

The opportunity is lost

BISHWAJIT ROY from Ctg

For a team like Bangladesh it's always important to grab every opportunity. And after a fabulous effort by the bowlers who wrapped up the much-vaunted Indian batting line-up for 243 runs it was expected that the Tigers batting would graft if not flourish under brilliant sunshine on the third day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in this port city yesterday.

But the batting let the hosts down and apart from a 108-run seventh wicket partnership between Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim there was little to speak about. India were understandably happy after taking a morale-boosting one-run lead and at the end of the day they cruised to a 123-run lead with nine wickets still standing.

"It was a poor batting display by the top six batsmen," was the brief answer from a grim-faced Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons when asked whether his side lost an opportunity to take a first-innings lead in the match.

When the match started 90 minutes behind the schedule under glorious sunshine, the Bangladesh batters failed to cash in on a favourable condition and lack of temperament was the reason behind the poor batting show.

After the dismissals of Mohammad Ashraf, Shakib Al Hasan and Rokibul Hasan in the first session, things could have been worse had

Mahudullah and Mushfiqur not batted with great concentration. Still it was a crime after the way wicketkeeper batsman Mushfiqur gave away his wicket to put a premature

end of a very good partnership. Many have considered him as a compact batsman especially for the longer-version game because of his technique and Mushfiqur pro-

vided a glimpse of that during his 104-ball 44 but he spoiled his good effort by playing a wrong shot at the wrong time. The Bangladesh vice-captain unnecessarily bent

down to slog against the turn of Amit Mishra only to get a thick top-edge that went straight to Virender Sehwag at midwicket. His departure exposed the tail and ulti-

mately dashed Bangladesh's hopes of taking a first-innings advantage. The scenario could have been different in the end if the partnership could safely

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



IT'S ALL ABOUT PARTNERSHIP: Bangladesh's last recognised pair Mahmudullah (L) and Mushfiqur Rahim cross each other during a fine 108-run seventh wicket stand on the third day of the first Test against India at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.



Straight Drive

SUNIL GAVASKAR

India's bowlers brought their team back into the game with a fabulous effort. If the batsmen apart from the admirable Sachin Tendulkar gave the impression of being a bit casual and complacent about this Test, the bowlers led by Zaheer took no chances and bowled with great heart to get India a nominal but psychologically important lead of just one run. Previous India - Bangladesh Tests have been dominated by India and so if Bangladesh had taken the lead then it would have been a huge morale booster for them. Having said that the manner in which Bangladesh's lower order fought back through Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur Rahim is a wonderful sign that this cricket mad nation is producing players who will be strong mentally as well. It's in the temperament stakes that teams like Australia and South Africa score over others. It is their never give up attitude that often turns matches in their favour and they never ever make the mistake of taking any opposition lightly. India's batsmen did that and so find themselves in this equal position in this Test match.

The Bangladesh bowlers bowled well especially the skipper, Shakib Al Hasan and he will be the bowler that India will have to watch out for in the second innings too. He is getting the ball to turn and because he bowls such a tight line and length it is hard to get after him. Virender Sehwag tried and perished for the second time in the match. After his dismissive comments about Bangladesh's capabilities, his wicket will be prized more than the others in the Indian team and the Bangladesh players will take a special delight everytime he gets out.

Sehwag has certainly given the impression that he is not challenged by this attack but unless he scores a century against them he will not back up his thoughts with action. If anything, it is far more difficult to score against an attack that seems to have no teeth since a casualness enters the game and all it takes for a batsman is one mistake for him to be back in the pavilion. Those who scoff at centuries scored against so-called second raters will be surprised to see how many top batsmen don't have those scores. So it does take a bit more than just skill to get a century or a big score and Sehwag will have to apply himself in the next Test to get that elusive century against Bangladesh. Knowing his propensity to go on from a century he could well hammer a big one but it will take him a lot of determination to do so. He also has said that Bangladesh cannot take 20 wickets in a Test match and by throwing his wicket away he is making it easier for the hosts to prove him wrong.

With the ball turning India will have to ensure that they get at least 300 runs for Bangladesh to chase else it could well mean an extraordinary win for an 'ordinary' side.

'Booters will give their best'

SPORTS REPORTER



Zoran Djordjevic picked almost the same squad as the SAFF Championship when the Serbian coach announced a 25-member squad for the upcoming

South Asian Games, beginning from January 29.

