

MAKING OF MEHEDI'S MAGNUM FIVE-FOR

BEN DUCKETT BOWLED FOR 14
The England left-hander exposed his stumps and Mehedi sniffed a chance -- his off-break got enough grip after hitting the turf and the batsman played all over it.

GARY BALLANCE LBW FOR 1
It was a slider and caught Ballance on the crease. There was a huge appeal from the bowler but the umpire was unmoved with a notion that the ball had hit the bat. But Mushfiqur Rahim's judgment of a review was spot on as the ball was shown to have been demolishing middle and leg.

JOE ROOT CAUGHT AT SLIP FOR 40
The best England batsman was undone by a delivery that skidded straight on after hitting the deck. It took a sharp edge into the pads of Mushfiqur behind the wicket before Sabbir Rahman completed a tumbling catch in the slip.

JONNY BAIRSTOW BOWLED FOR 52
The imposing right-hander paid the penalty for playing from the crease and was deceived by a delivery that did not turn and hit his off-stump.

MOEEN ALI CAUGHT BEHIND FOR 68
It had everything of a classical off-spinner -- the flight, the dip and the grip. Moeen, who had played superbly, could only edge it through to the keeper. It was like a kiss of death.

STAR SPORT DESK



The opening day of the Chittagong Test yesterday saw plenty of drama when it came down to reviewing decisions. Interestingly though, most of the decisions revolved round one wily young off-spinner Mehedi Hasan (C) whose five-for on debut brought plenty of cheers for the Tigers against England.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

দেয়ালে ডাম্প-এর কারণে
প্রেস্টিজ পাংকচার আর নয়

MR. EXPERT DAMP STOP

DAMP STOP

I will remember this: Mehedi

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



He walked into the media room and, quite unusually for a player coming to meet the press after his first day as a Test player, Mehedi Hasan Miraz flashed a smile to the assembled media personnel.

"How is everyone?" he asked to the slight bemusement of his comparatively jaded audience yesterday.

There was of course reason for him to be so happy. He had after all, at 18 years and 361 days, become the youngest Bangladeshi to take five wickets on debut and, with three England wickets left to take, might well overtake Shohag Gazi's high mark of six for 54 when play resumes today for the second day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

"I am actually feeling really good. I will remember this day and this match for the rest of my life," said Mehedi. "I know that I am very lucky to take five wickets against England."

Although he is young, his cricket and general outlook on the game reveals a mind older than his physical age. When asked how England were able to recover from the precarious position of 21 for three to end the day on 258 for seven, he answered like a veteran.

"Actually, in longer-version cricket, no matter how bad the situation is there will be one partnership or another," he said. "There will be a partnership of 50, 70, 100. Actually I

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FIFERS ON DEBUT					
Player	Opposition	Venue	Date	Age	
Mehedi Hasan Miraz	England	Chittagong	20 Oct 2016	18 years 361 days	
Sohag Gazi	West Indies	Dhaka	13 Nov 2012	21 years 100 days	
Manjural Islam	Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	19 Apr 2001	21 years 163 days	
Tajjul Islam	West Indies	Kingstown	5 Sep 2014	22 years 210 days	
Mahmudullah	West Indies	Kingstown	9 Jul 2009	23 years 155 days	
Elias Sunny	West Indies	Chittagong	21 Oct 2011	25 years 293 days	
Naimur Rahman	India	Dhaka	10 Nov 2000	26 years 52 days	

was bowling a little differently during the [Joe] Root-[Moeen] Ali partnership either side of lunch -- I was bowling over the wicket. But Mushfiqur Rahim Bhui told me that if I bowl on the stumps, I will get success -- I will be able to get leg-before and bowled dismissals."

His pedigree as a longer-version cricketer comes across

loud and clear. When he was selected in the national squad he said that he always wanted to make his international debut in Test cricket.

He also seemed quick to suss out the difference between the domestic and international level, and thanked his Khulna captain and domestic spin partner, former national left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak for helping him in that regard. "There is a big difference in quality. You have to be patient; people make fewer mistakes here. Here they identify the good balls and bad balls very quickly, and are quick to punish the bad balls.

