

SPORT



I'm 'auto-fit'

From sharing his dream of being able to bowl next to his idol Mashrafe Bin Mortaza in international cricket one day to terming himself as an 'auto-fit' player and a loner who hates addas; off the field, Bangladesh's newest international pace bowler, Mohammad Shahid (MS) follows an approach as simple and direct as his bowling on the field. The Daily Star's (TDS) Bishwajit Roy caught up with him in Mirpur yesterday. The following is an extract of the exclusive interview.



TDS: How different is international cricket?

MS: I think its all about consistency. The only difference between a Test match and a four-day match is that

you have no room to err. Honestly, I wasn't thinking of too many things when I was making my debut in Khulna. I just tried my best to find a spot and keep bowling in that area repeatedly.

TDS: You bowled an eight-over spell in very hot conditions in the second Test. How painful was that?

MS: It was a little painful. [Shahadat Hossain] Rajib bhai's injury put a pressure on me. I was bowling with spinners and I didn't get enough time to rest. But I wasn't focusing on Rajib bhai's injury. I told myself that my team needs me to bowl now and that's what I focused on doing. I never asked my captain for rest.

TDS: You currently seem to be the fittest pacer in the side. What's your personal fitness routine like?

MS: If you ask me, I will tell you that I am 'auto-fit' (automatically fit). I don't work on my fitness as much. Before I didn't go to the gym that often either, but now I do. By God's grace I haven't had any major injury as yet. Hopefully I can continue that way... I still know that I have a long way to go. I personally think that its easy to get into the national team, but hard to hold on to your position. **TDS: Was it always a dream to play international cricket?**

MS: When I shared the dressing room with the likes of Mushfiquir [Rahim] bhai, Shakib

[Al Hasan] bhai, [Mahmudullah] Riyad bhai... to me it still feels like a dream. There were times when I used to see photographs of these players and today I laugh with them in the dressing room. It does feel like a dream.

TDS: Did you always want to be a pacer? Is there any one you follow?

MS: Mashrafe [Mortaza] bhai. I used to watch him play as a child. I remember watching him bowl beautifully against India in the Bangabandhu stadium back in the early 2000s. That's when I really got the urge to take pace bowling more seriously. Even today, I try to follow his action. I bowled with him in the Premier League once. I hope I can do that again in international cricket.

TDS: But isn't it hard for a pace bowler to develop in our conditions?

MS: National league wickets are very flat. How can you support pacers here? At these moments I ask myself, why I have become a pacer at all. The ball doesn't go to the keeper; the batsman plays it easily. It becomes a huge challenge. If they can make sporting wickets, domestic games would be far more fun to watch.

TDS: Any special targets in the India series?

MS: I would love to get Virat Kohli's wicket.

TDS: Has life changed after your international debut? Have you made more friends?

MS: Honestly speaking, from a very young age I haven't had too many friends. I don't go to too many addas either. In fact, I don't like them at all. I prefer resting at home.

AB ONLY IN ODIS

Steyn is coming

REUTERS, Johannesburg

AB de Villiers has been granted paternity leave and will miss the two-Test series in Bangladesh, Cricket South Africa (CSA) said on Wednesday.

The Proteas named four uncapped players in their Test squad for the matches in July and August.

Opener Reeza Hendricks, wicketkeeper Dane Vilas, spinner Aaron Phangiso and fast bowler Kagiso Rabada have all previously represented the country in the limited-overs formats.

One-day captain de Villiers, however, will play the limited-over matches preceding the Tests.

Pace duo Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander have been rested for the one-day series and were replaced by Rabada, Chris Morris and all-rounder Ryan McLaren. Steyn had earlier suggested he might not be available for the full duration of the tour as he was trying to manage his workload with one eye on appearing at another World Cup.

Starting from July 5, South Africa will play two T20 internationals, three one-dayers and two Tests.

SQUADS

TEST: Hashim Amla (captain), Temba Bavuma, Quinton de Kock, JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Dean Elgar, Simon Harmer, Reeza Hendricks, Morne Morkel, Aaron Phangiso, Vernon Philander, Kagiso Rabada, Dale Steyn, Stiaan van Zyl, Dane Vilas.

