

SPORT



Stalwart Mushfiqur Rahim (R) celebrated becoming the first Bangladeshi batsman to score three double-hundreds in Tests in an animated fashion after he smashed an unbeaten 203 against Zimbabwe on the third day of the lone Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Mushfiqur was well supported by skipper Mominul Haque, who hit a ton while stringing together a 222-run fourth-wicket. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Third double 'the easiest'

There was talk about whether Mushfiqur Rahim would even be considered for the Bangladesh Test squad to maintain team continuity after Mushfiqur had opted out of the Pakistan tour due to security fears. There were also huge concerns over the Tigers' recent performances in the longest format, but Mushfiqur Rahim brushed aside all the negative aspects as the right-hander became the only Bangladesh batsman to score three double-hundreds in Tests and took himself to a new height. His unbeaten 203 helped Bangladesh post a huge 560 for six declared in their first innings and the Tigers are eyeing a win in the Test. Despite reaching the new milestone, when asked to compare this double hundred with the previous two, the experienced cricketer perhaps gave a message by saying this was the easiest pitch among the three. His comment perhaps tells Bangladesh batsmen not to have a false sense of security when they face tougher opponents. During a more than 20-minute press conference, Mushfiqur spoke about his emotions, achievements and about his future. The excerpts of the press conference are given below:



On whether he feels relieved after his third double ton

There is nothing to be relieved about. If you notice I have scored 74 in my last Test innings. I never felt pressure, not even when I came to play here. I think whenever I am playing my importance should be to contribute behind the victory of the team. There was a plan from our team that someone from the top six should score hundred, 150 or a double-hundred once they get set. Mominul tried well and batted really well. I think everyone tried hard from their end and I was lucky that I was able to score the double-hundred, but the most important thing is our team is in very good situation which, was badly needed for us.

On comparing this double ton to the previous two
If you ask about comparisons, it was perhaps the easiest wicket to bat on. And it's not that they [Zimbabwe] had very threatening bowlers who were swinging the ball or turning, or even had a mystery bowler in the line-up. Among the three double-centuries I scored, I think this was the easiest wicket.

On whether he eyed for a triple hundred

A DINOSAUR!

It was a normal celebration and I did not think ahead about what I was going to do. My son is a big fan of dinosaurs and whenever he watches dinosaurs, he celebrates and gets excited about it. My double century was for him. No, no... I didn't do it (celebration after hundred) targeting anybody. In my career I never did anything for revenge. I will be fighting with myself till the end of my career. What I thought was that if I could make the double hundred, I would do it for my son and that inspired me to reach my target in the end.



Yes, obviously I had a plan. To be honest I did not think we would declare the innings at that time as we still had two days in hand. I had it in my mind as Liton was at the other end, so I thought if he could score his hundred then I will also have the opportunity to score a triple hundred. It might not be possible today [Monday] but we could have done that inside the first session tomorrow [today]. I will try to utilise the opportunity if it arises in future. Weather could be a reason but I haven't asked yet. We have a quality bowling attack and I hope that this innings will be enough for us to win the game.

On whether he is now pressure-free after he left keeping

How am I pressure-free? I think the pressure has increased as it was two departments previously and I could have gotten help from one if I failed in another. But now there's only one as I can't bowl (smiles). I think we have to accept the reality and I am getting older now. I think it's time to focus on the other side. On whether he feels that this is his peak time and also the time to take his batting average over forty

This is Bangladesh, here, at this stage of your career is when you get dropped. I never felt this is my peak time but at the same time if you notice in world cricket, this should be the time for a bowler or batsman to mature. After playing for over

12-15 years it is important to give returns on the investment. I am trying to maximise my score from a hundred to a double or even a triple while trying to remain unbeaten. It will be good both for me and the team.

On surpassing Tamim and becoming the highest run-scorer in Tests

Alhamdulillah, I didn't know that. Tamim knows obviously, he knows everything (smiles), I have always said that he is my favourite batsman. There is always a healthy competition between me and Tamim and we always encourage each other. I know we enjoy each other's achievements, which are for the team.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

ZIMBABWE: First innings 265
BANGLADESH: First innings R/B 4s/6s

Tamim c Chakabva b Tiripano	41/89	7/0
Saif c Chakabva b Nyauchi	8/12	2/0
Nazmul c Chakabva b Tshuma	71/139	7/0
Mominul c & b Ndlovu	132/234	14/0
Mushfiqur not out	203/318	28/0
Mithun c Chakabva b Ndlovu	17/23	3/0
Liton c Chakabva b Raza	53/95	5/0
Tajjilul not out	14/19	1/0
Extras: (b-8, lb-3, nb-5, w-5)	21	
Total: (For 6 wickets in 154 overs)	560	
Did not bat: Nayeem, Ebadat, Jayed.		
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-96, 3-172, 4-394, 5-421, 6-532.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tiripano	30	6	96	1
Nyauchi	27	3	87	1
Raza	30	2	111	1
Tshuma	25	2	85	1
Ndlovu	42	4	170	2

ZIMBABWE: Second innings R/B 4s/6s

Masvaure b Nayeem	0/2	0/0
Kasuzu not out	8/18	0/0
Tiripano c Liton b Nayeem	0/1	0/0
Taylor not out	1/9	0/0
Extras:	0	
Total: (For 2 wickets in 5 overs)	9	
Yet to bat: Raza, Chakabva, Ervine, Maruma, Nyauchi, Ndlovu, Tshuma.		
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-0.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nayeem	3	1	4	2
Tajjilul	2	0	5	0

ICC WOMEN'S T20 WC Australia keep hopes alive

AFP, Perth

Rachael Haynes and Meg Lanning revived Australia's stuttering women's Twenty20 World Cup title defence with a match-turning 95-run partnership in the home side's tense five-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in Perth on Friday.