"I want to really, really thank Raj [Razzak] Bhai. He told me to continue doing what I did in longer-version [domestic first-class]. He said 'bowl in one area and bowl 30-35 overs. Don't try too many variations. If you keep bowling in one area no one will be able to play you.'"

He also had special words of appreciation for Sohel Islam, the specialist spin-bowling coach who has been guiding him from the Under-15 level to this day. "I always stay in touch with him and discuss how to develop further. I want to thank him for that. I am feeling very happy, and I believe he is too."

Regarding the match, he believed that Bangladesh batsmen -- including him, as an all-rounder -- were more accustomed to playing spin on such a turning wicket and so they should be able to cope well in the first innings if they apply what they practised.

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

MEHEDI HASAN

When you are making your Test debut as an off-spinning all-rounder and your captain throws you the shiny new ball in the second over of a match, you need to have more guts than skill to respond to that massive responsibility. And 18-year-old Mehedi Hasan not only responded to that call magnificently, but turned the red cherry into gold with a mesmerizing spell of classical off-spin that ripped through the England hearts on the first day of the Chittagong Test yesterday. His figures of 33-6-64-5 were the cornerstone of the Tigers' expression of intent that they are no longer pushovers in a five-day contest.

'His strength is his enthusiasm'

BISHWAJIT ROY



"We have just seen his brilliant bowling on his first day of Test cricket but I am confident that the cricket world will also enjoy his fielding and batting at the highest level of the game. He's not a good bowler or good batsman; he is a good cricketer," veteran left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak said in one breath while speaking about Mehedi Hasan Miraz's dream debut in the Test format against England in Chittagong yesterday.

After the day's play, five-star Mehedi did not hesitate in thanking his Khulna captain, branding Razzak a mentor to him, saying the experienced campaigner's advice during the National Cricket League helped him a lot.

However, Razzak was unsurprised by the 18-year-old's magnificent debut.

"It would not be fair to say that I expected such dream debut. It's a big thing to claim five wickets on debut but he has the ability to do so and I am not completely surprised because I had the opportunity to watch his talent closely," said Razzak.

"Longer-version cricket is nothing new to Mehedi as he has played in the National Cricket League for the last few seasons with utmost sincerity, so he had every chance to make his presence felt in the Test arena," he added.

When asked what Mehedi's biggest strength as a 'good cricketer' was, Razzak responded: "I have hardly seen such an enthusiastic cricketer."

Queried about what his expectations were from the budding youngster, Razzak was a little more subdued and requested everyone not to put any undue pressure on his shoulders.

"It's very difficult to predict anything in cricket. There have been so many examples that a player had an outstanding debut but faded away from the international scene very quickly. However, it would be a really big loss for Bangladesh cricket if Miraz does not play for the country for at least ten to fifteen years."



ABDUR RAZZAK

More than a mirage of promise

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Mehedi Hasan Miraz ran in to bowl. It was a match that the Bangladesh U-19s were supposed to win -- the World Cup semifinal at home against West Indies, a team thought to be inept against spin. The target was a below par 227 and the Caribbean youngsters were going great guns at 56 for one in just the seventh over, with Gidron Pope hitting them all over the park. Mehedi opened the bowling and had been taken for 36 in 3.5 overs, including a four and six in that seventh over. Pope tried to repeat the six he hit the previous ball, but the home captain fired it in full on off to evade the flashing blade and bowl him. He set off on a celebratory run full of the exuberance and unshakeable confidence of youth.

Those watching that match on February 11, 2016 would probably have thought of another cricketer wearing the red and green and celebrating in similar fashion a little over five years ago. Shakib Al Hasan went off on a similar celebratory run after bowling Nathan McCullum in the fifth ODI against New Zealand on October 17, 2010 on way to a 4-0 whitewash, chased by ecstatic teammates powered by the burning desire to not give a single inch when, for once, they were the boys doing the whipping.

