



Sakib Al Hasan receives treatment on his sore arm after his unbeaten 67 against Sri Lanka in the Champions Trophy on Saturday.

PHOTO: TIGERCRICKET.COM

Sakib plays cool



BISHWAJIT ROY from Chandigarh

It is too early to say that Sakib Al Hasan has come to rule the middle order for a long time for the Tigers but his undefeated 67-run knock against Sri Lanka made many believe that the youngster has the potential to do so.

The Magura lad is now only 19-year old but his mental strength already has not only impressed the team think-tank but also his teammates, like out-of-form Mohammad Ashraf, who praised the young man's toughness.

When he made an impressive debut during the recently concluded Africa tour, many including skipper Habibul Bashar had said that they were looking forward to how the young

left-hander responded against the big names. Sakib, however did not frustrate them at all and successfully overcame his first real test against biggies Sri Lanka.

The way the left-hander tackled the formidable Lankan attack coming at number four with the scoreboard reading 55-2 and showed his temperament to carry the innings was simply fantastic.

The young guy also said that temperament is key in his batting but he was not satisfied with his technique.

"I think temperament is the key in my batting but I have to improve my technique if I want to become a good middle order batsman. Actually my main target is to become a good all-rounder that's why I give importance to both batting and fielding," said a soft-spoken Sakib, who is also a useful left-arm spinner though he conceded 23 runs in two overs on Saturday's match.

"I was a little bit nervous because there was a big difference between Sri Lanka and the opponents of my first

few matches. But after a few overs I got back my confidence. I had hope that we could win this match if we had some wickets in hand in the last few overs," said Sakib, who was spotted in a BKSP talent search programme at Narail and the showed his potential at different age levels.

The rookie said that he wants to play innings for team victory rather than for personal records.

"I like Rahul Dravid's batting because most of his innings play vital role in the team's victory. Actually I want to be a match winner," he explained.

Sakib said that he has yet to set any target because it is too early. "Now I only think about match by match. I believe that every match is important for me to cement my place in the team. Still I have to go a long way," said the cool customer, who is a fan of romantic Hindi oldies.



Did U Know?

Shooting made its first appearance as Olympic sport in 1896.



Younis Khan
(Pakistan cricket captain)
"I am always proud to play for my country and hope we can make it to the final here. We have a balanced side even though we will miss Inzamamul Haq."
After being reinstated at the helm for the Champions Trophy.



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Aussie focus on Trophy

AFP, New Delhi

Australian captain Ricky Ponting said on Sunday his team was not worried about the Ashes series later this year and they were aiming to do their best in the Champions Trophy.

"The Ashes series is not a distraction. This is a one-day squad and we are very keen to play well and make it through to the final," said Ponting, whose side are the favourites for the title.

Australia host England for the Ashes series starting in November.

"Every tournament that we have played in the last six or seven years, we have been the favourites. But that doesn't really mean anything because it is all about playing well on a particular day," said Ponting.

Ponting, 31, who led Australia to a World Cup triumph in 2003, said his team was good enough to ensure a third successive title in the West Indies next year.

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Acme, StarTel win

SPORTS REPORTER



Nayeem Islam hammered the first century of the Grameen Phone Corporate League to spearhead StarTel to an impressive 64-run win against Channel F2 Advertising in a battle of two debutants while Acme Laboratories defeated Syfang Fan by three wickets yesterday.

The number four batsman remained unbeaten on 102 as the inserted StarTel reached 222 for six in the stipulated 50 overs at the under prepared Fatullah Stadium.

The slow wicket and heavy outfield restricted the scoring even after a remarkable recovery operation by Nayeem and Abul Bashar,

who put on 155 runs for the fourth wicket after StarTel were reduced to 23-3 in the 12th over.

Man-of-the-match Nayeem, who hit four fours and two sixes in 140 deliveries, received excellent support from Bashar, whose 66 featured two fours and one six. Due to the thick outfield, there were only seven boundaries in the innings compared to four sixes. Ahsanullah Hassan was the only other player to reach double figures.

New ball bowler Shikder Kankan was the pick of Channel F2 attack with 3-35 from 9.3 overs.