ODI: AB de Villiers (captain), Kyle Abbott, Amla, Farhaan Behardien, De Kock, Duminy, Du Plessis, Ryan McLaren, David Miller, Morkel, Chris Morris, Wayne Parnell, Phangiso, Rabada, Rilee Rossouw, Imran Tahir.

T20: Du Plessis (captain), Abbott, De Kock, de Villiers, Duminy, Beuran Hendricks, Eddie Leie, Miller, Morris, Parnell, Phangiso, Rabada, Rossouw, David Wiese.

Trophy goes to South

SPORTS REPORTER



A draw between Abdur Razzak's South Zone and Alok Kapali's East Zone led to the former lifting this season's Bangladesh Cricket League's four-day trophy in Chittagong yesterday.

South Zone topped the table with 46 points, while East Zone finished second with 39.

In the other game in Mirpur, Walton Central Zone beat BCB North Zone in a low-scoring encounter to finish third with 33 points. North finished at the bottom of the table with 18 points.

Kapali finished as the highest run-getter of the tournament, scoring 408 runs while Razzak scalped 18 wickets and was the highest wicket-taker. The selectors will be happy to see pacer Abul Hasan amongst the wickets. He took eleven wickets in two matches at an average of 15.36. They will also be glad to see Anamul Haque, who averaged 79.40 in this tournament, get back in the runs following his return from injury.

Having aced the required bonus points, Prime Bank South Zone had one hand on the trophy as early as Day 3. All they had to do was avoid an outright defeat and centu-

ries from Soumya Sarkar (127) and Mosaddek Hossain (119) on the final day yesterday ensured exactly that.

They led their side to a mammoth 452 before being bowled out. After the exchange, Islami Bank East Zone finished on 166 for 3, with Litton Kumar and Kapali scoring half-centuries at the end of the match.

The game at Mirpur was a lot more interesting. Nasir Hossain's North Zone were set a target of 202 and they were expected to reach that. However, Central's bowling attack proved to be too good for them.

Mohammad Shahid, Mosharraf Hossain and Shuvagata Hom shared 10 wickets and cleaned up North Zone two hours before the end of play. Shuvagata's off-spinners scalped four wickets, while Shahid and Mosharraf took three wickets each to secure an 80-run victory.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH ZONE: 385 and 452 all out in 107.2 overs (Soumya 127, Mosaddek 119; Abul 3-26) v **EAST ZONE:** 247 and 166 for 3 (Litton 74, Alok 55 not out; Al-Amin 3-43).

Result: Match drawn

CENTRAL ZONE: 289 and 200 v **NORTH ZONE:** 287 and 122 all out in 40.4 overs (Shuvagata 4-35, Mosharraf 3-27, Shahid 3-32).

Result: Central Zone won by 80 runs.



Prime Bank South Zone players are ecstatic after winning the Bangladesh Cricket League's longer version competition in Chittagong yesterday. They topped the table with 46 points.

PHOTO: STAR

IN A NUTSHELL

SL rope in Jonty

AGENCIES, Colombo

Sri Lankan cricketers are to get fielding tips from the man who revolutionised the art after former South African player Jonty Rhodes agreed to a short stint with them.

The 45-year-old arrived for a 10-day stint ahead of Sri Lanka's home series against Pakistan next month.

Sri Lanka will host Pakistan for three tests, five ODIs and two T20I's from June.

'Shiv deserves farewell'

IBN, Port of Spain

Brian Lara has criticised the decision of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) to drop Shivnarine Chanderpaul from the training squad ahead of the Test series against Australia, saying that the 40-year-old batsman deserves an honourable farewell for his years of service.

"This has nothing to do with numbers or averages. What are they saying that Chanderpaul was given the last 11 innings to get the desired number of runs to break a record?

"This has absolutely nothing to do with runs or numbers. It has to do with respect and Chanderpaul has earned the right to say goodbye in an acceptable way. In fact, he should be allowed to do it in his own way," he added.

