



Mushfiqur Rahim takes the bails off for the final wicket as Bangladesh bundle out West Indies for 148 before chasing the down the target comfortably in the second ODI in Mirpur yesterday. (Inset) Mehedi Hasan Miraz took four wickets.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Miraz turns up and turns it on

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehedi Hasan Miraz had to wait two years to register his second man-of-the-match performance and his career-best bowling figures of four for 25 from 9.4 overs helped Bangladesh seal the three-match ODI series against the West Indies with a game in hand yesterday.

Mehedi's first man-of-the-match award came against the same opposition in 2018, when he picked up four wickets for 29 runs. However, the two years since have not gone well for Miraz, especially in limited-overs cricket.

After initially bursting onto the international arena against England in a Test series in 2016, when he announced himself as the next big thing in the Tigers' spin department, there have been talks in the recent past about

dropping him from the limited-overs formats due to a lack of impact and variation.

The youngster has been under tremendous pressure and, after picking up one wicket in the first game, Miraz came out strong in the second ODI yesterday, consistently bowling in the right areas and often asking questions of the batsmen.

Despite there not being much turn in the surface, Miraz varied his line and length to good effect after being introduced into the attack in the 10th over, keeping things tight in his first two overs and targeting the footmarks.

"When I saw the footmarks on the pitch, I tried to bowl there. I tried to make some changes to what I did in the first game. Our spin-bowling coach, Sohail Islam, called me and gave me some tips and told me to bowl over spin balls frequently and maintain line and length and it was a result of the execution of that," Miraz said

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: 148 all out in 43.4 overs (Powell 41, Ottley 24; Mehidy 4-25, Mustafizur 2-15, Shakib 2-30)
BANGLADESH: 149 for 3 in 33.2 overs (Tamim 50, Shakib 43 not out; Reifer 1-18)
Result: Bangladesh won by 7 wickets to lead 3-match series 2-0
Man-of-the-match: Mehedi Hasan Miraz

after the game.

He hit the visitors with a double-blow, first removing debutant Kjorn Ottley with a rather straight delivery that the left-hander played straight to cover while trying to go over.

Two balls later Miraz undid Joshua Da Silva with another flighted delivery that held its line. The batsman waited for the turn, but the ball went on to hit the timber. He immediately picked up a wicket when he came on for his second spell, dismissing Windies skipper Jason Mohammed as the

ball skid through and trapped him leg before.

He then got the final wicket of Rovman Powell to wrap things up for Bangladesh and register his best ODI bowling figures.

The 23 year old relieved after the game and credited seniors like Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad for helping him by providing valuable input.

"I was unable to bowl well in the first ODI against the left-handed batters then Shakib bhai advised me to bowl around the leg-middle area. All of a sudden I gained the confidence and even bowled a maiden over.

"It was same today (yesterday) when I did not get a wicket in my first three overs. Riyad bhai suggested that I change the fielding set-up and I got a wicket off the very next ball. It was really special for me because I might not have picked that wicket if Riyad bhai didn't advise me," he said.

Jason bemoans lack of big partnerships

SPORTS REPORTER

West Indies' hopes of putting up some sort of resistance in the second ODI after having meekly surrendered in the first one, was once again foiled after another early batting slump in Mirpur yesterday. Captain Jason Mohammed spoke of his side's inexperience after the series loss.

The visitors were bowled out for 148 runs, giving the hosts a target which was comfortably chased down with seven wickets in hand and one-third of the overs to spare.

Asked why his team batted first after a dismal effort with the bat in the first ODI, Jason said: "I think the wicket looked a lot better today. I thought if we bat first and put some runs on the board then we could have defended and bowled them out."

Many of the newcomers in the team have not gone through the grind of playing a high number of matches in domestic tournaments and the international level found them lacking in conviction. The Windies skipper admitted that inexperience played a part but attributed the lack of partnerships as the chief reason of the debacle.

"Obviously we know there is a little bit of inexperience [in our side] with a lot of guys making their debut. Obviously the guys have a lot of potential and we just didn't put in a performance together. We didn't put together big partnerships so individuals didn't put up big scores," he said.

"We were not able to manage them and that's why we had those low totals," Jason said about the difficulties of facing the spin of Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Shakib Al Hasan.

In a league of his own

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan became the first player to have scored more than 2500 runs and also to have picked 100 wickets at a single venue -- the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur -- during the Tigers' second ODI against the West Indies yesterday.

After his unbeaten 50-ball 43 and two for 30 in 10 overs with the ball yesterday, Shakib has now scored a total of 2534 runs with two hundreds and 21 fifties and scalped a total of 119 wickets in Mirpur. He is only after teammate Tamim Iqbal, who is top of the list of most runs scored at a single venue with 2713 runs in 80 matches, including five hundreds and 18 fifties, in Mirpur. Shakib is also second to Wasim Akram for most wickets at a single venue, the Pakistani legend took 122 wickets in 77 matches at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

Playing in his 82nd ODI in Mirpur, Shakib achieved the feat when he struck West Indies medium-pace Raymon Reifer for a boundary towards the backward point in the 22nd over. This achievement of Shakib comes on the back of a lot of speculation that has been going around regarding his return to form since being reinstated in international arena following a one-year ban imposed by the ICC in October 2019.

Shakib had marked his return to with an astounding bowling display, taking four wickets for eight runs in 7.2 overs in the first ODI on Wednesday. But the 33-year-old, who had played a number of domestic games before returning to the international stage, had been struggling to get runs since his return.

He was part of a star-studded Gemcon Khulna team that won the Bangabandhu T20 Cup in December last year. Shakib was decent with his bowling in that tournament but the ace all-rounder struggled to get runs. He scored a total of 110 runs in nine games at an average of 12.22 in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup.

