

SPORT

LOVE YOU

"It was different. It is enough for me if the person to whom I dedicated it can understand," Shakib Al Hasan said with a mischievous smile, leaving the inquisitive press guessing to whom he dedicated that unique 'heart' sign and the kiss immediately after scoring his third hundred at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna on Tuesday. It was however learnt that he actually dedicated it to his wife Umme Ahmed



Al-Amin cleared

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has cleared Bangladesh pace bowler Al Amin Hossain from suspect bowling action.

"The International Cricket Council (ICC) confirmed today (Wednesday) that the bowling action of Bangladesh fast bowler Al-Amin Hossain had been found to be legal following an independent test, and that the player can, therefore, continue to bowl in international cricket", read an ICC release.

Al-Amin's action was reported during Bangladesh's tour of the West Indies. He went through a bowling test at an ICC accredited centre in Chennai, India on October 20.

"I am really happy. I always knew that there was nothing wrong with my action. None of my coaches have found anything wrong. I thank everyone for their support and prayers," Al-Amin told The Daily Star.

The bowler, who is currently on leave to attend his university examinations, is likely to return to Bangladesh's ODI squad against Zimbabwe later this month.

'Cutting the deficit first'

SPORTS REPORTER from Khulna

Zimbabwe set their first target at minimising their deficit after the third day's play of the second Test at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium here yesterday.

"Right now it's still in the balance. We are still trying to get to Bangladesh's total and that's the target for now," said Regis Chakabva at the press conference after the day's play.

"There is still a bit there for the bowlers, some turn, some bounce. It is flat, but I wouldn't say it is too easy," he said of the pitch, which merely offered anything for the bowlers.

The 27-year-old batsman, who was not out on 75, highly praised Hamilton Masakadza, who remained not out on 154.

"It's a wonderful innings and it's even more special to me than him [Masakadza] to be batting alongside him. We were joking about how it has taken so much time to come but it was magnificent to see him play," said Chakabva, who shared an unbeaten 142-run sixth wicket partnership with Masakadza to bring their team right back into the match.

Japan U-21s coming for one match

SPORTS REPORTER

The Japan Football Association (JFA) has agreed to send to Bangladesh its U-21 team, instead of the Olympic team as was previously disclosed by the Bangladesh Football Federation, in mid-December for a friendly match against the Bangladesh national team on December 18.

The BFF president, Kazi Salahuddin, had verbally requested the president of JFA during his Japan tour in September to send their Olympic team for two friendly matches. But the JFA yesterday confirmed that its U-21 team would play a single match during their four-day stay here.

"The JFA has sent us a four-day schedule for its U-21 team which will play the match on December 18 following their arrival here on December 16," informed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.



Hamilton Masakadza executes a back-footed cover-drive on way to his fourth hundred that brought Zimbabwe back against Bangladesh on the third day of the second and final Test in Khulna yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Nothing's impossible'

BISHWAJIT ROY from Khulna

He was scintillating in his batting on Tuesday on way to scoring his third Test hundred, sharp in his bowling to initiate a collapse in Zimbabwe's top order and finally he was bold in his statement at the end of the third day's play of the second Test here yesterday.

It was none other than ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan who pointed out many reasons -- slow batting on the first day as Tamim Iqbal made the slowest hundred for Bangladesh, missing chances, poor bowling in the last session and, above all, an unfavourable pitch for the Tigers' slow bowlers - behind losing control of the match.

Reminding a popular saying, the all-rounder sketched a difficult proposition when asked about his team's chances to win this match.

"Anything is possible in cricket, so it is still possible [to win the match]. We should take their remaining five wickets quickly tomorrow morning and if possible within an hour, though it's a

little bit tough. We have to bat well in the second innings and ensure that we score fast and then again we must take their ten wickets. All those things are tough but not impossible," said a straightforward Shakib.

"I don't think they are ahead of us. We won the first Test and this match is now evenly poised. But cricket is a game of uncertainty, where anything can happen in one or two hours. I am hopeful, but right now my observation is that the match is heading towards a draw."

Shakib however rued the missed opportunities.

