

Imrul, Miraz begin new venture with ‘Bat Doctor’

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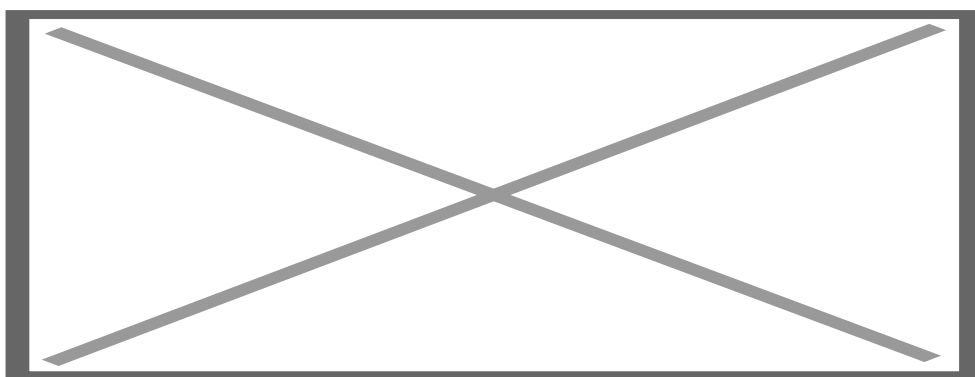
Online Desk: Bangladesh all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz and experienced batter Imrul Kayes have begun a new mission. They are set to begin a bat manufacturing business alongside the ‘Bat Doctor’ Hussain Mohammad Aftab AKA Shahin.

Almost everyone in the Bangladesh cricket team knows the name– ‘Bat Doctor’. From repairing bats to making new ones, this bat technician does it all. His name is Hussain Mohammad Aftab. This bat technician from Rajshahi is known to all by his nick name ‘Shahin’. National team all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz and experienced batter Imrul Kayes have begun a new venture with him. The three of them are about to launch a bat manufacturing business. Their company’s name is MKS Sports and it is set to be Bangladesh’s first bat manufacturing company.

Miraz is really excited ahead of this new venture. He plans to plaster the logo ‘MKS Sports’ on the bats of national team cricketers, age-level players, High Performance Unit cricketers, women’s cricketers and even club-level players. “We will sponsor everyone. No one will be left out,” Miraz said with a smile. Imrul dreams that Bangladeshi cricketers will play with locally manufactured bats, “We pay a lot of money to purchase bats from abroad. But Indian companies don’t give their best bats to our top players. They sell those in their market. Now, we have top quality willow here, and also have the capability to manufacture bats. Then why shouldn’t we manufacture our own bats.”

Having Miraz, Imrul as business partners is a dream come true for Shahin, “Indian, Pakistani bat-makers earn a lot. They have a huge market in our country too. There are no good local products for our cricketers. I’ve always thought– If they can do it, why can’t we? From 2019-20, I started making bats for some national team cricketers. Now, we will begin operation on a large scale. Imrul bhai has been besides me for a long time. Miraz joined later. I’m thankful to both of them for coming forward to help me fulfill my dreams.”

Till now, Shahin has made bats for Mushfiqur Rahim, Afif Hossain, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mosaddek Hossain and Mohammad Saifuddin. Many players who are not part of the national team also regularly take bats from him. Foreign players like Khushdil Shah, Sikander Raza and Andre Russell, who had come to take part in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), also appreciated Shahin’s work. Out of them, Shahin had made a new bat for Khushdil. Russell had also ordered a bat.



Zimbabwe’s Raza is a fan of Shahin’s work. Last July, Anamul Haque had some bat-related problems during the Bangladesh team’s tour of Zimbabwe. Anamul went to Raza hoping to find a solution, but returned disappointed. Raza had apparently told Anamul, “There is no Shahin in this country who can mend your bat.” Not just Bangladeshi cricketers, Shahin has also gotten contracts to manufacture bats for many US, Germany and France national team cricketers.

Like many others, Shahin also dreamt of becoming a cricketer. In 2001, he was listed in the preliminary squad of the national Under-15 team. But after it was found out that he is older than 15, he was removed from the team. He later played some cricket here and there, but couldn't become a professional cricketer. Shahin had a hidden desire of working with cricket bats for a long time. That's why he took a two-year technician course on wood work.

That's when Shahin first began repairing bats. After his studies, he started a job but continued working on bats of domestic level cricketers. At daytime, he would be at his office, at nights, he would work on worn out bats and made them look brand new— that's how Shahin got started. In the second season of BPL in 2013, Shahin repaired Shahriar Nafees' bat. The left-hander scored a century with that very bat the next match. Shahin also worked on Nafees' Australian teammate Travis Birt's bat.

Since then, Shahin has been regularly working with bats of local and overseas cricketers during BPL. He has had many amusing experiences in his unique job. Repairing Caribbean batter Kieron Pollard's bat when he was in Bangladesh for the BPL was one such experience, "Pollard's bat weighs 1350 grams. I don't think any other batter in the world bats with a heavier bat. It also has five grips. The bat was so heavy that my hands were hurting while lifting it."

Shahin knows the weight of the bats used by the Bangladesh cricketers by heart. The cricketers no longer have to tell Shahin about their requirements. Shahin dreams that one day, MKS Sports bat will compete with the bats made in India and Pakistan. The 'Bat Doctor' wants to earn that tag by manufacturing good bats.