

SPORT

What to WATCH

Star Sports 3
ACC Emerging Asia Cup
Bangladesh A vs Oman A
Live from 10:30 am
Star Sports SelectHD1
Wimbledon
Women's singles final
Jabeur vs Vondrousova
Live from 7:00 pm

Tried to remain calm in that situation: Hridoy

SPORTS REPORTER FROM SYLHET

Needing six runs off the final over with five wickets in hand and Towhid Hridoy on 47 off 32 at the non-strikers' end, it seemed an easy task for Bangladesh to win the first T20I against Afghanistan in Sylhet yesterday until Karim Janat's hat-trick suddenly changed the complexion of the game.

Shoriful Islam eventually struck a boundary to take Bangladesh home with a ball to spare but before that, it was Hridoy who played a pivotal role in the Tigers' narrow two-wicket victory by chasing down the 155-run target set by Afghanistan.

22-year-old Hridoy, who smashed three boundaries and two maximums on way to his highest T20I score, showed great maturity as he starred in a match-winning 73-run fifth-wicket stand with another youngster in Shamim Hossain after the Tigers were under a lot of pressure following the departure of skipper Shakib Al Hasan.

Hridoy, as he walked into the press conference room following the game, maintained his calm demeanour as shown while on the pitch. Showing no signs of being overwhelmed with what he had achieved, Hridoy informed that he had the belief that the Tigers would go on to win

SCORES IN BRIEF

Afghanistan: 154 for 7 in 20 overs (Nabi 54 not out, Omarzai 33; Shakib 2-27, Miraz 1-13)
Bangladesh: 157 for 8 in 19.5 overs (Hridoy 47 not out, Shamim 33; Janat 3-5)
Result: Bangladesh won by 2 wickets
Player-of-the-match: Towhid Hridoy

the game.

"I was normal because I knew we only needed two runs which would only need one ball and if we could just connect the ball. I tried to remain calm in that situation. Since I was at the non-striker's end, I tried to help my partner by relaying what type of ball may come, and that's it. I had belief in everyone [who came to bat at the end]," player of the match Hridoy told the media after the game.

It was the day of the young guns who had lifted the Under-19 World Cup for Bangladesh in 2020 as they took responsibility when it mattered the most. The chemistry between the two players from the Under-19 World Cup winning team – Shamim, who scored 33 off 25, and Hridoy – proved vital for the hosts.

"I just told Shamim that we have won this type of matches in the past, maybe in the domestic circuit as we both bat in the middle order and faced such situations before. I told him that if we could gain the momentum in one or two overs, we could turn the game in our favour," he said. The 22-year-old, who seemed quite mature compared to his age, said that he wanted to stay till the end and finish the game as such an opportunity rarely presents itself.

Imranur misses out on Asian final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's fastest sprinter Imranur Rahman failed to qualify for the finals of the 100m sprint in Asian Athletics Championship in Thailand on Friday, finishing 11th among 24 competitors and missing the eight-man final by 0.03 seconds.

The 30-year-old sprinter clocked 10.40s in one of the three semifinals, which is 0.15 seconds more than the time that he had set in the heat on the previous day.

Imranur, who specialises in 60m sprints and won the gold in that event in last year's Asian Indoor Athletics Championship, made a strong start and led the race more than half-way through before falling behind the others.

Top qualifier Hiroki Yanagita of Japan took 10.14 seconds while the eighth and last one, Chen Jiapeng of China, took 10.38 seconds.



Bangladesh pacer Shoriful Islam celebrates taking the wicket of Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran early in the innings as the Tigers continued their good Powerplay display during their two-wicket win in the first of the two-match T20I series in Sylhet yesterday. With the ball in hand, Bangladesh have the lowest economy rate in the first six overs in the past 12 months. [Bottom] Meanwhile, the picturesque Sylhet International Cricket Stadium was packed with enthusiastic fans, cheering on Shakib Al Hasan and Co. from the stands.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bowling depth pays dividends

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Bangladesh have come up with a different strategy in the game's shortest format this year, and it worked again to some extent against Afghanistan in their two-wicket victory in the first of the two-match T20I series at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The team selection offers six genuine bowling options for the Tigers, with Mehedi Hasan Miraz playing the role of the all-rounder alongside skipper Shakib Al Hasan. Also, a third spin option exists in the form of another left-armed Nasum Ahmed.

Over the past twelve months, Bangladesh's bowling record in the first six overs of T20Is has been incredible as they lead the charts with lowest economy rates, of 7.20.

Earlier this year, their miserly bowling helped restricting England to near-150 scores and Bangladesh went on to whitewash the world champions.

Keeping in mind the average first-innings total of 153 in Sylhet – and considering that team batting second went on to win seven out of eight games so far – it was a good toss to win for Shakib who did not hesitate to ask the visitors to bat.

Nasum was handed the new ball to start the proceedings and he gave Bangladesh the breakthrough in his second over.



The hosts kept mounting pressure on the visitors with Taskin Ahmed removing the dangerous Rahmanullah Gurbaz.

