

Rokibul could change mind

SPORTS REPORTER

Just three days after announcing his retirement, there's some speculation that Rokibul Hasan may have a change of heart pretty soon.

According to sources, a member of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has offered to mediate between the retired batsman and the board in a bid to reverse his decision within the seven-day ultimatum given by the board.

It has also been suggested in some quarters that Rokibul may consider writing a letter to the BCB about withdrawing his retirement.

But the man himself hasn't confirmed such claims, although he yesterday sounded a lot better than previous days and seemed in a lighter mood.

"I don't want to talk about these things," said Rokibul when contacted over phone.

According to sources, the BCB directors would weigh up the issue in a March 19 meeting. Some are talking about a punishment up to a two-year ban while others are in favour of giving him a light penalty.

Rokibul's reluctance to discuss a change of mind could equate to nothing but if the word around the cricketing fraternity was to be believed, a whole new twist could be a few days away.

CHITS FROM CHITTAGONG

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Ctg

It was a real treat for the Chittagong fans when the two local heroes batted together on the second day of the first Test against England here yesterday, but it lasted only 29 balls.

Tamim Iqbal and Aftab Ahmed's immense popularity in Chittagong was proved once again as the small crowd at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium came alive when Aftab walked in.

But the right-hander's stay was cut short when the umpire made a contentious bat-pad decision off Graeme Swann's first over. Aftab tried a cute paddle sweep but television replays suggested that the ball had hit the pad and lobbed to Ian Bell at short-leg.

However Tamim made up for Chittagong's loss as he kept himself going and ended the day on 81 not out with some eye-catching shots.

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- SuperSport5**
Bangladesh v England
First Test, Day Three
Live from 9:30am
- SET Max & SuperSport2**
Indian Premier League
Kolkata Knight Riders v Royal Challengers Bangalore
Live from 4:30pm
Chennai Super Kings v Deccan Chargers
Live from 8:30pm
- STAR Sports**
FIA F1 WC
Raceday
Live from 5:00pm
- TEN Sports & SuperSport5**
West Indies v Zimbabwe
Fifth ODI
Live from 7:30pm
- ESPN**
English Premier League
Man United v Fulham
Live from 7:25pm
Sunderland v Man City
Live from 9:55pm
- SuperSport3**
Primera Liga
Barcelona v Valencia
Live from 11:55pm
Valladolid v Real Madrid
Live from 1:55am (Monday)



Bangladesh v England
First Test, Day Three
Live from 9:30am
Venue: Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chittagong



BANGLADESH-ENGLAND 1ST TEST - DAY 2 All too familiar collapse

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

After the first day's play it was inevitable for Bangladesh that they would be put under a pile of runs on the second day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. And England had no problems executing their plan on the placid track as they declared the innings on a mammoth 599 for six just forty-five minutes ahead of the tea break leaving a challenge for the Bangladesh batsmen to survive after a hard day's work under scorching heat.

The whispering after the first day's play was whether this young side have mustered any competitiveness in the longer version and after Shakib Al Hasan's poor decision to field first,



PHOTOS: AFP

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (L) plays off his hips on way to making an unbeaten 81 while England star Paul Collingwood (above) salutes his teammates upon reaching his century on the second day of the first Test against England at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

the batsmen could only give the perfect answer to the critics. But alas, the same old top-order collapse was revisited in the port city courtesy of poor shot selection to give a chance to raising questions towards Paul Collingwood in the press conference: "How do you rate Bangladesh in Test cricket or was it the easiest hundred for you?"

Many were even sensing a result inside three days. Star England batsman Collingwood, who struck a stroke-filled hundred, might have been polite in his answers but the Bangladesh score was 154-5, still 246 runs behind to save the follow-on, didn't reflect anything polite for the home team.

Imrul Kayes and Zunaed Siddiqui were found wanting against short-pitched bowling of Stuart Broad to cause early collapse but the promoted Mahmudullah Riyad seemed to salvage some pride when he was batting with Tamim Iqbal, on 81.

