

SPORT



The Export Leader

'International, domestic are same for me'

SPORTS REPORTER

Sabbir Rahman only made his international debut in the Zimbabwe series towards the end of last year but he can whack the ball like he has been playing for ages. The manner in which he hammered the experienced Wahab Riaz for a series of boundaries at Mirpur yesterday defied belief. He has displayed aggression in domestic cricket, but to confidently be able to apply himself at the international level so early in his career is an aspect that has surprised many.

"I personally don't think about the difference between domestic and international. I don't have that thought in my mind. So that's why it went well," said Sabbir at the post-match press conference yesterday. "I just tried to stay positive and I think I generally play well when I am in that frame of mind," added the youngster.

When Sabbir arrived at the crease, Bangladesh had lost three quick wickets and were under pressure. The middle order batsman claimed that there weren't any plans in his mind at that point in time. "When I was going to the crease, Mushfiqur bhai, who had just got out, told me that the wicket was good and that runs could be scored if I stayed. With those words he gave me a lot of confidence.

"There was no plan as such. We just tried to stay positive and that worked," explained Sabbir.

WE KEEP OUR PROMISE

ANWAR CEMENT

Apart from Sabbir and Shakib Al Hasan's half-centuries, debutant Mustafizur Rahman made an impact yesterday. His two-wicket haul suppressed the visitors and put them under pressure.

"I always believed that cricket is actually a bowler's game. If your bowlers do well, everything becomes easy. And that's why I wouldn't have been surprised if Mustafizur got the player-of-the-match award today. His bowling was outstanding. It was amazing to see his performance," said skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

According to Mashrafe, winning the T20I was important because it showed that the hosts had not just beaten a second-string side in the ODIs. "Shahid Afridi, Ahmed Shehzad, these are big players. Had we not won the T20I, people would have said that they didn't have the best side. So from that aspect we are a bit relaxed. I hope the players feel better now," said Mashrafe.

Despite having comfortably won the match yesterday, the skipper believed there is room for improvement. "You can't judge a team's performance based on one match. In the World Cup we had lost to Hong Kong. So I think there are several areas where we can still improve our game," said Mashrafe.



WELCOME TO THE BIG LEAGUE: Teenaged pacer Mustafizur Rahman (L) impressed everyone including the inspirational captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as the latter blesses him during a break in the one-off Bangladesh-Pakistan Twenty20 International yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

WORLD WILL SEE WHEN **SILK** ADORN YOUR LIFE

A Mustafiz from the blue

NAIMUL KARIM

A thin, lean teenager is busy ruffling around his bowling mark. Unknown to both the Pakistan openers, unknown to most of the 24,000 spectators at Mirpur, he quietly grips the white ball in his left-hand and waits for the umpire's signal. "Looks like a left-handed version of Shafiqul Islam," chuckled a journalist, pointing towards his thin arms. "Wonder how much power he can generate..." added another.

As the presumptions continue, Mustafizur bowls a wide. A ball later, Mukhtar Ahmed, a debutant himself, drives one past backward point and Mahmudullah Riyad does well to restrict it to three runs. Mustafizur's fluent run-up fails to complement his placement. Ahmed Shehzad is on strike and likes what he sees.

Breathing heavily, Mustafizur gets back to his mark amidst the roar of

the crowd; the intensity of which has suddenly increased ten-fold.

He starts with a full delivery pitched outside leg and jags it outside off. Shehzad, who is yet to feel the ball, carelessly makes a dab at it and is beaten. A moral victory for the bowler. Two more deliveries are bowled in similar areas and are defended to covers. With one more to go, Mustafizur unleashes a slower ball that leaves Shehzad confused. However, his straight drive lands inches in front of mid-off.

Shehzad shrugs off the early jitters and gets ready to face the teenager again. It might be a new over, but it seems like a replay of the previous. The first ball pitches around middle and leg and angles away outside off. The batsman slashes at it in vain.

If the first delivery hurts Shehzad, the next one almost puts him out of the game. It was another back of a length delivery bowled on the leg-stump which moved just past Shehzad's bat.

Shehzad's innings is eventually put to rest by Taskin Ahmed, but

Mustafizur has unfinished business.

He is brought back for his second spell in the eleventh over; this time against Shahid Afridi, a player who started playing professional cricket even before the pacer was born.

He is a touch nervous and allows two doubles. Like most pacers, he reverts to his bouncer. The result is a six over mid-wicket. He follows that with an over-pitched delivery outside the off-stump which is deemed a wide. In despair, he puts his hands on his head. Shakib Al Hasan runs all the way from long-on to calm the lad from Satkhira.

