

## Pace assembly line now up and running

ASHEFAQ-UL-ALAM

Chances of Taskin Ahmed waking up super early in St Kitts and take time out of his preparation for the first ODI against West Indies to watch the final of the Under-19 Asia Cup between Bangladesh and India in the UAE yesterday are quite slim.

But if he did do so, or at least tuned in for the 21st over of Bangladesh's title defense, a wry smile perhaps broke through in his face.

In that over, pacer Iqbal Hossain Emon got the dangerous-looking KP Karthikeya and Nikhil Kumar out in space three deliveries, both getting caught behind.

The dismissals were crucial for Bangladesh as they left India five down for 73, chasing 199. But for Taskin, the amusing part would have been what happened after.

Emon, who emerged as the tournament's highest wicket-taker with 13 scalps and was named the player-of-the-final and the

tournament, celebrated both wickets in the same way, running in a straight line with arms stretched wide and the index fingers pointing outwards while being chased by his overjoyed teammates.

This celebration, from start to finish, feels like an homage to Taskin, who, for around a decade, has been celebrating in the same manner after getting batters caught behind.

Taskin, who debuted for Bangladesh in 2014, was present from the nascent stage of Bangladesh's pace bowling revolution, which is now kicking into full gear.

This year's U-19 Asia Cup showed that the country's fast bowling assembly line is busy at work, churning out new prospects. Emon grabbed most of the headlines as the highest wicket-taker but breathing down his neck was Al Fahad, who finished as the second-highest wicket-taker with 12 wickets.

