

Better than imagination

BISHWAJIT ROY



CricketPhone
Aussie Tour of Bangladesh

Stadium on Sunday.

One could not have even dreamt before the series start that they would score 144 in the first session at cost of one wicket before finishing the day on 355-5 against the world's most devastating attack. And what was most significant that Dav Whatmore's charges broke the trend of the usual Australian dominance from the word go.

Although Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar time and again told that they were not scared of their mighty opponents, not even a crazy fan would have thought about such a great day.

But once again the 33-year old Tigers skipper made a clear statement after the first day's play that his boys were very much capable to do things like this.

"Our previous Test record might not prove it but I have always told that we have the capability to do much better. So don't think it was a miracle," said the all-smiling Bashar.

"But it was never on our mind that we would score 350 runs on a day against a team like Australia. I want to say that it is a clear message that we are improving. It is really encouraging," he continued.

"If you consider the previous record, definitely it is the best day in our history and the most significant

thing is not many teams in the world score 350 runs on a single day. So definitely it is an achievement for our cricket as well as a boost for the in future."

Despite the heroic efforts, he was reserved about his target.

"There are still four days to go and you all know that Australia can bounce back from any stage. That's why our first target would be to bat at least two more sessions tomorrow and then we can think about saving the match. There is no scope to be over excited. It would have been satisfactory had we finished the day losing one less wicket," said Bashar.

"Many may think scoring runs is easy in this kind of wicket but I disagree. We actually didn't attack them rather we dominated. Most of our batsmen have the ability to play strokes. It that means we never missed the opportunity to score runs off bad deliveries. I think we also punished some good deliveries."

"I must say Shahriar Nafees played a brilliant innings to make this possible. It was one of the best innings I've ever seen from any Bangladeshi batsman. He played according to merit and never allowed the bowlers to get on top."

The most successful Bangladesh batsman was little bit frustrated with his dismissal as he thought it was possible for him to make his first hundred against Australia.

"A century would have been good not only for me but also for the benefit of the team. Making a century against Australia is always a special any batsman," he regretted.

Australian coach John Buchanan also praised Bangladesh batsmen for their tremendous effort.

"Bangladesh played spin and quick bowlers very well. There will be more opportunities for us tomorrow morning. We will know more in the morning as well. Nafees played very sensibly. We dropped a few catches and that opened up an opportunity for them," said Buchanan.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the opening day of the first Test between Bangladesh and Australia at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on Sunday:

BANGLADESH: First innings
Omar lbw b Gillespie 27
Nafees b MacGill 138
Bashar c Lee b MacGill 76
Saleh not out 35
Ashraf lbw b Gillespie 29
Aftab c Hayden b MacGill 29
Mashud not out 2
Extras: (lb-10, w-1, nb-8) 19
Total: (For five wks in 88 overs) 355
Fall of wks: 1-51, 2-238, 3-265, 4-295, 5-351.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lee	15	2	65	0
Clark	12	1	43	0
Gillespie	16	4	36	2
Warne	20	1	112	0
MacGill	22	1	82	3
Clarke	3	0	7	0

Toss: Bangladesh
Umpires: Aleem Dar (PAK) and Nadeem Ghauri (PAK)
TV umpire: Nadeer Shah (BAN)
Match referee: Jeff Crowe (NZL)

AUSTRALIA: S Clark, M Clarke, A Gilchrist, J Gillespie, M Hayden, M Hussey, B Lee, S MacGill, D Martyn, R Ponting, A Symonds, S Warne.



ON CLOUD NINE: Centurion Shahriar Nafees is embraced by captain Habibul Bashar (L) while a dejected Shane Warne looks on during the first day's play of the first Test between Bangladesh and Australia on Sunday.

Nafees' motivation is Australia itself

SPORTS REPORTER



CricketPhone
Aussie Tour of Bangladesh

For Shahriar Nafees playing against the best bowling attack in the world was the incentive to smash his maiden hundred as well as helping Bangladesh to touch a pinnacle in a day against Australia.

