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## The clapping goes on

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong



The sight of a teenager clapping and **NPOLY** laughing his guts out is soon becoming CRICKET SERIES the country's most sought after scenario. W WALTON Perhaps the best part about the spectacle

is that when Mustafizur Rahman is on a roll, one doesn't get to witness the typical outrage of a fast bowler, but the innocent, childish joy of a youngster who has suddenly found the world at his feet.

While Mustafizur did weave his magic in the one-dayers, there were many who were sceptical about giving him his first Test cap. And so, when he went wicket-less in his first two spells yesterday, the status updates and the 'told you so' opinions started pouring out in the middle of the day.

However, the left-armer silenced them all with a magical three-wicket burst that changed the entire scenario of the game.

"If I have to compare my performances then I would keep today's game ahead of the rest. That's because in one-dayers, whether I bowl in the right areas or not, everyone tries to

unless you bowl in the good areas. Test cricket is fun when you get wickets... not when you field for one and a half days," a smiling Mustafizur told reporters at the post-day press conference yesterday.

"But in longer version cricket, you won't get wickets

It was a seemingly long reply to the first question, considering the fact that he mostly depended on one-word answers in the previous press meets.

Either he is beginning to enjoy these moments or it could have been the 20-odd minutes that BCB's media manager Rabeed Imam had spent with him in front of the dressing room ahead of the press conference.

"In the first spell, I wasn't able to bowl well. After the lunch break, my coach [Heath Streak] told me to have a look at the way I bowl and try to do something different and that's what I did from then on.

"Even though I wasn't bowling well initially I made it a point to focus on bowling dot balls so that we could put pressure on them from both ends. That's how the wickets would eventually come," he continued.

When he first played international cricket in April this year, Mustafizur's bowling speed seemed to be limited to around 130 kms. Recently though, he has been breaking the



140-km mark. The left-hander credited the increase to regular gym-work and the BCB's high performance programme.

But then again speed isn't everything. Mustafizur had to follow a rather different approach in his first Test.

"In ODIs, I generally bowl around two to three variations in an over. In Test cricket I bowl variations after two or three overs," explained Mustafizur, adding that he enjoyed Hashim Amla's scalp the most amongst the four wickets.

That the left-armer enjoyed his first ever Test stint was evident at the end of the press conference.

While he was walking towards the team bus he was casually asked about how he felt about the three-wicket over, he wildly clapped his hands -- almost as though he was reliving those moments in the 60th over -- and said, "Those

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#### **SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY**

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#### **MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN**



His first wicket on T20I debut was Shahid Afridi, a batsman better known to the world as the hardest hitter of a cricket ball. His first wicket on ODI debut was Rohit Sharma, the only batsman to have scored two one-day double hundreds. On Tuesday Mustafizur Rahman made his Test

debut at Chittagong against South Africa. And the 19-year-old boy wonder marked that august occasion with the scalp of Hashim Amla, the best batsman in contemporary cricket with more than 6,700 runs at an average of over 52. Not only that, Mustafizur turned the day on its head with a fourwicket haul that included three wickets in four deliveries. His scintillating performance saw the Tigers enjoy a rare Test day in the sun and that too against the top-ranked Test side in the world. His fourth victim was Temba Bavuma, who scored highest 54 in the visitors' unimpressive first innings total of 248. But what one cricket connoisseur Saurabh Bhuwani said in a nutshell after the day's proceedings summed up Mustafizur's impact in a new-look Tigers. "There is always a player with whom a team's transformation phase generally gets associated with. It got associated with Sanath Jayasuriya in 1996 for Sri Lanka and it may well be the same with Mustafizur Rahman for Bangladesh in 2015. What a bowler!"



WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD: Bangladesh Test captain Mushfigur Rahim (R) shakes hands with the newest member of his team, Mustafizur Rahman, before the start of the opening Test against South Africa at Chittagong yesterday. And the left-arm paceman responded with a four-wicket gift.

