



I'M GOING TO KEEP THIS BALL: Ace Bangladesh spinner Mohammad Rafique displays the ball that got him his 100th wicket as he leaves the field at close of play on the second day of the second Test against South Africa at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: ZOAHER HOSSAIN SIDDIQI

Cock-a-hoop Rafique

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

WARID Cricket Series

There was nothing wrong if Mohammad Rafique considered himself as the luckiest man in the world. It seemed that the wily spinner's desire to finish his Test career with the milestone of a hundred wickets would remain incomplete following the run-feast by record-breaking South African openers Graeme Smith and Neil McKenzie. Things got worse for the 37-year-old left-arm spinner when wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim dropped Jacques Kallis. But it took a little while to see lady luck smile on him as Mark Boucher was caught at cover by Shakib Al Hasan to become his 99th victim.

Rafique must have thanked the Proteas skipper who still didn't declare with the scoreboard reading 579-6 rather than the declaration only after the most successful Bangladesh bowler completed his feat by taking the wicket of Robin Peterson, caught at slip by Zunaed Siddiqui.

So far it was the only moment for the Tigers to smile in two days of Test cricket. The day could have been perfect for Rafique if his side had not lost three wickets in the end but still he was the most satisfied man.

"Thank god I finally achieved it in my last international match. Bangladesh will stay in this level and so many players will achieve this feat but everybody will remember

me as the first Bangladeshi who got hundred wickets in Test," said an emotion-choked Rafique in the press conference at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium at the end of the second day's play yesterday.

Rafique, who played 33 Tests and 125 one-day internationals, was the only bowler in the country who claimed hundred wickets in both versions of the game and also scored 1000-plus runs in both versions.

And the bowler himself believed that luck favoured him to put an end to his 13 year-long international career as per his desire.

"Without any doubt I am now a happy man after getting two wickets but I never thought about my feat in the field, rather my whole concentration was on my team. You know, team comes first to me when I cross the rope.

"I firmly believe that you have to have the favour of luck to achieve anything in cricket. Luck is a big factor in and no doubt I was lucky enough today," he observed.

But Rafique also said that patience was key to becoming successful in cricket especially in the longer-version.

"I never lost patience in the field and there was no exception in this game. You will be lucky only when you keep your patience intact throughout the game no matter whether you are a bowler or a batsman," he opined.

Rafique said that he still liked playing but only took the decision to create opportunities for the youngsters.

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MOHAMMAD RAFIQUE'S BREAKDOWN OF TEST WICKETS

Wicket	Batsman	Dismissal	Venue	Year
1st	R Dravid (IND)	ct Shahriar	Dhaka	2000
25th	F Adil (PAK)	ct Bashir	Multan	2003
50th	J Oram (NZ)	ct Rana	Dhaka	2004
75th	M Jayawardene (SL)	ct Shahadat	Chittagong	2006
100th	R Peterson (SA)	ct Zunaed	Chittagong	2008

Quickie Steyn the quickest

SPORTS REPORTER, from Chittagong

WARID Cricket Series

The quick, aggressive and accurate Dale Steyn served another real fast bowling lesson at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday to become the quickest South African bowler to take hundred wickets in terms of matches played.

The right-arm bowler claimed all three Bangladesh wickets by producing an array of short balls in his 20th Test match to eclipse his country's previous fastest bowlers Hugh Tayfield and Allan Donald (both in 22 Tests), followed by Peter Pollock (24), Neil Adcock (25), Shaun Pollock (26) and Andre Nel (28).

Steyn not only enhanced his reputation as a leading fast bowler of his generation by achieving the feat but also put another cherry on the top of his side's two brilliant batting records. After taking 13 Tests to take his first 51 wickets, the pacer has taken the next 50 in little more than six Test matches. "We are just planning to bowl them out cheaply and put them to bat again and win the match. And

in the end, it's a really big achievement that I have done today. I haven't really thought about it too much. It came quite quickly," responded Steyn in his instant reaction to the landmark.

Steyn, who started the match with 98 wickets, also pointed his fingers towards the Bangladesh top-order behind his success to achieve the mark so quickly.

"It is important to bowl in right areas with decent pace in this condition. In the end, things went quite nicely and quickly for us. We basically forced the batsmen to play shots that they shouldn't have played," he said.

