



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PATIENCE WILL BE THE KEY: Opener Tamim Iqbal leaves alone a good length delivery during Bangladesh's second innings on the fourth day of the first Test against India at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. The left-hander needs this kind of concentration for Bangladesh to do something special on the fifth and final day today.

Muhith unhappy

SPORTS REPORTER

Finance minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, chairman of the organising committee of the South Asian Games, expressed his dissatisfaction over lack of actions on the publicity of the upcoming 11th edition of the regional extravaganza in Bangladesh with only eight days to start.

Muhith has emphasised on increasing the publicity in the remaining days as the Finance minister sat with 20 different subcommittees formed to make the games a success in order to being informed about the progress of different committees at the National Sports Council Tower yesterday.

It was, however, learnt that the media subcommittee informed the meeting that the promotional activities of the game fall outside the jurisdiction of media committee.

A source present at the meeting said that the venue management committee informed the organising committee chairman that almost all venues are ready to host the games and the remaining works at a few venues would be complete by

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

Gambhir stays modest

BISHWAJIT ROY from Ctg

Batting under the shadows of big names like Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag and VVS Laxman, Gautam Gambhir could hardly hog the spotlights but he silently proved himself as a pillar for the opening spot in the celebrated Indian batting line-up. The Delhi left-hander never missed an opportunity when it came his way and the 28-year old batsman, who anchored India's second innings during his 129-ball 116 featuring ten fours and a six, achieved a milestone yesterday.

Gambhir charged down the track against left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan to dispatch it over long-on for a clean six to make five centuries in five consecutive games, a feat achieved earlier by Don Bradman, who holds the record of centuries in consecutive six matches, Jacques Kallis and Mohammad Yousuf.

The soft-spoken batsman however was not too much excited with this achievement while speaking at a press conference yesterday.

"I've never thought that I

would get five centuries. I don't play for it. It is just my job to go out there and keep scoring runs for the team and if it comes my way, I'll be

pretty happy about it. I don't go for it. When you play for your country, there is already so much pressure. When you

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

FANTASTIC FIFTH: India opener Gautam Gambhir raises his bat after scoring a superb century on the fourth day of the first Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong yesterday. It was his fifth ton in as many Tests.

Hockey happy with bronze

SPORTS REPORTER

After making a lot of hue and cry over the last one year Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has set a realistic target -- winning the bronze -- in the 11th South Asian (SA) Games, beginning here on January 29.

"It is important to regain the bronze medal that we lost to Sri Lanka in the last edition of the Games," said BHF general secretary Khodoker Jamiluddin while announcing the final squad for the regional showpiece event at the Bangladesh Olympic Bhaban yesterday.

World hockey's two giants India and Pakistan along with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and

Nepal will fight for the gold at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

The federation's chief executive had earlier set an ambitious target of playing the final beating either India or Pakistan whom Bangladesh have never defeated in their 39-year history of hockey.

"We can only imagine beating India or Pakistan, but the ground reality is that it is almost impossible to beat any of them with a one-year preparation," Jamil said. "However, it is not impossible and we need more preparation to do that. We can beat them on our day and still our main target is to play the final in the Games."

A youthful hockey team has

been training for one year under the supervision of German coach Gerhard Peter Rach and the boys played a four-nation invitational tournament in Russia as a part of their preparation.

The BHF, suspending the domestic league, sent the players to Germany to play for different clubs. Later they played a few friendly matches against Italy, Czech Republic and the Netherlands during their three-month tour of Europe. They won two games against Italy.

"You are destined to lose a bit of rhythm in domestic front when you are going to host an international event. Still, we tried to begin the

domestic league without the national players, but could not start it in the face of opposition from the clubs," said Jamil when asked why the federation had suspended the domestic league.

Coach Rach also echoed the sentiment of Jamil.

"We had a good preparation as the boys have learned new techniques and tactics in their three-month tour of Europe and we are now looking forward to performing better against world class opponents like India and Pakistan," said Rach, who once coached the Indian national team.

