

# Everything but winning

## Cricket

RABEED IMAM from St Lucia

If there is any emotion that can best describe Bangladesh's performance in the first Test against the West Indies in St Lucia, it has to be astonishing.

What didn't the Tigers do? They chose to bat first fully aware that the home team were going to come at them with four fast bowlers. They kept the West Indies at bay batting out two days and posting their record score in the process. The skipper and a number nine scored hundreds. They bowled out the formidable batting line up and took a lead, got themselves in serious trouble and then recovered in spectacular fashion to get in a position to declare with the number eight making a ton this time.

It was as perfect as things can get in a drawn match. There was hardly any chance of enforcing a win, considering the benign nature of the pitch, the state of the match and the time on hand.

Resuming the final day at 94 for six with an overall 158-run lead, one would have thought 'here we go again!' But that's the beauty of this new Bangladesh team. They fought back as good as any team playing international cricket and surprised you when you least expected them to deliver. For the handful of Bangladeshis who were present at the ground, it was a privilege to watch the Tigers as they steadily reached that zone of comfort at 271 for nine declared.

For Khaled Mashud, fighting through odds on the field is like an obsession. He relishes the battle out there and the stage

was set for him on the last day. The bubbly wicketkeeper began the day on eight and added another 95 in his unconquered innings.

Shortly after the tea interval, Chris Gayle bowls a faster off-break that gives just enough room to Mashud to put his front foot forward and drive past the cover fielder towards the boundary to cross the 100-run landmark for the first time in a Test match.

By the time he did this in the 106th over of the second innings, he had spent nearly six hours at the crease. More importantly he and Rajin Saleh, the overnight partner, gave the confidence to the tailenders sitting in the dressing room and made them feel that it's easy in the middle for the brave.

Mashud was wrapped underneath his right elbow from a stinging Tino Best delivery and Saleh too took in some blows in the first hour of play. Both needed treatment and with the hostile Best bowling around the 90mph mark, it was a testing time. But they never flinched. When Saleh departed after a sedate yet soothing 51, Mashud, so appropriately nicknamed Pilot, became the inspiring influence to Mohammad Rafique, Tapash Baisya and Tareq Aziz.

The West Indies, perhaps bowled their best of the match on Tuesday but the Bangladeshi late-order never allowed them to sniff a kill.

With Rafique, Mashud put on 56 and then had a wonderful 75-run partnership with Baisya, a Bangladesh record for the ninth wicket eclipsing Mashud's own stand of 49 with another fast bowler Mashrafe- bin-Mortuza

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ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL: The delighted Bangladesh team after their fantastic five days at the Beausejour Stadium in St Lucia on Tuesday.

PHOTO: RABEED IMAM



**Sourav Ganguly**  
(India cricket captain)

"Globalisation of cricket is fine, but it shouldn't destroy the competitive



## Did U Know?

When choosing locations for the Olympic Games, the IOC specifically gives the honor of holding the Games to a city rather than a country.



### TEN Sports

Brazil vs Argentina  
Soccer WC Qualifier  
Live at 6:30 am

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## 'We now have self-belief'

## Cricket

RABEED IMAM from St Lucia

The scenes near the Bangladesh dressing room was fitting of a winning team after the first Test had been drawn and in many ways, the Tigers have won over the hearts of those who were sceptic of their stature and had inflicted a psychological defeat on the home team.

Skipper Habibul Bashar had just finished his post match interview and was waiting arms outstretched to greet the travelling journalists. One after another, the elated players and officials were coming out of the dressing room and there were hugs and congratulations all around. No one has ever seen this mood after a Tigers' Test match.

"I'm ecstatic. The feeling is wonderful. In the past we had drawn Test matches mainly because of rain to be fair. But this was a game we dominated. But it

could have been even better had we not dropped six catches and lost those wickets on the fourth day. Still, overall I'm very happy because whenever we needed runs, someone was there to get them for us. It was a total team effort. This is something I had always wanted," said Bashar who starred in the first innings with strokeful 113.

"We were expecting a lead of 80-100 but what happened today was beyond my expectation. I had personally talked with the guys yesterday evening and today morning and I think we have more feelings for the team now and we believe in ourselves more. We were never short of commitment and the professionalism was there too. What we probably lacked was self-belief," added the captain.

Bashar was asked whether he had refrained from declaring earlier to give Khaled Mashud the chance to get a hundred.

"On this pitch you can't get a

team out in 50-60 overs. Had we not lost six wickets yesterday and had a few more runs on the board, we might have given it a thought to declare earlier. But as that was not the case, I think it was only right to give Mashud the opportunity to get to three figures which he so deserves.

"Mashud saved the match for us and (Mohammad) Rafique was unbelievable."

Bashar said he would remember the moment of declaration, the first by a Bangladeshi captain in the country's 29 Tests, forever.

"I wish somebody would've taken a photo when I called the batsmen in. Can't describe the feeling. It had been the case of watching opposing captains declaring and here was I doing it for the first time. I don't know what others think but I firmly believe that now we are a team which has the ability to declare innings."

Amidst all the euphoria, Bashar

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PHOTO: AP

BRAVE TIGER: Mohammad Rafique, who scored 29 to add to his first innings maiden century, bats in the second innings on Tuesday.

## 'A matter of time'

SPORTS REPORTER

"This is now only a matter of time to watch the Tigers record their first Test victory."

The comment may sound too bold and optimistic, but one can think of such thing after Habibul Bashar's men's brilliant show against the West Indies in the drawn first Test at St Lucia.

It was only for the third time that Bangladesh had drawn a Test match. On the two previous occasions, it was rain that played the vital roles in the outcome of the matches. But this was not the case this time. The Tigers truly played out the match.

"I have no doubt that Bangladesh put up their best Test performance. We got close against Pakistan in Multan but you should take one thing in account that we lost that time," said former Bangladesh captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain.

The ex-Bangladesh manager was delighted with the boys' fighting spirit, especially the way wicket-keeper Khaled Mashud took things on his shoulders to salvage the side from the face of another defeat.

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## Gaudio in last four

AFP, Paris

Unseeded Argentine Gaston Gaudio overpowered Australian 12th seed Lleyton Hewitt 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 to advance to his first Grand Slam semifinal at the French Open here on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old from Buenos Aires totally outclassed the former Wimbledon and US Open champion who never succeeded in stamping his mark on the game which lasted 1hr 55min on a windy and chilly Philippe Chatrier Centre Court.

The former world number one hit 43 unforced errors, compared to Gaudio's 19, with five double faults and seven breaks of serve and was struggling from the outset against his clay court specialist opponent.