

## Ash inspired Mashrafe

SPORTS REPORTER in  
Chittagong

Mohammad Ashraf might have frustrated everybody with a suicidal dismissal, but he at least inspired someone in the dressing room to salvage his team from the follow-on on the second day of the second and final Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

It was none other than his deputy Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who admitted that he got the inspiration from his skipper to play his third half-century to save the follow-on.

"Murali had got me seven or eight times before and every time I was out early. That's why my goal was to survive first which I managed to do today. Also boys in the dressing room and Ash (Ashraf) in particular gave me tips on how to handle him and he encouraged me," said the Bangladesh hero of the day.

"I was thinking more about Murali to be honest. Mendis is obviously world-class and currently the top bowler in international cricket but today I found Murali more difficult comparatively," he added.

The braveheart cricketer, for whom it was nothing new as he did the same thing

against India with his career-best 79 to salvage his side from the follow-on last year, also disclosed his plan after Bangladesh were nine down for 145 and still 40 runs away from the follow-on target.

"The plan was to save the follow on. I tried to take as much strike as possible but Rajib (Shahadat Hossain) was a brilliant partner. We have batted together in similar situations a few times before, so I had the confidence in him," said Mashrafe recalling his record ninth wicket 77-run partnership with Shahadat.

Mashrafe said that the dismissals of Ashraf and Mushfiqur Rahim were the turning point for them.

"They bowled well with the new ball and Mendis is always dangerous when the ball is new. The turning point was the wicket of Ashraf and maybe that of Mushfiq (Rahim). They both got set and then got out trying to play shots," he said.

"Ashraf had played brilliantly until he got out. Ash has a habit of hurrying through the 40s and 90s. Also, I think he spotted a scoring opportunity as the off-side fielders were brought in and Murali came round the wicket," he said when asked to comment on his long-time mate Ashraf's fatal reverse sweep on 45 after two previous abortive

attempts. Sri Lanka were in a comfortable position after the second day's play but the Bangladesh vice-captain still believed that it could be a good contest.

"I think the third day will be crucial in the context of the match. If we can bowl well and restrict them then this match can turn into a good contest. We have to show the application like we did in Mirpur," he hoped.

"There are cracks in the pitch but not that prominent and if you look back to the Test here against New Zealand in October the pitch actually got better for batting in the last three days," he headed.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second and final Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Sunday:  
SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 371-6)  
Warnapura lbw b Ashraf 63  
P Jayawardene lbw b Mashrafe 0  
Sangakkara b Mashrafe 5  
M Jayawardene c Mushfiqur b Shakib 11  
Samaraweera b Shahadat 19  
Dilshan b Enamul 162  
Kapugedera lbw b Shakib 96  
Vaas lbw b Mashrafe 3  
Muralidaran lbw b Shakib 0

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PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIDDER

GET OUT OF MY WAY: Sri Lankan Malinda Warnapura (R) takes evasive action from a powerful sweep of Bangladesh vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza whose fighting 63 saved the follow-on on the second day of the second Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

## CHITS FROM CHITTAGONG

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong

Bangladesh vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza rarely allowed his partner Shahadat Hossain to take singles during the last wicket stand that saved the follow-on on the second day of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The ploy of Mashrafe at a crucial stage when singles were very much needed might have irritated the sparse crowd in the stands. But he did just right. He kept the fans on their toes by taking sharp singles off the final delivery of an over in a desperate effort to regain the strike. Beside this, Mashrafe always tried to create scoring opportunity off the first ball of the next over.

There was a fear that the match would end on the third day as the batsmen started a procession of coming back to the dressing room, slimming the hopes for the home team.

But, when the first innings ended surpassing the follow-on mark thanks to the Bangladesh vice-captain's brilliant half-century the spectators breathed a sigh of relief saying that

"Mashrafe did right".

"If Mashrafe did not take most of the strike, Shahadat (who remained not out on 5) could have easily fallen victim to any of the Sri Lankan strike bowlers to evaporate any hope for the Tigers to come back in the match," the were discussing at the end of the day's play.

The day's hero Mashrafe left the crease bagging 63 runs off 89 balls featuring eight fantastic boundaries and two sixes.