Country's number one goalkeeper Aminul Haque (captain), defender Wali Faisal (vice-captain) and in-form striker Enamul Haque have been included in the quota of three senior players while the well-known national players Zahid Hasan Emily, Zahid Parvez, Zahed Parvez Chowdhury, Mamunul Islam, Atiqur Rahman Mishu, Nasir, Mithun Chowdhury, Mamun Mia and Ariful Islam have secured their places in the Under-23 squad as regular players.

Of the 25-member squad, 13 players were the part of the SAFF Championship

while booters like Arup Kumar Baddya, Rezaul Karim Reza, Monaem Khan Raju and Mobarak Hossain were members of the national preliminary squad at different times.

Zoran has also pinned his hopes on a few fresh faces like defender Mithun Sheikh, midfielder Shakil Ahmed, strikers Touhidul Alam Sabuj, Touhidul Islam Siddique, veteran forward Mohammad Yousuf and goalkeeper Nehal.

The Serbian coach, however, will have to cut his squad down to 20 members at the managers' meeting before the Games kicks off.

After the inclusion of Aminul, Wali and Enamul, veteran Rokonuzzaman Khanchan, Biplob Bhattacharya, Pranotosh Kumar were dropped from the squad while two British-born Bangladeshi booters Sibli Mia and Sarwar Ahmed Sadik found no place in the squad and Zoran thought they still needed more time to be part of the national squad.

"You have wonderful talents, who have a lot of motivation, aspiration and spirit and I have come here to put my head to help your football. The training is going very well and the future of your country's football is good. I can't assure you we will be champions in the Games, but I believe under my leadership the players will give their best," said Zoran at a press conference at the Bangladesh Olympic Bhaban yesterday.

"It is difficult to say which department is better because our team is a unit, which has an experienced goalkeeper, good backline, very good midfield and a capable attacking lineup," said the 57-year-old coach, who started his camp on January 13 at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan with 39 players.

Captain Aminul Haq said, "We are hoping to do something better as we could not do well in the SAFF Championship and the coach is working on strengthening our

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

U-19s must win today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 cricketers will need to beat Pakistan to qualify for the quarterfinals of the Under-19 World Cup when they meet in the final group match at Palmerston North, Napier today. Having come into the tournament with the aim of finishing among the top four, they find themselves in a precarious position needing to win a very strong Pakistan side to stand a chance of qualifying for the quarterfinals. To make matters more complicated, only a win will not ensure their last-eight berth, but they will have to beat Pakistan by a big margin as the three teams of the group Bangladesh, Pakistan

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Zaheer smells victory

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



India took away the initiatives from Bangladesh on the third day and were looking forward to winning the first Test match at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in the port city with the pre-condition of good weather.

India's leading paceman Zaheer Khan, who caused most of the damage to the Bangladesh top order with three for 54, expressed his team's sentiment at the press conference after his side took a 123-run lead with nine wickets in hand at stumps on third day.

After a brittle batting in the first innings, India bounced back strongly in their second innings to finish the third day play with 122 for one in 22.2 overs and Zaheer hinted that they kept a good run rate eyeing victory.

"We are happy with the way things have been progressing. There is every chance to achieve a positive result if the weather condition stays like today. The first two sessions of the fourth day will be very important," said Zaheer.

"We will definitely try to maintain the run rate we have achieved today," he added.

Zaheer also praised their bowling effort which enabled them to wrap up Bangladesh for 242 runs and take a one-run lead.

"I thought it was a good bowling effort. Basically they were playing shots, so it was important that we stuck to our areas and be patient. I was just bowling in the right areas. There was good sunshine and the wicket definitely improved as the play went on. We are happy with the proceedings," said Zaheer.

"I think the wicket was offering help to the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

What to WATCH

BTV & Neo Cricket

Bangladesh v India
First Test, Day Four
Live from 9:30am

STAR Sports

Australian Open
Second Round
Live from 6:00am

SuperSport3

English Premier League
Liverpool v Tottenham
Live from 1:30 am (Thursday)

SuperSport7

English Premier League
Arsenal v Bolton
Live from 1:30 am (Thursday)

ESPN

Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

11TH SA GAMES Torch starts journey from Adam's Peak

SPORTS REPORTER

The torch of 11th South Asian Games will be lit on the Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka on January 23 before it is taken to the capital of Bangladesh, which is all set to host the 12-day regional extravaganza, beginning from January 29.