The four-time champions were on the brink of elimination at 10 for three chasing 123 before vice-captain Haynes made 60 and skipper Lanning managed 41 not out to rescue the home side, who lost their opener against India on Friday. "Hopefully it settles our group down," player of the match Haynes told reporters.

Final comes to life after 15-wkt day

SPORTS REPORTER



An action-packed day at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday saw 15 wickets fall during the third day's play of the Bangladesh Cricket League final, with veteran left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak taking seven wickets to help give South Zone a healthy lead against East Zone.

Razzak spun South to a 213-run first innings lead after East Zone were bundled out for 273, having resumed on 110 for three. Razzak took five

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH V EAST
SOUTH ZONE: First innings 486 all out and second innings 125 for 8 (Mahmudullah 17, Mahedi 41 not out; Mahmud 2-22, Hider 4-51, Ruyel 2-22)
EAST ZONE: First innings 273 all out (Pinak 38, Ashraful 28, Mahmudul 33, Imrul 22, Afif 47, Tanzid 82; Shafiu 2-72, Razzak 7-102)



Veteran left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak led from the front, registering a seven-wicket haul for South Zone on the third day of their Bangladesh Cricket League final against East Zone in Chattogram yesterday. East Zone's Abu Hider also bagged a four-for as they reduced South Zone to 125 for eight before stumps. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

more wickets yesterday to finish with figures of seven for 102 in 32.3 overs.

Although East Zone's pace trio of Abu Hider, Hasan Mahmud and Ruyel Miah rattled South's second innings, they were still in an advantageous position as they extended their lead to 338 runs after finishing the day on 125 for eight.

Hider claimed four wickets, including the one of Mahmudullah Riyad, who continued his poor form in longer-version cricket after making only 17 runs in South's second innings. Number eight batsman Mahedi Hasan rescued his side from complete disaster as his unbeaten 41 helped South cross the

hundred mark.

Hasan and Ruyel took two wickets each.

Earlier, ICC Under-19 World Cup winner Tanzid Hasan, was the star performer for East on his first-class debut as the left-hander hit 82 off 87 balls, which contained seven fours and two sixes.

Tigresses fall short

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh women started their ICC Women's T20 World Cup campaign with an 18-run defeat to their Indian counterparts at the WACA in Perth yesterday.

The Tigresses, going up against an Indian side that got the better of the defending champions Australia by 17 runs in the tournament opener on February 21, went into the game as underdogs. In reply to India's 142 for six, the Tigresses could only manage 124 for eight.

India displayed their prowess in the way they started the game after being asked to bat. Despite losing opener Taniya Bhatia in the second over, the women in blue powered to 54 for two at the end of the six Powerplay overs. Shefali Verma, who contributed the most during that period to



Bangladesh women's celebrations during the Indian innings turned pale as the Tigresses suffered an 18-run defeat in their first ICC Women's T20 World Cup match in Perth yesterday. PHOTO: ICC

ensure a flying start, was however dismissed in the final over of the powerplay after a quickfire 17-ball 39 that featured two boundaries and four sixes.

However, the Tigresses did manage to regain some control with a few quick wickets and some excellent fielding display that helped put a lid on the scoring rate. However, the momentum of the game shifted at the end as Veda Krishnamurthy's quickfire unbeaten 11-ball 20 saw India pile up a challenging total.

And chasing down the total called for some firepower in the batting order and the Tigresses felt the lack of it immensely during their defeat. Murshida Khatun started proceedings brightly. The left-handed opener smashed a 26-ball 30, laced with four boundaries, before falling prey to Arundhati Reddy in the eighth over.

The Tigresses lost two quick wickets in the middle when Sanjida Islam and Fargana Hoque were dismissed in consecutive overs. Nigar Sultana's 26-ball 35 in the middle ignited some hope for the Tigresses, who were innovative with the bat, playing reverse sweeps, sweeps and cuts often. However, the Tigresses, who do not have a big hitter in their ranks, were still left wanting.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 142 for 6 in 20 overs (Shafali 39, Rodrigues 34, Krishnamurthy 20 not out; Salma 2-25, Panna 2-25)
BANGLADESH: 124 for 8 in 20 overs (Murshida 30, Nigar 35, Fahima 17; Pandey 2-14, Reddy 2-33, Poonam 3-18)
Result: India women won by 18 runs.