"Fielding is very important in this kind of a match. It is important to take those half-chances to win on this kind of pitch. We couldn't take one or two catches which cost us in the end," he said.

Shakib, who played a stroke-filled knock in contrast to Tamim's unusually slow batting, was critical of the slow approach on the first day.

"It could have been better had we taken some more runs [on the first day]. If you lose fewer wickets than normally you have to score 250 runs [Bangladesh scored 193 for 3 on the opening day].

The batters said that it was not easy to play shots. On the other hand, Zimbabwe set a defensive field and also bowled in right areas," observed Shakib.

Was it (the slowness) for the pitch or the situation? Shakib's answer was: "It can only be answered by those who were batting then."

When asked about whether they were happy with the behaviour of the pitch, Shakib said: "Not fully because we expected more favour for our spinners. It was not even easy to take three wickets in one session and on the other hand we could not bowl well in the last session."

Shakib however was happy that he could make a hundred so quickly after returning to Test cricket after an eight-month break.

"I failed with the bat in the first Test and you know it's not easy to get back your rhythm when you play a Test match after a long break. I didn't expect that I could score big so quickly. I hope things will be better in the coming days," said a confident Shakib.

It was however not possible to know Tamim's reaction as he has decided to keep away from facing the media.

Masakadza can thank Shamsur

BISHWAJIT ROY from Khulna

No one knows whether Hamilton Masakadza said hello and good morning to Shamsur Rahman before entering the ground or if he said thank you when leaving the ground after the day's play, but the Zimbabwean should be thankful to him for what he achieved on the third day of the second Test at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium here yesterday.

Surviving two chances in the day's first two overs courtesy of slip fielder Shamsur, the 31-year-old Masakadza amassed his best individual Test score of 154 not out to outshine Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan, both of whom struck hundreds on the previous day after a long break, to help the home team score 433 all out in their first innings.

Masakadza continued his success against his happy-hunting side, hitting his third hundred, and fourth overall, against Bangladesh, and his 142-run unbeaten sixth wicket stand with Regis Chakabva (75 not out) kept his side in contention as Zimbabwe finished the day at 331 for 5 despite crafty left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan initiating damage in the second session by taking three wickets. The visitors were still trailing by 102 runs.

There will also be a reason for 27-year-old Chakabva to thank Mushfiqur Rahim if he can score his maiden century today as the Bangladesh captain-cum-wicketkeeper missed a stumping when the batsman was on four runs only.

Bangladesh had finished the second day (Tuesday) on a high note thanks to Tamim and Shakib. Tamim scored the slowest ever century by a Bangladeshi, taking 312 balls to score his hundred -- three deliveries more than his elder brother Nafis Iqbal's mark. Shakib, the highest run-getter, hit 137 to end his

three-year century drought.

There would have been a chance for the home side to continue their domination on the third day had Shamsur grabbed the chances at slip. Resuming on 15, Masakadza offered a thick edge from pacer Rubel Hossain off the last delivery of the day's first over, but it flew past the first slip for a four. It was a difficult chance for Shamsur but a player at this level should take these half-chances, otherwise it hurts the bowlers' confidence on this kind of a benign surface.

In the next over however it was a simple chance for Shamsur as a delivery from left-arm spinner Tajjilul Islam got plenty of turn and bounce and the batsman poked the ball on the off-stump, sending the ball straight to first slip where Shamsur barely moved his hands, resulting in the ball going through his legs.

Tajjilul however brought about the breakthrough before lunch as Brian Chari gave away his wicket, but Zimbabwe didn't look troubled and skipper Brendan Taylor unsettled the spinners by coming down the track and provided enough confidence and support to his partner Masakadza, who then completed his fifty in 106 balls.

Shakib however hit back at the tourists as he sent back Taylor, Craig Ervine and Elton Chigumbura to reduce the score to 231 for five at tea, but Chakabva and Masakadza took the initiative and the visitors finished the day without losing any more wickets in the third and final session.

