ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP ENGLAND ACCCRICKET WORLD CUP ENGLAND & WALES 2019 CALLING SZ



I wanted to prove the reports wrong, says Saifuddin

SPORTS REPORTER from Birmingham

After Jasprit Bumrah bowled Rubel Hossain and Mustafizur Rahman with successive yorkers to signal the end of the match and Bangladesh's World Cup campaign, Mohammad Saifuddin stood mid-pitch in disbelief. He was unbeaten on a 38-ball 51, and if either of the two tailenders had gotten bat on ball, Bumrah's quota would have been over and Saifuddin could have launched an assault on India's target.

Even after losing all recognised batsmen, the all-rounder from Feni was intent on making something of an apparent lost cause, and he later revealed that there was extra motivation behind his determination.

"A few days ago there was a bad news that I used an injury as an excuse to get out of a match against a big team," an emotional Saifuddin said after the match. "So I was thinking that I would become a hero by winning a match against a big team. When I took the field against India, from the first ball to the last, I was determined to win the match so that I could prove the allegations against my name wrong. Unfortunately that did not happen.

"For us players, we have nothing to do but give our answers on the field of play. That is what we try to do," he said when asked whether the chest thump after reaching his fifty was motivated by the news reports.

Since the start of the World Cup, Saifuddin has been struggling from back pain and it was hinted in an article after the game that he sat out the World Cup match against Australia on June 20 when he could have played that game. Saifuddin had been nursing back pain since the Ireland series in the first half of May and had aggravated it during the warm-up match against India on May 28. There has, however, been no report from physio Thihan Chandramohan on the issue.



Mohammad Saifuddin scored a fine 51 off 38 balls to take Bangladesh close to the Indian total of 314 but he was left stranded at the other end as Jasprit Bumrah bowled out Rubel Hossain and Mustafizur Rahman to bowl the Tigers out 28 runs shy of the total during their World Cup match yesterday.

Deja vu all over again

AL-AMIN

Sri Lankan cricket writer Andrew Fidel Fernando wrote a very animated satire titled 'Here's a massively premature review of the World Cup' for Cricinfo a couple of days ago.

In that review he touched upon all ten teams but in the Bangladesh section he made an interesting observation. In the 'low point' section, he wrote: "The loss to India. It hasn't happened yet. But we pretty much all know it will."

He was spot on. Bangladesh suffered a 28-run defeat against India at Edgbaston yesterday and with it the World Cup dream of the 'loudest fans' (according to Fernando) ended with a whimper.

It was another painful defeat for the Tigers against a team that they are seemingly obsessed with beating, but a team that somehow manages to make them always press the self-destruct button. India are certainly a better side and deserved not only to make it to the semifinals; they have all the ingredients

to win the World Cup for a third time. But Bangladesh have developed a disturbing tendency of buckling under pressure whenever they have faced the mighty Indians over the past four years. That was again on display yesterday.



Bangladesh needed an early breakthrough to stop the Indians if there were to be any hopes of batting them out before the contest had reached the half way mark. They got their opportunity when Rohit Sharma top-edged a pull against Mustafizur Rahman to the mid-wicket boundary. The Indian opener was on nine at the time and his Bangladesh counterpart Tamim Iqbal ran from the deep squareleg boundary to complete what would have been a regulation catch. But Tamim, one of the safest pairs of hands in the Bangladesh ranks, spilled it.

The impact was devastating. Rohit went on to hit a 92-ball 104, his fourth hundred in this World Cup. By the

THIRD EYE

time he left, he had lain a foundation on which India could have scored over 350. Thankfully, Mustafizur arrested that avalanche of runs with his first fivewicket haul in the tournament. India eventually finished on 314-9.

It might have been a good score to defend on a wicket that became slower as the match progressed. But the Tigers batsmen were more to be blamed than the quality of the Indian attack for failing to chase down that stiff target. All the top six batsmen got starts but failed to carry on, save Shakib Al Hasan who struck a fighting 66.

