

Wild gesture unusual of Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER

It was the 39th over of the Bangladesh innings yesterday when a sudden delay did not register with anyone in the press box. But what developed moments later had the potential to temper yesterday's fantastic achievement.

Shakib Al Hasan, eight runs short of his fifth one-day hundred, stopped bowler Daryl Tuffey in his run-up because people were moving behind the sight-screen at the press box end.

The Bangladesh captain grew frustrated by the minute as the on-field umpires and the ground-staff manning the sight-screen failed to communicate with the crowd behind the bowler's arm.

When even the walkie-talkie wielding security men failed to solve the problem, Shakib took matters into his own hand, stomping towards the boundary and gesturing to the offending man, (apparently in a white shirt) told him in no uncertain terms where to go.

Usually such a cool customer, Shakib's emotions seeped over perhaps due to the magnitude of the occasion and the pressure of batting on 92.

However, this is the sort of farcical delay that one often sees at grounds in the subcontinent but the two galleries behind the sight-screen at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium are often kept off-limits to the paying public.

Perhaps it was the pressure of the large crowds waiting outside the Mirpur venue that forced the BCB to let them into the buffer zone but these things must be managed properly.

Shakib later said that he wasn't irate but wanted the game to go on. "I didn't get angry or anything, but the game was stopped for quite a while then," he said to reporters after the match.

Shakib, though, must also look to manage his emotions on all situations, something that he is usually so good at.

FED CUP FOOTBALL

Brothers, Ctg Abahani post wins

UNB, Dhaka

Brothers Union edged past Chittagong Mohammedan by a solitary goal while Rahmatganj MFS beat Chittagong Abahani by 4-2 goals in tiebreaker in their opening matches of the GrameenPhone Federation Cup Football at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Stadium at Kamalapur in the city yesterday.

Didar scored the all-important goal for Brothers Union in the 54th minute.

In the other match, Sohel and Jewel scored for the old Dhaka 'outfit' Rahmatganj MFS in the 13th and 78th minutes while Touhid and Ararat netted for Chittagong Abahani in the 41st and 58th minutes respectively. The match rolled into tiebreaker after the regulation time ended 2-2.

In today's matches Muktijoddha Sangsad KC play Farashganj SC at 3:30 pm while Arambagh KS take on Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at 5:45pm.

ASIAN GAMES FOOTBALL

Bangladesh open against Uzbekistan

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will play their opening match against Uzbekistan on November 7 in the Asian Games Football to be held on November 7-25 in Guangzhou, China.

The match will be held at the Yingdong Stadium.

Bangladesh, placed in group E with United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hong Kong and Uzbekistan, will play their second match against UAE on Nov 9 at the same venue, and the last match against Hong Kong on Nov 11 at the Haudu Stadium.

All the Bangladesh's matches will be held at 2 pm (Bangladesh Time).



HIS FIFTH AND THE MOST MEMORABLE ONE: Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan looks up to the heavens after scoring an authoritative hundred under pressure during the fourth one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Captain soundbites

Following Bangladesh's series win over New Zealand yesterday, The Daily Star Sport caught up with five Tigers' ex-captains and asked them to share their views on this historic achievement. This is what they had to say:



ROQUIBUL HASSAN

As a cricketer I feel proud after such a great achievement. It had been our duty to start off and now they are taking our cricket to a different strata. Shakib Al Hasan led from the front and the boys chipped in with consistent showings. It truly has been a grand performance.

FARUQUE AHMED

This is the best win ever, no doubt about it. Shakib (Al Hasan) is the most unbelievable performer in the country and simply you can't match anybody with him. I can't express my emotion in words. In my opinion he must be appointed as captain till the next year World Cup. What a performer he is! What also impressed me is that the management worked out the opponents and conditions perfectly.

AKRAM KHAN

We fought to win the ICC Trophy for making an



appearance in the World Cup. I feel great that this team has done a lot to establish themselves in the map of world cricket. It's really hard to express my emotions right at this moment.

KHALED MASHUD

A great success for Bangladesh cricket, especially I am excited as this historic series victory has come with only four months before the World Cup. It's a great feeling indeed. The team has gone through many ups and downs but has done really a tremendous job in this series. I am very happy.