Riyad looked solid and elegant in his batting but lost his composure as Bangladesh missed an opportunity to finish the day with some pleasure. It made no sense to play a ridiculous sweep shot with only few overs remaining on the day when all he needed was to play safely to extend their fourth wicket partnership which ended at 94 runs. Captain Shakib Al Hasan also threw away his wicket to deepen the crisis. And here lies the problem of Bangladesh batting:

"We lost some wickets through poor shot selections as the pitch was really good for batting," admitted Riyad, who has already impressed many with his batting.

The all-rounder however was very much confident about his team's chances of a turnaround in the match from a dire situation.

"Maybe tiredness was a reason behind the collapse. I still think there is a chance for us to avoid follow-on and put up a good total on the board because Mushfiqur (Rahim) and Nayeem (Islam) is still there to bat. And most importantly Tamim batted brilliantly and I hope he can carry on tomorrow (Sunday)," he said.

In the bleak sight that is Bangladesh's batting, local boy Tamim was exceptional. The left-hander fluently reached his half-century off 53 balls but for a change, the ever-improving batsman slowed down as wickets fell in a heap at the other end.

There was a ray of hope with Tamim's batting and the focus would be on him when the game resumes today. He is in best

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'My job is to get runs'

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

England all-rounder Paul Collingwood joined the party by saying that he too was surprised by Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan's decision to put them into bat in the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

England skipper Alastair Cook narrowly missed out on a maiden double hundred after ensuring his highest Test knock but Collingwood (145) and Ian Bell (84) put the home bowlers to the sword to tighten their grips around the Tigers.

"I was surprised when they put us into bat on a very good batting track," said the 33-year-old all-rounder.

Collingwood however was delighted with his tenth Test hundred in 58 games.

"This is a special one for me because it's my tenth Test hundred. To be honest I never thought I would achieve something like this when I first started the game," he said.

"I've played some decent innings along the way but I haven't scored a hundred for some time and once I got myself into a position today I wanted to make sure I got there, so it's a special one for me," added the right-hander, who has achieved a three-digit figure after a gap of more than a year. His previous century came against the West Indies in Port of Spain in March 2009.

"I think it was a very good wicket, it played fantastically well and there wasn't much in it for the spinners. But I'm delighted, I'm not going to get into grading whether it was my best or worst century or my easiest. I think that would be a little unfair because a Test century is

a Test century.

The smiling all-rounder claimed that he was still developing as a player at the age of 33.

"I'm 33 years old but I think I'm developing as a player all the time and getting more confident. There have been innings along the way that, in my mind, have been centuries in the last year but statistically they haven't been. So today it was important to get over the line," he said.

Collingwood was not ready to underestimate Bangladesh despite the home side's poor showing on the first two days.

"I don't want anything to be taken away from our performance. We've done some good things in the game. Bangladesh are improving all the time and they can be a very awkward team to come up against.

"What we've seen in the last two days is a very flat wicket. So it's easy to turn round and say they're not as good as the other Test-playing nations, but they've upset a few along the way and what we have to do is make sure they don't upset us," said Collingwood.

He also said that it was not important for him how his batting looked in the middle rather his focus was always on getting runs for the team.

"I'm not putting myself down as a great or anything like that but to get 10 Test centuries is an achievement. It's a proud moment. The fact that I'm not the best-looking batsman out in the middle has probably gone against me but in the end your job is as a run-getter, not a batsman. Some people forget it's getting runs that is the important thing, not how you get them.

"That's how I've always approached it and I'm happy with 10 centuries. Hopefully there are more to come," he hoped.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Kasba High School of Rajshahi stormed into the final of the Ecstasy Sixth National Hockey Championship with an emphatic 5-0 win over Jessore Municipal Preparatory High School in the second semifinal at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

They will face Dhaka's Armanitola High School in the final today.

In the match, Kasba led the first half 3-0 with Rubel striking twice and Golam netting once.

After resumption, Raju hit the board twice to seal the match.

RATING CHESS

FM Minhazuddin Ahmed maintained his lead in the Prime Bank 12th International Rating Chess tournament at the close of the eighth round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room.

