

Cornered Tigers roar once again



KIWI HUNTER: Bangladesh pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) has every reason to have a dancing celebration after having New Zealand opener Jesse Ryder (L) caught at mid-on during the first one-dayer at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Ryder was Mashrafe's second of four wickets that laid the foundation of Bangladesh's maiden win against the Kiwis.

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashraf's men proved that when the chips are down, they still have in them what it takes to pull out a victory out of nowhere.

Nobody expected the Tigers to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series against New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, but as it always happens, it turned out just right.

The saga of the fourteen players, including several internationals, leaving for the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) hit Bangladesh cricket hard and many predicted that it would take many years to get over the mess. But coach Jamie Siddons agreed after yesterday's seven-wicket win that the entire episode probably did his side a small favour.

"We had the ICL stuff with the changing of several players and a lot of talk and distractions and before that there was the loss against Australia. But credit goes to the boys," said Siddons, who praised the man brought in for this match to replace one of the ICL rebels.

"The one debutant [Nayeem Islam] did a great job with the ball (10-0-34-0) and was probably our best fielder today. Losing players from the group is never good and I hope that doesn't happen again but the team looked good out there."

The Australian coach hoped that the players learned something from the victory, the type he has always stressed, saying: "I don't want to be a stick in the mud but they learned how to play a type of cricket where they had to bowl, bat and field well to win an international game. Hopefully they learned to do this today."

"It is definitely a big relief and a long time coming. As I said yesterday [Wednesday], I think we are playing good cricket to win. It is as

good a win that I've ever had for Australia and I will definitely have a smile on my face tonight," said the Bangladesh coach.

Siddons spoke highly of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Zunaed Siddiqui but was pleased with his captain, who took his advice on building the innings.

"It was a real captain's knock and I liked how he went about the innings. If [Mohammad] Ashraf or Zunaed [Siddiqui] got out at that stage, we'd have been in trouble," admitted Siddons.

Ashraf was pleased with his own performance, 60 off 56 balls, calling it a memorable moment in his stint as the captain.

"I have always tried to do well and I will continue trying to do as well as I can. It is definitely a memorable time for me as a captain and I am pleased that it was a team performance," said the ace batsman.

"We started off very well with Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza] providing it and all the bowlers contributing. And definitely it was a good toss to win," he added.

But days such as this are rare and Ashraf's time as the leader has been full of questions with the number of losses piling up. But the man himself wasn't ready to say that this innings probably saved his captaincy.

"My problem was always my performance with the bat. It was not my field placements or bowling changes. I am enjoying the time and I have the players' support," said Ashraf.

His opposite number acknowledged that Bangladesh were the better team on the day but also said that the overhead conditions played its part.

"Obviously you have to give credit to Bangladesh. They played well. They won the toss on conditions that suited the bowlers and they made the most of it."

"But when you are 60-5, you are up against it. We recovered reasonably well with Oram's innings but



CAPTAIN SMILES, SO DOES THE COACH: Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons (C), who is understandably elated after his first major success with the Tigers, embraces his under pressure captain Mohammad Ashraf (L) while Shakib Al Hasan (R) looks on after Bangladesh's stunningly easy seven-wicket win against New Zealand in Mirpur yesterday.

What to WATCH

Neo Cricket & DD National
India v Australia
First Test, Day Two
Live from 10:00am
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

TALK TURKEY



Sachin Tendulkar
(India's batting superstar)
"It came as a surprise as he told us in the dressing room that he was quitting. It was towards the end of practice and I was surprised. I could not even talk to him since he had to rush to the press conference."
His reaction to Sourav Ganguly's decision to retire from international cricket.

DAY'S EVENT

Citycell B. League
Cib Abahani v Sheikh Russel
Time: 3:30pm
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium
Arambagh v Brothers Union
Time: 4:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Abahani v Khulna Abahani
Time: 6:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

The true warrior

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

The coach calls him the guy who never lets the side down and there is hardly anyone who would disagree.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has time and again proved that he is the real deal when it comes to spearheading the Tigers since his spectacular debut in 2001.

But the most poignant piece of information: four out of his best six bowling performances have come in a Bangladesh victory.

It was no different yesterday as the Narail Express bowled with his usual big-heartedness and the acumen of an experienced campaigner. His four-wicket haul was the cornerstone of Bangladesh's smooth ride to a seven-wicket victory over New Zealand yesterday.

Mashrafe himself remained modest but rated the victory among his best days in cricket, after avoiding serious injury when he slammed against a roller, situated strangely behind the billboards near the boundary rope.

"We completely dominated the

game and remember that it came against a very good batting line-up. They bat very deep and are one of the few teams in international cricket who are purely dependant on their batsmen," said Mashrafe.

He has become wily enough to understand that the Kiwi openers hold the key to a big score for the visitors.

"(Jesse) Ryder and (Brendon) McCullum give good starts and I knew breaking their opening partnership was crucial," added Mashrafe.