Tamim, his opening partner Soumya Sarkar, an otherwise dependable Mushfigur Rahim and Liton Das all were subjected to soft dismissals and that too at a time when they looked like taking the game away from India's firm grip.

Tamim chopped a Mohammad Shami delivery onto his stumps, Soumya cracked a rank long-hop from Hardik Pandya straight to the throat of Indian captain Virat Kohli at cover, Mushfigur mistimed a sweep shot against leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal to Shami at short square leg and Liton top-edged an attempted pull against Pandya to Dinesh Karthik.

Had both Mushfigur and Liton, who were playing so well in the company of Shakib, curbed their natural strokemaking instincts and focused more on building a partnership, it could have been a different story. They refused to take the game deep, which was where the Tigers lost the plot.

Sabbir Rahman and Mohammad Saifuddin produced a very interesting 50-plus stand for the seventh wicket. And it could have turned gold had their predecessors carried on the innings till at least the 40th over.

It was good to see Sabbir get runs but it was the calmness of Saifudddin and his approach in a superb unbeaten 50 that was the biggest plus point in a defeat. He was stuck at the other end when Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah dismissed the last two batsmen with perfect yorkers off successive deliveries

With two more overs still to go, the young all-rounder in the making left Tigers fans pondering what could have been had he gotten the chance to play those 12 legal deliveries.

But more importantly for the Tigers as a unit it was yet another opportunity lost to overcome the Indian hoodoo.

BEST QUOTE



The Tigers have, for me, the best player in this tournament in Shakib Al Hasan. His bowling has been decent but his batting has been from a different planet - just ask the West Indies.

Clive Lloyd Former WI captain

Taylor backs NZ to turn a corner

AFP, Chester-le-Street

New Zealand's Ross Taylor believes the Black Caps can return to winning ways against England, adding that they had not played to their full potential so far. "We definitely haven't

got the momentum that we would have liked in the last couple of games, but tomorrow is a different story against different opposition," he said yesterday. "I'd love as a team to take a little bit of pressure off Kane and score some runs and not let him do everything."

"Every time we played England in the last little while it's been a great series. I think it came down to the wire in that series back home and the last time we were here was a must-win. I think it was two-all, and Jonny Bairstow came in fresh and batted well."



HAPPY MOMENT



Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza did not hav e the best outing against India but he had a happy moment when coach Steve Rhodes backed him to the hilt in the post-match briefing. Rhodes said: "First, this situation with the board and all this talk that's been going on for the last two weeks or so, those really are questions for the board and questions for Mash to answer. I can't really answer. We've also need to have a bowler good enough, capable enough to actually replace Mash Everybody forgets that. We haven't got too many of the taller, quicker bowlers, which is what we're trying to get in Test matches. As soon as we find them and as soon as they're starting to do well, I'm sure that we'll be wanting to get them in the team. I'm sure Mash would be a little disappointed with that first over, but I actually thought it was a very brave decision to check himself off... But he did come back, and he did come back better. So he showed that he was clawing his way back. Mash is a very proud person, and I'm sure Mash will look at his performances so far and wish they were a little bit better, but having said that, he's tried his hardest all the way through. The one thing about Mash is that he tries every single ball. He doesn't know any other way. He's had seven knee operations, and he's had a fantastic, wonderful career of over 200 ODIs, and he has not stopped trying throughout all of those ODIs, I know that."

Hoping, not expecting

SAKEB SUBHAN from Birmingham

When Rohit Sharma top-edged a pull off Mustafizur Rahman in the fifth over of the match and the ball ballooned to the left of deep square leg, a lot hung in the balance for Bangladesh. Before the match, skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza talked about the importance of taking early wickets against India because their top order was their strength, but Bangladesh had dented the wickets column in the first 10 overs in just

two of their six completed matches. Mashrafe would not have asked for a safer pair of hands than Tamim Iqbal's to buck that trend, but Tamim was slow to react, got in a bad position, and spilled a simple chance. It was especially unusual for a fielder who has pulled off spectacular outfield catches because he was always quick off the blocks. Yesterday, it seemed that a catch that early in the innings was not what he was expecting. It was an early example of the Tigers hoping for the best but not expecting it.