Minhaz defeated Abdullah Al Saif to secure seven points from eight outings while three players -- FM Javed, Oten and Arman Monir -- were second with 6.5 points each. Javed drew with Oten while Monir beat Firoz Ahmed in the eight round games.

FM Khandoker Aminul Islam, Nahid Parvez, Amin,

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PHOTO: AFP

Australian hockey players pose with the trophy after winning the World Cup final against Germany at the Major Dhyana Chand Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

24-year wait ends

Australia lift men's hockey World Cup

AFP, New Delhi

Power-packed Australia proved third time lucky as they won the men's field hockey World Cup after a 24-year hiatus with a 2-1 win over defending champions Germany on Saturday.

Luke Doerner scored the winning penalty corner 11 minutes from the end after Edward Ockenden had put the Kookaburras ahead in the sixth minute and Moritz Furste drew level for Germany in the 48th.

Doerner's eighth goal in

the tournament made him the joint leading scorer with another penalty corner specialist Taeke Taekema of the Netherlands.

Australia, whose previous World Cup title came way back in 1986, had lost the last two

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Mumbai survive Yusuf scare

CRICINFO, undated



The second-fastest T20 hundred, a 37-ball assault from Yusuf Pathan, as delicate as it was brutal, wasn't enough on a day in which precious little was contributed by the other Rajasthan Royals players. Despite Mumbai Indians piling on their biggest score in the IPL, it required special death bowling from Zaheer Khan and Lasith Malinga to deny Rajasthan 19 runs in the last two overs.

Yusuf's onslaught came after Mumbai's youngsters Ambati Rayudu, considered unlucky to have not played for India yet, and Saurabh Tiwary powered the home side to what seemed a massive total of 212 for 6, but it turned out to be one that just about dodged the Yusuf-shaped bullet.

The it's-good-to-be-back ad campaign of the IPL could well have been meant exclusively for Yusuf. In his first innings back in India, he shook a dying match up and gave Mumbai a right scare. The Yusuf show began when Rajasthan needed 143 off 57. He scored 54 off the next 11 balls he faced, 26 other deliveries got him 46, and when he finally got out he left Rajasthan 40 to get off 17 deliveries.

Of the nine fours and eight sixes he hit in a frenetic period of play, three shots stood out -- and they were not sixes. The length deliveries and full tosses were all murdered, but in the 13th over -- he was 57 off 22 by then -- Ryan McLaren bowled a decent enough yorker to him. Yusuf opened the face late, beautifully late, and guided it for four. The next ball was not more than a couple of inches short of being a yorker, but on the stumps, and he managed to get under it, and still hit it to long-off for four. The third yorker of the over was neither wide nor straight, in between, and he leaned back to make space and steered it even later than the one before. More brutal hits preceded a moment of inspiration for Mumbai.

Arguably the best fielder in India, R Sathish, returning from ICL, followed up his direct-hit run-out and a terrific caught-and-bowled with Yusuf's dismissal. He bowled full and straight to Paras Dogra, the other batsman, then dived in his follow through

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Gambhir inspires Delhi

CRICINFO, undated

In his first match as IPL captain, Gautam Gambhir followed up inspired moves in the field with an old-fashioned innings full of sensible strokeplay to save a glimmering batting line-up the blushes in a straightforward chase of 143 on a flat pitch. It was thanks to disconcerting bowling from Dirk Nannes and timely big wickets for Farveez Maharoo that Delhi were chasing a paltry total, but Gambhir had to counter the regularly falling wickets and rising required rate to take his team home.

Sreesanth, who somehow nudged and edged nine runs in the final over to give himself something to bowl at, made the most of the extra few runs at Kings XI Punjab's disposal. He swung the ball beautifully, taking out Virender Sehwag and Tillakaratne Dilshan in his first over, and gave away just 15 in his first spell of three overs.

While sizeable contributions from the other end didn't arrive, Gambhir was not going to contribute to Punjab's cause. He ran hard, hit only one shot in the air before the six in the 19th over, never let the required rate reach unmanageable proportions, and got out with only three runs required. The main feature of

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