



With Bangladesh crashing to 60 for six inside 10 overs in their chase of 145 against Zimbabwe in the tri-nation T20I series opener yesterday, Mosaddek Hossain (L) and Afif Hossain stitched together a magnificent, match-winning 82-run seventh-wicket partnership in Mirpur.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

From a duck to a call from the PM

SPORTS REPORTER



The very first ball that 19-year-old Afif Hossain faced in his second T20I yesterday -- that too after a one-year gap since scoring a duck on his debut against Sri Lanka -- the left-hander smoked for a boundary over pacer Neville Madziva's head.

That clearly outlined his intentions. He was not going to reel in his instincts despite the fact that Bangladesh were reeling on 60 for six inside ten overs in chase of 145. Instead, Afif launched a pulverising counterattack.

"I was only thinking of reading the situation and trying to bat accordingly," was how Afif replied when asked what he was thinking when he walked out to bat at that critical time.

Whether it was a conventional stroke or a bit of improvisation, such as a late cut just beside the wicketkeeper or even a scoop shot on his knees to a fast bowler -- the youngster was brimming with confidence.

Afif recorded his maiden T20I fifty before he was eventually dismissed for a 26-ball 52, but by then the Tigers were just three runs away from their target and a much-needed win following dismal showings in recent times.

He and Mosaddek Hossain added a match-winning 82-run seventh-wicket stand that helped Bangladesh start the tri-series on a winning note.

But a rather mature Afif did not seem overexuberant despite getting a phone call from the Prime Minister after his brilliant performance.

In the year since making his T20I debut, Afif has been a regular performer for the High Performance (HP) team, with the highlight being an unbeaten century against the Sri Lankan Emerging team in Cox's Bazar. He was also denied a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Caribbean Premier League. However, he said he was not thinking of anything beyond performing regardless of the level of cricket.

"I was dropped from the national team, but I did not want to think about it. I waited my turn and whenever I get a chance, I try to give my best and make a comeback. I tried to play well in the HP and A-team games and those were part of my preparation," he said.

According to Afif, skipper Shakib Al Hasan gave him the freedom to play his normal game, which helped him remain confident. However, he expressed disappointment at not being able to finish off the game and remain unbeaten at the end.

BD U-19s hunt maiden title

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will look to become first-time champions of the ongoing Asian Cricket Council Under-19s Asia Cup when they take on India in the final at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo today.

The match is set to get underway at 10:30am Bangladesh time.

Both Bangladesh and India made it through to the final following first-place finishes in their respective groups while their respective semifinal encounters were washed out.

So far, Bangladesh have remained unbeaten in the tournament, having clinched comfortable victories against the likes of UAE, Nepal and hosts Sri Lanka.

India have also been in fine fettle and just like their Bangladeshi counterparts, the side have to be beaten in the tournament.

Batting has been the strong suit for both teams so far with India's Arjun Azad leading the most runs chart with 202 at a staggering average of 101 and a high score of 121 in three matches. Meanwhile, Bangladesh top-order batsman Mahmudul Hasan Joy is a close second with 193 runs to his name from three matches.

'Want to be part of the BPL'

Comilla Victorians owner urges for resolution with the BPL GC

SPORTS REPORTER



A tearful Nafisa Kamal, owner of Bangladesh Premier League franchise Comilla Victorians (BPL), said yesterday the franchise were shocked by the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) decision to stage the seventh edition of the tournament without the involvement of the franchises.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan informed of the development during a press conference on Wednesday, citing what he termed were unacceptable demands made by the franchises.

According to Nafisa, they did not have the chance to renegotiate with the BPL governing council (GC) members about their demands and the franchise were not informed about the decision before learning of it through the media.

"The last decision during the meeting was that we were going to get a draft on September 15 and they (BPL GC) said they were compiling the proposals after considering our

recommendations. We have held meetings with the board (BCB governing body), we had some demands for the sake of cricket. I think there is a huge communication gap and I think the process has not been followed. I think we should have been informed a few days earlier or even a few hours before the media that they were not able to accept our demands this time. But we had no idea we had to pay such a heavy fine. There is always a space for proposals. This should not happen in our professional cricket body," Nafisa told reporters at her office yesterday.

In early August, four months before the tournament is slated to begin on December 6, the board announced that the seventh edition would kick off a new four-year cycle, which meant that off-season signings and existing rosters would be null and void. That set off a series of discussions with the franchises, whose demands included a new revenue sharing model.

