



HATTRICK ON DEBUT... Young left-arm spinner Taijul islam (C) is the toast of his teammates after his unique feat -- he became the first bowler in ODI history to claim a hattrick on debut -- in the fifth and final one-dayer in Mirpur, where the Tigers completed a 5-0 whitewash of Zimbabwe yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

5-NIL SATISFACTION

BISHWAJIT ROY



Bangladesh made a happy-ending to an until-this-series sordid year at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Mahmudullah Riyad slogged a length ball from Solomon Mire to the midwicket boundary to complete his match-winning half-century in the face of his side's batting jittery as the Tigers' 'mission whitewash' was accomplished against Zimbabwe with a five-wicket victory in the low-scoring fifth and final ODI. Taijul Islam however hogged the spotlight in the year's last international engagement as the left-arm spinner became the first bowler in history to claim a hattrick on debut and was adjudged player-of-the-match for his figures of 4-11. The 22-year-old from Natore became the fourth Bangladeshi to claim a treble after Shahadat Hossain, Abdur Razzak and Rubel Hossain. As expected, the clean sweep of the five-match ODI series followed the 3-0 victory in

TOP FIVE BATSMEN							
Player	M	I	R	HS	AVE	100s	50s
Mushfiqur (Ban)	5	5	213	77	42.60	0	2
Anamul (Ban)	5	5	200	95	40.00	0	2
Riyad (Ban)	5	5	179	82*	89.50	0	2
Taylor (Zim)	5	5	162	63	32.40	0	2
Tamim (Ban)	5	5	147	76	29.40	0	1

TOP FIVE BOWLERS						
Player	M	O	Wkts	BBi	Econ	
Shakib (Ban)	5	42	11	4-41	3.23	
Sunny (Ban)	3	27.5	10	4-27	2.80	
Mashrafe (Ban)	5	36	9	3-34	4.11	
Panyangara (Zim)	4	40	9	3-66	5.50	

the Test series against the southern African nation, who had no answer to Bangladesh's spin attack even in the last game as Shakib Al Hasan and Taijul, along with tyro leg-

spinner Jubair Hossain, bundled them up only for 128 runs after choosing to bat. There was an interesting similarity between Bangladesh's first win and last win in the series. Firstly, Taijul made a Bangladesh record by taking highest eight wickets in an innings in the first Test and then he finished with the world record hattrick in the last ODI. And secondly, on both the occasions, though the first one was a Test match, the Bangladesh top order faltered in chase of small totals, which however caused a concern for the team management. Winning a match with five wickets in hand and 153 balls remaining without any doubt statistically reflected a very comfortable victory, but it was not as clear-cut as the result showed. Had it not been for Riyad's unbeaten 51 off 55, which saw 10 sweetly timed boundaries, the outcome could have been different following Bangladesh's inept top-order batting in trying overcast conditions. Bangladesh's batsmen got a little demonstration of what they might be up against in

the upcoming World Cup in Australia and New Zealand both in the first Test and in the last ODI and they provided enough food for thought for the team management after the way the top order fell. The outcome of the series has definitely been a big boost for the Tigers as it not only brought back the confidence after losses after losses but also saw the top players get back their rhythm. Tendai Chatara and Tinashe Panyangara tested Bangladesh's top order by using the bounce and movement, but in the end their total was too little to defend. Earlier Zimbabwe decided to bat and Hamilton Masakadza gave his side a good start, but once he fell to Jubair, Shakib and Taijul destroyed the middle and lower orders as they were clueless to the spinners. They lost their last nine wickets for 33 runs. Taijul first dismissed Mire at the start of the 27th over and then had Panyangara, John Nyumbu and Chatara off the last ball of the 27th and the first two balls of the 29th to complete his unique feat.