Sharma was on nine then and went on to score 104, his fourth hundred of this World Cup. Mashrafe said other things too on the eve of the match. 'It will be very important to keep our cool', he had said, because 'initially nerves play a role'. Also, surprisingly for a renowned fighter on the field of cricket, he seemed to hold out very little hope of winning the match against India, at one point even saying that he was unsure of what to do if he won the toss, despite it being a used wicket and therefore batting first being an obvious choice, because of how well India chase. It was certainly a departure from his oft-stated intention to focus on what they do instead of letting opponents dictate terms.

It is of course unknowable what Mashrafe said in the dressing room, but if press conferences offer even a translucent window into the mind of a captain, the picture was not a positive one. For the first half of India's innings, the negativity seemed to infect the rest of the team. Apart from Tamim's miss, which led to a drop in body language from the rest of the team, even the redoubtable Shakib Al Hasan dove over a ball in the fourth over and

conceded a boundary through midwicket. Before Mustafizur worked his magic in the 39th over, the fielding and bowling effort appeared listless. On more than one occasion fielders in the deep were lost in their own thoughts and those in the infield had to wave and shout to capture their attention when the bowler wanted a change in the field.

Mashrafe himself opened the bowling, and after conceding 10 runs in the first over -- which included a pulled six by Sharma -he took himself off and brought Mustafizur on. All three bowlers in the first 10 overs, which went by without Bangladesh picking a wicket yet again, were undisciplined and bowled both sides of the wicket, allowing Sharma and Lokesh Rahul to score at will. Criticism of Mashrafe's bowling is likely to increase as he bowled just five overs and conceded 37 runs and went wicketless for the seventh time in eight matches. He can count himself lucky that Soumya Sarkar filled in admirably with his parttime medium pace, breaking the 180-run opening stand in the 30th over. Rubel Hossain and Shakib also played their parts, picking the wickets of Rahul and Rishabh Pant respectively.

However, it was Mustafizur's five wickets -- starting with a double-wicket maiden in the 39th over -- that pulled India's innings back to a manageable score of 314 for nine. In other words, it was rare individual brilliance from one bowler and not the collective bowling effort Mashrafe always says that Bangladesh count on. Without Mustafizur, the match could well have panned out like it did against the two other strong batting lineups that the Tigers faced in Australia and England, when they conceded more than 380. If the batsmen manage to overhaul the target against a strong bowling attack and stay alive in the World Cup, more positivity and belief early may help the Tigers.

RiRi cheers up Windies



AGENCIES, Durham

Fabian Allen revels in a bit of razzmatazz, and with Rihanna in the house he tried to make the most of it.

Nicholas Pooran was playing the support act, scoring his first ODI century to dig West Indies out of serious trouble in a chase against Sri Lanka on Monday. Allen had the spotlight, a 30-ball half-century cameo containing seven boundaries and a six down the ground that drew Rihanna to her feet.

The stage was set for a comeback victory, until a mix up cost Allen his wicket and ended an 83-run partnership and West Indies fell short.

Despite the result, Rihanna visited the players in their changing room. West Indies captain Jason Holder, also from Rihanna's homeland of Barbados, said her

appearance in Riverside stadium was a pleasant surprise. "It was great to see her here. I just want to personally

thank her for coming out," he said. "I'm sure the boys felt her presence in the stands. And she came down to PLAYING the dressing room as well

players, and that was also refreshing." Allen said he was more confident with the superstar in support, and was

and met quite a few of the

especially disappointed the team couldn't deliver a win. "She's gorgeous. Rihanna is always my favorite," he said. "It was good to meet

her."

