MOST 6s : HIT BY A PLAYER O MORGAN ENGLAND 022 MOST 4s : HIT BY A PLAYER 🔘 WARNER

AUSTRALIA

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এছাড়াও রয়েছে গোল্ড এডিশন ব্যাট বল, ব্যাট

ও কোটি কোটি টাকার নিশ্চিত ক্যাশ ভাউচার

'NOTHING HAS CHANGED'

Through the ongoing World Cup, Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has had an uneven, halting stride while he goes about the field marshalling his resources in order to keep the side still in contention for the semifinals. The hobble has been caused by physical pain, past knee surgeries and a current hamstring injury but it is also an apt manifestation of the tightrope that the outwardly carefree and jovial cricketer has to walk as the bearer of a cricket-crazy nation's ultra-high expectations that ignore the team's ranking of eighth in the world. He has also had to find the balance between his own initial mindset as a 140-kph bowler and now being a medium-pacer with a minimal margin for error on flat wickets. Add to that, constant speculation about his retirement, especially with his meagre return of one wicket from six World Cup matches. The man who fate has guided and barred in equal measure and who talks about luck as a separate entity, spoke to The Daily Star's Sakeb Subhan about injury management, retirement and Bangladesh's World Cup.

The Daily Star (TDS): You have been hampered by hamstring injuries since the start of the World Cup. How do you manage to keep playing?

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (MBM): I was fine physically. It was so cold in Ireland; my main problem is with my knees and knee-related issues. Initially, the injury I had in Ireland was of the glutes, that was manageable. In the final match I had a hamstring injury and that has hampered me. And when it came to the World Cup, I didn't think about it much... I played with the injury. Talking about management, it's just that I don't think about it. From a mental perspective, I can take pain. I have had this for a long time; I can take the

TDS: What kind of injury would it take to stop you from playing?

MBM: The physio said it was Grade 2. I have not had the test. With Grade 2, some people can't even walk. I am playing, so that means I have been tolerating an extreme. But it is bothering me, that's just the truth. I have bowled off a short run-up too, but I don't want to give up. It's not that I am not giving my hundred per cent while I am delivering. It is bothering me, but I don't want to keep these things in mind when I play. Maybe I have just set my mind to just accept the way I am now and carry on in the last stages of my

TDS: How does it affect your practice? MBM: At first we could not practise much because of the rain. Later, I practised, but by that time maybe the pain reached such a level that I could not practise at the level I would have liked; I can't give a lot of effort in practice.

TDS: Is the focus more on gym? MBM: I just do gym work more now. Over the last eight to 10 years, the focus has been more on gym. Now it is even more, to build up my strength.

TDS: It is rare that you don't take wickets for a stretch of matches. Is it hard, with all the things you have to keep in mind on the field as captain?

MBM: There is no use making excuses; I don't believe in that. You need luck to get wickets. I said the same thing when I was getting wickets and I am saying the same thing now that I am not. Suppose I got six wickets in six

matches, no one would have said anything then. But would you say that I have not bowled one delivery per match worthy of

taking a wicket?

TDS: No, you have... MBM: You can get a wicket with a full toss. Bowling well is one thing and getting wickets another. With regards to bowling well, you can ask whether you are hitting a consistent areas or whether you are executing according to your plan. If you get a wicket with a full toss, it will still count as a wicket. If you are just talking about taking wickets, then I have just not had luck on my side.

TDS: You have changed as a bowler over the years, from a sort of tearaway capable of bowling 140-plus to a medium pacer, because of injuries. How has that affected your training?

MBM: Training has remained the same. I do a lot of spot bowling, normally. The one thing that has helped me survive is that I know when I am bowling well or not. Depending on that I used to increase the amount of training, which maybe I am not able to do at the right stage now. But I do a lot of spot bowling. I am not a great believer in

net bowling; instead, to get my confidence, my rhythm back, spot bowling helps me. This is what I do always, separately.