HABIBUL BASHAR

I cannot express in words how I feel today. We have stared down New Zealand after every defeat over the years and now it was their turn. I was happy to see that and to be honest, I am very proud of these players.



Superman Shakib!

MOHAMMAD ISAM



skill?

Shakib Al Hasan did exactly that yesterday. Coming in with his side perilously placed at 48 for three, the Bangladesh captain disdainfully flicked the first ball he faced to the square-leg boundary.

Then in a little over 2½ hours of enthralling batting in front of a packed Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Shakib manured a slippery slope into a majestic mountain that peaked in a series-winning 3-0 lead against New Zealand yesterday.

A fifth one-day hundred followed as he struck eleven boundaries, a six and contributed to three fifty-plus partnerships in the middle of the innings that raised Bangladesh to 241 runs, a total that had 'winning score' tagged over it.

His shots on both sides of the wicket exuded confidence that came through his footwork and placement, none more evident than his nonchalant six over long-on from a length ball by Kyle Mills.

His innings of 106 off 113 balls breathed life into the Bangladesh innings when all seemed to go pear-shaped.

Another critical three-wicket haul and some tremendously well-timed bowling changes later, a parched Shakib Al Hasan had enough strength to raise his arms in glory when the

visitors were stopped at 233 in the final over. There was also perhaps a hint of relief; after all, the toughest game of his career was finally over.

"Wasn't it really hot today?" asked Shakib at the press conference.

"It was quite a tough workout in that kind of weather. When I was bowling I thought I would go down with cramps any moment," he said later.

His performance overturned the Kiwis in the most crucial of cricket matches for both countries and yet, Shakib found something as simple as teammates' encouragement as one of the biggest changes in the team's outlook.

"I know I may be missing a few names but when Rokibul, Suhash (Shafiu) and Shuvo encouraged the team during trying times today, I was very pleased.

"This is really a big change for the team as it didn't happen even earlier in this year."

That the 3-0 win for the Shakib-led Bangladesh came against a side like New Zealand was another feather to their cap, a factor that trumps the 3-0 whitewash over an under-strength West Indies last year.

"Of course no win is little for us but definitely it was more competitive against New Zealand and that's why this is a sweeter victory," said Shakib.

He didn't raise the bat when reaching his fifty, in turn raising a few eyebrows but the left-hander said he had unfinished business at that time.

"I didn't raise my bat of course because a lot of work was still to be done.

"Jamie [Siddons] told us that it's fine if we

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

'I'm under pressure'

MOHAMMAD ISAM



pressure?

After the blustery post-match press conference with questions predominantly of uncomfortable sort, Daniel Vettori mournfully accepted that these three losses against Bangladesh have been a major blow to his captaincy.

"Every loss puts a lot of pressure on the captaincy," was Vettori's simple reply to this correspondent.

Poignantly, Vettori said during the course of the post-match talk that the fifth and final one-day on Sunday would be a must-win game for the Kiwis.

"It is international cricket, so you are playing for your country and that's what you have to do, you have to pick yourself up. This is a must-win game every time you play so that's how the team has to think," admitted the bespectacled Black Caps captain.

It has been a bitter pill to swallow for one of the best all-rounders in world cricket and definitely, someone who has been probably the biggest performer in the team for several years.

But now that he has overseen three defeats to a team against whom they have dominated for so long, it must be a feeling that he has never been through before.

Vettori, who took over the captaincy full-time from Stephen Fleming in 2007, had never looked so forlorn in 13 years playing top-flight cricket. During this time his team came across 25 losses, but these three must have been the worst of them all.

His team suffered a 9-run loss in the first game, probably a shock result to most but when they were knocked off for a 7-wicket win in the third one-dayer, it was a wake-up call. But yesterday's defeat would rankle the team for a long time to come.

In his own words, Vettori said the collapse that felled his team to 80 for five in the 21st over was the turning point that led to the defeat.

"The difference was 80 for 5 and I think we put ourselves under so much pressure from there. I think 80-5, 100-5, 90-6 is the reason we are down 3-0," he said.

"It was a fantastic effort from the whole Bangladesh team and they have been outstanding in the field and with the ball, and they really taught us a lesson under these conditions," added Vettori.

The all-rounder had a lot of praise for his opposite number Shakib Al Hasan, who romped to a century and picked up three crucial wickets.

"They just play well, they play a lot better in their own conditions and they got some good

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

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