



Did U Know?

Star Indian batsman Saurav Ganguly scored his sixteenth century on the second day of the second Test against Australia on Saturday. He became the fourth Indian player to exceed 7,000 runs.



Wasim Akram
(Pakistan cricket legend)
"I definitely rate him alongside Lara, Sunil Gavaskar, Viri Richards and Ricky Ponting. Tendulkar is the best of all time." While praising Indian batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar.



BT
Bangladesh v New Zealand
First Test, Day Four
Live from 9:30am
Neo Cricket
India v Australia
Second Test, Day Four
Live from 10:00am
TEN Sports
ICL Twenty20
Delhi v Dhaka Warriors
Live from 8:00pm



Day's Event
Nat'l Cricket League
(Four-Day, Day-3)
Barisal v Khulna
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Rajshahi v Chittagong
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Sylhet v Dhaka
Venue: Sylhet District Stadium

Footballers' Vietnam test today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's return from the Merdeka Cup in empty hands looks certain as the national football team go into their last group match apparently without any particular target.

Having lost 1-0 to Mozambique's Under-20 side and by the same margin to neighbours Myanmar, Shaiful Islam Manik's boys today face Vietnam's Olympic team (under-23), the best team of the group without any argument.

The Group B match will start at the Shah Alam Stadium in Kuala Lumpur at Bangladesh time 4.30 p.m. Semifinal contenders Mozambique and Myanmar also play at the same time at the MPPJ Stadium.

Vietnam routed Myanmar 3-1 and thrashed Mozambique 4-0 to ensure their semifinal berth with flying colours but Bangladesh were rather unfortunate to lose two matches they had really dominated.

"We were unfortunate to lose both matches after playing so well. The missed chances, we had plenty to win in the two matches, really cost us dear," coach Manik told The Daily Star yesterday from the Malaysian capital.

The Bangladesh footballers were given a chance to escape from

Will the Tigers pounce?

MOHAMMAD ISAM in Chittagong

If the words of the New Zealand camp is to be taken seriously, overly confident might be a close enough assessment of their mood.

"We hopefully will take the two remaining wickets tomorrow and knock off the runs in the afternoon or the fifth day," said Jeetan Patel yesterday despite his side's poor track record of chasing down fourth innings targets.

One of those two wickets, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, however, believes that a total between 270 and 300 always offers pressure.

"We should get another 30-40 runs because any score above 270 can be difficult," said the Tigers pace spearhead, who was unbeaten on five having made sure that no further damage took place at the end of the third day of the first Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons believed that the game will go into the fifth day, whichever way the tide turns.

"Whatever happens it will probably go into the fifth day," said the former Australian international.

Wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim who struck a vital 32 said that the Black Caps would be tense.

"If we can score another 30 runs, they would be nervous. They have no experience in their top-order," said Mushfiqur.

Interestingly enough, if the Black Caps were asked to chase the

259 runs -- Bangladesh's lead so far -- it would be their best showing away from home.

The last time they were successful was in 1985-86, when they chased down 164 runs in Perth against Australia and their subcontinental best has been 177 all out against Pakistan in 1990, where they lost by 66 runs. In 49 attempts, the Black Caps have won just six

times chasing on foreign soil.

"I think we still are in a strong position as well. If you look at stats, it goes each way," said Patel before adding, "I think the guys worked on their game plan really well. We are really looking forward to the challenge tomorrow."

With two days remaining, he said that time is on their side.

"I think the guys need to work

on their game plan and have a day and a half to do it. The belief is still there. We've got a lot of time to do that," insisted Patel, who took two wickets for 52 in the second innings.

"We need to get it out for 30-40 overs when the chance arrives. If we can bat for long periods of time, we have a good chance," added the

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Shakib sets new mark

Cricket

AFP, Chittagong

Left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan recorded the best bowling figures in an innings for Bangladesh in all Test cricket when he took 7-36 against New Zealand here on Sunday.