### CAPTAIN & DEPUTY PERFORM DUTIES

Everything was going fine for Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraf from the capital to the port city. He scored a praiseworthy 101 in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Dhaka before arriving here in Chittagong to play the final match of the series which they chase 1-0.

He grabbed the important wicket of Malinda Warnapura (63 runs off 151 balls) with the first delivery of his two overs on the first day during a crucial moment of the game.

Yesterday's Ashraf was seen confident

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## Nayeem to captain Academy

SPORTS REPORTER

Nayeem Islam has been named captain of the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy team that takes on Zimbabwe in a three-day warm-up match at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra from tomorrow.

The 22-year-old will have to prove his match fitness ahead of the tri-series involving Sri Lanka. Nayeem suffered a finger injury while playing for Rajshahi in the National Cricket League last month. Nayeem has played a couple of Tests and five one-day internationals since making his debut against New Zealand in October last year.

The right-hander will have Dhaka's Marshall Ayub, the stylish batsman has shown good promise for the last two seasons, as his deputy. Left-hander Nasiruddin Faruque and tall opener Jahurul Islam

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## 50 chosen for hockey camp

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Hockey Federation initially picked up 50 players for national training camp for the 11th South Asian Games, which will be held in Dhaka next year.

The players have been asked to report at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation on January 7 at 5 pm.

The squad: Mahbubullah Shakil, Mehrab Hossain Kiron, Zahid Hossain, Rafiqul Islam, Prabir Ghosh, Shetul, Issa Miah, Musa Miah, Moshir Rahman Biplab, Tapash Barman, Hadiuzzaman, Enamul Kabir

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## Changed, but not for too long

BISHWAJIT ROY in Chittagong

When others had no clue Mohammad Ashraf looked calm, determined and of course skilful to handle the versatile attack on a tricky pitch at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

It was unusual the way the Bangladesh captain started his innings after a brilliant hundred in the first Test at Mirpur. He hardly has any reputation as a consistent performer and that's why nobody expected anything from him when he came to bat with the scoreboard reading 33 for three in reply to Sri Lanka's 384.

But it seemed that the right-hander was focused on his job to silent the critics as well as bringing his team out of trouble and it could have been a day for the little man if he hadn't made the mistake to put a premature end to his innings.

In the end Mashrafe ensured some solace by smashing his third half-century to avoid the follow-on, but still the visitors managed a handsome first innings lead of 176 runs, but the question was all around: Why has Ashraf made that stupid mistake?

Ashraf was undaunted despite the wickets falling at regular intervals on the other end and he concentrated on the singles to rotate the strike but suddenly the Bangladesh skipper thought that the time has come for him to play some adventurous shot though his side was wobbling.

He charged down the pitch to loft with the turn of Muttiah

Muralidaran to sail the ball over deep midwicket and immediately executed a beautiful cover drive to the fence against the same bowler and then he charged another dangerous Ajantha Mendis in the very next over for a boundary through mid-wicket.

Bangladesh captain might have tried to complete his half-century quickly to ease the

pressure but he paid for his aggressiveness. He had survived twice while trying to play the reverse sweep but it could not stop him from trying again.

He played a little too early against Muralidaran and the ball lobbed off the toe of the bat to reach at the safe hands of wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene and umpire

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PHOTO: STAR

Young Sri Lanka off-spinner Ajantha Mendis sends down one of his mystery deliveries during the second day of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

## Sahagir takes Khulna home

SPORTS REPORTER



Sahagir Hossain's last ditch effort took Khulna to a tight one-wicket victory over Chittagong in the National Cricket League at the BKSP

ground in Savar yesterday. When the ninth Khulna wicket fell With 18 runs required from as many balls, it was Chittagong's for the taking but Sahagir and Murad Khan added the runs needed with three balls to spare in the 38-overs-a-side game.

In a day of shortened matches, Rajshahi also had a close win. They defeated Dhaka by two wickets at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium with Delwar Hossain starring with both bat and ball.

Sylhet chased a daunting 257-run target and won by four wickets against Barisal at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium. Hannan Sarkar

made the first one-day hundred of the season but that went down the drain.