'No alternative to winning'

NAIMUL KARIM

Sceptics may not describe Bangladesh's perfect wins against Zimbabwe in both the Tests and ODIs as much of an achievement. After all, the Tigers were playing in their own conditions. In addition, the visitors, apart from the first Test, seemed quite lost throughout the tour. However the way the things have panned out for the Tigers in 2014, the '8-0' result, according to Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, was exactly what the players needed to boost themselves. "Nothing can substitute a win. This year we had a number of close matches which we could not finish off, but that does not mean that we played bad. So no matter who we played against, we need to hold on to the feeling that we won," said Mashrafe at the post-match press conference in Mirpur yesterday. "You can't expect a perfect result even if you play gully cricket. You are likely to face a day when things don't go your way. So I thought the boys performed professionally. Everybody worked hard and that's why this was possible," he added. With the series over, Bangladesh's next project will be the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. Bangladesh don't have any other international assignments planned out before the mega event, and as a result, Mashrafe urged his teammates to take care of themselves both mentally and physically. "Preparation [for the World Cup] depends upon the individual. A coach can only change the technical side of a player, but it's up to the player to perform. Each of the players who have played here knows what he has to do to succeed. They need to understand this," reckoned the 31-year-old. "For instance, we suffered a collapse today. This is a matter of concern. And the players should work on this aspect individually. We need to keep these things in mind for the more difficult situations in the future," he added. Apart from achieving a 5-0 whitewash, the other factor that Mashrafe was pleased about was his fitness. He played all the five matches without getting injured and in a way buried the nightmares of the past, which saw him get injured twice upon beginning a series as a captain.

'Mates said I did something special'

SPORTS REPORTER

For a player who almost let out a King Kong-like celebration—he had spread his arms wide and was about to beat his chest before he decided to hug one of his teammates —after completing his hat-trick, Taijul Islam was extremely quiet in the post-match press conference. His answers barely lasted a few seconds and there were moments when his senior colleagues sitting next to him, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, had to help him out. Take for instance, Taijul's reaction to the record that he created in yesterday's match by becoming the first debutant to get a hat-trick wicket in the history of ODI cricket. When asked as to how he felt about the achievement, all he said was: "I think I bowled quite well in my first match." Asked whether he knew about the record he said: "I got to know on the field. The senior players told me that I had done something special. It felt good then." Even apart from the hat-trick, Taijul repeatedly bowled in the same areas. "I was not thinking about a hat-trick. I just wanted to bowl dot balls. Mushfiqur bhai asked me to bowl in line and that's what I did. Thank God I got the wicket," blurted a relieved Taijul. He ended up scalping figures of 4 for 11, a stat that's even better than Shakib Al Hasan's best in the ODIs. Not bad for a player, who was initially picked as a specialist for longer version cricket. "I don't think I am only meant for Tests. If God wills, I can do well in both the formats," hoped the 22-year-old from Natore.



TAIJUL ISLAM

It's Mushy's duty

SPORTS REPORTER



A technically-sound Mushfiqur Rahim is the most consistent and dependable Bangladeshi batsman in recent times, so it came as no surprise when he was named the player-of-the-series after scoring the highest runs in the five-match ODI series against Zimbabwe yesterday. If someone wishes to judge his success as a reply to the authorities after he lost his ODI captaincy to Mashrafe Bin Mortaza before this series, one can do that by his own right, but to Mushfiqur it's simply a duty for him to contribute to his side. "It feels good [on the field]. Maybe off the field, yes I understand, I did not have to do

those meetings and planning. But on the field, I tried my best to help Mashrafe bhai. What I always tried to do was to contribute. Our team work was brilliant. All the credit to Mashrafe bhai as he did the bowling changes well," said the wicketkeeper-batsman when asked about how it felt after the change in captaincy. He dismissed the notion that the player-of-the-series award was a reply to the authorities. "Actually this is nothing new, even when I was captain I got these awards. This is just one part whether you are captain or not you have a responsibility. I was in good touch so it was my duty to contribute when my team needed. It's a good feeling that I contributed. This is also my first series after marriage, so I am really happy," was the response from the little man, who added that captaincy was never a burden for him.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD				
ZIMBABWE				
H Masakadza b Jubair	52	54	5	3
Raza c Mushfiqur b Mashrafe	9	14	2	0
Sibanda c Mashrafe b Shakib	37	51	3	0
Taylor b Shakib	9	11	1	0
Mire lbw b Taijul	9	16	0	1
Maruma b Jubair	1	9	0	0
Chigumbura not out	3	4	0	0
Panyangara b Taijul	0	5	0	0
Nyumbu lbw b Taijul	3	6	0	0
Chatara b Taijul	0	1	0	0
Kamungozi c				
Mahmudullah b Shakib	2	9	0	0
Extras: (w-3)	3			
Total: (All out in 30 overs)	128			
Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-95, 3-108, 4-109, 5-112, 6-120, 7-120, 8-124, 9-124.				
Bangladesh				
Tamim c Mire b Panyangara	10	15	2	0
Anamul c Masakadza b Chatara	8	13	2	0
Soumya c Raza b Chatara	20	18	4	0
Mahmudullah not out	51	55	10	0
Shakib c Masakadza b Panyangara	0	8	0	0
Mushfiqur c Taylor b Chatara	11	23	2	0
Sabbir not out	13	16	1	0
Extras: (lb-6, w-10, nb-1)	17			
Total: (For 5 wickets in 24.3 overs)	130			
Did not bat: Abul, Mashrafe, Taijul, Jubair.				
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-28, 3-47, 4-58, 5-93.				
Bowler				
Panyangara	10	1	49	2
Chatara	10	0	44	3
Kamungozi	4	0	21	0
Mire	0.3	0	10	0
Result: Bangladesh won by 5 wickets and sweep the 5-match series 5-0.				
Player-of-the-match: Taijul Islam.				
Player-of-the-series: Mushfiqur Rahim.				
ODI debuts: Soumya Sarkar and Taijul Islam.				

