

'It was a mistake'

SAKEB SUBHAN from Bulawayo



The last time Mushfiqur Rahim came to a press conference was after the ODI series loss and announced his resignation from the captaincy on Wednesday. He has been avoiding the press since, inviting speculation over the future of his captaincy and indeed the team. After the series-levelling win in the second and final T20i yesterday, the last match of the tour, he came to the press conference and cleared some of the smoke that had gathered.

After the cursory questions about the match the serious questions about his captaincy were fielded well by Mushfiqur who may or may not have captained his last match. Whether he has quit or not will be known once he goes back and talks to the board. "I will talk to board members when I go back home and then come to a final decision," said Mushfiqur. "After announcing my resignation I realised that I should have talked to them before taking the decision. I realise that I cannot take these decisions on a whim -- I did not become captain just because I wanted to. The board had given me a responsibility and I am proud to have taken that responsibility."

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon had said in the aftermath of Mushfiqur's announcement that the skipper was not happy with the teamwork. Those present during the conversation still maintain that the reasons Mushfiqur gave to the press were the reasons he gave to the president -- that he felt his performance with the bat and as a leader led to the ODI series loss. Mushfiqur was embarrassed when the question was put to him.

"There is no problem with the teamwork. It was an emotional decision," he said. "At a time like that no player, much less a captain, should take a backward step and withdraw from a team. I should instead have encouraged the players. It was a mistake. I could not stomach the fact that we were losing to them. At that time I felt that I could not play well and that is why we lost. But later I realised that the fault was not mine alone, but that it is a team game and the blame and credit is shared."

After a tumultuous tour in which a Test series was drawn and an ODI series lost, a tour ending win must be a relief for the captain. "Obviously it feels good. Having lost the last three matches we were under pressure, so it was a big gain to win the match convincingly. But overall we are all a little upset. We wanted to win the ODI series at least. There were some things that were not in our favour and some were our fault. We should have won yesterday's (Saturday's) T20 as well, we lost from a position of strength. There were times when we should have been a bit more mature, but these are all things to learn from a tour and I hope the more we go on such tours, the more we will learn," said Mushfiqur.

It was one of the more decisive press conferences by the Bangladesh skipper. As he said Bangladesh will have finished this tour wiser for the experience. So has Mushfiqur -- a press conference like yesterday was what was needed immediately after the ODI series loss. The good news is he learns from mistakes, which will continue to serve Bangladesh well if he does eventually take back the captaincy.



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh skipper (R) Mushfiqur Rahim celebrates one of the Zimbabwean dismissals with Shamsur Rahman Shuvo during the second T20I at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo yesterday. Bangladesh won the match by 34 runs, bringing smile to the skipper's face after a week of dispiriting performances.

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Shakib salvages pride

SAKEB SUBHAN from Bulawayo



The tables were turned comprehensively on the last day of the tour, as a Shakib Al Hasan-inspired Bangladesh won the second T20I by 34 runs against Zimbabwe and squared the series at the Queens Sports Club here yesterday.

Zimbabwe failed to overhaul the same score that they put up batting first in the first game on Saturday as Shakib returned career-best T20I figures of four for 22 after scoring 40 runs with the bat.

Needing 59 from the last five overs with only five wickets in hand the wheels came off for the home side. Sikandar Raza looked dangerous but was sent packing by Shakib who followed the backing away Raza and was rewarded with an edge on to the stumps. Two more wickets in his next over -- a fine running catch by Nasir Hossain at deep midwicket to dismiss Shingi Masakadza and the wicket of Natsai Mushangwe bowled -- sealed the deal. In the last over, a yorker from Shafiul Islam bowled Prosper Utseya and brought Zimbabwe with a wicket of being all out.

Chasing 169, Zimbabwe's chase met an early roadblock when Abdur Razzak bowled Hamilton Masakadza off the seventh ball of the innings. Bangladesh opened with spin at both ends, but after bowling a good fast over Shohag Gazi came in for some punishment as Vusi Sibanda and Brendan Taylor went on the attack, plundering 16 runs from the third over.

In the fifth over Shakib then got the big wicket of Taylor when the Zimbabwe skipper top-edged an attempted six to Nasir at cover, who steadied himself under a swirling skier to take a good catch. Two overs later Shafiul had Sibanda caught at long off, and at 53 for three the sting went out of Zimbabwe's charge.

Earlier, Bangladesh won only their second toss of the tour and like they did on Saturday lost a wicket in the first over. This time it was Shamsur Rahman who departed early, slog sweeping Utseya into the hands of Malcolm Waller at deep midwicket. Shakib joined his good friend Tamim Iqbal, and the two lynchpins of Bangladesh's batting set about attacking the bowling. Four boundaries -- three from Shakib and one from Tamim -- followed in the third over bowled by Shingi Masakadza. Shakib was at his fluent best

as he was the previous day, slapping balls over cover and swivelling to pull over short fine-leg.