Coincidentally, both had also scored in their respective sides' innings.

But of course, it is quite improper to compare a debutant with the best cricketer to don the Bangladesh cap. But on the evidence of the duo's bowling on the

first day of the first Test against England yesterday, their fortunes in Test cricket may run on parallel paths from now on. Shakib being a left-arm spinner of high class and Mehedi's right arm off-spin looking every bit the part as the two ran through the England top order, they may help do for Bangladesh's Test cricket what Shakib and Co started doing for their ODI cricket.

The two combined to pick all of England's wickets to fall yesterday with the protégé dominating with a debut five-for. The batsmen struggled to cope with near mirror images of spin bowling -- both can turn the off break and have wickedly deceiving arm-balls -- helped by a friendly pitch. While Shakib is an internationally recognised batsman, Mehedi has five half-centuries in 14 innings and an average of 40 in first-class cricket and through the age groups has proven himself a reliable and cool customer with the bat. It is of course too early to say that we have a right-handed Shakib in Mehedi, but the prospect of two such cricketers in the same side is an enticing one for a fledgling Test nation.

The similarities do not end there. If there is one quality that describes Shakib it is that of calm but unshakeable self-belief. In Mehedi's case, his calm is perhaps rooted in his background. Coming from a poor family in Khulna he has seen hardships that not many other cricketers his age would have experienced. It could have worked the other way; he may well have given up but he chose to fight, and that quality seems to have informed his efforts so far on the cricket field.

It will be difficult to recall another cricketer who was as calm as Mehedi was when he opened the bowling on debut in a match in which the debutant bowled 10 straight overs and through most of that spell, landed it in areas that compelled the batsmen to play.

His answer to which wicket gave him most joy was revealing. He chose Bairstow's wicket, not because that was his fifth, but because he did not know himself which way the ball would turn. It drew laughter from the media, but it also revealed that Mehedi knows even at a young age that the game, taken too seriously, will cease to be

an enjoyment.

Again, by way of a disclaimer, only the future will tell how successful Mehedi will be and what kind of career he will enjoy. But for the moment, he seems to have the crucial elements between the ears to go a long way.

"We will manage it well next time," Mehedi had said in February after the end of the West Indies match which they lost, referring to the pressure a bunch of teenagers faced from home fans waiting on history.

By the evidence on display yesterday, that promise has been kept.



It is too early to say if Mehedi Hasan could be the next Shakib Al Hasan in the Tigers' ranks. But after his exploits with ball alongside the champion all-rounder, the notion gathered some pace in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAN

PREMIER
cemeNT

BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND: Firstinnings	R/B	4s/6s
Cook b Shakib	4/26	0/0
Duckett b Mehedi	14/35	2/0
Root c Sabbir b Mehedi	40/49	5/0
Ballance lbw b Mehedi	1/7	0/0
Moeen c Mushfiqur		
b Mehedi	68/170	8/1
Stokes b Shakib	18/34	0/1
Bairstow b Mehedi	52/126	8/0
Woakes not out	36/77	5/0
Rashid not out	5/28	0/0
Extras: (b-14, lb-4, w-2)	20	
Total: (For 7 wickets in 92 overs)	258	
To bat: Batty, Broad.		
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-18, 3-21, 4-83, 5-106, 6-194, 7-237.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shafiqul	9	1	33	0
Mehedi	33	6	64	5
Kamrul	8	0	41	0
Shakib	19	6	46	2
Tajjul	17	8	28	0
Sabbir	3	0	11	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	17	0
Mominul	1	1	0	0

BANGLADESH: Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Mominul Haque, Mahmudullah, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim*, Sabbir Rahman, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Tajjul Islam, Shafiqul Islam, Kamrul Islam Rabbi.

Toss: England

Umpires: HDPK Dharmasena (Sri Lanka) and CB Gaffaney (New Zealand)

TV umpire: S Ravi (India)

Match referee: RS Madugalle (Sri Lanka)