Afghanistan – sitting at the bottom of the table in terms of Powerplay run-rate in the past year, having registered 7.18 in that regard – felt the heat, courtesy of some tight bowling from the Tigers.

Pacer Shoriful Islam then joined the party to dismiss Ibrahim Zadran and Afghanistan could only score 40 for three in the Powerplay.

Shakib later came into the act. The Bangladesh talisman dismissed Karim Janat, aided by Najmul Hossain Shanto who took a brilliant catch running from long off.

It appeared that the visitors, reeling at 52 for four inside eight overs, may not even go on

to post near 120.

However, experienced campaigner Mohammad Nabi alongside Najibullah Zadran added a quick 35-run partnership for the fifth wicket, and Nabi went on to smash his fifth T20I fifty.

Unlike the Powerplay, Bangladesh's economy rate in the death overs leaves a lot to be desired. The past year's statistics in that regard show that the Tigers occupy the seventh spot.

So, it did not come as a surprise as Afghanistan went on to add 60 runs in the last five overs. Azmatullah Omarzai played an 18-ball 33-run cameo.

Despite the late onslaught, Bangladesh can take positives from their tight bowling in Powerplay and fielding that was on point.



Kings wrap up campaign with win

SPORTS REPORTER

Already-champions Bashundhara Kings wrapped up their Bangladesh Premier League campaign with a 1-0 win over second-placed Abahani in their last match at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday.

Dorielton Gomez's 21-st minute goal gave the now hat-trick champions a comfortable victory, ending their campaign with 55 points from 20 games.

The new powerhouse of Bangladesh football lost only one match and drew one while winning the remaining 18 matches this season.

Dorielton, meanwhile, leads the scorer's chart with 19 goals, four ahead of Mohammedan's inspirational skipper Suleymane Diabate, who had almost single-handedly beaten Abahani in the final of the Federation Cup a couple of months ago.

Abahani, meanwhile, remained on 37 points from 19 games as there is still one more round of matches left for 10 teams.

Mohammedan consolidated fourth position with a 1-0 win over away to Fortis FC. The Black and Whites are on 26 points from 19 games while Fortis FC are on 20 points from same number of matches.

The day's other match saw Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club thrash already-relegated Azampur FC 3-1, courtesy of a goal each from Cornelius Stewart, Mannaf Rabbi and Nodir Mavlonov.



Novak Djokovic powered into his ninth Wimbledon final as the defending champion subdued big-hitting Jannik Sinner to reach a record 35th Grand Slam singles title match on Friday, beating the Italian 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4). The Serb will meet World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz, who beat Daniil Medvedev 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 in the other semifinal, in tomorrow's final.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WILL THIRD TIME be the charm for Jabeur?

AFP, London

Ons Jabeur hopes it will be third time lucky when she attempts to become the first African or Arab woman to win a Grand Slam singles title in the Wimbledon final on Saturday.

The 28-year-old Tunisian takes on Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic, hoping to go one better than last year when she was defeated by Elena Rybakina in the final at the All England Club and lost to world number one Iga Swiatek at the US Open later in the year.

Unlike her two final losses at the majors, this time world number six Jabeur will start as the favourite against the left-handed Vondrousova, the first unseeded woman in the Wimbledon final in 60 years.

She has had a tough run to Saturday's championship match, beating two-time former winner Petra Kvitova in the last 16, third seed Rybakina in the quarterfinal and then coming from a set down to knock out second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka in the semifinals.



By doing so she became the first woman to defeat three top-10 players at Wimbledon since Serena Williams in 2012.

But she said she could not afford to take her eye off the ball on Saturday, even though she is taking on a player far lower down the rankings at 42 in the world.

"I think a final is a final," Jabeur said. "You're playing someone, Grand Slam champion or not. I think it's going to be very difficult. It can happen for both. Whoever could handle more

emotions, whoever could be more ready on the court, will definitely win that match.

"I want to make my path worth it, winning against all these Grand Slam champions to be in the final. Yeah, I'm going full in, and hopefully this time it will work."

Only six women have lost all three of their first Grand Slam finals, although two of those – Chris Evert and Kim Clijsters – eventually made up for lost time. Jabeur has form on her side for Saturday, with a tour best 28 wins

on grass since 2021 matching the run of former Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova between 2004 and 2006.

However, Jabeur has lost twice in 2023 to Vondrousova, in the second round of the Australian Open and third round in Miami.

"I'm going for my revenge. I didn't win against her this year. She has good hands. She plays very good," said Jabeur of an opponent who is appearing in her second Slam final after finishing runner-up at the 2019 French Open.

Vondrousova, whose run at Wimbledon has guaranteed her a return to the world's top 20 next week, was an injured bystander at the tournament in 2022, reduced to watching a friend attempt to qualify for the main draw.

She is the second-lowest ranked player to reach the Wimbledon final – only Serena Williams in 2018 was ranked lower at 181.

Like Jabeur, the 24-year-old Czech has had to battle hard to make the final.

"For me, it's really crazy this is happening. But I think anything can happen in tennis," she said.