Whatever Shakib said worked well, the next ball saw him produce one of those jaffas that troubled Shehzad for so long and leaves Afridi clueless. Afridi swings his bat wildly at the delivery and the umpire adjudges that there has been a nick and sends Afridi on his way, much to the delight of the thin-armed, unknown teenager who has suddenly become the most sought-after player during the innings break.

AFC U-14 Girls' C'SHIP Bangladesh in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh moved into the final of the AFC Under-14 Girls' Regional Championship after beating Iran 2-0 in the second semifinal at the Dasarath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday.

Skipper Krishna Rani gave the girls in Red and Green the lead in the 23rd minute before Marzia wrapped up the victory in 62nd minute of the 70-minute affair, to give Bangladesh a first-ever final berth in any international event.

Bangladesh will meet hosts Nepal, who beat India by a single goal in the first semifinal, in today's final at 4:15pm Bangladesh time.

Zim's counter proposal for Pak tour

AGENCIES, Harare

The Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) has put forward two conditions to its Pakistan counterpart to undertake its next month tour in Pakistan.

First, a return tour to Zimbabwe in August and second, it should be given 50 per cent of the revenue from the series in Pakistan.

The source said that the chief executive of ZC, in recent meetings with the PCB officials in Dubai, made it clear that while the Zimbabwean board was keen to send its team to Pakistan in May, it needed financial incentives to revive its cricket.



Bangladesh players stayed back at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium after their game and celebrated their win on the field with some festive, if somewhat clumsy, dancing while the fans enjoyed the experience.

PHOTO: STAR

WI fight after Root ton

AFP, St. George's

West Indies were 122 for one in their second innings at tea on the fourth day of the second Test against England at the National Cricket Stadium in Grenada on Friday.

Opener Kraigg Brathwaite and one-down Darren Bravo put on an unbroken second wicket partnership of 119 runs after Dwayne Smith was bowled by James Anderson for two in the third over of the innings.

Earlier, resuming at the overnight score of 373 for six, England were dismissed in their first innings for 464, earning a lead of 165 with Joe Root undefeated on 182.

Root carried on from the previous day with his positive, aggressive style of play, especially as the wickets continued to fall at the other end.

Root's overnight partner, Jos Buttler,

charged down the pitch at Devendra Bishoo to be stumped within the first half-hour.

Chris Jordan helped the senior batsman in putting on 39 runs for the eighth wicket before he was adjudged run out for 16 by television umpire Billy Bowden.

Stuart Broad's poor form continued with his second "duck" in as many innings, top-edging a sweep at Bishoo for Smith to take the catch running back from first slip.

In his first bowler in Test cricket for three years, the leg-spinner finished with figures of four for 177 from 51 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: First innings 299 all out (Samuels 103, Bravo 35; Broad 4-61)

ENGLAND: First innings 464 all out (Root 182 not out, Ballance 77, Cook 76; Bishoo 4-177)

WEST INDIES: Second innings 122 for 1 (Brathwaite 68 not out, Bravo 47 not out)

Siddikur misses cut again

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman missed the cut again after a disastrous second round in the CIMB Niaga Indonesian Masters yesterday. The 30-year-old golfer struggled to cope with gusty conditions at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club throughout the day as did most of the other golfers.

The two-time Asian Tour winner, who started the day at two-over (74), finished the second round with a nine-over (81) - thanks to seven bogeys and a double bogey -- for an aggregate of 11-over (155). That effort put him in 101st position while 68 golfers made it to the weekend rounds, with the cut made at seven-over.

Uhno Park of Australia grabbed the lead after a one-over (73) in the second round for an aggregate of four-under (140).

This was Siddikur's third failure in four Asian Tour events this season. The Bangladeshi golfer had earlier missed cut in the Maybank Malaysian Open and True Thailand Classic before finishing seventh in the Hero Indian Open in February.

Siddikur is likely to play in the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open at the start of next month before returning home where the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open, the first ever Asian Tour event in Bangladesh, will be held from May 27 to 30.

IN A NUTSHELL

Narine reported again

AGENCIES, New Delhi

A suspected illegal bowling action report has been filed by the match officials on certain deliveries bowled by Sunil Narine of Kolkata Knight Riders during the match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Kolkata Knight Riders played on the 22 April in Visakhapatnam.

As per the provisions of the IPL Suspected Illegal Bowling Action Policy, Narine will still be eligible to bowl in forthcoming IPL matches and may request a biomechanical analysis of the deliveries in question at the ICC and BCCI accredited testing facility, the Sri Ramachandra Arthroscopy and Sports Science Centre in Chennai.

