

Eye to eye

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Shahadat Hossain loves to give the batsmen a stare, no matter whether the man under the helmet is Sachin Tendulkar or Ricky Ponting. The lanky right-arm paceman made the statement while talking with the press after his brilliant effort with the bat and then with the leather on the fourth day of the first Test match against India at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The 20-year-old was asked the question by an Indian journalist, at a very lively and interesting press conference, who enquired about his exchange with master batter Sachin Tendulkar as he was seen staring at him.

"I always love to stare at the batsman no matter whether it is Sachin or any other batsman in the world. It's not only at Sachin. I also stared at

Australia captain Ricky Ponting in the last Test series at home," said Shahadat, who surprised the vaunted Indian batting line-up with his aggressive bowling.

But his main success on the day was with the bat as his valuable 31-run knock, highest in any level, helped Bangladesh to avoid the follow-on.

"My main intention was to play straight and gave support as much as possible to Mashrafe. I proved that I can also bat," said the 20-year old Shahadat, who is popular with his teammates for his squeaky clean image.

"I told my partner not to think about me. I assured him that I would try my best to stay at the crease as long as possible. I enjoyed the batting today. I think the absence of Kumble also helped us to avoid the follow-on," he said.

Everybody laughed at him when he declared that Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is the best batsman in the squad.

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BANGLADESH-INDIA FIRST TEST SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the first Test between Bangladesh and India at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Monday: INDIA: First innings (Saturday night 384-6)					
Wasim Jaffer b Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	R	B	4s	6s	
Dinesh Karthik c Mohammad Ashraf b Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	56	102	8	0	
Rahul Dravid c Khaled Mashud b Shahadat Hossain	61	99	11	0	
Sachin Tendulkar c Mohammad Ashraf b Shahadat Hossain	101	169	9	0	
Sourav Ganguly c Mohammad Rafique b Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	100	165	13	2	
Mahendra Dhoni c Javed Omar b Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	36	38	6	0	

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Did U Know?

Sachin Tendulkar was the ball boy in a few games that were played at the Wankhede Stadium during the ICC World Cup 1987.



Darren Gough

(England fast bowler)
"If there is a chance to play in an older guys' Twenty20 then I'd be up for it."

While finally accepting his England days are over.

What to WATCH

BTV & NEO Sports

Bangladesh v India

First Test, Day 5

Live from 10:00 am

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Sports News

Live at 8:30 pm

Dav favourite for India role

BBC ONLINE, undated

India's new cricket coach could be revealed as early as June 4, with Dav Whatmore the leading contender.

Whatmore met the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Niranjan Shah in Bangladesh on Saturday.

BCCI spokesman Ratnakar Shetty told BBC Sport: "The committee electing a new coach will meet in Bangalore on June 4.

"They will make a decision. The

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PHOTO: STAR

A TIGER AT HEART: Mashrafe Bin Mortaza salutes the cheering home crowd after scoring his maiden fifty on the fourth day of the first Test against India at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Abahani stay on top

SPORTS REPORTER



A depleted Abahani bounced back in the Kai-Altech Premier Cricket League title race when the leaders thrashed Sonargaon Cricketers by five wickets yesterday.

It was Abahani's first Super League win after a washed-out match and a defeat which helped them open up a three-point lead in the six-team championship table.

Mohammedan stayed alive with a heavy 65-run win over Victoria Sporting Club but the second-placed side cannot afford another loss as it will hand the trophy to Abahani after half a decade.

Sonargaon can catch Abahani by the end of the league if they win their remaining two matches, provided the current table-toppers also lose both their games, but the head-to-head record will speak for Abahani who

have defeated their rivals twice this season.

In another third round match, Tamim Iqbal's blazing hundred gave defending two-time champions Old DOHS a five-wicket victory against Bangladesh Biman to put an end to their six-match winless streak.

ABAHANI-SONARGAON

With only three specialist batsmen in the line-up, Abahani were in deep trouble when makeshift opener Ziaur Rahman and one-down Nazimuddin were sent back without scoring while chasing a 186-run target at BKSP.

However, opener Nazmus Sadat and Naeem Islam, the last recognised

pair which came together at 13-2, weathered the storm adding 86 runs. Sadat was dismissed for 42 but left-hander Naeem shared another significant 50-run stand with wicketkeeper Kuntal Chanda (35 off 59 balls) for the fourth wicket to ease the pressure.

Naeem, man-of-the-match, hit seven fours and one six to 63 in a 97-ball vigil while experienced all-rounder Chandana made a brisk 16 not out to guide Abahani to 187-5 with nearly ten overs remaining.