Venus fined \$3,000

REUTERS, Paris

Venus Williams has been fined 3,000 dollars by tournament organisers for not attending a press conference following her first-round exit at the French Open.

After Williams, the 15th seed, lost 7-6, 6-1 to



Sloane Stephens on Monday, she snubbed the media, instead issuing a short statement: "When you arrive at any tournament you hope you will have a chance to work your way into the event, but I didn't have that opportunity. She just played better than me today."

FOOTBALL FRIENDLIES

De Kruif gets boost upfront

SPORTS REPORTER

The return of veteran strikers Enamul Haque and Towhidul Alam Sabuj has given the national football team's coaching staff more options in the front ahead of two friendly matches against Singapore and Afghanistan.

Scoring has long been a problem for the national team and the inclusion of in-form Enamul and Sabuj will bring some hope to Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruif, who is trying Enamul in different positions.

Enamul has so far struck 14 goals in the season -- nine in the league and five in Federation Cup -- while Sabuj scored six -- four goals in the league and two in the Federation Cup.

"The inclusion of Enamul and Sabuj has more or less increased the diversity in the attack and we see it positively because we already have strikers like Emily, Wahed, Sajib and Toklish," said assistant coach Saiful Bari Titu yesterday.

A 31-member Singapore team is scheduled to arrive here tonight to play the match on May 30 while Bangladesh will play their second warm-up match against Afghanistan on June 2 before their joint-qualifiers for the World Cup and Asian Cup against Kyrgyzstan on June 11 and against Tajikistan on the 16th.

Former national booter Titu hinted that they might field two teams against Singapore and Afghanistan due to shortage of time in between the two friendlies.

One, two or three for Mushy?

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiquir Rahim said yesterday that he doesn't have any problem if the team management rids him of one of his three duties.

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan Papon recently said that he feels that the triple responsibility -- batting, wicketkeeping and captaining the side -- is 'too stressful' for the player and that the board will discuss the matter with Mushfiquir. And the recent revelation that his finger injury was yet to heal made many doubt whether he could continue with the three responsibilities in the one-off Test against India, starting from June 10 at Fatullah.

"There is nothing personal because it's the Bangladesh cricket team. The team management will take the final decision according to their plans, from the selection of the squad to the best eleven," Mushfiquir said.

"The coach is currently not here, but when he gets back we will sit down and decide on all the aspects; what the plan will be, what combination of players we will use and what role I will play in the team. The coach will return in 2-3 days and after that we can decide on all these things," he added, when his attention was drawn to Papon's observation during a function yesterday at an event where Samsung introduced him as its brand ambassador.

When asked whether he felt any pressure doing these three tasks at once, Mushfiquir added: "When I do badly then it's normal that people will speak up. However, I have previously done all three and I believe I did well and nobody was talking then. Maybe I'm getting older also, so I will have to think about that. Perhaps I don't have the same

level of fitness as before.

"If I can contribute to my team through only one role, then I will do that. Or if I can contribute through three roles then I am also willing to do those. It's all up to the team management, so I will talk to them and decide."

Regarding his injury, he informed that by Friday his one week's rest would be complete and he hoped he could start batting from Saturday.

"The keeping will take a bit more time, but I hope I will be hundred per cent fit by June 10."

While speaking about his decade long journey, Mushfiquir said: "Still after ten years when I play any match I try to think of it as my first and last match, because perhaps I may not get another chance."



Mushfiquir Rahim became the first ever Bangladeshi personality to endorse the products of Samsung yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Zia in the 2nd place

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman shared the second position at the end of fifth round in the Elite Category of 8th KIT International Chess Festival at Bhubaneswar in Odisha in India yesterday.

Zia drew with Russian GM Smirnov Pavel in his fifth board to join nine other players with four points each.

GM Enamul Hossain Rajib also followed the footsteps of Zia as he drew his board against Indian IM Swayams Mishra and shared the third position with 20 other players with 3.5 points each from five matches while the other Bangladeshi GM Abdullah Al Rakib lost to Indian Himanshu Sharma to remain stuck to his previous three points from five outings.