The 21-year old left-handed opener made his first game against the Australians a memorable one with a well-paced hundred (138 off 189 balls), the third highest after Mohammad Ashraf (158) and former Bangladesh skipper Aminul Islam (145).

"I think playing against the world's best attack was an inspiration for me. It is a different feeling when someone meets teams like Australia and I was also not an exception. And finally when you come out with a hundred against them, it's simply a great, great feeling," told an excited Nafees, who crossed the magical three figures in only the fifth match of his short career.

"And when players like Adam Gilchrist and Ricky Ponting congrat-

ulated me saying that it was a well-paced hundred, joy knew no bound for me," he added.

But the young batter was most excited with the fact that his innings played a role for his side to finish the day on a great note.

"The day's success proved that Bangladesh cricket is going upward which is most significant for me. I think the achievement was best of Bangladesh cricket. Scoring 350 runs in day against a team like Australia is not a joke," said Nafees, elated for obvious reason.

When he was asked about his batting position, Nafees said that his main concern is to score runs for his side.

"I enjoy batting for Bangladesh. My duty is to score runs for my team and not to think about batting positions. It's great that I made my hundred as an opener. I am looking forward to serve my team as best as possible," he said.

"I was not nervous at any stage even when I received a nasty bounce off Brett Lee on my helmet."

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HIGHEST PARTNERSHIPS FOR BANGLADESH

Wkt	Runs	Batsmen	Venue	Season	Opponents
2nd	187	Bashar and Nafees	Fatullah	2005-2006	Australia
2nd	167	Javed and Bashar	Peshawar	2003-2004	Pakistan
1st	133	Javed and Iqbal	Dhaka	2004-2005	Zimbabwe
3rd	130	Javed and Ashraf	Peshawar	2003-2004	Pakistan
5th	126	Aminul and Ashraf	Colombo	2001-2002	Sri Lanka
4th	120	Bashar and Manjarul	Jamaica	2003-2004	West Indies

India doubtful over Jamaica leg

CRICINFO, undated

The Jamaican leg of India's tour to the West Indies later this year might be scrapped or switched to another venue after fears that the ground at Sabina Park, Kingston, currently being spruced up for the 2007 World Cup, might not be ready to host the matches.

India are scheduled to play two one-day internationals there on May 18 and 20, and the fourth Test from June 30 to July 4. However, cement shortage in Jamaica has meant that the US\$29 million renovation project at the venue is behind schedule by at least two weeks, according to a report in Jamaica Observer. Robert Bryan, the chief executive officer of Jamaica Cricket 2007, indicated that a final decision on the matches will be taken soon. "We are at an advanced stage of evaluating and as soon as a decision is taken, an announcement will be made in short order," Bryan was quoted as saying by the daily.

Paul Campbell, the vice-president of the Jamaica Cricket Association, also indicated that getting the venue ready for the Indians would be tough. "As we speak there is no final decision, [but] it was brought to our attention last week [by the Sabina venue development team] that under the current circumstances meeting the deadlines will be really, really tight."

"The focus is World Cup 2007. That's the big picture," said Campbell. "What is being assessed is whether hosting international games in the short term will impact negatively on our hosting the World Cup next year. How will it affect our delivery of the venue on time? That's the question." A decision on

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Nepal, Kyrgyzstan in semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Nepal and Kyrgyzstan proved all calculations wrong when they showed the doors to the two top-ranked teams of the AFC Challenge Cup -- India and Palestine -- from the quarterfinals yesterday.

Rank-outsiders Nepal, who scraped through to the last eight by virtue of better goal difference, dumped India 3-0 at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong while a stoppage time goal by substitute Ruslan Djamshidov helped tournament dark-horse Kyrgyzstan knock out sentimental favourites Palestine with a solitary goal victory at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Nepal now play Sri Lanka while Kyrgyzstan take on winners of today's quarterfinal between hosts Bangladesh and Tajikistan in the semifinals.