TDS: Mentally speaking, how did you adapt to the reduction in

MBM: At one stage, when [Khaled Masud] Pilot bhai was the keeper and the ball went to him, I used to ask him 'Pilot bhai, is the ball

hitting the gloves hard?'. I used to ask the same of Mushfiqur. Then I had one injury after another. Then, when my right leg went during the delivery stride [on the tour of West Indies in 2009], that was the moment that my pace broke down. When I returned from that injury, every time I bowled, I could not find the confidence to jump off my right foot to enter my delivery stride. I was supposed to return after six months, and it took me all of that time to get my jump back. That is when I lost my pace; if you compare my 2007 run-up and the one I have now, you will see that they are chalk and cheese -- from start to end, including the delivery stride. Over the six months, I could not adjust everything fully; over the course of bowling, this is what came out of my changed physical state. It was automatic, and straightaway it reduced my pace. Even after my first wave of injuries, I bowled at 132-134, but it came down to 125

after 2009. There is no scope to deny that when you are playing on flat wickets, that is a problem It is then about management: whether it is bowling slowers or other variations, I do those. Success has come my way in some matches, and in some matches it has not. TDS: You said that you know when you are bowling well... are you bowling well now? MBM: I did not bowl well in the first two matches. In the last three-four matches, my percentage has been very good when it comes to bowling in the right areas. In terms of wickets, I was zero. But if you are talking of hitting the right areas, I have done well in the last four games, I think even in matters of conceding runs it has been okay. I think

It is the same thing that I said in Bangladesh and I want to make it clear again. Nothing has changed. I will think about these things only after the World Cup ends. I don't want the team to be disturbed by this or that they think about these things even for a second. If my career is over, I will think about it after the World Cup, talk to them and take a decision in a proper way. There is a lot of confusion around this issue and I will also become a topic of debate. There is no scope to think about such things during a tournament, because it then becomes so personal and self-centred that I am thinking about myself.

that I have bowled many balls that could have gotten me a wicket but I didn't get it, but when talking of percentages I think I have done well since England. But it is also true that people will judge you through wickets... I have to admit that.

TDS: How hard is it to juggle team management, injury management, your own bowling and the World Cup pressure? MBM: To tell you the truth, I do not calculate those things minutely. I have never been able to get into a complex explanation about these things... I don't know why. But to tell the truth, even if you don't think about it much you will always have that extra pressure or hype that comes with a World Cup. And that is more for the captain.

TDS: You said that you are nearing the end of your career and there has been some talk about that recently. Anything you want to

clarify? MBM: I just want to tell you clearly -- I had said two lines the other day and now too I will do the same. It is the same thing that I said in Bangladesh and I want to make it clear again. Nothing has changed. I will think about these things only after the World Cup ends. I don't want the team to be disturbed by this or that they think about these things even for a second. If my career is over, I will think about it after the World Cup, talk to them and take a decision in a proper way. Around 55 of you have come here, and there are many more journalists in Bangladesh. I think you people also deserve that whatever I say about this, I say it with a calm and cool mindset. I also deserve to finish the tournament, go back home, consider the matter and decide,

but I do not want to go into such discussions during the tournament.

I said the other day that currently I want to focus on playing. If you ask me to give a clear yes or no answer, I cannot do that now because I haven't decided. There is a lot of confusion around this issue and I will also become a topic of debate. There is no scope to think about such things during a tournament, because it then becomes so personal and self-centred that I am thinking about myself. Let the tournament end and let me go home. There is my family to consider... there was a time when I retired from T20Is, but I think my family deserves that I discuss with them before leaving the whole of cricket behind

TDS: Coming back to the World Cup, there is a similarity with this situation and the one you faced before getting to the Asia Cup final last year. You needed to win two matches, as you do now against India and Pakistan; does that give the team a singular focus? MBM: Everyone is positive. Luck has to favour you. To win two matches you have to play sufficiently well, there is no alternative to playing to the best of your ability. But with that the right thing has to happen at the right time. Suppose a run-out or a catch is missed, you lose the match after that. Apart from that,

we are positive, I am hopeful that luck is on

our side. To tell the truth, in this tournament, there were some matches that we took at a time and other matches where we weren't able to do that. It becomes easier when you take it one by one, because if I win this match everything opens up for me, so you leave everything on the field for that particular match. If that doesn't happen, you do the same thing for the next match. I think somehow, in some matches we could not stay in that space. I mean, it would have been better if the focus was sharper. Now, there is no other alternative to taking it one by one. TDS: How would you rate your team's performance so far in the World Cup? MBM: Hundred per cent. As I said, maybe one or two people -- for example myself -- you will find were not up to the mark. But overall team performance is important. From that perspective, you are seeing the hype around the team -- no one is belittling Bangladesh or looking at us as a small team. That is a positive. Even so, I am a little disappointed because there were some matches that escaped our grasp. The effort was there, but I don't know, we missed in some areas. I could say what those were, but it is not yet time to go in-depth into everything yet. But if certain things happened, we could have been on nine points now. And I think we would be more relaxed if we were on nine points.