Tamim hit the biggest six of the weekend when he launched Mushangwe over long on into the second tier. The two had put on 82 runs in 8.1 overs when Shakib holed out to deep square leg. In the 11th over, Tamim tried to hit his second six but only succeeded in finding the long-on fielder. With the two set batsmen back in the pavilion, skipper Mushfiqur Rahim tried to take up the attack, but his stay was cut short by the umpire who ruled him out to a ball that seemed headed down leg.

A hundred and eleven for four soon became 116 for five in the 15th over when Mahmudullah Riyad gave a catch to cover. Mominul Haque scored a run-a-ball nine before having his stumps played by Brian Vitori. It was left to Nasir then on to take the team to a good total after the brilliant start had promised a great one. Nasir did that with a 23-ball 27 but was run out for the second time in as many days when Shohag sent him back off the last ball of the 18th over. Shohag and Razzak then took the score to the exact total that Zimbabwe scored the previous day, and like on Saturday, it proved to be enough.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH	R	B	4s	6s
Tamim c S Masakadza b Utseya	43	30	6	1
Shamsur c Waller b Utseya	2	3	0	0
Shakib c Raza b Mushangwe	40	28	6	1
Mushfiqur lbw b H Masakadza	17	12	2	0
Nasir run out 27	23	3	0	0
Mahmudullah c Raza b Panyangara	1	4	0	0
Mominul b Vitori	9	9	1	0
Shohag not out	8	7	1	0
Razzak not out	6	6	0	0
Extras: (lb-5, w-7, nb-3)	15			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 20 overs)	168			
Did not bat: Shafiul, Robul.				
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-86, 3-101, 4-111, 5-116, 6-152, 7-152.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Utseya	4	0	15	2
Vitori	4	0	26	1
S Masakadza	2	0	31	0
Panyangara	4	0	42	1
Mushangwe	3	0	29	1
Williams	2	0	16	0
H Masakadza	1	0	4	1

Zimbabwe	R	B	4s	6s
H Masakadza b Razzak	32	19	3	1
Sibanda c Mahmudullah b Shafiul	15	12	3	0
Taylor c Nasir b Shakib	16	19	2	0
Williams run out	32	30	2	0
Raza b Shakib	10	10	0	0
Waller c Mominul b Razzak	9	12	0	0
S Masakadza c Nasir b Shakib	6	8	0	0
Utseya b Shafiul	1	3	0	0
Mushangwe b Shakib	0	1	0	0
Panyangara not out	1	3	0	0
Vitori not out	1	3	0	0
Extras: (lb-6, w-4)	10			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 20 overs)	134			
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-45, 3-53, 4-78, 5-99, 6-120, 7-131, 8-132, 9-132.				

Result: Bangladesh won by 34 runs and 2-match

Kabaddi hands punishment

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation, in an executive committee meeting on Saturday, reprimanded Bangladesh Ansar, Police and Army for their involvement in the clashes during the Bangladesh Games last month.

Ansar has been fined Tk 50,000 while a number of their officials have been declared persona non grata in Kabaddi for two years.

Romanuzzaman and Araduzzaman of Police have been slapped with 6-month ban while Bangladesh Army's Abu Saleh Musa, a national player, has been banned for three months.

ASIAN YOUTH GAMES, INDOOR GAMES Bangladesh to take part

SPORTS REPORTER

A 27-member Bangladesh contingent is expected to take part in the 2nd Asian Youth Games which will be held in the Chinese city of Nanjing from August 16 to 24. Bangladesh will be participating in five disciplines -- athletics, swimming, weightlifting, basketball and golf.

A team from will also be participating in the Asian Indoor Games which will be held in Incheon, Korea from June 29 to July 6. Bangladesh will be competing in Kabaddi, chess and billiard events.



Crack; panic at SBNS!

SPORTS REPORTER



One of the arms that hold the shed over the Southern Gallery of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium (SBNS) was found unattached to the roof yesterday, causing panic among the shopkeepers on the outer ring of the stadium.

A small crack was also seen on the beam that holds the arms.

According to officials, the displacement took place due to heavy showers that hit the city this week. National Sports Council's engineers inspected the spot yesterday afternoon and are expected to repair these today.

"This is an international venue and these kinds of problems should be fixed as soon as they occur," said Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Sujon. "While these damages may not be extremely dangerous, we are not taking any chances," he added.

Umpire calls 5-ball over!

SPORTS REPORTER from Bulawayo

The umpiring has been an issue throughout the series, and the last match of the tour was not an exception. In the 14th over of Bangladesh's innings, one of the two local umpires called over with only five balls being bowled. There were screams from an agitated dressing room, understandably because one ball out of 120 can have a bearing on the result.

