

Bangladesh deny England clean sweep

All-round Shakib Al Hasan gives Bangladesh consolation win over England

● **Shakib notches a half-century and four wickets in an ODI for record-breaking fourth time**

AFP | Chittagong

Shakib Al Hasan put in a fine all-round performance as Bangladesh pulled off a consolation 50-run win in the third one-day international against England in Chittagong yesterday.

Shakib top-scored with 75 to guide Bangladesh to 249 runs and then claimed 4-35 to help the home side bowl out England for 196 in 43.1 overs, ending the series 1-2.

This was England's last scheduled ODI until September 8 and gave the defending champions useful practice on tricky South Asian pitches ahead of the ODI



Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan (C) greets his teammate Mushfiqur Rahim as England's Chris Woakes (R) and Jofra Archer (2R) gesture

World Cup in India later this year.

Ebadot Hossain and Taijul Islam played their part in the win with 2-38 and 2-52 and Mushfiqur and Najmul chipped in with 70 and 53 runs respectively

with the bat.

Bangladesh had England reeling on 55-3 with quick strikes after Jason Roy and Philip Salt put on 54 runs for the opening stand.

Player-of-the-match Shakib

broke the stand with Salt going for 35 before bowling out Roy for 19 in his next over.

In between his two wickets, Ebadot handed Dawid Malan a duck.

James Vince and Sam Curran staged a recovery with a 49-run stand for the fourth wicket before they were removed by Shakib and Mehidy Hasan Miraz respectively.

Bangladesh then took full control of the game once Taijul had skipper Jos Buttler out leg-before for 26.

Taijul also bowled Adil Rashid before Shakib returned for his final spell to dismiss debutant Rehan Ahmed.

Mehidy took a low catch at midwicket as Shakib completed 300 ODI wickets, the first Bangladeshi to do so.

Shakib thought he had his fifth five-wicket haul in ODI after Jofra Archer was given out lbw but the decision was reversed on review.

Mustafizur ended the fight of Chris Woakes, who made 34 runs, in the next over to end the contest.

Archer earlier picked up 3-35,

Adil Rashid 2-21 and Curran 2-51 as England bowled out Bangladesh, who opted to bat first after winning the toss, in 48.5 overs.

Curran struck early, handing opener Liton Das a duck in the very first over before he dismissed Tamim Iqbal for 11.

Najmul and Mushfiqur shared a 98-run partnership for the third wicket to steady Bangladesh's innings before the former was run out by Buttler.

Rashid bowled Mushfiqur and Archer ended Shakib's 71-ball innings in the penultimate over, wrapping up Bangladesh's innings the next ball.

England handed an ODI debut to 18-year-old leg-spinner Rehan, who finished with a modest 1-62.

The two teams will now play a three-match Twenty20 international series, with the first match scheduled for March 9 in Chittagong.



Bangladesh's victory in the third ODI gave them some much-needed confidence ahead of the upcoming T20I series against England, which begins on March 9 in Chittagong

Alonso hails 'my hero' Stroll as Aston Martin shine in Bahrain

AFP | Manama

Fernando Alonso stormed to a spectacular 99th podium finish of his career in Sunday's season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix before heaping praise on teammate Lance Stroll, describing him as "my hero".

The 41-year-old Spaniard, a two-time world champion who took a two-year break from Formula One before returning in 2021, finished a stunning third for Aston Martin behind the Red Bulls of double world champion Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez.

Starting from fifth on the grid, he had a poor start, but then rolled back the years with a dazzling drive exactly 22 years after he made his Formula One debut at the 2001 Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne.

"First of all, my congrats to my team-mate Lance. Twelve days ago, he had surgery and now he is fighting here right with everybody. It's amazing for the team," said Alonso of his teammate who was sixth on Sunday.

He said it was unreal that Aston Martin, who finished 12th and 17th in last year's Bahrain race, had produced the second fastest car at the



Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso celebrates on the podium

He's my hero! If you had seen his hand and his feet, you think he cannot race. He is phenomenal and it's inspiring to see his determination and motivation. He deserves a good podium very soon

FERNANDO ALONSO

opening race.