**ANURUP KANTI DAS** 



## The wicket-less hero

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Five overs and five consecutive maidens; that's exactly how enigmatic Mohammad Shahid's third spell on the first day of the

first Test in Chittagong was. His overall figures of none for 34 in 17

overs by no means do justice to the blood, sweat and tears that he shed at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday. A careful analysis of the first day would

clearly depict the pivotal role that Shahid played. Left-arm pace bowling sensation Mustafizur Rahman didn't have the best of starts on the day. But the pressure was never on him, since Shahid, at the other end, kept the run-flow in check with his immaculate line and length.

over before lunch. That was the time when South Africa were cruising at a 104 for 1. After the break though, it was

Shahid's determined persistence from one end that eventually led to a breakthrough and then a cluster of wickets.

He bowled five consecutive maidens from over number 30 onwards. That spell right there, set the foundation for the others to attack from the other end.

In between overs 30 and 46, the visitors scored just 28 runs and soon after that they began to break.

The bowler didn't try to do anything special. He doesn't have the cutters of a Mustafizur in his armoury or the pace of a Rubel Hossain. Shahid's ability though allows him to bowl with a consistent line and length for a long period of time.

He extracted bounce from the pitch, got some of them go in and teased the batsmen in that nagging off-stump line.

He however, could have been He was brought in for his third spell an rewarded had Imrul Kayes held on to opportunities in the slip cordon. The first successfully managed to play the role that one came in the 70th over when Vernon no other Test bowler in Bangladesh's

towards first slip. A diving Kayes failed to grasp the ball with his left hand.

Ten overs later, it was Temba Bavuma who was spared. He bowled another full delivery and Bavuma, desperate to score some runs towards the end of the innings, edged that one. Kayes though failed to hold on to the catch again.

Frustrated, the bowler wiped off the sweat off his forehead and merely walked back to his bowling mark.

Prior to the first Test, Shahid was described as a workhorse by coach Chandika Hathurusingha. The Sri Lankan had also indicated that it would be a huge boost if Shahid managed to display his best.

Fortunately for the coach and for Bangladesh fans, Shahid arguably put up one of his best international performances.

Despite his limited abilities, he Philander edged a length delivery current outfit would have been able to

BD-SA SCOREBOARD

**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings

Van Zyl c Liton b Mahmudullah

Bavuma c Jubair b Mustafizur

Elgar c Liton b Taijul

Du Plessis Ibw b Shakib

Amla c Liton b Mustafizur

Duminy Ibw b Mustafizur De Kock b Mustafizur

Philander c Shakib b Jubair

Harmer c Mominul b Jubair

Steyn c Tamim b Jubair

Extras: (b-8, lb-5, nb-1)

Total: (All out in 83.3 overs)

**BANGLADESH:** First innings

Total: (For no loss in 2 overs)

To bat: Mominul, Mahmudullah, Shakib,

Mushfigur, Litton, Jubair, Shahid, Taijul,

Tamim not out

Imrul not out

Extras: (nb-1)

Fall of wickets: 1-58, 2-136, 3-136, 4-173,

53 3

5-173, 6-173, 7-208, 8-237, 9-239.

Morkel not out

### '1 Mustafiz over nailed us down'

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



yesterday.

South Africa's middle-order batsman Temba Bavuma credited Bangladesh's bowlers WWALTON for their dominating performance on the first day of the first Test between the sides at Zahur Ahmed Cowdhury Stadium here

The batsman, who top-scored for the visitors with 54, admitted that South Africa were 'nailed down' by the hosts after Mustafizur Rahman's three-wicket burst.

"I think for Bangladesh that's when the momentum swung in their favour [after Mustafizur scalped three wickets in the 60th over]. From that point they just kept on nailing it down on us. We weren't able to recover from there and yeah it was a brilliant spell from Mustafiz," said Bavuma.

"I think it wasn't our best day. We were on top till lunch. We were 130 something for 1 and then to be bundled out for 250-odd... we didn't have our best day. We haven't taken any team lightly. Bangladesh were just on top today, but tomorrow we will be coming back fighting even harder," he added.