"Look at the frustration, first two overs I went for 10, I wasn't quite happy. Two big shots that went through the covers could have gone towards the slips with a bit of extra bounce. No quick bowler likes the batsmen come on

the front foot and hit him," he said. In world terms, Steyn is jointly ninth on the all-time list along with six other bowlers that include fast bowling legends Wes Hall of the West Indies, Waqar Younis of Pakistan and Maurice Tate of England plus the great Australian legspinner Bill O'Reilly.

South Africa coach Mickey Arthur however was more delighted about the batsmen's, especially the openers', high concentration in the middle.

"One thing that struck me most was the intensity with which they [Graeme Smith and Neil McKenzie] batted. That's the key. It is quite easy to put four hundred in two days, but we did it in a day, which I thought was fantastic. We scored just under four runs an over on a wicket that is very, very slow. So it gives us lot more time to bowl out

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HIGHEST OPENING PARTNERSHIP IN TESTS

Partners	Runs	Opposition	Venue	Year
N McKenzie & G Smith (SA)	415	Bangladesh	Chittagong	2008
M Mankad & P Roy (IND)	413	New Zealand	Chennai	1956
V Sehwaag & R Dravid (IND)	410	Pakistan	Lahore	2006
G Turner & T Jarvis (NZ)	387	West Indies	Georgetown	1972
W Lawry & B Simpson (AUS)	382	West Indies	Bridgetown	1965

Abahani, MSC win

Imran hits first ton

SPORTS REPORTER

A six-wicket win over promoted side Surjo Torun gave defending champions Abahani a perfect start to their Premier League campaign at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

In the other opening day matches, Mohammed Sporting Club reversed their wretched Twenty20 form with a 53-run win over BKSP while Imran Ahmed played a captain's knock to ensure City Club sneak past Sonargaon Cricketers by two runs.

Surjo Torun were bowled out for 178 in 49.2 overs, with Abahani replying with 180-4 in 41.2 overs.

At the main BKSP cricket ground, City Club's 244-4 in 50 overs, with Imran Ahmed scoring the first century of the league, proved little too much for

Sonargaon, who only reached 242-8 in 50 overs, while at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, BKSP (156-7 in 50 overs) failed to challenge Mohammedan's modest 209-9 in 50 overs.

Earlier, former national cricketer Shakil Kasem inaugurated the Premier League in Mirpur.



IMHRAN AHMED ... 128 no

ABAHANI SURJO TORUN Opting to field first, the Dhamondi powerhouse rode on their three-man pace attack to put their neighbours on the backfoot early on.

Talha Jubair removed Uttam Sarkar for a nine-ball duck and the Torun middle-order were slow off the blocks as a result. Shamsur Rahman and Nizamuddin scored 29 each off 68 and 42 balls respectively and had it not been for Shakil Haider's 93-ball 60, Torun would have struggled to challenge Abahani.

After Naeem fell for 27, Abahani cleaned up the lower-order, dismissing Torun in the final over.

Abahani opener Jahurul Islam mirrored Uttam's feat as he too fell for a duck but his opening partner Mahbulul Karim carried his Twenty20 form with a run-a-ball 41, which had five fours and a six in it. Abahani skipper Tushar Imran

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CDS missing giant screen

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) budget for the on-going second Test and upcoming first ODI being visited South Africa is quite sumptuous -- Tk 3 crore 57 lakh -- if not somewhat overflowing.

So, it was naturally expected by all to have all arrangements or facilities assured at Chittagong Divisional Stadium (CDS), much to the fulfilment of the standard of any international venue.

To have a Giant Screen at a Test venue has now become an essential facility and it is a big attraction as well for crowds in any international cricket match. But despite such a satisfactory budget allocation, the BCB mysteriously opted not to go with this popular technological proposition.

The Chittagong crowd had the first-time experience of being thrilled last year watching the match of Bangladesh versus India live on giant screen and they were eagerly expecting the screen this time too.

Fazle Bari Khan Rubel, the venue manager, skirted the question by saying it was a decision of the cricket board.

