



# Riyad, the calm slugger

NAIMUL KARIM

Mahmudullah Riyad was at peace with himself yesterday. In fact he was so calm that his demeanour seemed a tad bit eerie amidst the frenzy of his teammates.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza collapsed in excitement, Rubel Hossain crashed into the fans in the stands, Taskin Ahmed brought out the chainsaw, while Mushfiqur Rahim raised both his gloves and let out his classic roar. Riyad though was busy taking deep breaths and gently responding to questions in the post-match interviews. He seemed to be in a different groove altogether; almost as though he had attained nirvana.

The beauty of Riyad's achievement doesn't remain constrained within the record books. Yes, to be the first in the list of World Cup centuries is a great honour, however, the fact that almost no one had given him an ounce of a chance to reach the landmark makes this achievement a lot sweeter.

A year ago if someone had said that the lanky all-rounder was going to be the first Bangladeshi to score a World Cup century, you would have



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been certain that that person was either being sarcastic or that he was a distant relative of the Mushfiqur Rahim family.

Riyad's form, in 2014, was so appalling that a question regarding the player's inclusion in the side was brought up in almost every post-match press conference that year; and there was always an extra bite when the person responding to those questions was Mushfiqur.

His batting statistics were enough to depict the torrid time he went through. Prior to the Zimbabwe series, he averaged 12.7 with the bat in 2014. Riyad's life off the field had taken a hit as well. There were talks about how Riyad's good relationship with Mushfiqur apparently helped him to stay in the side;

there were even memes made on facebook with regards to the issue.

He probably had to go through one of the most embarrassing moments of his career last year when a journalist, compelled by the more popular notion in the social media, went on to ask the player how he felt when people reckoned that his place in the side was preserved by the captain.

All Riyad did that day was smile and state that it didn't matter and that he was trying his best to recover. In fact that was his approach in almost all his interviews; which at times painted a monotonous picture for the player.

However, beyond the smile and the diplomatic answers was a huge amount of grit; a glimpse of which was first witnessed during his fighting half-century in West Indies. And by the time he reached Brisbane, he was in a different gear altogether. He had lost a huge amount of weight, he was timing the ball better, was playing at the top order and his performance gradually peaked.

He had two consecutive half-centuries against Zimbabwe under his

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# 'Dream comes true'

BISHWAJIT ROY from Adelaide

Bangladesh's first World Cup centurion Mahmudullah Riyad has said that his hundred against England will forever remain a special memory in his life. As soon as he reached the landmark Riyad celebrated emphatically and also blew a flying kiss towards his family.

"My wife and two-year old boy were in the hotel and that was meant for them. I got really emotional today and thought of my mother while singing the national anthem before the match. I had to do well," said the emotion-choked right hander.

After reaching Australia Riyad, in an interview had told The Daily Star that he had a dream regarding this World Cup; one which he did not want to disclose back then. Yesterday Riyad told reporters that he had in fact dreamed to become the first Bangladeshi centurion.

"I never thought that I would be the first Bangladeshi to score a hundred in the World Cup but I had a dream regarding the century. I didn't want to disclose it during my interview previously," an excited Riyad said.

He was aggressive right from the start

and credited his fearless approach to coach Chandika Hathurusingha.

"I think our coach gave us the confidence. He always says that if you want to play a shot you should go for it instead of being double minded," said Riyad.

Just a year back Riyad was going through a rough patch in his career and was under tremendous pressure. Talks regarding his family relationship with former ODI skipper Mushfiqur Rahim surfaced in the media and things weren't going well for him.

"I believe criticism helped me a lot. Yes, I have a family relationship with Mushfiqur but we are two different individuals when we are on the field and also in the team because we are professionals," he explained.

Riyad admitted that he was nervous in the nineties. "I was a little nervous when I just entered the nineties but after I hit a boundary and reached 96 that relieved a lot of pressure.