Bavuma reckoned that his side failed to adjust to the slow and low wicket in Chittagong. He also lamented the fact that the visitors lost wickets in clusters and failed to build partnerships.

"I think the wicket for me was quite slow and so trying to adapt to the wicket was a bit more of a challenge. Trying to score as well was a bit more of a challenge with the ball not coming on to the bat and keeping a bit low. But the Bangladeshis bowled quite well and made life hard for us," he said.

"When we had opportunities to try and get a better momentum in our innings we kind of lost it there. Maybe mentally we were quite weak at times. But these things happen. The guys [Bangladeshis] had their game plans and unfortunately our game plans didn't work for us today," he added.

He also said that the deliveries were more difficult to play once the ball got a bit older.

"I think with the new ball it was definitely a bit easier with the ball coming on to the bat. The wicket was playing a bit more consistently. As the ball got a bit older it got a bit harder to try and score and pierce the gaps. Like I said the guys didn't really give us any freebies to score," said Bavuma, adding that the wicket would only get

There was nothing in the wicket column for a depressed-looking Mohammad Shahid. But it only belied the true story of how well he bowled on the opening day of the first Test yesterday.

PHOTO: **ANURUP KANTI DAS** 

## Tigers living the dream

SPORTS REPORTER



The Tigers displayed the NPOLY beauty of Test cricket on CRICKET SERIES the opening day of the WWALTON first Test against South

Africa at Chittagong yesterday. It's always too early to decipher the fate of a Test match after the first day's play, but as former national captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain said: it was a dream day. Yes, it was a dream day that the country had been anticipating for so long.

Such beauty was unfolded by the Bangladeshi bowlers that Faruque Ahmed -- the chief selector who was also the national skipper -- was forced to say, "It's unbelievable". Unbelievable! Because of the character the Tigers showed to turn the table on South Africa

after the visitors went to lunch on 104-1.

the first session which was something new," said another skipper-turned-selector, Habibul Bashar.

"Beautiful, tremendous and overall a dream day and undoubtedly the bowlers deserved credit for that. But I also thanked the man who stood behind the stumps. Litton (Das)'s first catch was outstanding. That was the first breakthrough and Taijul Islam must thank the young keeper for that fantastic catch at the second attempt. Overall he [Litton] was so bright. We had been talking about concentrating session by session and it was the perfect example of what we actually wanted, " said Gazi Ashraf.

"The boys showed that they have the mental toughness to bounce back from a

tough situation. I think everybody chipped "If you tell me to describe the best part of in to make it a day and especially a debutant," praised Faruque.

> Nobody knows better than Bashar about the days when Bangladesh surrendered in situations like the first session yesterday.

> "What could have been the regular scene was that we concede 500-plus runs after their strong start, but the boys showed maturity to write a new chapter. I especially want to focus on Mustafizur because his presence proved that you need pace bowlers to bowl out your opponents, so we should encourage our pace bowlers, " said Bashar.

> Ashraf however didn't forget to point out some loopholes in the great success.

> "The ground fielding completely contrasted Litton's brilliance. Our fielding coach should focus on our slip fielding,

which is a long-standing headache for the team. If I feel sorry for [Mohammad] the day, I must say it was the comeback after Mustafizur. He showed no sign that he was Shahid, then I must say Likhon [Jubair Hossain] failed to rise to our expectations. He was lucky to take three wickets but the young leg-spinner needs to work hard." He also had some suggestions to make

the first day's success meaningful.

"We need to survive the first ten overs on the second day's morning. In my opinion, the South African bowling attack does not have as much variety as we have. What they will try is to test our batsmen with pace and short-pitched deliveries. We have to be careful regarding fishing the outside offstump deliveries. The bounce is good, so our batsmen may be tempted to play shots, but they should show patience and gain a first innings lead and focus on calculative batting," suggested Ashraf.