The board is now set to launch the seventh edition on their own and name it after Father

of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to mark his 100th birth anniversary.

Nafisa said that they wanted to be a part of the Bangabandhu BPL and was looking forward to discuss the matter with the board to look for a resolution. She said that the recent developments would hamper the image of the tournament.

"Even [former Pakistan all-rounder] Shahid Afridi called me today. Some of the cricketers have abandoned other commitments to play in the BPL and now all of a sudden there is no place for us in the tournament. Afridi wanted to know whether the news was correct. The foreign players are asking that having finalised the contract, how could we reverse course? There is no chance for them to take part in the next edition and said that there is no certainty around the BPL as the tournament is yet to reach professionalism. We have an obligation to our fans and we want to play in the tournament, and so we want BCB to reconsider their decision," said Nafisa.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

ZIMBABWE		R/B	4s/6s	
Taylor c Mahmudullah b Tajul	6/5	5/0		
Masakadza c Sabbir b Saifuddin	34/26	5/1		
Ervine c Mosaddek b Mustafizur	11/14	1/0		
Williams c & b Mosaddek	2/3	0/0		
Maruma run out	1/2	0/0		
Burl not out	57/32	5/4		
Mutombodzi not out	27/26	1/1		
Extras: (lb-2, w-4)	6			
Total: (For 5 wkts in 18 overs)	144			
Did not bat: Madziva, Jarvis, Munyonga, Chataru.				
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-51, 3-56, 4-56, 5-63				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shakib	4	0	49	0
Tajul	3	0	26	1
Saifuddin	4	0	26	1
Mustafizur	4	0	31	1
Mosaddek	3	0	10	1
Bangladesh innings				
Liton b Chataru	19/14	1/1		
Soumya c Madziva b Jarvis	4/7	0/0		
Shakib c Masakadza b Chataru	1/3	0/0		
Mushfiqur c Taylor b Jarvis	0/1	0/0		
Mahmudullah lbw b Burl	14/16	2/0		
Sabbir c Burl b Madziva	15/15	1/0		
Mosaddek not out	30/24	0/2		
Afif c Masakadza b Madziva	52/26	8/1		
Saifuddin not out	6/2	1/0		
Extras: (lb-1, lb-1, w-3, nb-2):	7			
Total (For seven wickets in 17.4 overs):	148			
Did not bat: Tajul, Mustafizur.				
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-26, 3-27, 4-29, 5-56, 6-60, 7-142				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Williams	3	0	31	0
Jarvis	4	0	31	2
Chataru	4	0	32	2
Burl	3	0	27	1
Madziva	3.4	0	25	2
Result: Bangladesh win by three wickets.				
Player-of-the-match: Afif Hossain.				

Sarfraz retains captaincy

REUTERS, Karachi

Sarfraz Ahmed has been retained as the captain of the Pakistan cricket team for the upcoming limited-overs series against Sri Lanka, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Friday.

Sarfraz took charge of Pakistan across all formats in April 2017 and led the team to the Champions Trophy title two months later.

The decision to continue with Sarfraz comes a week after former captain Misbahul Haq was confirmed as the head coach and chief selector of the national team.

"I feel humbled and honoured to have been awarded extension to my captaincy term," Sarfraz said in a statement.

"I have enjoyed captaining the Pakistan cricket team and look forward to improve my leadership qualities under the new set-up of Misbahul-Haq who also has a proven record as captain.

"I have played most of my cricket under Misbah and we know each other pretty well. I think we will make a good combination, which will contribute to improved performances of the side across all formats."

Top order batsman Babar Azam, who has previously captained Pakistan in the U-19 World Cup in 2012, was named the team's new vice-captain after an impressive run.

MOMENTS

Power failure!

Mustafizur Rahman was on his run-up mark before the last over of the first innings when a power failure in Mirpur plunged the entire Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium into darkness. Although the back-up managed to turn on the lights of the press box and VIP box, the floodlights were still off. It took more than five minutes before the authorities could resume the game. It was a rare incident at the home of cricket but power failures in Bangladesh cricket are nothing out of the ordinary these days. During the third day of the Chattogram Test against Afghanistan last week, the floodlights came into play due to bad light but a power failure saw them switch off, forcing the days' play conclude 20 minutes before the scheduled time.