THE STORIES BEHIND '8-0'

A 3-0 win in the Test series and a 5-0 thumping in the ODIs, the Tigers could not have achieved a better result. Having had a terrible run in 2014, this was exactly the kind of end that the cricketers and their fans were hoping for. The emphatic scoreline was based on a series of record-breaking individual performances. Here are some of the landmarks that the Tigers achieved in the last two months:

- Taijul Islam became the first ever debutant to scalp a hattrick in an ODI yesterday. He had also bowled Bangladesh's best bowling figures in an innings, **8 for 39**, in the first Test.
- Shakib Al Hasan became only the third player after Imran Khan and Ian Botham to have pick up **10** wickets and score a century in a Test match.
- Shakib also became the **12th** player to score a century and take a four-wicket haul in an ODI in Chittagong.
- Mominul Haque became only the seventh player to have nine consecutive **50**-plus scores in Test matches.
- Anamul Haque and Tamim Iqbal became Bangladesh's only opening pair to share **2** century stands
- Leg-spinner Jubair Hossain embarked on his journey with a **5**-wicket haul.
- Bangladesh's spinners scalped **49** wickets in the Test series, one less than the all-time record in a three-match series, set by India and Sri Lanka.
- Bangladesh scored a match total of **822** runs in the third Test, which is their highest ever.

DAV'S DISSECTION



DAV WHATMORE

Where to begin? The fifth and final ODI lasted just 54.3 overs in total and after having batted second for the first time, Bangladesh won by 5 wickets to whitewash the opposition. It didn't matter that Zimbabwe batted first for the first time in this series. The pattern was a familiar one. Zimbabwe were in control for the first 10 overs (60/1), and then on the decline from thereon. Why? Well the answer lies with the inability of the visitors to play spin. It's interesting to note that in 5 ODIs, Zimbabwe lost 32 wickets to spin compared to 14 from the Bangladeshi quicks. There appeared to be a lack of technique on the part of Zimbabwe batsmen in assessing length and working the ball off the back foot. The other alarming factor is the inability with some high order Zimbabwe batsmen to read the googly. One of my Key Performance Indicators is a one percent, but can be the difference between winning and losing. Wides. In this series, Zimbabwe gave up 50 per cent more wides than the home team (51 to 22). The other KPI that I place importance on is singles. Before this match yesterday, the average singles scored by Bangladesh was 11.9, compared to Zimbabwe's 6.8. Where can Bangladesh improve? I reckon they need to nail down a reliable opening bowling pair that is trustworthy. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza did well, but he needs support from the other end. The spinners are doing well enough but apart from Shakib Al Hasan, there is a little inexperience. Fielding is also an important part of one day cricket and there is much more room for improvement for Bangladesh. What I saw, apart from a few, is that more work needs to be done to raise the level to international standards. Let's all appreciate the Tigers' win for now. It has been a difficult 2014, but these series victories in both Tests and ODIs will do wonders for confidence. Well done to all including the coaches and support staff. Onwards and upwards. The writer is a former Australia cricketer and Bangladesh's coach and currently a TV commentator.