"It's been a great weekend," he said.

He added that Stroll's gutsy performance and determination to race, just two weeks after cracking both wrists and breaking a toe in a pre-season cycling accident, was inspirational.

'One of our worst days', says Wolff as Hamilton bemoans Mercedes lack of speed

AFP | Manama

Team boss Toto Wolff declared Mercedes had "one of their worst days" in racing on Sunday after Lewis Hamilton and George Russell finished fifth and seventh at the Bahrain Grand Prix.

The Austrian, who on Saturday said his team had to go back to the drawing board and re-design their car, was backed by seven-time champion Hamilton who said the former champions had slipped to become 'the fourth-fastest team'.

In a race dominated by the triumphant Red Bull team, who were first and second with double champion Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez, Fernando Alonso, 41, charged through to finish third on his debut with Aston Martin after outpacing Hamilton.

"They were just quicker than us," said a calm Hamilton. "The Ferraris are quicker than us. We're the fourth-fastest team."

Carlos Sainz finished fourth for Ferrari after team-mate Charles Leclerc's retirement with a power failure, while running third.

"That was one of our worst days in racing. It was not good at all," said a downcast Wolff, the man who had led Mercedes to eight consecutive constructors' championship titles from 2014 to 2021.



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton competes during the Bahrain F1 Grand Prix

They were just quicker than us. The Ferraris are quicker than us. We're the fourth-fastest team

LEWIS HAMILTON

"We are lacking pace front, right, and centre. The Aston Martins are very fast and the Red Bull is just on a different planet."

"It hurts that they are so far ahead. It reminds me of our best years where we put one second on everyone else. That is the benchmark."

"We need to put one foot in front of the other to come back, but nobody in this team will throw in the towel."

"We need to dig deep, deeper

than we ever have done before. And we can do that..."

The bleak outlook for Mercedes was made worse by the knowledge that, essentially, Aston Martin are a 'customer' team running a Mercedes engine, gearbox and transmission, but in a car designed independently.

With Hamilton, 38, in the final year of his contract after winning six of his seven drivers' titles at Mercedes, facing a dilemma over his own future, the once all-conquering 'silver arrows' have a potential crisis.

That Hamilton was passed by Alonso and Russell by Stroll, in the second Aston Martin, during the race served only to add to Mercedes' pain and stiffen Hamilton's resolve to push for a new concept with their car.

He suggested the team need to persevere with the existing

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design - which was created for the new 'ground effect' era last year but flopped - while also planning a new one.

"We've just got to keep working," said Hamilton. "We know we're not where we need to be and we know that this isn't the right car."

"It's a difficult one, but I've just got to try and stay positive, keep my head up and keep pushing the guys, keep trying to be a positive light for them and get the best points I can on a weekend."

He added praise for the remarkable job done by Alonso and Aston Martin.

Red Bull have F1 title 'sewn up' after one race, says rival

AFP | Manama

Mercedes driver George Russell believes Red Bull have the 2023 title already "sewn up" after seeing Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez cruise to a one-two finish in the season-opener in Bahrain.

Verstappen, who is attempting to collect a third successive drivers title, won comfortably from pole position at Sakhir with Perez almost 12 seconds behind.

Evergreen former two-time world champion Fernando Alonso was third in an Aston Martin, more than 38 seconds behind Verstappen.

"They have this championship sewn up. I don't think anybody is going to be fighting with them this year," said Russell, who was



Mercedes' British driver George Russell (L) shakes hands with Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen during a group photo opportunity

seventh, almost a minute off the pace.

"They should win every race is my bet with the performance they've got," he told the BBC after only the first of a record 23

races this season.

Russell admitted Ferrari may still pose questions in qualifying but on race day, Red Bull have the speed, power and reliability to thwart their rivals on the grid.

"They have it easy at the moment and they can do what they like," Russell said.

They have this championship sewn up. I don't think anybody is going to be fighting with them this year. They should win every race is my bet with the performance they've got

GEORGE RUSSELL

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