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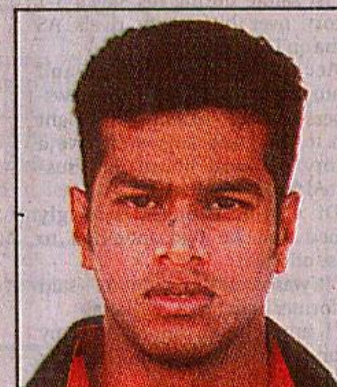


Did U Know?

Nafees Iqbal (56 off 122 balls against Zimbabwe) recorded his highest score, bettering his 54 vs India at Dhaka in 2004-05. These two innings are his only fifties in Test cricket.



What to Watch
BTV & ESPN
Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe
First Test, Day Four
Live at 8:20 am
SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



Alok Kapali
(Bangladesh batsman)
"It's a great honour for me to be a part of this game. I am really excited with the match as it gives me the opportunity to rub shoulders with some of the world's greatest players and also for the fact that I will be involved in a noble cause. After he was selected to play for the Asia XI in a charity match against the World XI."

DAY'S EVENT
Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe
First Test, Day Four
Venue: M A Aziz Stadium, Ctg
Green Delta Premier Cricket League
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Biman vs Orient (FCS)
Green Delta Premier Hockey League (Super League)
Abahani vs Usha

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DANCING RAFIQUE STYLE: Bangladesh spinner Mohammad Rafique (L) celebrates the dismissal of Zimbabwe captain Tatenda Taibu (not in picture) with teammates on the third day of the first Test at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Frustration on their faces

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

For local cricket fans, the third day of the first Test between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe was a day of disappointment.

The MA Aziz Stadium was only half-full with spectators, who came to the ground in anticipation of Bangladesh dominating the proceedings like the previous two days and staying on course for a maiden Test win.

But just like many a Test, Bangladesh's opponents somehow fought back, giving the crowd plenty to worry about when Zimbabwe

skipper Tatenda Taibu and Elton Chigumbura led a spectacular recovery operation after the lunch break. Taibu (92) and Chigumbura (71) added 119 runs for the seventh wicket as Zimbabwe finished the third day at 308-8 in reply to Bangladesh's massive 488.

"I thought we would be able to bowl them out by lunch and enforce the follow-on. My expectation was that Zimbabwe would be struggling at the end of the day, losing a few more second innings wickets," said Kalam Ahmed who came from Halishahar to witness the match despite a countrywide hartal being observed in the port city till mid-day.

"We could have done that but

Enamul Haque was very unlucky not to take any wickets. He bowled superbly," he added before leaving the ground with his friend.

Kalam Ahmed was another fan who had frustration till over his face but hoped that the Tigers still had a chance to win their first-ever Test after 31 defeats from 34 matches.

"It is going to be difficult for the Zimbabweans to bat in the fourth innings. But to do that our boys will have to bat well themselves tomorrow. Definitely, I will be here for the remaining two days to celebrate our maiden victory since the country achieved Test status in 2000. I think the game will go into a fifth day," he added.

Javed won't be opening

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

Javed Omar will not be able to bat before number seven in Bangladesh's second innings as the opening batsman damaged a ligament behind his left knee during fielding on Friday.

Javed did not field on the third day of the first Test and was replaced by Talha Jubair.

The opener who made 33 in Bangladesh's record first wicket stand of 91 with Nafees Iqbal, had treatment on Sunday night but felt some stiffness in the knee before play resumed in the morning.

"I had an operation on the same leg in 2001 and the damage is just behind it. I think I have rested enough to be able to bat tomorrow," Javed said after the third day's play.

Coach Day Whatmore also sounded confident about Javed batting in the second innings.

"But as per the ICC regulation, he can't bat before the fall of the fifth wicket," Whatmore said.

WON'T ACCEPT TSUNAMI AID BFF wants Tk 3 crore from govt

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has demanded three crore taka a year from the government for smooth running of its training programmes.

BFF president SA Sultan made the demand when he called on State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman yesterday to discuss ways of improving the game in the country.

"We desperately need money to run the sport and we believe the government will come forward to help us out," said Sultan after the meeting at the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

"We had asked for Tk 5 crore last year, but due to lack of proper communication we didn't get the money. But this time we have cut down on the amount and the minister also promised to provide it when we talked about it at a function last month."

Sultan also informed they will be looking for a foreign coach once they get assurance from the government and former national coach Gorge Kottan, who had a brilliant stint highlighted by Bangladesh's triumph in the 3rd SAFF Championship in 2003, will be the first choice.

Responding to a question, the BFF boss said that they were not ready to receive any amount from FIFA and AFC which had pledged

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

'We can still win'

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Chittagong

Nobody took it seriously when Zimbabwe vice-captain Mluleki Nkala said on Friday that the first Test was far from over.

Perhaps Nkala's bold assertion made during the briefing after the second day's play was more of an exaggeration given the fact that Zimbabwe had slumped to 84-4 at stumps in reply to Bangladesh's massive first innings total of 488.

But his words turned true after his captain Tatenda Taibu resurrected the innings with able support from Brendan Taylor and Elton Chigumbura.

And Taibu had every reason to smile when he appeared at a briefing after the third day's play at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

"Now we are in a better position than we were yesterday. And actually, we are not thinking about saving this match, we are thinking about winning. It's still possible to win if we can bat a bit longer tomorrow. It will put pressure on Bangladesh to come out and give a declaration in the second innings," Taibu said.

"And taking into consideration that our top order did not score much, it is likely that when they come out to bat again, they will be hungry for runs and win. And the wicket is still good for batting."

"It was an okay day for us. The players really applied themselves."

The plan was to avoid the follow-on and we have achieved that. We have got a pretty strong middle-order and I told the guys as long as you believe in yourselves that you are able to score big hundreds and stay long at the wicket, you will be able to do something. I am sure they got the message. And Elton Chigumbura played his natural game," said the tiny wicketkeeper-batsman after scoring a career-best 92.

A natural stroke-maker Taibu

however refrained from playing his trademark pull or hook shots because the situation demanded a cautious approach.

"They bowled wicket to wicket for lbws (decisions). So, I had to play straight."

On his dismissal in the 90s, Taibu said: "It was very disappointing. I was looking forward to my maiden Test century. I think I really played well to deserve that."

For the Tigers, things did not go according to their way.

"We had plans to take ten wickets but that was not to be. We all saw how difficult that was. I think the boys played very well," said coach Day Whatmore.

"We have to take two more wickets before we build up a total and hope the pitch holds some more tricks on the fifth day."

Praising the Zimbabwean batting effort, Whatmore thought that his boys toiled hard on a fast outfield but did a good job restricting the opposition's scoring rate to two and a half runs per over on an unresponsive pitch.

"That was absolutely fantastic." Scoring fast in the second innings will be the key to victory as Bangladesh attempt to take the remaining two wickets early and bat till the tea before putting Zimbabwe in again.

"Our first target is to get those two first innings wickets tomorrow as early as possible and then build a sizeable lead before the final session tomorrow."

Whatmore admitted he was a bit surprised by the behaviour of the wicket.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



GET, SET & GO: Zimbabwe captain Tatenda Taibu is all set to drive the ball on way to scoring a solid 92 on the third day of the first Test at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

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