

SPORT



'Next crop can do better'

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehedi Hasan Miraz left it to the next generation to fulfil the dream of the countrymen after his side exited from the ICC Under-19 World Cup at the semifinal stage yesterday following a three-wicket defeat to West Indies.

Miraz and Co got their desired opponents in the semifinal but the Caribbean boys dashed their hopes by playing better cricket. Bangladesh skipper Miraz was disappointed as he had a dream of playing the final but believed that playing the semifinal for the first time was itself an achievement for them.

"We made it to the semifinal for the first time. Everyone worked hard and played well. We really wanted to get to the final. Mushfiq bhai's [national Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim] team were fifth [in 2006, Sri Lanka] and now we reached the semifinal and after us, the next generation can better our result," said Miraz while he was speaking at the post-match press briefing.

When asked where they actually lost the match, Miraz said: "The wicket was slow. We don't play under pressure at this level of cricket. We thought if we score 240-250, it would be difficult for any opposition. We were short by 20 runs. When [Mohammad] Saifuddin and I got out at that time, the runs dropped down. That's where it went wrong for us."

He however said that they never lost hope. "We believed from the start that we would win. When they hit the second-last four, we knew it was over. Till the point when they needed 10 off 16 balls with three wickets, we had the belief. But had the spinners bowled better we would have stopped them. Their attacking start worked well for them. It reduced the pressure on them."

Although he dismissed the pressure factor prior to the match, he admitted after the defeat that the pressure was an issue. "As much as we say there's no pressure, there is some at the U-19 level. We never played in front of such a big crowd. We had the pressure from the expectation that we have to win the semifinal. We are still very young. We have to manage all this, and now that we have seen such situations, played in front of big crowds, we will manage it well next time."

West Indies skipper Shimron Hetmyer on the other hand pointed to their early arrival in the country as a factor behind their success, despite losing all the matches against the home side.

"It's a very big transformation to reach the final after losing 3-0 in the build-up series but I would put it down to the guys. Coming from the West Indies where most of the balls don't spin that much and coming here to Bangladesh where the ball spins, the guys just needed a little time to adjust to the pitches and to the weather, all in one," said Shimron.

"Very very good feeling for us as we got to the final for the second time. Possibly, if we play as well as we did today, we'll win the final as well. So it's a very, very good feeling for us and for the people back home in the West Indies," he added.

While West Indies have set up a final against India for February 14, Bangladesh's tournament is not quite over as they will face off against Sri Lanka on February 13 at Fatullah to fight for the third place.



STARTED FROM THE BOTTOM: Unfancied and staving off elimination in the group stages by a whisker, the resilient West Indian youths blazed a path to the ICC Under-19 World Cup final after defeating Bangladesh yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Foiled by Caribbean flair

Windies-India showdown in final on Sunday

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehedi Hasan Miraz ran like a cheetah fuelled by delirious anger, as if the dream to reach the final of the ICC Under-19 World Cup had come true. In reality it was just the fall of West Indies' second wicket. Perhaps the celebration was caused by the expectation that the West Indies batting, as usual, would start to crumble against the spinners but it was not to be as the Caribbean youngsters displayed a clinical approach to overhaul the home side's total of 226 runs with eight balls to spare to set up a final against India on February 14 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, the site of their semifinal triumph over the hosts yesterday. Bangladesh's journey, which had started a year and a half ago, ended with a three-wicket defeat as West Indies clinched their second berth in the final of the showpiece event --

their first was in 2004, also in Bangladesh.

West Indies were cruising at 147 for three after Miraz dismissed openers Gidron Pope (38) and Tevin Imlach (14) but seemed to be buckling under pressure after captain Shimron Hetmyer fell for 60. They lost two more wickets for 34 runs but player-of-the-match Shamar Springer, who earlier bowled an incisive spell of 10-2-36-2, held his nerve to take his team to victory with an unbeaten 62.

The Caribbean boys proved that they learned a lot from their 3-0 defeat to Miraz and Co in the pre-tournament build-up about how to handle the spin bowlers and acclimatise to the slow pitches, and that was evident in their consecutive wins against two sub-continental opponents -- Pakistan in the quarterfinal and Bangladesh in the semifinal. But ordinary bowling and poor batting from the home side made the things easy for the West Indies Under-19s, who had a poor record against the Young Tigers but did the right things in the right time.

It could have been the day of 'Captain Cool' Miraz as he first showed lot of character during batting after his side were reduced to 88 for four in 21.4 overs. Opener Pinak Ghosh and Saif Hasan once again failed to give a good start after Miraz decided to bat first in foggy conditions. There was not much movement from Alzarri Joseph and Chemar Holder but it seemed Bangladesh's top order panicked when faced with their pace.