Saluting send-off

AFP, St. George's

West Indies all-rounder Marlon Samuels conjured up a new twist to his feud with Ben Stokes when he stood to attention and gave a military-style salute to his English rival on Thursday.



Samuels stood bolt upright and mockingly raised his right hand to his forehead as Stokes walked past him after being dismissed for just eight on the third day of the second Test.

The gesture by the West Indian drew praise and criticism on social media.

"He can be an absolute tool sometimes but I have to admit Marlon Samuels just made me laugh tea out of my nose with his saluting send off," tweeted former England off-spinner Graeme Swann.

West Indies bowling coach Curtly Ambrose backed Samuels.

"There's nothing wrong with a little bantering. As long as it doesn't go over the top, I'm fine with it."

'ICC's watching'

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan T20 captain Shahid Afridi expressed his unhappiness with regards to the umpiring in yesterday's match at Mirpur. Afridi was given caught behind off Mustafizur Rahman, a decision which he claimed was wrong. He also believed that a few other decisions didn't go Pakistan's way.

"Every person makes mistakes. They [umpires] would have realised it. And the match referee would also realise it, he must have seen it. In my opinion a single decision can change the fate of a match. The ICC is watching," said Afridi at the post-match press conference yesterday.

When Afridi was given out he asked for a referral, not knowing that the Decision Review System was not in force for the match yesterday.

"I actually didn't attend the match referee's meeting so I didn't know if there was DRS. In my opinion that was not out. I am sure the match referee will notice all this, because there wasn't just one decision, but two or three," claimed the Pakistan captain.

Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza however, described Afridi's complaint as unfortunate. "If he says that then I don't really know what to say. It's good to just accept the decisions. Whether Shahid was out or not is not our issue. In my career I have always respected umpires' decisions. Some things are best kept off the record. If he complains then the ICC will take care of it," said Mashrafe.

The Pakistan skipper however praised the way left-arm pacer Mustafizur bowled and believed that the debutant's performance was a key reason behind Pakistan's defeat.

"Mustafizur bowled really well. He used the conditions and applied a lot of variation. It was a mature performance.

"I think we were 10 to 15 runs short. It wasn't that bad a total. Had we bowled in good areas we wouldn't have given the match away so easily," concluded Afridi.

SUPERCRETE CEMENT

SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY

Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

SHAKIB AL HASAN



Yesterday's Twenty20 International against Pakistan was tailor-made for Shakib to show his prowess with both bat and ball. After a miserly spell of none for 17 in his four overs, which helped keep the visitors to 141,

the 28-year-old all-rounder came was sent in to bat at number three. Shakib and Sabbir Rahman steadied the ship and took Bangladesh to their first win against Pakistan with an unbeaten 105-run partnership. Shakib scored 57 off 41 deliveries with nine exquisite boundaries.



THE FINE ART OF BAKING

BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN T20 SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN	R/B	A/6		
Mukhtar st Mushfiqur b Sunny	37/30	5/1		
Shehzad c Mashrafe b Taskin	17/31	2/0		
Afridi c Mushfiqur b Mustafizur	12/9	0/1		
Sohail not out	30/24	0/1		
Hafeez lbw b Mustafizur	26/18	4/0		
Tanvir run out (Sabbir/Mushfiqur)	8/8	0/0		
Extras: (b-2, lb-5, w-4)		11		
Total: (For 5 wks in 20 overs)	141			
Did not bat: Rizwan, Sarfraz, Riaz, Gul, Ajmal				
Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-64, 3-77, 4-126, 5-141				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mustafizur	4	0	20	2
Shakib	4	0	17	0
Mashrafe	4	0	29	0
Sunny	2	0	23	1
Taskin	4	0	29	1
Nasir	2	0	16	0
BANGLADESH	R/B	A/6		
Tamim c Hafeez b Gul	14/10	2/1		
Soumya run out (Ajmal)	0/0	0/0		
Shakib not out	57/41	9/0		
Mushfiqur b Riaz	19/15	4/0		
Sabbir not out	51/32	7/1		
Extras: (lb-1, w-1)		2		
Total: (For 3 wks in 16.2 overs)	143			
Did not bat: Mahmudullah, Nasir, Mashrafe, Sunny, Taskin, Mustafizur				
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-17, 3-38				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Hafeez	1	0	14	0
Tanvir	3	0	16	0
Gul	2	0	23	1
Ajmal	3.2	0	25	0
Riaz	4	0	39	1
Afridi	3	0	25	0

Result: Bangladesh won by 7 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Sabbir Rahman.