The 21-year-old bowled 25.5 overs in an extraordinary display to help Bangladesh dismiss New Zealand for 171 in their first innings on the third day of the opening Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

BOWLER	FIGURES	FOR	AGAINST	VENUE	YEAR
J Laker	10-53	England	Australia	Manchester	1956
A Kumble	10-74	India	Pakistan	Delhi	1999
M Muralidharan	9-51	Sri Lanka	Zimbabwe	Kandy	2002
R Hadlee	9-52	New Zealand	Australia	Brisbane	1985
A Qadir	9-56	Pakistan	England	Lahore	1987
J Norelga	9-95	West Indies	India	Port of Spain	1971
H Tayfield	9-113	South Africa	England	Johannesburg	1957
A Mailey	9-121	Australia	England	Melbourne	1921
P Strang	8-109	Zimbabwe	New Zealand	Bulawayo	2000
SAI Hasan	7-36	Bangladesh	New Zealand	Chittagong	2008

Bangladesh made 245 in their first innings.

The feat surpassed the previous best bowling figures in an innings of 7-95, also taken by a left-arm spinner, Enamul Haque, against Zimbabwe at the MA Aziz Stadium, also in Chittagong, in 2005.

England's off-spinner Jim Laker leads the chart of best figures in an innings since Test cricket began in 1876, with 10-53 against Australia at Old Trafford in Manchester in 1956.

Here are the best innings figures for all ten Test playing countries:



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

I WILL KEEP THIS BALL FOREVER: Left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan shows the ball with which he took 7 for 36, the best figures in an innings by a Bangladeshi, as he leads the team off the field at the end of New Zealand's first innings yesterday.

CHITS FROM CHITTAGONG

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong

After a solid ending to the second day of the first Test, the expected crowd of cricket fans was not seen in the morning.

The makeshift ticket counter of AB Bank at the entrance of the Chittagong Divisional Stadium was almost empty during the first session of play.

The scenario inside the galleries was also frustrating as the members of the law enforcement agencies were higher than the viewers while school students occupied one of the galleries since the authority offered the opportunity to enjoy the match free of cost for them.

But, the scenario started changing after the lunch break when Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim showed their resilience after the Tigers were stranded at 49 for four wickets.

The galleries started to pack up with cricket fans, who were earlier frustrated with the performance of the top-order batters of Bangladesh.

After the fall of Tamim for 33, yesterday's hero Shakib stone-walled the wickets and his responsible batting taking Mushfiqur on the crease mitigated the sorrow of the viewers to a great extent.

UNLUCKY SIX

When Naem Islam was batting on six, most of the viewers were praying to help the all-rounder to pass the digit as it turned out to be quite an unlucky number for Bangladeshi batsmen yesterday.

The digit earned the bad impression yesterday since three of the top order batsmen of the Tigers went to the pavilion with their

individual scores on six.

Zunaed Siddique who had previously dismissed the visiting New Zealanders in the first ODI of the Brac Bank Series scoring 85 runs.

The second 'victim of six' was Rajin Saleh who was picked for the Test match for his good performance in the domestic cricket recently.

Later, the best performer of the first innings, Mehrob Hossain was also stuck at six playing 18 balls when Patel grabbed his wicket.

PRAISE FOR TRIO

Tamim Iqbal's fans were tensed when the attacking batsman opened the second innings of Bangladesh yesterday as he had to compromise with his character of hitting ball.

He kept his commitment to the country as his talented batting contributed 33 runs off 100 balls featuring five boundaries yesterday.

The local hero didn't take any risk yesterday considering the conditions of the match while his four teammates left him at the crease before touching double-digits.

On the other hand, the responsible batting of Mushfiqur, who added 79 runs to his career in the first innings also showed his class and gave support to Shakib to bring the score at 127 runs conceding six wickets.

He fell to O'Brien after scoring 32 runs off 121 balls featuring four boundaries yesterday.

The debutant Naem Islam also played well yesterday scoring 19 runs off 70 balls, after earlier contributing 14 runs in the first innings.

Amit puts India on top

Cricket

AFP, Mohali

Debutant leg-spinner Amit Mishra took a five-wicket haul to put India in the driver's seat on the third day of the second Test against Australia here on Sunday.

Mishra, who took two wickets on Saturday, dismissed top-scorer Shane Watson (78) before mopping up tailenders Cameron White and Peter Siddle to finish with an impressive 5-71 from 26.4 overs.

Paceman Ishant Sharma and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh chipped in with two wickets each as the visitors were bowled out for a first innings score of 268, two less than the follow-on mark.