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# 'Apple of our eyes'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT from Mymensingh

Mahmudullah Riyad's parents were over the moon after their son became the first Bangladeshi player to score a World Cup century yesterday. Speaking to reporters his father, Obaid Ullah said, "My son has gone down in the history of Bangladesh's cricket and has brought glory for the whole nation. We have reached the quarter finals for the first time."

Riyad's mother Arafat Begum was a lot more excited. "Riyad is the youngest of my three children and he is the apple of our eyes. I cannot describe how happy I am."

"We are extremely happy that Riyad scored a century but we are happier because he contributed in Bangladesh's win today," Riyad's elder brother Ahsan Ullah added.

Riyad began his cricket career at the Golkibari Club of Mymensingh. Later, he joined the Panditpara Club.



Mahmudullah Riyad is the journeyman of Bangladesh's batting. Thankfully he struck gold at a more deserving number four spot against England at the Adelaide Oval, where he hit his maiden century.

PHOTO: AFP

# Mash and Co fined for slow going

AFP, Adelaide

Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's joy at his team's World Cup defeat of England was cut short on Monday when he was threatened with a suspension for slow over-rates.

The ICC said that Bangladesh were two overs short of their target in the thrilling 15-run victory at the Adelaide Oval.

Mashrafe was fined 40 per cent of his match fee while his players received 20 per cent fines.

"For a captain to be suspended, he must commit two minor over-rate offences or one serious over rate offence during the event," said an ICC statement.

# 'BEST WIN IN BANGLADESH'S HISTORY'

## GAZI ASHRAF HOSSAIN

It's a fantastic victory and completely different from the others. They had to adapt to the different situations of the game and fight back. The momentum of the game swung like a pendulum. But at the end we kept a cool head and finished. This win will hold a completely different place in Bangladesh's history.



## AKRAM KHAN

I think this is one of the biggest achievements ever for Bangladesh. This was what they deserved and they needed. The pacers showed today what they can do. We have shown that we are not just a team that depends on spinners. We need to support them more.



## AMINUL ISLAM

What can I say? This is the best victory in the history of Bangladesh's cricket. No other win can beat this one. We have climbed another step in the ladder and we have shown the world that we can go into the next phase. Mushfiqur Rahim in particular held the middle order together well.



## MOHAMMAD RAFIQUE

Throughout the game the players were positive and they wanted to win. However, there were a few small mistakes which, probably would have been highlighted had Bangladesh lost. There were moments when they didn't bowl according to their field. They need to fix them in the next round.



## ROBIUL ISLAM

I felt really good after watching the way the pacers bowled today. They were outstanding. Everybody saw how Mashrafe bhai put in everything to bowl those last three overs despite his injury. Rubel [Hossain] was absolutely outstanding. I enjoyed it a lot on TV.



## SHOHAG GAZI

The last time I felt so excited was during the Asia Cup final against Pakistan. It obviously hurts to not play in the squad but really, if your team can play so well, all you can do is feel excited. The way Rubel [Hossain] bowled despite getting into so much trouble was simply amazing.



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ভিজিট ও বিজনেস ভিসা প্রসেস

Plot-22, Gulshan Circle-2, Dhaka  
M: 01720557104/6/7/8/13/18

# INFO ZONE

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Last Meeting : 6 th March 2011 at Bangalore. India won by 5 wickets.

KEY PLAYERS	
Shikhar Dhawan	ED JOYCE
43.92	35.26
56	48
89.81	93.96
2328	1587
137	116*
12	10
7	3
9	112

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FAN ZONE



Bangladesh fans flood the Adelaide Oval and cheer on their team, as the new generation of Tigers fans enjoy Bangladesh's historic win.



**Munazir Hussain Syed:** Take a bow Heath Streak. All the fast bowlers have taken wickets today and the fastest 146kmph ball was from a Bangladeshi

**Mpumelelo Mbangwa:** Thrills and spills, twists and turns. What entertainment that was. What a win for Bangladesh! Heartbreak for England.