When the board president sits in the gallery

Generally, the VIPs along with the BCB president watch games in Mirpur from the prestigious President's Box. But there was an exception yesterday. BCB chief Nazmul Hassan was watching from the grand stand gallery, along with a few other spectators. Although the BCB boss might have felt embarrassed when darkness enveloped the stadium, waiting helplessly for the lights to turn back on.



The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium was plunged into darkness yesterday when a power failure caused the floodlights to switch off. PHOTO: STAR

Archer's six give hosts charge

AFP, London



Jofra Archer took six wickets as England bowled Australia out for 225 to gain the upper hand on the second day of the fifth Ashes Test on Friday despite another Steve Smith masterclass.

Joe Root's team are desperate to level the series at 2-2 to end their historic World Cup-winning season on a high but have been consistently dogged by the peerless Smith.

The former Australian skipper has now amassed 751 runs in six innings -- more than double the tally of the next highest runscore on either side.

But he was forced to settle for his lowest score of the series -- 80 -- when Chris Woakes trapped him lbw in the evening session, leaving the sun-drenched Oval crowd dumbfounded.

Australia conceded a first-innings deficit of 69, pacer Archer finishing with figures of 6-62. Sam Curran took three wickets on his return to the side.

England openers Rory Burns and Joe Denly, dropped in the slips in the final over, survived a tricky four overs as the light faded to reach 9-0 by the close -- an overall lead of 78.

Barbados-born Archer only made his Test debut last month but already has 22 wickets.

"It was a tough wicket to bowl on to be honest," said Archer. "I didn't feel there was much assistance."

He said Smith was almost impossible to shift, even though he "didn't look himself today".

"It's weird because every time he bats, I don't know what it is," he added.

"He literally cannot get out. The ball just lands, especially if he plays a bad shot, the ball just lands in no-man's land for the whole series."

Smith came to the crease with Australia in trouble at 14-2 in reply to England's first-innings total of 294



PHOTO: REUTERS

England pacer Jofra Archer celebrates after taking the wicket of Australia opener Marcus Harris during the second day of the fifth Ashes Test at The Oval in London yesterday.

after Archer had removed openers David Warner and Marcus Harris.

Smith was watchful at the start of his innings but soon found his touch.

Marcus Labuschagne fell for 48 but Smith appeared to be playing a completely different game from all the other batsmen. However, he had a lucky escape after tea when, on 66, he edged to Root in the slips, only for the England skipper to shell the chance.

Wickets continued to tumble after tea, with Curran removing Australia captain Tim Paine and Pat Cummins in successive balls. Smith's dismissal left the Australians struggling at 187-8.

Peter Siddle and Nathan Lyon added 37 before Archer bowled Lyon and Burns took a sensational catch to

end Siddle's knock.

Smith said he had been feeling under the weather during the day.

"I've been struggling a bit today. I've got a bit of the flu but I was loading up on the cold and flu (medicine) throughout the day and just tried to stay as focused as I could be," he said.

"Unfortunately I couldn't bat with the tail for as long as I would have liked."

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 294 all out (Burns 47, Root 57, Buttler 70; Cummins 3-84, Marsh 5-46) and second innings 9 for no loss

AUSTRALIA: First innings 225 all out (Labuschagne 48, Smith 80; Archer 6-62, Curran 3-46)

Test journey just started: Bumrah

AGENCIES, New Delhi

India pacer Jasprit Bumrah said Friday that he always wanted to do well in Tests and not restrict himself to just limited-overs cricket.

Bumrah has picked up 62 wickets in 12 Tests and was magical in the recent tour of the West Indies, where he scalped 13 wickets in two Tests, including a hat-trick. He is also the first Asian pacer to take five-wicket hauls in South Africa, England, Australia, and the West Indies, besides becoming the fastest Indian pacer to 50 Test wickets.

"For me, Test cricket was very important and I always wanted to play Tests and didn't want to be a cricketer who played (only) T20s and ODIs. I gave a lot of importance to Test cricket... I always wanted to make a mark in Tests," Bumrah said.

"I had the belief that I do well in first-class cricket, I could replicate that in Test matches. The journey has just started and I have just played 12 Tests. When I made my Test debut in South Africa after playing two years of international cricket, it was a dream come true (moment)."