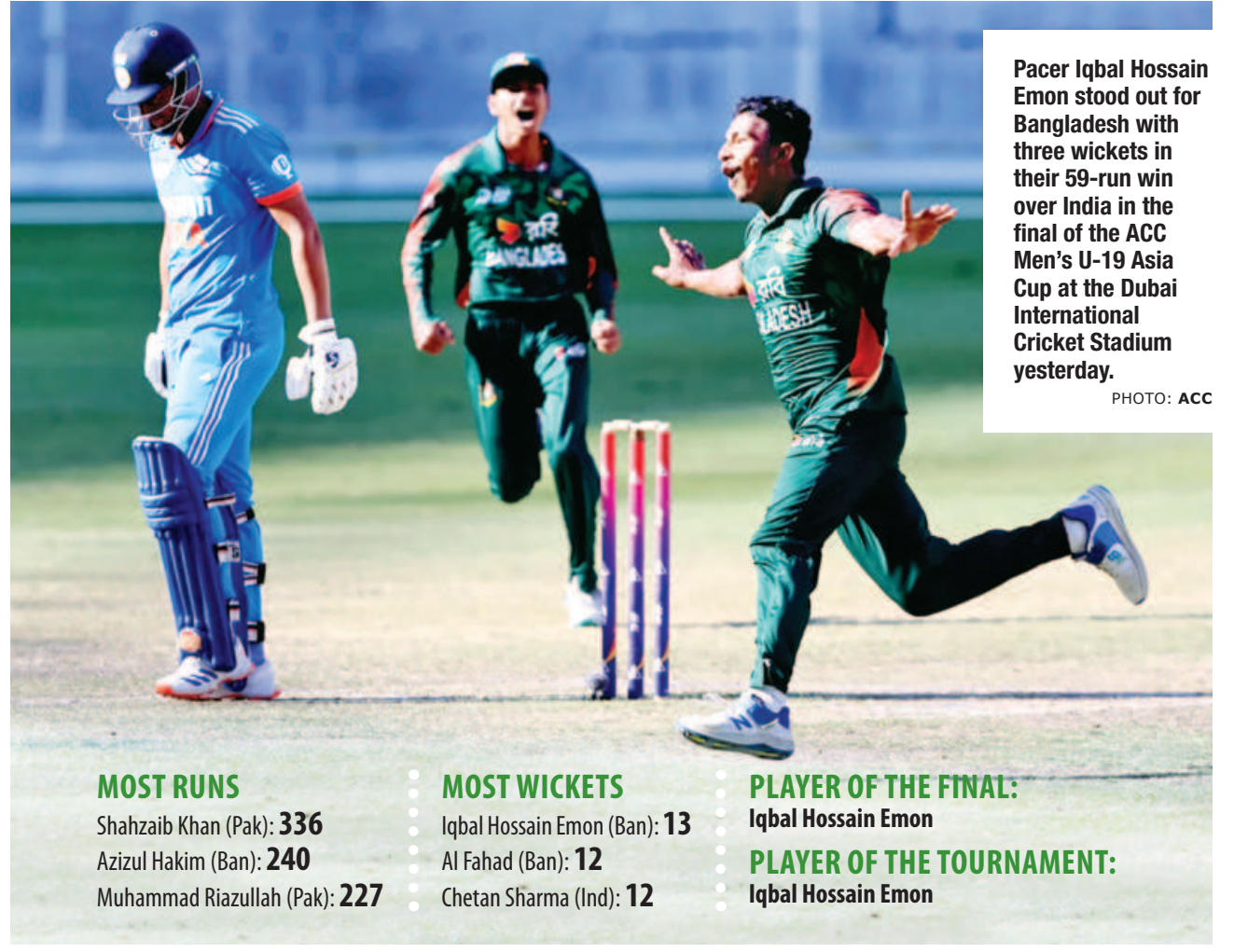
Pace-bowling all-rounder Rizan

Hossain also played a decent role with six scalps in five games while Maruf Mridha took five wickets in three games and Saad Islam took one in his lone appearance.

Bangladesh fielded four fast bowling options in four of their five games in the Asia Cup. Only in the final group-stage match against Sri Lanka, they went with three pacers and it was also the only match in the campaign they lost.

In the all-important final, Maruf and Fahad gave India no breathing space in their opening spell, expertly blending aggression with skills. And, after them, Emon and Rizan joined the attack and continued building pressure, which resulted in the Indian batters losing their nerves and surrendering.

Coming back to Emon's Taskin-esque celebration, only he can say whether it was an intentional homage or not. But if he can grow strength from strength, it would be a matter of time before he can celebrate this way side by side with Taskin.



Pacer Iqbal Hossain Emon stood out for Bangladesh with three wickets in their 59-run win over India in the final of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: ACC

**MOST RUNS**

Shahzaib Khan (Pak): 336  
Azizul Hakim (Ban): 240  
Muhammad Riazullah (Pak): 227

**MOST WICKETS**

Iqbal Hossain Emon (Ban): 13  
Al Fahad (Ban): 12  
Chetan Sharma (Ind): 12

**PLAYER OF THE FINAL:**

Iqbal Hossain Emon

**PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT:**

Iqbal Hossain Emon

## 'Australia back to their best'

● Australia are the most successful team in Day-Night Tests, winning 12 of the 13 they have played so far. India have won three of their five Day-Night Tests.

● Yesterday's 10-wicket win over India at Adelaide Oval meant Australia have won each of their eight pink ball Tests at the venue.

● This was the fourth shortest completed Test on Australian soil in terms of balls bowled. Australia won the game with 1031 deliveries bowled.

● Australia captain Pat Cummins finished with figures of five for 57 in 14 overs in the second innings. This was Cummins' 13th Test fiver and eighth as captain. Only Pakistan's Imran Khan (12) and Australia's Richie Benaud (9) have more five-wicket hauls as captains.

● This was Rohit Sharma's fourth consecutive Test defeat as a captain, two shy of MAK Pataudi who had lost a record six Tests in a row as India captain between 1967-68. Rohit's team was clean-swept at home in a three-match Test series by New Zealand in October-November before he sat out India's 295-run win in the first Test of this series in Perth last month.

Disappointing week for us, we didn't play well enough to win the game. There were times in the game where we could have grabbed those opportunities but we failed to do that and that cost us the game.

India captain Rohit Sharma after the game



“He [Mitchell Starc] just does it time and time again. He's done it for over a decade now. So feel very lucky and privileged.”  
Australia captain Pat Cummins on Mitchell Starc

AFP, Adelaide

Pat Cummins warned India that Australia are pumped up and back to their best as they look to carry the momentum from a commanding 10-wicket win on Sunday into the next Test in Brisbane.

After being thumped by 295 runs in Perth, the hosts responded emphatically at Adelaide to wipe out Rohit Sharma's men inside three days and leave the five-match series evenly poised at 1-1.