Miraz and Mohammad Saifuddin's 85-run sixth wicket stand however gave some hope of reaching the 250-run mark but Keemo Paul turned the tables on them by dismissing both batsmen in consecutive deliveries in the 46th over and thus, despite Miraz's 74-ball 60, the home team failed to put up a challenging total.

Bangladesh's bowling lacked bite, and they performed far below their reputation as a good fielding unit, but eventually they just did not have enough runs on the board to make sure the 10,000-strong partisan crowd went home in good cheer.

BD-WI SCOREBOARD

Player	R	B	4/6
Pinak c Paul b Holder	0/10	0/0	
Saif c Goolie b Joseph	10/16	1/0	
Joyraz b Springer	35/54	5/0	
Nazmul c Hetmyer b John	11/24	1/0	
Zakir b Holder	24/44	2/0	
Miraz c Frew b Paul	60/74	7/0	
Saifuddin b Paul	36/55	3/0	
Saeed b Paul	3/6	0/0	
Mosabbek b Springer	14/12	1/0	
Rana not out	10/7	0/1	
Saleh run out	1/1	0/0	
Extras: (lb-6, w-13, nb-3)	22		
Total: (All out in 50 overs)	226		
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-27, 3-58, 4-88, 5-113, 6-198, 7-198, 8-205, 9-217.			

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Joseph	7	1	33	1
Holder	10	1	36	2
John	8	0	29	1
Springer	10	0	36	2
Goolie	2	0	13	0
Pope	6	0	35	0
Frew	4	0	18	0
Paul	3	0	20	3

Player	R	B	4/6
Pope b Miraz	38/25	5/2	
Imlach lbw b Miraz	14/12	1/0	
Hetmyer c Saif b Saifuddin	60/59	7/1	
Carty b Saleh	22/43	2/0	
Springer not out	62/88	5/1	
Goolie lbw b Saleh	9/33	0/0	
Paul b Saleh	4/3	1/0	
Frew c Zakir b Saifuddin	12/21	0/0	
John not out	2/9	0/0	
Extras: (w-6, nb-1)	7		
Total: (For 7 wks in 48.4 overs)	230		
Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-56, 3-118, 4-147, 5-177, 6-181, 7-217.			

Player-of-the-match: Shamar Springer.



They may not have made it to the final but under the leadership of Mehedi Hassan Miraz (C) the Young Tigers showcased their budding talents on the global stage in the ICC Under-19 World Cup.

PHOTO: STAR

Sohel, Matin lead local charge

SPORTS REPORTER

Pos	Name	Score
1	T Chuayprakong (THA)	-11 (131)
2	Soomin Lee (KOR)	-9 (133)
3	Chikkarangappa (IND)	-8 (134)
3	Shubhanakar Sharma (IND)	-8 (134)
5	S Kooratanapisan (THA)	-8 (134)
10	Shakhawat Sohel (BAN)	-6 (136)
10	Abdul MATIN (BAN)	-6 (136)
16	Zamal Hossain (BAN)	-5 (137)
27	Siddikur Rahman (BAN)	-3 (139)
34	Sayum (BAN)	-2 (140)

Shakhawat Hossain Sohel and Abdul Matin led the local charge on the second day of the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open with a share of the tenth position at six-under-par (136) yesterday. 31-year-old Sohel, who had finished as the best Bangladeshi performer in the inaugural edition of this Asian Tour event last year, carded five birdies while going bogey-free at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday to lift himself up from his overnight 38th position. Matin, on the other hand, continued his surprise run with yet another three-under-par to stay at tenth, alongside Sohel.

However, despite the excellent feat, both Sohel and Matin were five shots behind surprise leader, Thitiphun Chuayprakong of Thailand, who followed up his 65 on the first day with a 66 yesterday.

Bangladesh's Jamal Hossain Mollah, who started the day with a three-under-par, traded four birdies for two bogeys and finished with five-under-par (137) and a share of the 16th position, while Siddikur Rahman moved up to 14th with an aggregate of three-under-par (139). Only five golfers from Bangladesh -- one less than last year -- made the cut, which was set at two-over-par (144).

Sohel, who holds the course record (19-under) which he had set during a 72-par amateur tournament a few years ago, said he was quite happy with his overall game.

"My ball striking was very good today. I hit lots of fairways and greens. I missed a lot of putts from six to seven feet. If I had made them, I could have easily been 10-under-par now. But overall, it's still a good round and I am very happy," Sohel told The Daily Star.

The former Bangladesh Open champion said he was just looking to keep himself grounded and looking for a positive outcome.

SELECTED SCORES

Pos	Name	Score
1	T Chuayprakong (THA)	-11 (131)
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continue to believe in myself for the next two rounds. This is my home course. The greens are very small here. Hitting it onto the greens has got to be the priority," Sohel added.

Matin, meanwhile, admitted that he exceeded his own expectations. "I didn't really expect this because I missed the cut the last time around. But the course is pretty good

this time and the weather is fine which is what made it easier for me I guess," the 45-year-old said after the day's play. "Since I sort of exceeded my expectations, I won't be feeling any pressure over the next two rounds so I can enjoy my game."