Masakadza, whose previous best was 119 against West Indies on his debut at Harare in 2001, showed how one should capitalise on opportunities while Bangladesh must have learnt how costly a chance can be, especially on this kind of a docile surface, where batsmen need to make mistakes for bowlers to succeed.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: First innings				
Tamim c Ervine b Masakadza				109
Shamsur lbw b Chigumbura				2
Mominul c and b Panyangara				35
Mahmudullah lbw b Panyangara				56
Shakib b Waller				137
Mushfiqur run out				11
Shuvagata c Chari b Waller				15
Tajjilul c Masakadza b Chatar				32
Shahadat c M'Shangwe b Chatar				18
Jubair lbw b M'Shangwe				1
Rubel not out				0
Extras: (b-6, lb-6, w-2, nb-3)				17
Total: (All out in 158.5 overs)				433
Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-78, 3-173, 4-305, 5-322, 6-376, 7-383, 8-426, 9-433				
Bowler				
Panyangara	29	10	49	2
Chigumbura	22	5	60	1
Chatar	27	7	61	2
M'Shangwe	40.5	7	127	1
Waller	23	4	65	2
Raza	11	2	31	0
Masakadza	6	1	28	1
ZIMBABWE: First innings (overnight 53-1)				
Raza lbw b Tajjilul				11
Chari c Tamim b Tajjilul				25
Masakadza not out				154
Taylor c Mominul b Shakib				37
Ervine c Mushfiqur b Shakib				17
Chigumbura c Mominul b Shakib				1
Chakabva not out				75
Extras: (b-2, lb-7, w-1, nb-1)				11
Total: (For 5 wickets in 112 overs)				331
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-84, 3-151, 4-181, 5-189				
Bowler				
Shahadat	11	2	24	0
Tajjilul	30	6	94	2
Shakib	30	6	70	3
Jubair	18	2	63	0
Rubel	13	4	31	0



AT LONG LAST: Tamim Iqbal (R) and Shakib Al Hasan finally ended their century drought at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna on Tuesday. While Tamim took four years to score his fifth ton, Shakib needed three for his third. PHOTO: STAR

School team in national hockey!

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite suffering a 0-11 goal defeat against Chittagong, the Habiganj team was the centre of attention on the opening day of the 30th National Hockey Championship yesterday, as they are a school side taking on players twice their age.

The Habiganj players, a couple of whom are as young as 12, seemed like they were holding hockey sticks for the first time in their life. They hit the ball more like a cricketer would, causing fear amongst the Chittagong players. They did not even wear any safety guards while defending Chittagong's penalty corners.

Thankfully, no one was injured during the match, which ended, as expected, in favour of the Chittagong side. The defeat, though, didn't demoralise the teenaged players who left the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium with a smile on their faces.

Comprising students of Habiganj Richi High School, the Habiganj team had taken part in the National School Championship last year where they were eliminated from the quarterfinal stage. This time they are taking part in the national championship as part of preparation for the school championship. The team's skipper Moinul informed that their squad consists of three players of class-X, 11 of Class-IX and two of Class-VII and that they have come with sticks provided by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation last year most of which have become rusty.

In the day's two other matches, Bangladesh Air Force beat Comilla 5-1 while Mymensingh beat Patuakhali 2-1.

Proteas win first T20

AFP, Adelaide

Rilee Rossouw scored a breezy 78 to lead South Africa to a commanding seven-wicket victory over Australia in the first of three Twenty20 Internationals on Wednesday.

Rossouw, making his T20 debut, smashed three sixes and seven fours in his 50-ball knock to get the Proteas home with 145 for three. The Australians could only manage 144 for six off their 20 overs after winning the toss at the Adelaide Oval.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 144 for 6 in 20 overs (Watson 47, Faulkner 41 not out, White 24; Abbott 3-21, McLaren 1-27) SOUTH AFRICA: 145 for 3 in 19 overs (Rossouw 78, de Kock 46; Cummins 1-21, Bollinger 1-22) Result: South Africa won by 7 wickets. Player-of-the-match: Rilee Rossouw.

Sanga, Midge in for double

AFP, Dubai

Prolific Sri Lankan batsman Kumar Sangakkara and fiery Australian paceman Mitchell Johnson were in line for a rare double as cricketer of the year after a shortlist of nominees was announced on Wednesday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive David Richardson announced the shortlists for the 2014 awards, with the winner to be announced on November 14.

