



Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza ensured that his 200th international match in the format was a memorable one as the inspirational cricketer picked up three wickets to lead the Tigers to a five-wicket win over West Indies in the first match of the ODI series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# MASHRAFE inspires by example

MAZHAR UDDIN



The logic behind Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's backing of pacers in the ODI format was validated yesterday, and it was the inspirational cricketer who led from the front in his milestone 200th international match for Bangladesh in the first ODI against West Indies.

It was not just about formulating a plan and expecting the others to implement; Mashrafe showed why he has managed to come this far and play 200 ODIs -- 198 for Bangladesh, two for Asian XI in 2007 -- as his experience informs every ball he bowls.

Bangladesh managed to keep things tight for the visitors who opted to bat on a slow Mirpur wicket offering some movement, restricting West Indies to a modest 195 for nine in which the pacers shared seven wickets among them.

It was Mashrafe who led the three seamers, ending up with figures of three for 30 from 10 overs, which included 41 dot balls -- the most by a Bangladesh bowler yesterday.

Left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman also bagged three wickets for 35 runs from his 10 overs while Rubel Hossain was the only pacer who was expensive, conceding 61 runs from his 10 overs and picking up a wicket.

After spinners -- Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Shakib Al Hasan -- provided a tight start with the new ball, Mashrafe brought himself to the attack in the 15th over of the innings and was greeted by a four towards cover by Darren Bravo. After that though, it was all about Mashrafe's experience and the ability to adapt his bowling.

The 'Narail Express' provided hardly any room for the West Indies batsmen and kept mounting the pressure. He bowled seven overs on the trot in his first spell and ended up picking two wickets for just 14 runs.

His first victim was Bravo when he went to clear the ropes and mistimed it, but Mashrafe must thank Tamim Iqbal, who sprinted towards his right from long off and completed a magnificent catch with a full-length dive.

Shai Hope was his second victim when the batsman was caught at point going for a slash as things started to get worse for the visitors.

Mashrafe returned for his second spell in the 37th over and immediately removed West Indies skipper Rovman Powell, conceding just five runs in his two-over spell.

With just 19 runs from nine overs, it was the last over that ruined the figures a little for Mashrafe as the six off the last ball took his runs conceded figure to 30.

Just to give a brief background of the other pressures surrounding Mashrafe, before the game was over his involvement in politics and the decision to contest the upcoming general elections for the ruling party has taken all the limelight from Mashrafe the player to Mashrafe the politician.

Keeping all the off-field issues aside, the charismatic cricketer managed to attract attention for what he has been doing best all for 17 years -- bowling.

I am still carrying the injury [groin] which I faced during the Zimbabwe series. It's not that I am at my best just because I have picked three wickets. At the same time, I have also picked up some other injuries, such as a hamstring injury which I did not have before.

MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA  
BANGLADESH ODI CAPTAIN

## Bangladesh storm into semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Under-23 team came out on top of their must-win ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup group stage final against the Pakistan Under-23 team with a convincing 84-run victory, which secured their place in the semifinals, at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday.

After electing to bat, a 126-run fifth wicket stand between Yasir Ali and Mosaddek Hossain powered Bangladesh to 309 runs for five wickets. Mosaddek, who scored a century in the previous match against Hong Kong, continued his run-fest in the tournament as he authored an unbeaten 74-ball 85-run knock.

In chase of the mammoth total, Pakistan lost two of their top order batsmen within the first six overs. However, an 88-run third wicket partnership between Mohammad Rizwan and Zeeshan Malik somewhat steadied the ship before Malik ultimately fell prey to Shoriful Islam in the 21st over.

It was all downhill for the hosts after that as Pakistan kept losing wickets at regular intervals before eventually being bundled out on 225 runs in 46.5 overs.

Off-spinner Nayeem Hasan was the pick of the bowlers for Bangladesh, scalping three wickets for 36 runs in his 10-overs spell.