They did so without injured frontline bowler Josh Hazlewood, who appears on track to play the third Test at the Gabba starting on Saturday.

“Great week, great to level the series. You know, I think we were back to our best,” said skipper Cummins, who took 5-57 and seven wickets for the match.

“That's the kind of team that I remember, and how we want to play our cricket. So really satisfying.”

The defeat in Perth and negative media coverage made their eighth consecutive pink-ball win in Adelaide taste even better, he added.

“I think being one down, no doubt there's a little bit more on it, trying to level up the series,” he said.

After bowling out India for 180 in the first innings, Australia slammed 337 in reply to pile pressure on the visitors, with Travis Head's whirlwind 140 a game-changer.

Cummins said it was a luxury having a weapon like him in the middle order.

“It feels like every time he walks out the game's kind of in the balance, it can go one of two ways,” he said.

“And you know, within the space of a session or so, he really took the game out of their hands and just put the pressure right back onto the opposition.”

## NCL T20 trophy unveiled

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday unveiled the trophy for the first edition of NCL T20 tournament.

The eight-team tournament would begin on December 11, with all the matches scheduled to be held in Sylhet. BCB officials informed that the prize money for the winners would be Tk 20 lakh.

The tournament is a big opportunity for local players to gain T20 exposure and for BCB to filter talents for the premier T20 tournament in the country, which is the BPL.

The captains of the eight teams lauded the measures for holding the tournament during a ceremony at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday. The need for a T20 tournament alongside BPL had been felt and last year the BCB made room in its tight schedule to satisfy the demands of local T20 stars.

“Thanks to BCB for arranging such a tournament. I think it's a great initiative before the BPL,” Yasir Ali Chowdhury, who will skipper Chattogram Division, told the media at the event.

The 32-match tournament will end on December, with national team skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto also featuring in the very first edition



Jude Bellingham put on an inspirational performance during Real Madrid's 3-0 LaLiga win away to Girona on Saturday. Bellingham opened the scoring before half-time and set up Turkish playmaker Arda Guler for Madrid's second before Kylian Mbappe produced a clinical finish for their third. The win saw Los Blancos cut the gap on league leaders Barcelona to two points after the Catalans drew 2-2 at Real Betis earlier on the day, with Madrid having played one fewer match.

PHOTO: REAL MADRID

## A stunning New Zealand collapse

AFP, Wellington

Captain Tom Latham refused to blame fatigue for his New Zealand side crashing to a home Test series loss against England on Sunday, weeks after their stunning triumph in India.

New Zealand haven't come close to recapturing the magic of the 3-0 sweep of India just five weeks ago, when they became the first team in 12 years to win a Test series against the cricketing giants on Indian soil.

The balloon spectacularly popped against England, who stormed to emphatic wins in Christchurch and Wellington to clinch the lop-sided series with a game to spare.

The India series marked the end of nearly two months in the subcontinent for the Black Caps, but Latham denied a suggestion his players were still feeling the physical and emotional effects of what they had achieved.

“I don't think so, it's sort of a different squad, a few different personnel in this team,” said

Latham, referring to the switch in focus from spin to seam bowling to suit home conditions.

“But we came here to this series with high hopes of still trying to play our brand of cricket and sticking to that as best we can.”

“We haven't



been at our best, and credit to England, I think they've played fantastically.”

The New Zealand skipper was full of praise for England batter Harry Brook, who scored a fine 171 in England's eight-wicket victory in the series opener in Christchurch

last week, and followed that up with a 123 on day one of the second Test.

“You look down that scorecard, there's one guy that took it away from us,” said crestfallen Latham.

“I think on a surface that was offering enough for our bowlers, the way Harry played in that first innings was outstanding.”

“To play in the way that he did, it just puts you under pressure from ball one, and he played some incredible shots that you don't see from other teams around the world.”

Latham was giving few clues about potential player changes for the third Test, which starts on Saturday in Hamilton.

Pressure is mounting to recall batter Will Young, omitted from both England Tests despite being named player of the series in India for his run-scoring deeds.

Opener Devon Conway is without a century in his last 15 Tests and could make way.

The Test at Seddon Park will be the last for the retiring former captain and accomplished seam bowler Tim Southee.