K Y R G Y Z S T A N - PALESTINE

Palestine enjoyed superior ball possession but Kyrgyzstan defended doggedly to thwart the deadliest attack of the tournament featuring eight-goal Fahed Attal. Fullback Francisco Atura twice found Attal with teasing crosses from the left inside 20 minutes but the tournament top-scorer mistimed on both occasions.

The central Asians were quick on counter attacks down the flanks and looked dangerous from setpieces. They came close to snatch the lead three minutes from the breather but Palestine goalie Saleh Ramzi spectacularly tipped over Andrey Krasnov's header on a freekick by Igor Kudrenko.

Substitute Azamat Ishenbaev could have broken the deadlock in the 70th minute but the Kyrgyzstan

striker, having raced into the box chasing a through from Krasnov, lost the ball to Ramzi, who parried a magnificent lob by Vadim Harchenko in the 75th minute.

The best chance of the day fell to Palestine two minutes later but Attal and Mohanad's repeated attempts from handshaking distance came off the defensive wall on the goalline during a corner by Alkord.

Krasnov frustrated his teammates seven minutes from time when the

unmarked striker failed to contact a superb right-side cross by Djamshidov with only Ramzi to beat.

In a match full of forays and counter forays, both sides wasted last minute chances before Shoro Bishkek midfielder Djamshidov separated the two sides in the final seconds of the two-minute injury time. The 27-year-old, who replaced Timur Valiev halfway

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PHOTO: STAR

Ruslan Djamshidov of Kyrgyzstan is mobbed by his teammates after he scored the late winner against Palestine in their quarterfinal of the AFC Challenge Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Sunday.

Fleming shines for Black Caps

AFP, Benoni

Captain Stephen Fleming made a sparkling unbeaten 96 as the New Zealanders hit back on the second day of their four-day match against the Rest of South Africa at Willowmoore Park Saturday.

The New Zealanders were 159 for two in reply to the Rest of South Africa's 395 all out when bad light stopped play but the tourists were hit by an injury to strike bowler Shane Bond.

The Black Caps ripped through the Rest's batting Saturday, taking seven wickets for 40 runs, but Bond did not take the field because of a swollen right knee.

It was announced he would not play again during the match, although he was expected to be fit for the first of three Tests, starting at Centurion on April 15.

After a poor first day, in which the Rest scored 355 for three, the tourists struck early Saturday when Jean-Paul Duminy was caught at slip off fast bowler Chris Martin after adding only two runs to his overnight 125.

Three more wickets fell cheaply before Neil McKenzie, the Rest's captain, was eighth out for 141, having eked out only 16 runs in 24.2 overs Saturday after being unbeaten on 125 overnight.

Left-arm pace bowler James Franklin added three wickets to the one he took on the first day to finish with four for 80.

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DALMIYA ISSUE Pawar given the power

PTI, Mumbai

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has authorised its president, Sharad Pawar, to take a decision on former chief Jagmohan Dalmiya who has been accused of siphoning off funds from 1996 World Cup.

"More information on the earlier lines was placed before the working committee by the treasurer," Pawar said after the working committee meeting in Mumbai. "The matter was discussed and it was decided to leave the matter to the discretion of the president."

Dalmyia has been accused of misappropriating 2.174 million rupees (49,000 dollars approx) from PILCOM, the organising committee of the 1996 World Cup. The Economic Offences Wing of the Mumbai police interrogated Dalmyia and former treasurers Jyoti Bajpai and Kishore Rungta over six days in Mumbai and Kolkata, following a Mumbai High Court order.

The High Court order came while staying the arrest of Dalmyia by the Mumbai Police who were acting on an FIR filed by the board at the Marine Drive police station here last month.

Asked about reports of fresh charges against Dalmyia, Pawar said: "The matter is subjudice, so I cannot comment on that." Pawar added that pending the board's action, Dalmyia can attend BCCI meetings as president of Cricket Association of Bengal.