MOSADDEK HOSSAIN Bangladesh all-rounder

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Mohammad Nabi was influential for Afghanistan in their World Cup encounter against Pakistan yesterday. After scoring sixteen runs, the all-rounder picked up two wickets with his off-spin. Nabi was also economical as Pakistan were struggling to chase the small target of 228 runs.

'Prepared myself mentally in the DPL'

SPORTS REPORTER from Birmingham

Mosaddek Hossain has been the surprise package of sorts in the World Cup for Bangladesh. His inclusion in the World Cup squad was out of the blue because he was not included in the squad for the New Zealand tour in February, and it was thought that, because of a perceived weakness against pace, he was not an obvious choice for a World Cup on pace-friendly wickets. Seven matches into the World Cup, however, he has become a regular member. His batting improvements against pace -- seen in the 26-ball 52 that won the tri-series final in Ireland against West Indies and the late-order cameos in World Cup wins against South Africa and Afghanistan -- were because of mental preparation, according to the 23-year-

"Actually I am not thinking too much about the triseries final in Ireland. Before the World Cup I prepared myself mentally to perform better. I knew I had to play well if I got the opportunity. I just tried to prepare myself accordingly so that whenever the team needs, I can deliver," Mosaddek said in Birmingham yesterday.

Trying to score quick runs at number seven is a tough proposition for a batsman who averages nearly 60 in firstclass cricket, but Mosaddek said that he tried to play in that manner even while batting higher up in the order for Abahani in this season's Dhaka Premier League.

"Batting at number seven is challenging, not just for me but for everyone. There is limited time to get settled down because at number seven, we need to score quick





MOSADDEK HOSSAIN

runs and always have to utilise scoring options. I tried to bat keeping these things in mind in the Dhaka Premier

League, to score at a better strike rate," Mosaddek added. Part of the reason that he has become a regular is that he has seized the opportunity provided by Mahmudullah Riyad's shoulder injury. It opened up a role for a part-time off-spinner, and Mosaddek has fulfilled that admirably in

the matches so far. "I knew that I would need to bowl five-six overs in a match. My job is to keep the pressure and bowl enough dot balls, rather than taking wickets regularly. I am focusing on that," Mosaddek added.

About Bangladesh's prospects in the match against frontrunners India at Edgbaston on July 2, Mosaddek sounded a confident note. "I think with the state we have reached in this tournament, we do not have to think about India or any other team. It is better that we keep playing the way we have been."

SINGER 429,220

AFG-PAK SCOREBOARD Rahmat c Azam b Imad Asghar b Shadab Rashid c Fakhar b Afridi PAKISTAN Fakhar Ibw b Mujeeb mam st Alikhil b Nab Babar b Nabi 45/51 Hafeez c Shahidi b Mujeeb 19/35 1/0 2/0 Haris Ibw b Rashid

27/57 Sarfaraz run out 18/22 5/0 49/54 mad not out Shadab run out 11/17 Wahab not out 15/9 Extras: (b-1, lb-4, w-5) Total: (For 7 wkts in 49.4 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-72, 3-81, 4-121, 5-142, 6-156, 7-206 Bowler Result: Pakistan won by 3 wickets Player-of-the-match: Imad Wasim

1/0

RAHIM STEEL णल वाउँछाव

РНОТО: ВСВ

Bangladesh's misfiring openers Soumya Sarkar (L)

and Tamim Iqbal, seen here at the team hotel in

Birmingham, will have to step up their otherwise

against India.

lukewarm performances if the Tigers are to secure a win

in Tuesday's veritable knockout match in the World Cup