



Pacer Shoriful Islam showcased his death-bowling skills to bag three late wickets but only after opener Dawid Malan took apart the Bangladesh bowling attack during his 107-ball 140 in Dharamshala yesterday, paving the way for a 137-run win for England in their second ICC World Cup match.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

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## Rohit looks to retrieve his mojo

AGENCIES

Hosts India will be eyeing a near-perfect game to maintain their impressive form today against a sprightly Afghanistan in their second match of the ICC World Cup.

India navigated their way through some extreme pressure moments on way to a six-wicket victory in their tournament opener against Australia but skipper Rohit Sharma started his campaign with a duck in Chennai.

As pointed out by Rohit, India's biggest challenge over the course of the group stage will be to quickly adapt to the conditions in nine different venues and the skipper himself will definitely try to get back his rhythm against Afghanistan.

- The two sides have squared off only three times in ODIs, with India winning twice and one match ending in a tie.
- Their most recent meeting in the format was in the 2019 World Cup, which India won by 11 runs.
- Afghanistan are yet to play an ODI against India in India.

After a slow and spinning track at Chennai's Chepauk Stadium, a belter of a surface is expected at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium, where more than 700 runs were plundered in a high-scoring affair between South Africa and Sri Lanka last week. The game will be a homecoming for chase master Virat Kohli, who reinforced his credentials while batting alongside K.L. Rahul in Chennai on Sunday night.



Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi however hoped leg spin wizard Rashid Khan "delivers" against India as they attempt to stay on track after an opening defeat in the tournament against Bangladesh.

"Rashid is the best bowler in ODI and T20s, so whatever the opposition is doing, we don't care about that," said Shahidi. "Like how they want to play Rashid, but for us the important thing is how he has planned against the opposition. So that matters for us."

**Long tournament. We have to move on and we have some tough matches coming up. We cannot be bogged down. We have to move on and think about all the positives we have been doing.**

- Bangladesh skipper **Shakib Al Hasan**

# Tigers cornered on the field, fans off it

MAZHAR UDDIN from Dharamshala

As England removed Bangladesh batters one after another yesterday, the Bangladesh fans present at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association stadium in Dharamshala were on the receiving end of added misery.

"Harega bhai harega, Bangladesh harega (Bangladesh will lose)," chanted the local spectators while the Bangladesh fans absorbed the taunts in silence.

Earlier, after being sent to bat, the two English openers Jonny Bairstow and Dawid Malan started off with all guns blazing, courtesy of some ordinary bowling from the Tigers. The pair added 115 runs and the enthusiastic Bangladeshi fans slowly began to prepare for what was to follow.

However, they erupted in joy when Shakib finally gave the breakthrough for the Tigers, removing Bairstow (52 off 59 balls) with a brilliant armer, which went on to hit the timber.

The noise began to amplify in favour of Bangladesh but it did not last long as Malan, who went on to strike his fifth ODI ton, and Joe Root combined to punish the Tigers bowlers. The duo added 151 runs in no time for the second wicket.

A small section of the English supporters' group, 'Barmy Army', had taken control over by then and found their voices reinforced by local supporters.

It appeared the Bangladesh fans were

helplessly cornered. The last ten overs of the innings, however, neutralised managed to pull the momentum back in Tigers' favour as seven wickets fell for 68 runs in last 63 balls.

Despite Bangladesh's late comeback,

Star yesterday.

In reply to a mammoth 365-run target, Bangladesh top-order collapsed like a house of cards, reeling at 49 for four at one point, leading to some of the dejected Tigers supporters leaving the ground.

After Liton's lone battle -- of 76 from 66 balls, laced with seven fours and two sixes -- eventually came to a halt, a handful number of Bangladeshi fans were still waiting for a miracle. However, the Tigers were eventually bundled out for 227 runs in 48.2 overs and faced a crushing 137-run defeat.

A few optimistic Bangladeshi supporters still want to keep their faith on the Tigers.

"It's not the end of the world to be honest. Such bad days can happen in cricket, and don't forget that we played against the World champions. I strongly believe Bangladesh will bounce back brilliantly in the next match against New Zealand on Friday. We are with our Tigers," said Jalal Ahmed, a Bangladeshi fan.

Bangladesh will now travel to Chennai to play their third match against New Zealand on Friday.

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AS WAS IN NATURE SO IS INSIDE

England's scorecard read 365 for nine in 50 overs -- the highest total in the venue.

"Look we know England are a very strong but we expected our team to give them a tough fight at least. But the way the England batters treated our bowlers, and how our batters failed yet again, it was embarrassing to some extent especially when the opposition supporters started to mock your team," Mamunur Rashid, a businessman in Bangladesh, told The Daily



Kusal Mendis continued his red-hot form as he smashed the fastest century for Sri Lanka in a World Cup match before going on to make a career-high 122, while Sadeera Samarawickrama hit his maiden ton, a 89-ball 108, as Sri Lanka piled up 344 for nine against Pakistan in the ICC World Cup match in Hyderabad yesterday. The 28-year-old Mendis cracked his hundred in 65 balls. Previously, Kumar Sangakkara held the Sri Lanka World Cup record with a 70-ball hundred, scored against England in 2015. It was also his highest score in ODIs as his earlier best was 119 against the West Indies in Hambantota in February 2020.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'The execution let us down'

SPORTS REPORTER from Dharamshala

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha had to face a barrage of questions regarding the indifferent performance from his side in their 137-run defeat against England in Dharamshala yesterday.

While the team failed collectively in all the departments, major concern, according to the head coach, was the openers' inability to provide a good start. Young opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim fell cheaply for the second consecutive game as Bangladesh were reduced to 49 for four at one stage of the Bangladesh chase.

"If you don't get a start, if you lose more than three wickets in the first Powerplay, you are not winning many matches. So, definitely it's a concern for batting. When we play seven batters, we want our top-order to fire, so that's a big concern," Hathurusingha told the media.



With Mehedi Hasan Miraz as the only back-up option in the opening slot, Hathurusingha is still willing to back young Tanzid. The coach also highlighted Liton's valiant knock of 76 as one of the positives from the game.

However, the 55-year-old was disappointed with the performance of the pace bowling unit despite huge expectation from them.

All three pacers -- Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman and Shoriful Islam -- were expensive and they offered a lot of width to the English batters, which was dealt with extreme brutality.

"The plan was not to bowl outside the stumps, the plan was to bowl at the stumps. I think the execution let us down, in this game especially. In the last game we came back later with the help of the spinners. This game, what happened was that our spinners did not bring us back into the game due to good intelligent batting," the coach said.

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