WHAT a day of cricket at the Fatullah Stadium! The Australians and rest of the cricketing world could not even dream of such a start to the series between Bangladesh and Australia. As for Bangladesh it was a dream

AKRAM INSWINGER

start. It was a good toss to win by Habibul Bashar and elect to bat first on a typical Dhaka wicket, flat, low bounce, grassless. The skipper knew exactly what the wicket could do.

The opening pair saw off the new ball and did a good job by putting on 51 runs. Shahriar Nafees played a real good knock making his maiden century against world's number one team. After such marvels, it would now give him a lot of confidence to play against any attack in the world. He showed great ability to play shorts all around the ground as he was cutting, pulling, driving and sweeping with ease and confidence.

Bashar played a real captain's knock and pairing with Nafees, really dominated the Australian attack during a big partnership of 187. Rajin Saleh, one of my favourite players, is still batting and he looked very solid and confident. But he has a lot of work to do tomorrow.

Bangladesh have shown that they have the talent and ability to

play against any side of the world if they apply themselves and use the experience as they demonstrated today. What they should avoid doing is play slog shots towards the end of the day and throwing away wickets.

The Australians looked a bit tired on the field as they just played a full series in South Africa. The pick of the bowlers, Stuart MacGill, bowled well and got three wickets but Shane Warne was made not look at his best by Shahriar Nafees as the Bangladesh batsman completely dominated and outplayed him.

The day belonged to Bangladesh but they should be careful tomorrow as the Aussies will hit back with the new ball. It is only the first day of a Test match and knowing the Australians, you should not write them off. They will come right back to the game. Bangladesh should target to get at least 430 runs on board.

Guwahati turns violent after ODI cancellation

Cricket

AFP, Guwahati

Police fired tear gas on fans after they turned violent after the fifth one-day international between India and England was abandoned without a ball being bowled here on Sunday.

Spectators threw missiles on to the field and set advertising hoardings on fire after umpires Rudi Koertzen and Arani Jayaprakash decided no play would be possible due to wet ground conditions follow-

ing overnight rain.

"I am disappointed that there was no match today. But if such things (crowd violence) happen, Guwahati might not have a game again," said South African umpire Koertzen.

Two policemen and one spectator were injured in the violence.

India have already clinched the seven-match series after winning the first four games.

Thousands had begun packing into the stadium since early morning and a section of the crowd grew restless as hopes of even an abbreviated match vanished. They then

attacked policemen with water bottles and sticks.

The police fired tear gas to disperse the angry spectators, who tore down fencing around sections of the field and pelted stones at television cameras.

The two teams were taken to their hotel just as the violence broke out.

"We had to consider the safety of the players and both camps were adamant they were not happy with the run-ups and the fielding areas, particularly the slip cordon," umpire Koertzen said.

Nimbus, the television production company covering the series, said four cameras were damaged in the riot, which could affect the last two games in Jamshedpur on Wednesday and Indore on Saturday.

"We are in the process of assessing the damage but at the moment I can tell you that at least four cameras have been badly damaged," said James Rego, executive producer of Nimbus.

"What is of immediate concern is the cameras that determine run-outs, which are high density cameras and far more expensive than the regular cameras used in other positions.

"If these are irreparably damaged, and suitable replacements cannot be found in time for the Jamshedpur match, that game will be affected because international matches cannot take place without the cameras for the TV umpire in place.

"The damage is likely to be in the region of hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is a total security disaster."

The local Assam Cricket Association said they will protest the umpires' decision to abandon the match.

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What to WATCH

BTV & STAR Sports
Bangladesh vs Australia
1st Test, Day Two
Live at 10:00 am

BTV
AFC Challenge Cup
Quarterfinal
Bangladesh vs Tajikistan
Live at 3:30 pm



Bangladesh vs Australia
1st Test, Day Two
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

AFC Challenge Cup
QUARTERFINAL
Bangladesh vs Tajikistan (3.30pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium