



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortuza and first slip Sakib Al Hasan successfully appeal for an lbw decision against Zimbabwe's Terrence Duffin during the fourth and final ODI at the Harare Sports Club ground yesterday.

Aftab delivers the goods

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Aftab Ahmed fell eight runs short of what would have been a well-deserved maiden one-day hundred but the right-hander's brilliant knock guided Bangladesh to a nerve-wrecking one-wicket victory in the fourth and final match to ensure their first-ever series victory in Zimbabwe yesterday.

A record 135-run Bangladesh third wicket partnership between Aftab and young wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim set the tone for an easy victory in the chase of Zimbabwe's 244-8 but a sudden collapse saw the Tigers lose six wickets in the span of 34 runs to complicate matters at the Harare Sports Club.

Abdur Razzak and Shahadat Hossain, however, kept cool to safely take their team to victory when the left-handed Razzak smashed Chamu Chibhaba for a boundary in the second ball of the 48th over as Bangladesh posted to 246-9 in 47.2 overs.

Earlier, it was the story of Aftab and Mushfiqur who set the platform for the much-desired series victory on Zimbabwean soil. Mushfiqur justified his promotion to number three by scoring his maiden half-century after an early loss.

With a fighting 3-1 victory, Habibul Bashar's men not only maintained supremacy over their southern African opponents but also buried memories of a heartbreaking tour last

year when they lost 3-2. It will definitely boost the Tigers' morale ahead of next month's World Cup in the West Indies.

While chasing a decent total, Bangladesh once again made a poor start like the previous games when last match hero Shahriar Nafees fell for a two-ball duck. Another left-hander Tamim Iqbal played a run-a-ball 30 but still, the visitors were reduced to 38-2.

The team management's ploy to send young stumper Mushfiqur up the order clicked as the 18-year old Bogra lad did his job as a grafter with his senior partner Aftab's elegance putting the Zimbabwean attack to the sword.

The pair overtook the third wicket Bangladesh record of 128, shared by Rajin Saleh and Alok Kapali against Pakistan at Karachi in 2003, and ultimately dashed the home team's hope to bounce back.

When Aftab, trapped lbw by pacer Anthony Ireland, returned to the pavilion, Bangladesh were well placed at 173-3. During his career best 92 in 53 appearances, the Chittagonian clobbered six fours and five sixes off 77 balls.

On the other hand, Mushfiqur, who is breathing on the neck of long-serving keeper Khaled Mashud, hit only two boundaries during his 95-ball 57.

Earlier, Bangladesh skipper Bashar made no mistake like the second match, which they lost by eight wickets, to invite the rivals to bat first and leading paceman Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza gave a perfect start by removing the two

openers with 22 runs on board.

Sean Williams (51 off 73 balls) and Chaminurwa Chibhabha (54 off 73 balls) repaired the damage during a 101-run third wicket stand but 200 looked to be a distant total until Elton Chigumbura came up with a spectacular display of over boundaries.

Chigumbura smashed seven sixes and a four in his 57-ball hurricane knock off 77.

Bangladesh brought two changes to the squad from the last day, which won the third match by 14 runs. Mohammad Ashraful was dropped to pave way for Tushar Imran while Mohammad Sharif, a latest injury victim, was replaced by Shahadat Hossain.

The 21-year-old pace bowling all-rounder Sharif was unable to deliver the final ball of his 10th over on Friday as he had to hobble off the field with a thigh strain.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the fourth and final one-day international between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club on Saturday:

ZIMBABWE				
Duffin lbw b Mortuza	12			
Sibanda b Mortuza	5			
Chibhabha c Mortuza b Razzak	54			
Williams c and b Sakibul	51			
Kasten b Shahadat	9			
Chigumbura not out	77			
Taylor b Mortuza	10			
Utseya run out	9			
Ireland run out	8			
Mpofu not out	0			
Extras: (b-1, w-4, nb-4)	9			
Total: (For 8 wks in 50 overs)	244			
Did not bat: E. Rainsford				

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-22, 3-123, 4-127, 5-144, 6-170, 7-191, 8-230.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mortuza	10	0	52	3
Baissa	9	0	47	0
Shahadat	8	0	46	1
Razzak	10	0	36	1
Imran	3	0	20	0
Sakibul	10	0	42	1

BANGLADESH

Iqbal c Sibanda b Rainsford	30			
Nafees c Taylor b Ireland	0			
Rahim st Taylor b Utseya	57			
Aftab lbw b Ireland	92			
Sakibul c & b Mpofu	25			
Bashar run out	14			
Imran lbw b Mpofu	0			
Mortuza c Taylor b Rainsford	11			
Baissa c Duffin b Mpofu	0			
Razzak not out	4			
Shahadat not out	0			
Extras: (lb-1, w-10, nb-2)	13			
Total: (For 9 wks in 47.2 overs)	246			
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-40, 3-172, 4-209, 5-216, 6-216, 7-23, 8-242, 9-242.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rainsford	10	2	41	2
Ireland	10	1	51	2
Mpofu	10	1	52	3
Utseya	10	0	50	1
Williams	4	0	22	0
Chibhabha	3.2	0	29	0

Result: Bangladesh won by one wicket and clinched the 4-match series 3-1.

Man-of-the-match: Aftab Ahmed

Man-of-the-series Mashrafe Bin Mortuza

Toss: Bangladesh



Did U Know?

Paul Collingwood of England scored 120 not out in the Commonwealth Bank Series first final against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on February 9. It was his fourth century, first against Australia.



Nasser Hussain

(Former England cricket captain)
"A poor decision from Darrell Harper who is, in my opinion, a poor umpire. He's made too many shockers and yet the ICC don't change their umpires... they see the footage and yet we see the same umpires, year in and year out."

What to WATCH

NEO Sports	
India v Sri Lanka	Second ODI
Live at 10:00 am	ESPN
Australia v England	
CB Series Second Final	Live at 9:15 am
English Premier Football League	
Arsenal v Wigan	Live at 9:55 pm
STAR Sports	
South Africa v Pakistan	Fourth ODI
Live at 2:00 pm	

4-ODI ban on Afridi

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi will miss the first two matches of the World Cup in the West Indies next month after the ICC banned him for four one-day internationals for jabbing his bat at a spectator.

The 26-year-old had been charged by the International Cricket Council with "conduct unbecoming... which could bring (players or officials) or the game of cricket into disrepute."

Afridi jabbed his bat aggressively in the direction of a spectator after being dismissed in the first one-day international against South Africa at

Centurion on Sunday as he walked out the stairs.

Pakistan have two more one-day internationals left in South Africa before their World Cup campaign starts on March 13 against West Indies in Jamaica.

ICC match referee Chris Broad said in an ICC statement on Saturday: "I took into account what I considered to be the mitigating circumstances of a spectator in close proximity to the player shouting at him as he returned to the dressing room."

"I also spoke to the spectator in question ahead of the hearing to get his version of events."

"However, I found it impossible to escape the conclusion that Afridi's actions were a clear threat to that

spectator, and had that person not taken evasive action then the bat would almost certainly have hit him.

"Such an act is completely unacceptable and on that basis I found the player guilty of the Level 3 offence."

Broad also commented on the specific situation in which the incident arose.

"For the record, I do not believe spectators should be that close to the players or that they should feel they can shout whatever they like and think that is acceptable," he said. "That is a view I have expressed to Cricket South Africa."

Afridi has 24 hours to appeal and, should he do so, he would be able to play until any new decision was made.

No extra pressure: Rahul

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Rahul Dravid was perched a plastic chair on the outfield of the Madhavrao Scindia Cricket Ground in Rajkot when he addressed the media in the customary pre-match press conference ahead of the second one-day international against Sri Lanka. Surrounded by a gaggle of members of the television and print media jostling for space he put the forthcoming match in perspective.

Dravid was keen to underscore the fact that the selection of the squad for the World Cup would not be made simply on the basis of a few matches. "Ideally we would have liked the guys to have played as much as possible but I don't think the fact that they have not played as much as we would have liked will hamper World Cup selection," said Dravid. "We don't make judgments on people who have been playing for a long while on the basis of one game, one innings or one or two matches. Just from the point of view of finding out what is our best combination, it is a bit of an irritant. But I'd rather have a few injuries now than in the middle of the World Cup. We don't view it as any added pressure. We don't judge the World Cup squad just on the basis of this one performance."

Having said that Dravid also spoke about how he was happy with the manner in which the Indian squad was shaping up. "What I like about the squad we are getting together at the moment is that it gives us the flexibility to be able to play different kinds of combinations based on the conditions we are

confronted with, based on the team we will be up against and based on the form of the individuals."

While saying this Dravid did say that there were a number of fitness

concerns in the team. "We still are a little concerned about the boys in terms of their fitness. They have practised a little bit today

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PHOTO: AFP

India captain Rahul Dravid takes part in running between the wicket drills during a training session yesterday at the Madhavrao Scindia stadium in Rajkot ahead of their second ODI against Sri Lanka today.

Rafiqul cracks brilliant ton

SPORTS REPORTER

Rafiqul Islam crashed eight sixes in his blistering 141 as Kurmitola High School handed Shishu Mitoli Vidyalaya a 196-run defeat in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament at the Uttara Friends Club ground yesterday.

Put to bat, Kurmitola piled 301-9 in 50 overs, thanks mainly to Rafiqul who struck seven boundaries in addition to those eight hits over the ropes in his 149-ball knock. He was aided by Hasan, who struck 50. Rashedul of Shishu Mitoli took three wickets.

In reply, Rashedul's school were bowled out for only 105 runs in 29.1 overs. Parvez top-scored with 29 while Abu Musa scalped three for 19.

In far flung Kalindi Club ground, Rashid Adarsha beat Banani Vidya Niketon by five wickets. Sanaullah turned in an all-round performance - two wickets and 22 runs -- to help his school to the win. Minhaj (40*) top-scored for Banani

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PHOTO: STAR

Kalabagan opener Uttam Sarkar drives to long-off during his 123 as Brothers Union wicketkeeper Labdur Rahman looks on in their Kai-Altech Premier League match at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

DOHS owe Brothers one Abahani consolidate lead

SPORTS



REPORTER

Defending champions Old DOHS were relieved to know that they will be in the Kai-Altech Premier Cricket Super League after a Road in a low dramatic finish of the first-leg of the competition yesterday.

On the final day of the 12-team fray, Manzarul Rana carried the bat to help top-of-the-table Abahani come back to winning ways with a comprehensive eight-wicket win against City Club and open up a handsome three-point lead.

However, bottom-table Brothers Union did DOHS a favour when they dashed Kalabagan Krira Chakra's hopes to become the last team in the Super Six with a 16-run victory while Bangladesh Biman recorded an identical win against Indira



MANZARUL RANA ... 130 n.o

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	L	Tie	Pts
Abahani	11	10	1	-	20
Mohammedan	11	8	2	1	17
Victoria	11	8	3	-	16
Sonargaon	11	7	3	1	15
Biman	11	7	4	-	14
Old DOHS	11	5	6	-	10
Pegasus	11	5	6	-	10
Kalabagan	11	4	7	-	8
Partex	11	4	7	-	8
Indira Road	11	3	8	-	6
City Club	11	2	9	-	4
Brothers	11	2	9	-	4

onship leg will start after the Cricket World Cup, scheduled to end in late April.

DOHS and newcomers Young Pegasus ended level on ten points but the former join Abahani, Mohammedan, Victoria, Sonargaon and Biman by virtue of a better head-to-head record.

The season will be over for Pegasus and fellow promotees Partex but Indira Road, City and Brothers will now face survival test in the relegation play-offs. Two teams will be demoted after relegation league.

ABAHANI-CITY

Out-of-favour national all-rounder

Manzarul Rana smashed an unbeaten 130 as Abahani made City Club's challenging total of 261-7 at BKSP look scanty.

Smarting from their surprise loss to Kalabagan in the previous round after nine consecutive wins, Abahani promoted Manzarul to the opening slot and the southpaw -- who had a long lay-off due to injury -- grabbed the opportunity to return to form.

While he played sensibly, Zahurul Islam (72 off 65 balls) gave the chase momentum, hitting seven fours and two sixes during the 135-run opening wicket.

Man-of-the-match Manzarul, whose 145-ball essay was studded

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