During the voting period of August 26, 2013 and September 17, 2014, the 2009 winner Johnson claimed 59 wickets in eight

Kock, Dale Steyn and AB de Villiers will vie with India's Virat Kohli.

For the ICC women's cricketer of the year award, two former winners have been shortlisted. These are England captain Charlotte Edwards, winner in 2008, and two-time winner Stafanie Taylor of the West Indies. They are joined by India captain and number-one ranked batter Mithali Raj and England wicketkeeper-batter Sarah Taylor.

England duo of Gary Ballance and Ben Stokes, and New Zealand's pair of Corey Anderson and Jimmy Neeshan have been shortlisted for the ICC emerging cricketer of the year award.

The ICC also announced its Test and one-day teams for 2014.

Cricketer of the year	Test cricketer of the year	ODI cricketer of the year	Women's ODI cricketer of the year	Emerging cricketer of the year
AB de Villiers	Mitchell Johnson	Quinton de Kock	Charlotte Edwards	Corey Anderson
Mitchell Johnson	Angelo Mathews	Kock	Mithali Raj	Gary Ballance
Angelo Mathews	Kumar	AB de Villiers	Sarah Taylor	Jimmy Neeshan
Kumar	Sangakkara	Virat Kohli		

Tests at an impressive average of 15.23.

Sangakkara, who won this prestigious award in Colombo in 2012, finished as the leading run-getter during the same period with 1,502 runs in 11 Tests.

Since the start of the ICC awards in 2004, no cricketer has won it twice.

The people's choice award, voted for by fans, was won by India's fast-rising paceman the 24-year-old Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

For the ICC one-day cricketer of the year award, South African trio of Quinton de

TEST SQUAD

Angelo Mathews (captain), David Warner, Kane Williamson, Kumar Sangakkara, AB de Villiers, Joe Root, Mitchell Johnson, Stuart Broad, Dale Steyn, Rangana Herath, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor (12th man)

ONE-DAY SQUAD

MS Dhoni (captain), Mohammad Hafeez, Quinton de Kock, Virat Kohli, George Bailey, AB de Villiers, Dwayne Bravo, James Faulkner, Dale Steyn, Mohammad Shami, Ajantha Mendis, Rohit Sharma (12th man)

SL to probe sex bribe claims

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's sports minister has ordered an investigation into sex bribe claims involving the national women's cricket team, an official said Wednesday.

Mahindananda Aluthgamage asked an independent panel to investigate local media allegations that unidentified players were dropped from the team for refusing to have sex with sports officials, his spokesman said.

"The minister wants to clear the air by getting this report investigated," spokesman Harsha Abeykoon told AFP.

"We want to get to the bottom of it because this is bad for the image of the game and the country."

The investigation would be conducted "even though no names have been mentioned in the report and there is no complaint to us or the police", he said.

A three-member panel headed by a retired woman judge was likely to be named in coming days after their

agreement to serve as investigators was secured, Abeykoon said.

The privately-run Sinhalese-language Divaina newspaper, quoting sources, had reported last month that unidentified selection and team officials sought sexual favours from players in return for securing them a place in the side.

Sri Lanka Cricket, the sport's governing body in the cricket-mad island, said it would conduct its own internal investigation but stressed that neither players or officials had complained of wrongdoing.

Siddikur happy to be back

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman returns to competitive golf today at the Panasonic Open India after being sidelined by a back injury which kept him out of action for almost five months.

The two-time Asian Tour winner is thankful to be back on the Asian Tour and contending in the 300,000-dollar event, against a stellar field including title holder Wade Ormsby of Australia and Indian star SSP Chowrasia, at the Delhi Golf Club.

"Unfortunately I got injured but that's part of life. I'm very happy to return to one of my favourite golf courses. Last year during the same week, I won the Indian Open here, so I have great memories here and I'm looking forward to it," Siddikur told Asiantour.com yesterday.

Siddikur, currently in 24th position in the Asian Tour Order of Merit, will have the company of compatriot Jamal Hossain Mollah among the 120 competitors.