"We must win the bronze

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Shakib eyes the unlikely

BISHWAJIT ROY from Ctg

Will it be an interesting final day after Bangladesh were set a mammoth target to achieve in the exciting first Test? If you take the answer from Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan, the answer is positive. There was no shortage of confidence from the Tigers' young skipper as he was speaking on his team's chances after the fourth day's play at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in the port city yesterday, and why not when his side are playing decent cricket against the world's number one Test team from the very first day.

One might think that the 415-run target is too much for the hosts considering their batting strength, but Shakib made it clear that they would go into the final day with an eye on victory despite having already lost two wickets for 67. His team's plan is simple: batting the whole day on a very good track. Bangladesh were still trailing by 348 runs at stumps.

"All three options are open: we can win the game, we can lose the game or the game can be drawn. But we have a very simple target, which is to bat the whole day, and if we can do that it would not be an impossible task to achieve the target. You never know, it might turn out to be a big day for our cricket. So, winning is our only target," said a confident Shakib.

"The wicket is very good for batting. Now everybody from

Tamim [Iqbal] to Rajib bhai [Shahadat Hossain] should take the responsibility to execute our plan in the middle. We will try our best to achieve a good result in the match," he added.

He however said that the mood in the dressing room was excellent despite losing the wickets of opener Imrul Kayes and one down Shahriar Nafees. "I think I am little bit nervous but my colleagues are very much confident," he jokingly said when asked

whether he was the only one confident about the victory.

There is one instance when Bangladesh scored 400-plus runs in the second innings of a Test match and that was against Sri Lanka while chasing a 521-run target at Mirpur in December 2008 but Shakib said that they were not thinking about that.

"One can take inspirations from that or one can take inspirations from their individual achievements like Tamim from his hundred and

Ashrafur from his 158 runs against the same opponents. But as I said, our main focus should be to bat the whole day," he responded when being reminded of their brilliant effort against Sri Lanka.

Patience would be key for the remaining batsmen if they want to pull off their biggest success in the longer-version game and without any doubt the two not out batsmen Tamim (23) and Ashrafur (16) will have to take the responsibility first to lay the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh pacer Rubel Hossain (R) has every reason to be elated after dismissing master Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar (L) with a fast and furious delivery during the fourth day of the first Test in Chittagong yesterday.

Fans enjoying it

DWAIPAYAN BARUA from Ctg

Supporters of both Bangladesh and India who thronged the Chittagong Divisional Stadium to watch fourth day's play on Wednesday termed the ongoing Test as an exciting match.

"It is still difficult to say what is going to happen - draw or a result. And that, I think, is the real charm of a Test match," said Sagar, a college student, praising the Tigers for putting up a fight against the world's number one side.

He also appreciated the wholehearted effort of bowlers who not only bowled India out for 243 in their first innings but also claimed eight second-innings wickets.

"It was a good reply to an arrogant remark of Indian skipper (Virender) Sehwag. We could have taken twenty wickets had he not declared", said Borhan Uddin, an official of a Shipping Lines, while

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Heartbreak for U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER



It was heartbreak for Bangladesh Under-19s they lost another last-over thriller against Pakistan by 4 wickets to bid bye to their hopes of reaching the quarterfinals of the ICC Under-19 World Cup in Palmerston North in New Zealand. After a last over defeat against West Indies in the earlier game, Bangladesh needed no less than a win against Pakistan in this match to qualify for the quarterfinals. And they looked on course for a win till Pakistan staged a spectacular comeback to snatch a penultimate-ball victory. Chasing 251 to win, Pakistan seemed to be going down at 199, with 21 balls to go. But Mohammad Waqas, coming in at number eight, smashed two sixes and three fours in his 14-ball 34 to turn the match on its head. This defeat puts Bangladesh out of the tournament, while West Indies qualified for the quarters along with group leaders Pakistan.

The day had begun well for Bangladesh, skipper Mahmudul Hasan's decision to bat was

vindicated by a strong batting show. Openers Anamul Haque and Amit Majumder laid the foundation with a steady stand of 92 in 23.1 overs. Anamul carried on his good form in the series, before he fell for 55. Mominul Haque kept the Bangladesh flag flying in the middle overs and set the team up for a strong finish, which was provided by captain Mahmudul Hasan who slammed 63 at close to run-a-ball. Shabbir Rahman upped the ante with Hasan, striking two sixes and two fours in his 34. Alaaddin Babu who came in for the last ball of the innings smote a six to take the side to 250.