In the previous over skipper Mushfiqur Rahim was victim of yet another bad decision as he was given out to a ball that was heading down leg. That was not all, when bowling Mahmudullah Riyad received some flak from the umpire when he was in an argument with batsman Sean Williams. Mushfiqur said after the match that Sean Williams had started the exchange and the umpire chose to remonstrate with Riyad.

Earlier, Brendan Taylor looked to be quite lucky in escaping a close leg-before decision.

"There were issues with the back foot of the legspinner (Natsai Mushangwe) as well. His foot was landing wide and it may have landed wide in the ball that Shakib got out. When I went out there I told the umpire but he did not do anything," said Mushfiqur. "I know there are local umpires in T20s, but there should be an effort to be fair."

AFRICAN adventures

BY SAKEB SUBHAN

MOSQUE HOSPITALITY

The best bit of hospitality on the tour of Zimbabwe was perhaps that gotten at the Bulawayo mosque. The Muslim community of the town laid tables out at the community hall adjacent to the mosque, and held a feast in honour of the Bangladesh touring party on Friday. And it was quite a feast -- the source was a barbecue grill in front of the mosque and the products were succulent steaks and barbecue chicken. The Amir of all of Zimbabwe was there to oversee the feast and ensure that no one had less than two steaks. Also present was Pakistan spin legend and Bangladesh's spin bowling coach Saqlain Mushtaq, in full regalia with a black salwar and white turban.

We were taken care of by Dawood, an elderly affable man who was ready with stories of the mosque and anything you could want to hear. His grandfather had walked all the way to Bulawayo in 1917 after

landing at the Mozambique port of Baira. Dawood said the party had walked through the wilderness on day and slept in trees in the night.

ZIMBABWEAN TIGER

Shoaib 'Tiger' Ali has garnered quite a fan following in Zimbabwe. More than the players people want to know about the Tiger in the stands when they realise that they are talking to Bangladeshis. Yesterday however, he had a special fan.

A young boy of about four or five came up to him and wanted his face painted like a Tiger too. Shoaib took out his paint kit and was about to start work on the little tyke's face when the mother came and pulled him away. Shoaib said that he was Brendan Taylor's son and that the captain would not like to see his flesh and blood in enemy colours, but upon checking it was learnt that Taylor does not have a son, and that it may have been his girlfriend's son.

Royals move to No. 2

CRICINFO, Jaipur



At the mid-innings break, Michael Hussey had thought the 141-run total put up by Chennai Super Kings was competitive given the pitch was aiding seam

bowling and was not easy to bat on, but he was wary of the 'Watson factor' and in the end, it was Shane Watson who turned out to be the difference in the match as Rajasthan Royals notched up their eighth win in Jaipur and rose to No. 2 on the points table. Watson smashed 70 off 34 balls to take Royals from a precarious 45-4 close to victory in company with Binny (41 not out).

Earlier, spinner Sunil Narine proved to be the stand-out performer with a four-wicket haul as Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by five wickets here on Sunday to keep alive

their faint hopes of reaching the play-offs stage of the Pepsi Indian Premier League.

Opting to field, KKR restricted RCB to 115 for nine, and then chased down the modest target with four balls to spare.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 141 for 4 in 20 overs (M Vijay 55, Hussey 40, Cooper 2-32) RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 144 for 5 in 17.1 overs (Watson 70, Binny 41 not out)

Result: Royals won by five wickets.

Player of the match: Watson

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE: 115 for 9 in 20 overs (Gayle 33, Kohli 17, De Villiers 28, Vinay 14 not out; Balaji 2-22, Narine 4-22, Kallis 2-17)

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 116 for 5 in 19.2 overs (Gambhir 14, Kallis 41, Y Pathan 18, Tiwary 24; Vinay 2-17)

Result: Kolkata Knight Riders won by 5 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Jacques Kallis.

ASIA CUP HOCKEY

33 called up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation has called up 33 players for the camp for Asia Cup which will be held in Malaysia from August 24 to September 1. Bangladesh are looking to continue with their good work in the Asian Games after performing superbly in the World Hockey League Qualifiers (Rd-2) where they finished third ahead of China. Coach Mahbub Harun been given the charges to conduct the camp. The selected players have been asked to report to the coach on May 15.

MADRID OPEN

Nadal's 5th

AFP, Madrid

Rafael Nadal sealed his fifth title in seven tournaments since returning from a seven-month injury layoff as he claimed a third Madrid Masters title with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Stanislas Wawrinka on Sunday.

Nadal rolled through the first set thanks to two early breaks in little over half an hour.

And after a little more resistance from Wawrinka in the second, Nadal broke again to go ahead 4-3 before serving out to claim his 23rd Masters Series title.

Nadal now has 55 career titles with 40 coming on clay