hosts complete a series sweep over reigning white-ball champions.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



SPORTS REPORTER

It was not what was expected from a newly built team, but the Tigers pulled off the unlikely feat of a 3-0 T20I series clean sweep against T20I world champions England with a 16-run victory at Mirpur in the third and final match yesterday.

Having lost the ODI series, which Tigers were expected to be competitive in, the new faces in the T20I team gelled quickly and appeared to find the right tempo against the world champions. The key had been the trust placed on the new players by the skipper, which translated to dynamism on the field.

When the team was training at Chattogram for the very first T20I, it became apparent that Shakib was himself more invigorated to prove a point with a young side. He had been handed the T20I captaincy last year and said that the process began with last that year's Asia Cup.

T20I series wins against Australia and New Zealand had come with much reliance on home conditions but there was a lot more skill needed to win against England this time around. Shakib did not want to compare.

"I don't like to compare between series.

Winning every match is important but the way we won this series... we haven't played like this before. Winning with this approach satisfies the whole team. We started playing this way from the Asia Cup, so it took a bit of time to start getting the right results. But it has started," Shakib said at the press conference yesterday.

There had been a number of changes to the side that had played the Asia Cup last year. Veterans Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad are no longer there while the likes of Mosaddek Hossain and Mahedi Hasan made way. The BPL finishing just ahead of the England series helped Shakib and the team management find a fresh outlook to the team.

Rony Talukdar managed starts in all three T20Is and put on a 55-run stand with Liton yesterday. Towhid Hridoy also showed promise during the chase of 156 in the first T20I at Chattogram. Najmul Hossain Shanto scored runs in each of the three T20Is and translated his BPL form onto the international stage.

"Everyone in this team performed in this year's BPL. It wasn't too long before the England tour. The top five-six batters in this series were also the top run-getters in BPL. It is the same for the highest wicket-takers. The confidence did carry

over and I think that really helped us," Shakib said.

Tanvir Islam, who was the joint highest wicket-taker in the BPL alongside with Hasan Mahmud, made his international debut against England yesterday.

Although it may appear to be a newly built team, Shakib reminded that domestic performances from these players were trusted. "It might seem like this is a new team, but these players have been doing well in domestic cricket. We trust them. The way they started, it didn't seem like they were in an alien situation. They know. They are matured. It was a big plus for us," he said.

Fielding had been another key aspect of this team. England were strolling through the chase before Dawid Malan and Jos Buttler fell in back-to-back deliveries, with Buttler's run out inflicted by a brilliant direct hit from Mehedi Hasan Miraz. Such feats on the field added a different dimension to the unit.

"Everyone noticed our fielding in these three matches. We out-fielded England, who are themselves a good fielding side. It is a big tick mark," Shakib said. "Our target is to become the best fielding side in Asia. After this performance, I don't think we are too far behind."



'I wanted venom on the ball'

MAZHAR UDDIN

Despite discussions about the slow and low nature of the Mirpur surface and how much the Tigers would rely on home conditions as they looked to undo England prior to the start of the three-match T20I series, it was a breath of fresh air to witness the impact of the pace-bowling unit as Bangladesh sealed a maiden whitewash series win against the reigning white-ball world champions.

Young pacer Hasan Mahmud and the experienced duo of Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman put their hands up in all three games, playing pivotal roles exactly when required.

Bangladesh pace-bowling coach Allan Donald deserves a lot of credit for the change in the seamers' mindset and 'White Lightning' pointed out the importance of intelligent bowling, which had done the trick against England.

"The biggest area for me to work on was fragility because a lot of players were outcome-driven. Many of them were scared to make mistakes. I moved that completely out of the way and let them do their job. The biggest thing for me was to move that out of the way and compete fiercely. That didn't just take six months, but we are only seeing the results now," Donald told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Hathu [head coach Chandika Hathurusingha] has been emphasising that issue, about expressing our true talent, in every single meeting since his arrival. The response has been phenomenal. Okay,



it was home advantage, but the way they bowled and the response we are seeing, I think they are now bowling with their heads and making intelligent decisions. We are taking more time and thinking about it more carefully. We are paying attention to what's going on with the scoreboard."

The legendary South African also praised Mustafizur's skill after the Fizz turned the third game around with his second spell. The visitors were cruising on 100 for one after 13 overs in chase of a 159-run target when the left-armed was handed the ball.

Mustafizur bowled brilliantly, removing set batsman Dawid Malan while conceding just two runs. He came up with another tight performance in the 18th over, conceding just five runs with England needing 36 off the last three overs.

The Fizz ended with the figures of 14 for one from his four overs, becoming only the second Bangladeshi to scalp 100 T20I wickets.

"I just gave them the simple message that I wanted venom on the ball. If that happens and the Fizz can do what the Fizz does... That's what I coached. I believe this level is all about mindset and fierce competitiveness."

Real will not make 'calculations'

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid will go on the attack against Liverpool this week instead of trying to protect their Champions League last 16 first leg advantage, coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Tuesday.

Holders Madrid thrashed Liverpool 5-2 at Anfield in February, with Karim Benzema and Vinicius Junior scoring twice, along with an Eder Militao header, after the hosts had moved two goals ahead.

Despite their three-goal cushion, Ancelotti said his team had to focus on winning against the visitors on Wednesday at the Santiago Bernabeu to reach the quarter-finals.

"It's quite simple, we don't have to make calculations, instead try to play the best that we can, try to play a game like we did in the first leg," Ancelotti told reporters.

"Our ideal is not in making calculations, we have to play at maximum intensity, with maximum hope, trying to win the game."

The Italian coach believes the clash will be an open game, as Liverpool need to mount a huge comeback, while his team will not sit back and defend. "We've looked at what we did in the first leg, we did a lot of things well, above all in attack," Ancelotti said.

"We'll not play a game thinking about our advantage, we will play our football, attacking football. Tomorrow will be an open game, Liverpool will try and change the dynamic of the tie, so we have to do two things well - defending and attacking."

Madrid striker Benzema missed the win over Espanyol on Saturday in La Liga with an ankle problem but is fit again. "Yes, tomorrow he's at 100 percent, he trained on Sunday, he's done good sessions, he's at his best, motivated - for Karim and for the club it's a very important competition," said Ancelotti.



DPL begins today



SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Premier League, the country's premier one-day competition, is set to begin today across the country. Last year, 11 teams participated in the tournament but the competition reverted to 12 teams this time around. Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi, who won their maiden DPL title in the previous edition of the tournament, will play Dhaka Leopard today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The other opening day fixtures will see Legends of Rugganj play Agrani Bank Cricket Club at the Fatullah's Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium and Prime Bank take on City Club at BKSP-3.

All the games are scheduled for a 9:30am start. Fixtures till the third-round of the tournament has been announced by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Last season's runners-up Abahani Limited will play Brothers Union next Thursday.

Walton Group returned as the title sponsors of this season's DPL. Agrani Bank and Dhaka Leopards are the two teams that were promoted from first division to play this season's tournament.

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