India, however, decided to bat again, reaching 100 without loss at close for an overall lead of 301 runs, having made 469 in their first innings.

Openers Virender Sehwag notched up his 15th Test fifty and was batting on 53 with Gautam Gambhir on 46 when stumps were drawn for the day.

The duo negotiated a benign Australian attack with ease, scoring at more than four runs an over on a track which still played true and easy.

The Australians owed their first innings score to a fine rear-guard action from Watson and Brett Lee, who put on 73 runs for the eighth wicket to pull their side up from 167-7.

"They bowled really well today,"

said Watson. "I was a little uncomfortable against the spin of Harbhajan Singh. So I tried to play more from the crease by taking an off-stump guard."

"We can still win this game if we restrict their lead to around 400-450 because the pitch is not unplayable."

Watson's 156-ball career-best knock included 10 fours and a six while Lee contributed a handy 35 with six fours.

The 27-year-old all-rounder pulled Mishra, 25, over the midwicket for a huge six while Lee also danced down the track to loft the bowler twice for fours over the mid-off.

Watson, playing his fifth Test, reached his half-century in style, dispatching the long-maned Sharma (2-68) in front of square for a delectable four.

Lee, who needed two stitches on his right hand on day one of the match, also took a nasty blow on his back from Sharma, bowling with a new ball. But he responded by driving the bowler down to the ground for his fifth four.

His spirited resistance was brought to an end by Harbhajan who induced him into edging one to Rahul Dravid at slip.

Mishra, only the sixth Indian bowler to have picked five wickets in a debut, then got rid of Watson -- trapped leg before -- and Siddle in the space of six balls to bring the curtain down on the Australian innings.

Mishra's figures were the best



PHOTO: STAR

LEADING FROM THE FRONT: New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori (L) is ecstatic after dismissing Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal in the second innings of the first Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Shakib on a high

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

It never really hurts an all-rounder to have an off-day. If he fails with the bat, there's always bowling. If both do not click and if he happens to be a good fielder, the contribution never ceases in anyway.

But Shakib Al Hasan is having the sort of Test match that most all-rounders dream of.

He puts the team in command with a seven-wicket haul, takes the catch of the year and then the next day, he coolly bails his side out with a fantastic half-century.

Only Mohammad Rafique and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza have done anything close to this before. Rafique took five for 65 and scored 69 against Zimbabwe in 2004-05 while Mashrafe saved Bangladesh from follow-on last year against India with a blazing 79, after taking four for 97.

Whatever he is called, a batting, bowling or even a spinning all-rounder, Shakib has weighed in with his solo effort.

"I am a batsman for today," he said with a smile.

"When I was walking off (after scoring 71), I thought that I should have said thirty more yesterday," he added while recalling his statement to the journalists that he prefers a 70 more than five wickets.

Shakib smashed twelve boundaries, of which three were consecutively swept between the mid-on and mid-wicket arc off Jeetan Patel, in his 151-ball essay that literally pulled Bangladesh from the brink of another collapse and placed them in a good position.

"If we can take all the chances that come our way, we might even win," said Shakib.

The all-rounder who bowls more than handy left-arm spin took away the best bowling figures in Test cricket for Bangladesh, overtaking Enamul Haque's 7 for

95 after snaring Iain O'Brien first thing in the morning.

But his words would suggest that all this was just an added bonus.

"I never thought about my bowling that much. I think it is something like God's gift since I don't really practice it too much. I put all my concentration on my batting," said the left-hander. "Maybe one day I will find the significance of that effort but as of right now, I don't really understand it," added Shakib.

He shared a significant 56-run stand with Mushfiqur Rahim, who is making a name for himself by rescuing the Tigers.

The young wicketkeeper-batsman said that Shakib's performance did not really surprise him but he was happy that his teammate came back among the runs.

"He bowled well in the one-dayers but wasn't in touch with the bat. It is good to see him show good form," said Mushfiqur.



PHOTO: AFP

DREAM DEBUT: India leg-spinner Amit Mishra, who took 5 for 71, celebrates taking the important wicket of Shane Watson on the third day of the second Test against Australia at the Punjab Cricket Association Stadium in Mohali yesterday.

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