Bangladesh will next face the champions of Group A in the first semifinal on December 13 at the Colombo Cricket Club Ground in Sri Lanka.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGLADESH U-23s:** 309 for 5 in 50 overs (Mosaddek 85 not out, Zakir 69, Yasir 56; Khushdil 3-48, Musa 2-55)  
**PAKISTAN U-23s:** 225 all out in 46.5 overs (Khushdil 61, Zeeshan 47, Rizwan 46; Nayeem 3-36, Shafiqul 2-41, Mosaddek 2-32)  
**Result:** Bangladesh U-23 won by 84 runs.

## 'Focus won't shake easily'

SPORTS REPORTER



There was a lot of talk prior to the start of the three-match ODI series against West Indies about whether Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza would be able to keep his focus on cricket after his involvement in politics.

But the experienced cricketer brushed aside all speculation and ended up as the player-of-the-match for his brilliant bowling, which led the Tigers from the front in his milestone 200th ODI as the pacer bagged three wickets for 30 runs in 10 overs.

Rising to special occasions has now become a common feature for the 35-year-old -- he was also adjudged player-of-the-match during Bangladesh's 100th ODI back in 2004 against India for his all-round performance at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The visitors eventually managed to post a small total of 195 for nine which the Tigers chased comfortably for the loss of five wickets to lead the series 1-0.

"It was not about giving answers. People may have said things if my performance was not good. I have been playing for 18 years now and it is not

easy to lose focus just like that. I know myself and I knew that the focus won't shake that easily. I have been working on that area for the past few days -- I tried to prepare myself and wanted to ensure that I was able to bowl where I wanted to in training," Mashrafe told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Although the pacers shared seven of

the nine West Indies wickets yesterday, Mashrafe gave credit to the two spinners in Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who provided a tight start for the hosts with the new ball.

Despite the comfortable win, the inspirational cricketer pointed out a few areas to improve upon, like some of the dropped catches from the fielders, before the second ODI tomorrow.



There were high-fives all around for the Bangladesh players following their comfortable five-wicket win over West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

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## Meticulous Mushy

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim scored an unbeaten 70-ball 55 which helped the Tigers win the first ODI against the West Indies in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh restricted the visitors to just under the 200-run mark, courtesy of an impressive bowling display. In turn, the bowlers' efforts were well backed by Mushfiqur as he stood his ground till the end while the other top order batsmen made exits at regular intervals. Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was in awe of the right-hander's performance, praising his effort during the post-match interview. "I think Mushfiqur [Rahim] was brilliant. It was a very professional knock from him" said Mashrafe.