To put it simply, Mashrafe gave McCullum a torrid time. Concentrating mainly on getting the ball into the right-hander, Mashrafe bowled twelve dot balls before the Kiwi opener launched him over long-on and then over long-off in a display of bravado. But it ended soon however, when McCullum top-edged a swish off the Narail Express to Syed Rassel at third man in the eighth over.

"He took his chances against me and after he'd hit me for two boundaries, I sensed he was going to go after me and I mainly wanted to give him little room to play," said Mashrafe.

McCullum's opening partner Jesse Ryder took a liking to the

Bangladesh pace attack but found little success against Mashrafe. Later, the portly left-hander topped Mashrafe straight into the lap of Mahmudullah Riyad at mid-on.

Jamie How became Mashrafe's third wicket, trapped leg-before after scratching around for over half-an-hour to score seven.

"I concentrated on movement and it was readily available today," said the Tigers vice-captain.

He bowled a beautiful first spell of seven overs before being unnecessarily injured due to a lack of attentiveness of the Mirpur groundstaff.

But that didn't stop him and he came back to dismiss Kyle Mills, who looked dangerous at one stage.

He had a five-for well within his sights but for Mahmudullah Riyad's dropped catch in the final over.

"This is just part of cricket and all that matters to me is the team's victory," said Mashrafe.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons thought that it was just reward for a man who delivers the goods almost all the time.

"He was definitely the pick of

BANGLADESH-NZ SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the first one-day international between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Thursday:

NEW ZEALAND	Batting	Score
Ryder c Mahmudullah b Mortaza	34	
McCullum c Rassel b Mortaza	14	
How lbw b Mortaza	7	
Taylor c Ashraf b Shahadat	2	
Styris lbw b Razzak	4	
Flynn c Mahmudullah b Razzak	6	
Oram c Rassel b Razzak	57	
Vettori c Nayeem b Shakib	30	
Mills c Shahadat b Mortaza	16	
Southee not out	19	
Gillespie not out	2	
Extras: (lb-5, w-5)	10	
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	201	
Fall of wickets: 1-47, 2-55, 3-59, 4-62, 5-65, 6-79, 7-149, 8-174, 9-185		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mortaza	10	3	44	4
Rassel	2	0	18	0
Shahadat	6	0	29	1
Shakib	10	0	30	1
Razzak	10	0	33	3
Nayeem	10	0	34	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	8	0

BANGLADESH	Batting	Score
Tamim c Styris b Mills	12	
Siddique c Oram b Gillespie	85	
Rahim c Ryder b Styris	30	
Ashraf not out	60	
Shakib not out	5	
Extras: (lb-6, w-4)	10	
Total: (For 3 wickets in 45.3 overs)	202	
Did not bat: Nayeem, Mortaza, Razzak, Shahadat, Rassel, Mahmudullah		
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-85, 3-194		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mills	7	0	28	1
Gillespie	8.3	1	37	1
Southee	9	0	41	0

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A blessing in disguise

Cricket

FARAZ IHTESHAM

When Zunaed Siddiqui walked in to open Bangladesh's historic run chase against New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium fortune had already lent him a helping hand. Zunaed was not the first choice opener to partner Tamim Iqbal.

If everything went according to plan Shahriar Nafees would have opened the batting with Tamim Iqbal. But ICL happened and Bangladesh lost Nafees. One man's loss is another man's gain. Nafees chose ICL and Zunaed got his nod.

It is even more amazing to note

that Zunaed only scored 62 runs in his previous eight matches for Bangladesh at an average of less than eight runs per innings. This statistic alone could spell the doom of an international career. Zunaed got his second break and he grabbed it with both hands. He made a patient, workmanlike, career-best, match-winning 85 which earned him the man-of-the-match award.

Zunaed said after the match, "I am feeling great because the team won."

"My one-day form was really worrying and I feel this to be my best innings so far."

"Planning is very important and if we can follow the plan 100 per

cent then we will achieve the result."

Taking about his match-winning effort Zunaed said, "I built my innings exactly the way I wanted. After Tamim got out my plan was to stay for the fifty overs. I knew we play better against spin and all we needed to do was stay at the wicket."

He was also happy to see making contribution to a big win on a day he and his national team colleagues officially bid farewell to Khaled Mashud Pilot, former captain and wicketkeeper of the Tigers.

"He has done a lot for Rajshahi cricketers and there he is a role

Pilot bidden goodbye

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) accorded a fitting farewell to former national captain Khaled Mashud Pilot, who retired from international cricket on September 28.

During the lunch break of the first one-dayer between Bangladesh and New Zealand, BCB president Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali presented the country's most successful wicketkeeper with a plaque.

Mashud, who played 44 Tests and 126 ODIs, said that it was a poignant moment in his life.

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BANGLADESH'S MOST SUCCESSFUL WICKETKEEPER Khaled Mashud waves to the home crowd after he was accorded a farewell by the Bangladesh Cricket Board during the lunch break of the first one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

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