Channel F2 never looked to chase the total as they maintained a below-three run-rate before being bundled out for 158 in the final over. Nahidul Haque Shawon

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Exhibition match for Zidane

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will organise an exhibition football match in honour of French great Zinedine Zidane on November 7.

Zidane, one of the greatest footballers on the earth who retired from the game after the 2006 FIFA World Cup Football, is expected to arrive in Dhaka on November 7 for a two-day visit as guest of Grameen Bank and Danon Food, who will launch an energy yoghurt drink plant in Bangladesh.

Zidane, a World Cup winner in 1998, will also visit the BFF Bhaban on November 7 before witnessing the friendly match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

MSC ride on Prince treble

SPORTS REPORTER

Ariful Haque Prince slammed a hat-trick to give Club Cup champions Mohammedan Sporting Club an auspicious start in the Green Delta Premier Hockey League with a thrashing 4-0 win over Sadharan Bima at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan dominated an embarrassingly one-sided match but had to remain satisfied with a rather 'slender' victory in a bid to complete the treble for Prince, who opened the account with a field goal just three minutes after start.

The prolific national striker added his second ten minutes later as the black and whites went to the break with a comfortable 2-0 lead. Mohammedan wasted as many as four penalty corners after the break as the forwards selflessly tried to provide Prince the chance to score. After a series of near misses, Prince finally completed the first hat-trick of the league in the 63rd minute

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PHOTO: AFP

WILL IT BE A LASTING SMILE? Australia captain Ricky Ponting smiles as he speaks to reporters during an open media session in New Delhi yesterday.

Ad

Day finds positives



BISHWAJIT ROY from Chandigarh

Bangladesh might have lost their opening qualifying match in the ICC Champions Trophy against Sri Lanka, but coach Dav Whatmore preferred to look on the bright side of it ahead of the do-or-die battle against the West Indies at Jaipur on Wednesday.

The Tigers lost the match by 37 runs chasing a mammoth Sri Lankan total of 302. The high point of Saturday's match was a spectacular rearguard action that saw Bangladesh posting an encouraging 265, their highest total against the Lankans, after yet another top-order failure.

"I'm not frustrated at all with the performance. I think we played so far the best match against Sri Lanka though we have won one match against them. Mind it this time we played against a full-strength Sri Lankan side," said Whatmore.

"It is encouraging for me that we recovered from 4-78 to post 265-9 in chase of a huge total. The way we finished the match was fantastic.

"The players made some mistakes especially the seam bowlers. If there were some twenty odd runs less in the Sri Lankan total then definitely the match could have been more exciting," said the Sri Lankan-born Australian in a post-match briefing at Mohali.

Whatmore however wanted consistency from his boys so that they could make their presence felt in the international stage.

"If the boys can continue their performance then everything will fall in place. So the important thing is to continue the progress and I believed that this team is improving well and are on the right track," said a confident Bangladesh coach.

Skipper Habibul Bashar, who made a forgettable ICC Championship Trophy debut with a duck, told reporters that the way his team fought against the Lankans was a morale victory.

"It is difficult to chase three hundred runs in any condition. It was a very stiff target for us but the encouraging fact was that we never gave up

the fight. Everybody looked confident in the middle which is very important for us. You should also understand one thing is that Sri Lanka has been playing very good cricket in recent times," said Bashar.

The 33-year-old said that the positive frame of mind would definitely auger well in the next two games.

"I think scoring 265 runs batting second in a day-night match was not a joke and I must say it is our morale victory. We want to carry on this form in the next two games. Our main objective is to qualify into the main stage. We didn't perform up to our potential in the Africa tour but the team looked very confident after this performance," added Bashar while defending his decision to field first.

"I still believe it was not a wrong decision. Actually our seamers especially the two new-ball bowlers couldn't exploit the condition. It could have been a different story if we had taken one or two early wickets."

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Question mark on Mehrab

SPORTS REPORTER from Chandigarh

Whether all-rounder Mehrab Hossain would be given his international debut or not in the next match at Jaipur against West Indies has been the issue of the team think-tank.