The South Asian Olympic Council recently decided that from now on the torch of all South Asian Games in future would be lit from the Adam's Peak, a holy side for all religious people.

Sri Lanka has taken enough preparation to light up the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Shakib snubbed again

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan, the world's best all rounder in one-day cricket for the last one year, has once again been ignored by the IPL franchisees when 66 players went under the hammer for the third edition of the lucrative league in Mumbai yesterday.

However Shakib was not the only start player to be left out, Australian Test wicket-keeper Brad Haddin, England spinner Graeme Swann, West Indian Ramnaresh Sarwan and none of the 11 Pakistanis who went under the hammer.

Among the 66 players up for bid, only 11 were sold for the upcoming third edition of IPL that starts in mid-march, with West Indian all-rounder Kieron Pollard and New Zealand fast bowler Shane Bond drawing the highest prices at 750,000 dollars each.

Whereas Shakib's fans all over the world expressed their surprise at not seeing the ace

allrounder make it to the IPL-3, the player himself sounded unconcerned, "It doesn't bother me much. I'm concerned on the current game, not thinking about anything else. I believe, if I keep on playing well, I will get many chances like these in future," said Bangladesh's stand-in skipper at the media briefing on the end of the third day's play of the Chittagong Test against India.

Shakib was considered a hot pick for not only the fact that he has been the number one all-rounder in one-day cricket for almost a year now but also because his all-round skills make him the ideal candidate for such contest. It may be mentioned Shakib was ignored last time as well even though two of his fellow cricketers Mohammad Ashraf and Mashrafe Mortaza were picked by two franchises.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was the story of last year's auction as the Kolkata Knight Riders availed his services for a staggering price tag of six hundred thousand dollars. Mohammad Ashraf too was picked up by another franchise

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



THIS WICKET IS NOT ORDINARY: Stand-in India captain Virender Sehwag (L) trudges back to the dressing room as two Bangladesh players celebrate the fall of the dashing opener on the third day of the first Test in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Indian Premier League (IPL) commissioner Lalit Modi (C), accompanied by co-owner of Rajasthan Royals Shilpa Shetty (L) and co-owner of Kings XI Punjab Priety Zinta, attends a press conference after the IPL auction in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

IPL shuns Pak stars

AFP, Mumbai



Pakistani cricketers will not feature in the third edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) this year after being ignored by franchises at the players' auction on Tuesday.

None of the 11 Pakistanis who went under the hammer, including flamboyant all-rounder Shahid Afridi, were sold despite their national team being the reigning World Twenty20 champions.

Pakistani cricketers took part in the IPL's inaugural season in 2008, but were denied permission by Islamabad to play last year due to growing political tensions with India. Multi-millionaire owners of the eight clubs, who attended the auction, declined to comment on why the Pakistanis were kept out. But a franchise official, who preferred to remain unnamed, told AFP that he was not

surprised.

"We were not sure if the Pakistanis will get visas and we did not want players who won't be available," he said. "Besides, there is also the security issue. No one was willing to take a chance."

Of the 66 players up for bid, only 11 were sold, with West Indian all-rounder Kieron Pollard and New Zealand fast bowler Shane Bond drawing the highest prices at 750,000 dollars each.

Pollard was picked up by Mumbai Indians, owned by India's richest industrialist Mukesh Ambani, while Bond went to Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan's Kolkata Knight Riders.

Another West Indian, Kemar Roach, attracted 720,000 dollars from 2009 champions Deccan Chargers. Promising South African paceman Wayne Parnell was sold to Delhi Daredevils for 610,000 dollars.

The auction was held for cricketers not already linked with any IPL team and was limited to the third edition, which will be held

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Bangladesh eye taekwondo gold

SPORTS REPORTER

After the inclusion of Taekwondo in the eighth edition of the regional extravaganza, Bangladesh uncharacteristically got success in the event of marshal art in the 10th edition of South Asian Games and they are determined to maintain their success in the upcoming SA Games in Bangladesh.

"I can assure you that we will win gold, but don't know how many," said Bangladesh Taekwondo Federation general secretary Mahmudul Islam Rana adding that they

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v India
First Test, Day Four
Venue: Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chittagong.
National Cricket League (Four-Day Match, Day 1)
Rajshahi v Chittagong
Venue: BKSP
Khulna v Sylhet
Venue: Shahid Chandu Stadium, Bogra
Barisal v Dhaka
Venue: Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium, Khulna