Earlier, the inserted Sonargaon failed to build a challenging total despite half-centuries by Al Shahrar and Marshall Ayub. Having survived the opening salvo, Shahriar made a 67-ball 52 to steady the first half of the innings.

After Nazmus Sadat scalped the former national cricketer, Ayub single-handedly fought against the slow bowlers during an unbeaten 60 off 97 balls laced with nine boundaries.

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PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

GET OUT OF MY WAY: Bangladesh middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh drives through the covers as India's Dinesh Karthik, standing at silly mid-off, takes evasive action on the fourth day of the first Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The Bangladeshi braveheart

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



Bashar and his top-order for a while.

It was not because of any memory lapse but because of a man who had stood tall to salvage the blushes and had done it in some style.

That man was none other than Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

It could have been a nightmarish day for the Tigers after the top batsmen gifted their wickets away one after another but the 23-year old cricketer, dubbed the 'Narail Express' once again showed his character to give his side certain momentum in the rain-affected match.

If his wholehearted bowling was not good enough then he came up with his best as a batsman to help his country avoid a follow-on in the first match. The right-arm paceman was not only most successful bowler in the first innings

with a figure of 4-97 but also hit his career best 79 to keep his team in contention.

"What I can only say is that he was simply fantastic, fantastic. But you all know that he has the quality to deliver for the team in such a way. Because of him and Shahadat we survived on the day. Mashrafe just gave a very strong indication today that he is shaping brilliantly as an all-rounder," said an excited Bashar, who let his team down by making a second-ball duck.

Mashrafe however was not ready to consider himself as an all-rounder although many rated his 92-ball knock highly, especially the way he kept his cool and smashed the bad balls to take the challenge of overcoming the 39-run barrier to save the follow-on.

"My main duty is to bowl well. I think there is lot of scope to improve my bowling. But I also always try to give my best also in the other departments including the batting. What I thought today was that I will not let go without a fight. I like to take challenges and I am happy that I could do something for my team," said Mashrafe in a press meet.

He praised his partner Shahadat Hossain who helped make it possible.

"I believe in my partner and I must say Rajib (Shahadat) played brilliantly. If

I didn't get the support from him then it would not be possible" said the courageous cricketer, who along with Shahadat achieved a highest nine-wicket Bangladesh partnership during the 77-run essay.

Mashrafe also admitted that the possibility of a half-century was in his mind.

The job seemed impossible as Bangladesh lost eight wickets for 149 runs, still 39 runs behind to force India to bat again.

But the two new ball partner's valiant effort not only made it possible but also gave the home team a lifeline.

"Dav (Whatmore) told me that I have to make a fifty to save the team which worked as a motivation for me," he added.

"I don't think I got an extra motivation against India because always try to give hundred percent against any opponents. I just try to play my natural game," said Mashrafe, who claimed a four-wicket haul against India to script a glorious five-wicket victory in the World Cup in West Indies.

"There was a chance for me to make my first hundred but Shahadat dismissal ended it," he headed.

Draw looms at Lord's



AFP, London

England and West Indies remained on course for a draw in the first Test at Lord's on Monday as the weather reduced both sides' prospects of victory.

West Indies, at tea, on the fifth and final day of the opening match of a four-Test series, were 89 without loss still needing a further 312 runs to reach their victory target of 401 after rain and bad light meant only 20 of the day's scheduled 98 overs had been bowled.

The odds had been slightly

more in favour of England taking 10 wickets in a day as opposed to West Indies scoring the runs they required.

However, openers Chris Gayle (47 not out) and Daren Ganga (31 not out) were largely untroubled by Durham new-ball duo Stephen Harmison and Liam Plunkett.

If England were to force an unlikely win they badly needed Harmison, playing his first international since a disappointing Ashes tour, to find his form after a wayward first innings return of one for 117.

But his first delivery after lunch, a no-ball, was cut by Ganga for a four that saw the batsman reach

2,000 runs in Test cricket.

Plunkett was then thrashed through the covers off the backfoot in cavalier style by left-hander Gayle, who later drove him straight down the ground.

Andrew Strauss, England's captain in the absence of the injured Michael Vaughan, soon had just two slips in for Gayle despite England having plenty of runs to play with.

It wasn't long before Strauss turned to left-arm spinner Monty Panesar, who'd starred in the first innings with six for 129.

Panesar, who'd been due to bowl Monday's ninth over when

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh paceman Shahadat Hossain is ecstatic after dismissing India captain Rahul Dravid on the fourth day of the first Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

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