It was learnt that there have been different opinions regarding his inclusion in the team as some believe that it would be useful for the team to bring the young all-rounder in to strengthen the batting line-up.

The Jaipur wicket is expected to favour the spinners and that's why some want to drop Syed Rasel for the second match. But captain Habibul Bashar said that he didn't find any reason to change the squad.

"I don't think there is any reason to make any chance in the team which played against Sri Lanka so well. I think this combination will do well in the second match also," hoped Bashar.

On the other hand chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who is now with the team, didn't rule out the possibility of Mehrab playing in the next game.

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Asif's family worried

SPORTS REPORTER

The family of injured shooter Asif Hossain Khan feels that the Commonwealth and SAF Games gold medalist need foreign treatment for his quick recovery from pain.

Rehana Khan, mother of 19-year-old Asif who was a victim of brutal police attack on last Monday, told reporters yesterday that his son -- under treatment at the Metropolitan Hospital -- was having tremendous pain.

"His condition is not well at all. Like Shoebuzzaman (the other senior shooter who was also severely beaten up) he has been feeling heavy pain in the sole of his feet. The pain has spread to his back and he could not seat properly yesterday," Rehana told.

"He could not sleep last night at all. We are thinking about taking him abroad but we can't get the medical certificates of Asif from the hospital," the concerned mother informed.

"However, the shooting federation general secretary (Nazim Uddin Chowdhury) has told us that they will show the reports to orthopaedist Ruhul Haque and if the physician suggests to take him abroad, they will make arrangements.

"I pray that it is not too late. Also, we need the full assistance of the federation because without its help, we cannot get the necessary papers for Asif's travel as he is freed on bail," said Rehana.

Asif, Shoeb and three others were released on bail after the police had filed a case against them after Monday's incident.

The shooting federation yesterday filed a case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Deputy Commissioner Obaidur Rahman Khan, Officer-in-

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PHOTO: AFP

ONE MAN SHOW: West Indies' Chris Gayle acknowledges the crowd's applause after dismissing Zimbabwe captain Prosper Uteya during the second qualifying match of the ICC Champions Trophy at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday. Gayle took three wickets in 13 deliveries and then smashed 41 in West Indies' nine-wicket win.

Easy win pleases Lara



BBC ONLINE/AFP, Ahmedabad

West Indies captain Brian Lara was pleased with the efficient way in which his side disposed of Zimbabwe in their ICC Champions Trophy qualifying game Sunday.

"We were very clinical in our approach and bowled really well," he said after his team skittled Zimbabwe for only 85.

"We would have loved to win the toss and bat but three batters got a chance and we won in style which is important.

"It was a very good batting track but the guys stuck to the line and length they're supposed to and got

results. "We came here to win the game emphatically and I think we did that," the 37-year-old captain said.

"It does not matter what the opposition is. I thought we fielded and bowled great. In batting, we went out and showed purpose which was very important.

"The confidence we take from this game will work for us in future." Chris Gayle took three wickets and smashed a rapid 41, despite suffering from flu, to be named man-of-the-match.

He polished off the Zimbabweans with 3-3 in 19 deliveries and then paved the way for a nine-wicket triumph with almost 36 overs to spare.

"It wasn't the easiest wicket to bowl on but we got a good start from Jerome Taylor and Ian Bradshaw and capitalised on that," Gayle said.

"I wasn't feeling well but I tried to be myself and it didn't really pay off

with the bat. "I feel a bit weak and it will take a while to get into the groove but once I can I will try to build on it in the next set of games."

For Zimbabwe's young captain Prosper Uteya, it was another chastening defeat which left them facing early elimination from the tournament.

Uteya, who hit a brave 27, was one of only three players on his side to make it into double figures.

"They didn't do their job when batting and didn't have a good shot selection," he said of his teammates.

"They didn't give themselves a chance to build an innings and

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PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan's hat-trick hero Prince (C) tries to slot the ball past Sadharan Bima custodian Sadequr Rahman during their Green Delta Premier Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday. Prince struck thrice in Black and Whites 4-0 victory.