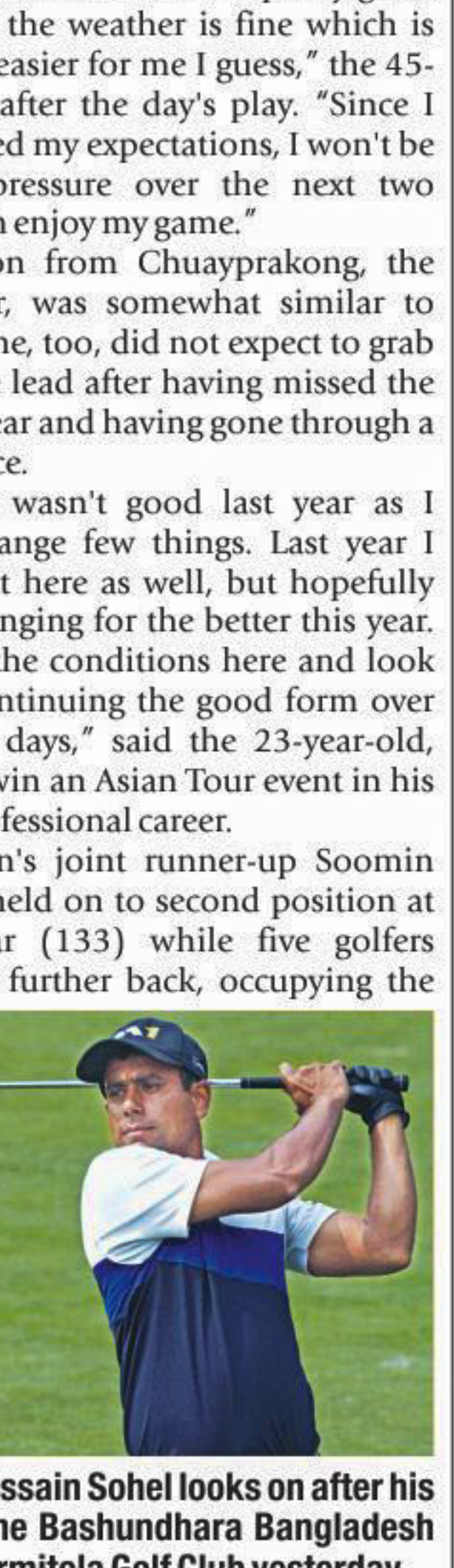
The reaction from Chuayprakong, the current leader, was somewhat similar to Matin's since he, too, did not expect to grab the clubhouse lead after having missed the cut here last year and having gone through a lean patch since.

"My game wasn't good last year as I needed to change few things. Last year I missed the cut here as well, but hopefully things are changing for the better this year. I'm enjoying the conditions here and look forward to continuing the good form over the next two days," said the 23-year-old, who is yet to win an Asian Tour event in his seven-year professional career.

Last edition's joint runner-up Soomin Lee of Korea held on to second position at nine-under-par (133) while five golfers were a stroke further back, occupying the

PHOTO: STAR

Shakhawat Hossain Sohel looks on after his drive during the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.



Concerns still prevalent

AFP, New Delhi

Storm clouds were gathering Thursday over cricket's World Twenty20, with organisers still to release tickets or confirm the venues, less than a month before the tournament begins in India.

Hundreds of thousands of supporters are expected to attend the 16-team contest which begins on March 8, the first time India has hosted the world cup for the game's newest and most popular format.

But with question marks over the presence of the West Indies and New Delhi yet to receive clearance to host matches, fans who need to secure flights, hotels and even visas are still unable to firm up travel plans.

The official line from the Indian board is that any glitches will be ironed out and there is no cause for alarm.

Zealand's Beige Brigade fan club, said it was now simply too late for some fans.

"We would have loved to travel to India as New Zealand have a good team this time round," Ford told AFP.

"But the delay in ticket sales and the venue being undecided has really made it hard for the fans to plan their travel."

Tickets for other major sporting events in 2016 such as the Rio Olympics in August and football's European Championships which take place in France in June went on sale months ago.

Thakur told reporters last Friday that tickets would be released at the start of this week, a month before the first matches involving the tournament's minnows.

MS threatens 100 crore case

PTI, New Delhi

The Hindi daily Sun Star that recently, in a sting operation, showed Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) secretary Sunil Dev alleging that India skipper MS Dhoni fixed the fourth Test of the England tour in 2014 will have to prove its claim in the court or deny it outright as the cricketer has sent it a legal notice, threatening to press defamation damages to the tune of Rs. 100 crore, reports the Deccan Chronicle.

As per the report on Thursday, Dhoni's Delhi-based lawyers C&C Associates have sent a nine-page legal notice to the daily.