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Start of a gripping end

Aussie-Indo 1st final today

CRICINFO, Sydney



After going at each other for the past two months, Australia and India clash in the first of three finals at the SCG on Sunday, and if recent encounters are any clue, expect some gripping cricket. Both have been involved in plenty of controversial moments on and off the field, adding to the entire drama which has made this last edition of the CB Series an enthralling affair.

A look back at the league phase, which ended on Friday in Melbourne with Australia losing narrowly to Sri Lanka, indicates that though India had a much tougher time getting to the finals, both teams have had similar strengths and problems: both the batting line-ups are yet to find fluency even after eight games, but their bowlers have been getting better with every match.

In the four previous clashes against India in this tournament,

Australia managed to win twice, in Adelaide and in Sydney, lost in Melbourne, while their first clash had ended in a washout. Luckily for India they have had a valuable four-day rest after their previous game in Hobart, where they scored an emphatic victory against the Sri Lankans.

After Australia's defeat on Friday, Ponting admitted that the result has robbed them of some momentum going into the final, and Mahendra Singh Dhoni wants to ensure that India capitalise on that. "Australia look to dominate always so it's important to put them under pressure and they have been under pressure," Dhoni said at the SCG. "So I just hope we maintain that pressure."

Aware of the flat nature of the SCG wicket, both captains will not dither in batting first. Australia had piled 317, the highest total in the tournament so far, and India, after a top-order collapse, scampered to within 17 runs of the target. Australia have maintained an almost unchanged team throughout, and their only likely change to Friday's team is the inclusion of

Matthew Hayden -- who was rested on Friday -- for Brad Haddin, with James Hopes slipping down to No. 7.

For India, though, a few problems persist regarding team composition. Dhoni said there is still "confusion" about his final XI and the main "concern" remains the opening partner for Sachin Tendulkar. Tendulkar has opened with three different partners in the eight games -- five times with Virender Sehwag, twice with Gautam Gambhir and once with Robin Uthappa. India's best start came in their second game, against Sri Lanka, when Tendulkar and Sehwag cracked a 68-run stand. The next best was 45 between the same pair in Canberra against the same opponents, but in the last four games India have had dismal starts of 18, 3, 2 and 20.

Apart from the 107-run opening partnership on Friday between Adam Gilchrist and James Hopes, Australia have faced the same problem at the top of the order: in the seven games when Gilchrist opened with Hayden, the pair only

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Jamal grabs golden trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cotton Group 23rd Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championships concluded at the city's Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday with our very own Jamal Hossain Mollah winning the golden trophy.

The win meant that Bangladesh maintained their champion status after winning the past three editions of the tournament.

The scenario had looked unlikely after Bangladesh trailed heavily following play in the first two rounds. But inspired play from Jamal saw him claw back the deficit in the third and fourth round to finish top with a gross score of 283 or 5 under par.

Bangladesh completed a clean sweep of the medals with Sohail Ahmed (285, 3 under par) and Milon Ahmed finishing runner-up and third respectively. Sri Lanka's Mithun Perera was the only foreigner in the top five as he finished fifth.

It was slightly different in the women's draw with Malaysia's

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladeshi golfer Jamal Hossain Mollah flashes the victory sign as he displays the Golden Trophy after winning the Cotton Group 23rd Amateur Golf Championships at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.



Did U Know?

Americans Nancy Hogshead and Carrie Steinseifer registered the first official tie in Olympic history in the 100-metre freestyle at the 1984 Olympics. They recorded a time of 55.92 each.



What to WATCH

- BTV & Super Sport 2**
Bangladesh v South Africa
Second Test, Day Three
Live from 10:00am
- STAR Sports**
Australia v India
CB Series, First Final
Live from 9:15am
- Almeria v Bilbao
Primera Liga
Live from 1:55am (Monday)
- STAR Cricket**
India v South Africa
ICC U-19 World Cup Final
Live from 11:50am
- ESPN**
English Premier League
Bolton Wanderers v Liverpool
Live from 7:25pm
- Everton v Portsmouth
Live from 9:55pm



DAY'S EVENT
Bangladesh v South Africa
Second Test, Day Three
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
Premier Div Cricket League
Biman v Partex
Venue: Dharmondi Cricket Stadium
Old DOHS v Young Pegasus
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Victoria v Kalabagan
Venue: BKSP-1