Bangladesh cricket fans have been waiting for Shakib to get back to groove with the willow and his unbeaten knock yesterday is sure to give them a massive sigh of relief.



'Massive punch in the face'

AFP, Liverpool

Jürgen Klopp admitted the end of Liverpool's 68-game unbeaten run at Anfield was a "massive punch in the face" as the Premier League champions crashed to a shock 1-0 defeat against Burnley on Thursday.

Klopp's side were beaten in a home league game for the first time since Crystal Palace won at Anfield in April 2017.

Ashley Barnes clinched Burnley's first win at Liverpool since 1974 when he converted an 83rd-minute penalty after being fouled by Reds goalkeeper Alisson Becker.

"It's a massive, massive punch in the face," Klopp said. "We had the ball a lot, created some and didn't finish the situations off."

"That keeps the game open and then they get the penalty. Alisson told me he didn't touch him, but I didn't see it back."

"We lost a game which I think it's actually impossible to lose. But we did it."

Spluttering Liverpool have slipped to fourth place after a second defeat in their last three league games and trail leaders Manchester United by six points.

Crowd abuse made Siraj 'mentally strong'

AFP, Hyderabad

India bowler Mohammed Siraj has given his first public account of the crowd abuse he suffered during the Australia Test series, saying it made him "mentally strong".

Siraj said India, who stunned Australia to win the series 2-1, declined an offer from the umpires to walk off the field as players were abused in the third Test in Sydney.

According to Indian media, shouts of "monkey" and other insults rang out when Siraj and fellow fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah were fielding near the boundary.

"The crowd in Australia began to abuse me but it made me mentally strong. I did not let it affect my game and that was important," said Siraj.

"I told my captain Ajju bhai (Ajinkya Rahane) about the abuse and he spoke to the umpires who said you can leave the field. But Rahane said: 'We will play on.'"

He said Rahane told the umpires to take action over the abuse. Six fans were ejected and an investigation into the incident is underway.

India, despite being decimated injuries, battled to a draw in Sydney and then broke Australia's 32-year unbeaten streak at Brisbane's Gabba ground to claim one of the great series victories of all time.

Siraj, still grieving his father, who died just before the series, took 13 wickets including five in Australia's second innings at the Gabba, just his third Test.

He was speaking after receiving a hero's welcome in his home city of Hyderabad on Thursday, where he headed straight for his father's grave.

Siraj's father, an auto rickshaw driver, died as India were in quarantine in Australia, but the player decided to stay



with the team.

"First of all it was very difficult for me. Mentally I was upset and depressed," he said.

"I had a chat with them back home and they said that I should complete Dad's dream (of playing for India)."

Siraj has emerged as a national player after becoming a key man for Indian Premier League side Royal Challengers Bangalore, who are led by India's regular captain Virat Kohli.

"I had a bad season in 2018, but RCB backed me. Virat bhai has always backed me, saying 'You have the power and you can do it,' he said.

"I will not let this performance go to my head. I cannot relax as there is the England series and the World Test Championship coming up."

Men's Asian CT hockey postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

The Asian Hockey Federation yesterday postponed the Men's Asian Champions Trophy, scheduled to be held in Dhaka, as well as the Women's Asian Champions Trophy to be held in Donghae, citing the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Korea, Malaysia and Japan were scheduled to take part in the men's event at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium in Dhaka from March 11.

A statement on AHF's website, which also revealed a tentative date in October, read: "First and foremost, the Asian Hockey Federation puts on record and appreciates the efforts of both the Bangladesh Hockey Federation and the Korea Hockey Association for their extraordinary efforts to secure this event. Unfortunately, the circumstances and ongoing pandemic have forced an unfavorable outcome."

"The decision of the postponement has been a difficult one, and has been made in consultation with the host, the FIH and all participating National Associations. The concern for athletes' safety, health, and welfare is at the forefront of our minds while taking this decision," it stated.

BHF acting general secretary Mohammad Yousof said that they had not been officially informed about the postponement of the tournament and that the national team's training camp would be postponed after getting an official letter.

Mature Mathews shows SL the way

REUTERS



Sri Lanka's improved batting on day one of the second and final Test against England in Galle on Friday was led by a century from Angelo Mathews and is a sign the hosts have taken on board the heavy criticism of their display in the first test.

Sri Lanka reached 229 for four at the close after electing to bat first, their total boosted by an unbeaten 107 from Mathews and 52 from captain Dinesh Chandimal.

It is a far cry from their woeful first innings score of 135 on the opening day of the first test when poor shot selection and an ill-advised attempt at quick runs likely cost them the match as England claimed a seven-wicket win.

Sri Lanka were much more cautious this time on a dry wicket that will crumble quickly under the hot sun and make chasing anything substantial in the fourth innings perilous for the tourists.

"We had to see through a few overs and get the ball slightly older to score some runs," Mathews told reporters at the close. "Credit must go to the England bowlers. It was hot and humid and they gave nothing away."

"They set a field that we could not score off easily. The fast bowlers had good line and length. We don't know what a good score is, just as many as we can get."

Mathews scored 71 in Sri Lanka's second innings in the first Test and says playing back-to-back games at the same venue has its advantages.

"I got into a rhythm in the second innings of the first test, so I thought if I can get a start I'm not going to give it away," he said. "I had to work extremely hard. They (England) gave us nothing, but we are 229 for four and we cannot give it away now."



Angelo Mathews scored a brilliant century as Sri Lanka put up a fight on the first day of the second and final Test against England in Galle yesterday. The former skipper was unbeaten on 107 as the hosts reached 229 for four at the end of the day.

PHOTO: TWITTER