### BD-WI SCOREBOARD

| WEST INDIES   |       | R/B | 4s/6s |   |   |
|---|-------|-----|-------|---|---|
| K Powell c Rubel b Shakib   | 10/27 | 1/0 |       |   |   |
| Hope c Mehedi b Mashrafe  | 43/59 | 3/0 |       |   |   |
| Bravo c Tamim b Mashrafe  | 19/51 | 1/0 |       |   |   |
| Samuels c Liton b Rubel   | 25/48 | 2/0 |       |   |   |
| Hetmyer b Mehedi  | 6/13  | 0/0 |       |   |   |
| R Powell c Liton b Mashrafe   | 14/25 | 1/0 |       |   |   |
| Chase c Mehedi b Mustafizur   | 32/38 | 1/1 |       |   |   |
| Paul c Mehedi b Mustafizur  | 36/28 | 1/2 |       |   |   |
| Roach not out   | 5/8   | 0/0 |       |   |   |
| Bishoo c b Mustafizur   | 0/1   | 0/0 |       |   |   |
| Thomas not out  | 0/2   | 0/0 |       |   |   |
| Extras: (lb-3, w-2)   | 5     |     |       |   |   |
| Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs) 195                                      |       |     |       |   |   |
| Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-65, 3-78, 4-93, 5-119, 6-127, 7-178, 8-194, 9-195. |       |     |       |   |   |
| Bowler  |       | O   | M     | R | W |
| Mehedi  | 10    | 0   | 30    | 1 |   |
| Shakib  | 10    | 0   | 36    | 1 |   |
| Mustafizur  | 10    | 0   | 35    | 3 |   |
| Mashrafe  | 10    | 0   | 30    | 3 |   |
| Rubel   | 10    | 0   | 61    | 1 |   |
| BANGLADESH  |       | R/B | 4s/6s |   |   |
| Tamim c Bishoo b Chase  | 12/24 | 0/0 |       |   |   |
| Liton b Paul  | 41/57 | 5/0 |       |   |   |
| Imrul b Thomas  | 4/2   | 1/0 |       |   |   |
| Mushfiqur not out   | 55/70 | 5/0 |       |   |   |
| Shakib c Hope b R Powell  | 30/26 | 4/0 |       |   |   |
| Soumya c R Powell b Chase   | 19/13 | 2/1 |       |   |   |
| Mahmudullah not out   | 14/21 | 0/1 |       |   |   |
| Extras: (lb-6, nb-2, w-13)  | 21    |     |       |   |   |
| Total: (For 5 wickets in 35.1 overs) 196                                    |       |     |       |   |   |
| Did not bat: Mehedi, Mashrafe, Mustafizur, Rubel.                           |       |     |       |   |   |
| Fall of wickets: 1-37, 2-42, 3-89, 4-146, 5-175.                            |       |     |       |   |   |
| Bowler  |       | O   | M     | R | W |
| Roach   | 6     | 0   | 35    | 0 |   |
| Chase   | 9     | 1   | 47    | 2 |   |
| Thomas  | 5     | 0   | 34    | 1 |   |
| Paul  | 8     | 0   | 37    | 1 |   |
| Bishoo  | 6.1   | 0   | 30    | 0 |   |
| Powell  | 1     | 0   | 7     | 1 |   |
| <b>Result:</b> Bangladesh won by 5 wickets.                                 |       |     |       |   |   |
| <b>Player-of-the-match:</b> Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.                           |       |     |       |   |   |

## MOMENTS

### Super-Tamim's super return

Darren Bravo was making a comeback to the West Indies side after two years. Tamim Iqbal was playing his first match for Bangladesh after nearly three months since fracturing his left knuckle in the Asia Cup and he won the comeback battle hands down. In the 21st over, Bravo tried to hit Mashrafe Bin Mortaza for a six over long off but was deceived by the slower ball. The miscue was flying just beyond the 30-yard circle. The moment the ball hit bat, Tamim started his sprint from long off and having crossed 20 yards in no time put in a full-length dive to pluck the ball inches from the turf. He got up and turned to the crowd and the dressing room with arms spread, as if to ask 'Did you miss me?' and they roared back in the affirmative.

### Shakib's frustration

Bangladesh's catching, unlike their bowling, was not up to scratch yesterday. Rubel Hossain had two catches of Darren Bravo dropped off his bowling, but he was the culprit when a simple chance came his way off the bat of Rovman Powell in the 32nd over. Powell swiped across the line against Shakib Al Hasan and the ball ballooned to mid on where Rubel dropped a sitter. As the batsmen crossed over, Shakib, grabbed hold of Powell and shook him in mock frustration. West Indies were already in trouble on 111 for four; otherwise the frustration could have been very real and directed elsewhere.

### In the same boat

Mashrafe's looming involvement in politics -- he will contest the upcoming general elections for Awami League -- has added a new dimension to cricket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. Shakib Al Hasan had also considered running in the elections as a nominee of the ruling party, which has 'nouka' (boat) as its election symbol, before deciding against it at the behest of Prime



### Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Yesterday, during the first ODI against West Indies, Shakib ended bowling the 36th over and skipper Mashrafe brought himself on in the 37th. That is exactly when a chant of 'nouka, nouka' started in the Eastern stands, and when Mashrafe got rid of West Indies captain Rovman Powell off the first ball, the chant spread around the ground. In a country that is politically quite divided, this was yet another example of the uniting power of cricket.