After three rounds, Sylhet, Khulna and Rajshahi have two wins apiece.

### CHITTAGONG-KHULNA

After a delay due to fog, the game started at quarter to eleven. Chittagong captain Nafis Iqbal batted well, scoring 74 off 110 balls with seven boundaries and a six. The right-handed batsman was one of three run-outs in the Chittagong innings as the port city side scored a modest 180 for seven from 38 overs.

Khulna built their innings around Amit Mazumder's 45, Rabiul Islam's 49 and 45 from captain Tushar Imran but once all three left, it was down to Sahagir to see Khulna home.

Tareq Aziz and Rezaul Karim shared seven wickets but Khulna won due to Sahagir's 27 off

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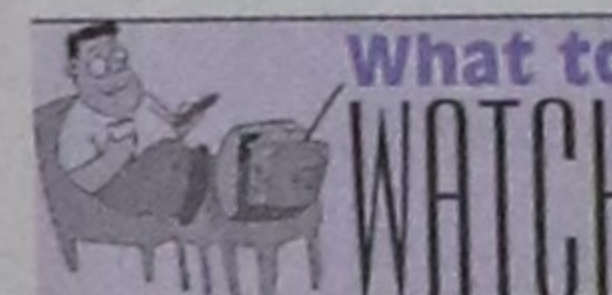
## Did U Know?

Sri Lanka batsman Tillakaratne Dilshan scored his sixth century in the second and final Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong on Saturday.



## Jan Poortvliet

(Southampton manager)  
"For every coach it is special playing against the best in Europe and in the world. It is like a World Cup final."  
On Sir Alex Ferguson's Manchester United.



### BTV

Bangladesh v Sri Lanka  
Second Test, Day Three  
Live from 9:30am  
**STAR Cricket**  
Australia v South Africa  
Third Test, Day Four  
Live from 5:30am (Tuesday)



Bangladesh v Sri Lanka  
Second Test, Day Three  
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium  
Time: 9:30am  
National Cricket League  
(One-day match)  
Sylhet v Rajshahi  
Venue: BKSP  
Dhaka v Khulna  
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium  
Barisal v Chittagong  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Citycell B. League  
Muktijoddha v Mohammedan  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium  
Time: 4:00pm



PHOTO: STAR

SALUTE WAR HEROES: Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed (sitting fourth from R) poses for photographs with the members of the Swadhin Bangla Football Dal during a reception at the Bangladesh Football Federation Bhawan yesterday.

## Better late than never BFF honours Swadhin Bangla Football Dal

SPORTS REPORTER

Thirty-seven years after the Liberation War, country's football war heroes finally got due respect from the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

Although the members of the Swadhin Bangla Football Dal (SBFD) received accolades and receptions from various organisations in the past for their great contribution, the BFF had never come forward to pay homage to the footballers, who played across India in 1971 to create public opinion and raise fund for the War of Independence.

Ironically, the BFF arranged the reception at a time when Kazi Salahuddin -- who refused the lure of an animated life in England then to be a part of that glorious chapter of our football history -- is its president.

As BFF president, everyone expected the country's greatest footballer -- arguably -- to be on stage last night but Salahuddin chose to sit with his comrades and take certificate and crest like the others from Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed, who graced the programme at the

ground adjacent to the BFF Bhawan as chief guest.

General Moeen, also the chairman of National Sports Council (NSC) and president of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), earlier unveiled a plaque dedicated to the SBFD at the BFF Bhawan premises.

"I am proud that the sportsmen of the country were not behind during the Liberation War. They fought on their own frontier and raised 3.5 lakh Rupees for the fund of the government. They also won a great 12 matches," Moeen said in his speech.

Moeen also announced that the NSC will resume pension of the footballers from this month. It is mentionable that the NSC had stopped the monthly Tk 3,000 pension for the members of the SBFD.

"The wives of those who have passed away will get the benefits if they want," he added.

Special guest Ananda Rajah Singham, Head of Marketing of BFF sponsor Citycell, said that the deed of the footballers is an inspiration for the country's youth. "Standing on the shoulders of the giants, Bangladesh will one day play

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