Pakistan employed a watchful approach to their chase, with Babar Azam and Ahmed Shehzad cutting out the risks in their steady 104-run opening stand, before Shehzad fell for 52. When Rameez Aziz fell at 113 in the 32nd over, Mahmudul Hasan had choked the innings of all momentum and Pakistan were in desperate need of a move-on. Azam provided the impetus in the company of his captain Azeem Ghummam, adding 60 in 56 balls. Bangladesh then hit back hard, removing both batsmen

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Barisal skittled cheaply

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Former pacers of the national side Mohammad Sharif and Talha Jubair took nine wickets between them as Dhaka bowled out Barisal for 89 runs in their first innings of the National Cricket League at the Divisional Stadium in Khulna. Dhaka then finished the day on 131 for four at stumps on day one of the first phase round two match taking a lead of 42 runs. In the other matches, Chittagong scored 128 for five against Rajshahi while Khulna were in a strong position with 196 runs for the loss of only three wickets at the end of first day's play. All three matches were curtailed due to unfavourable weather condition.

It was a commendable performance from Dhaka's two new-ball bowlers as bowled out Barisal for 89 runs in 32.1 overs in their first

innings. Barisal at one stage were 18 for five, but two 20-something innings in the middle order took their total towards a three digit score. But another late flurry of wickets got them bowled out for 89. Mohammad Sharif took five for 34 while Talha Jubair took four for 41. These four wickets took Talha's tally to 17 wickets in three innings after he had taken 13 wickets in Dhaka's first match against Khulna.

Then Dhaka opener Uttam Sarker scored 40 while Marshal Ayub stayed unbeaten on 46 as Dhaka reached 131 for four in 42 overs.

Over at BKSP, Chittagong ended the day at 128 for five in 36 overs after most of the day was lost due to wet condition. Opener Gazi Salauddin scored 34 runs while all-rounder Faisal Hossain scored 29 runs and skipper Aftab Ahmed stayed unbeaten for 34 runs.

At the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Tushar Imran hit an unbeaten fifty as Habibur Bashar remained not out on 38 to pile 196 runs

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

What to WATCH

BTV & Neo Cricket

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

STAR Sports

Australian Open
Second Round
Live from 6:00am

Star Cricket

India v England
U-19 Cricket World Cup
Live from 3:30am

ESPN

Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



PHOTO: COURTESY

German legend Lothar Matthaus pumps his fists standing next to the FIFA World Cup at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata last Sunday.

Up close with the World Cup

FARAZ IHTESHAM

It was a moment to behold for a group of journalists from Bangladesh to have a glimpse of the solid, 18-carat gold FIFA World Cup trophy up-close, courtesy of Coca-Cola.

And that too after enduring quite a hectic journey from Dhaka to Kolkata. There was obvious delay in flight, almost a sleepless night and an urgency on the following morning to make sure that we reach the Hyatt Regency hotel in Salt Lake where the World Cup trophy would be unveiled at 11:30am.

When we reached the posh hotel on January 15, we were exhausted. But the moment German World Cup winning captain Lothar Matthaus walked to the stage holding the glittering piece of glory, it reinvigorated me with fresh energy.

It was a once in a lifetime experience. I could hardly believe myself that I was

sitting only 15 feet away from the original trophy lifted by the likes of Franz Beckenbauer, Diego Maradona, Cafu, Fabio Cannavaro, and Matthaus himself who won it in 1990 in Rome.

As he was holding the trophy it seemed that he had just travelled from Rome to Kolkata.

Matthaus also spoke like a true champion while thanking Coca-Cola for arranging the trip.

Matthaus then answered questions from the eagerly waiting press.

The German midfielder general talked about his rivalry with Maradona, his happiest and saddest moments in football and who is going to win the World Cup this year in South Africa.

On Maradona, Matthaus commented that the Argentine was the best player he ever played against and that Argentina could not win the 1986 World Cup without Maradona. In the 1990

World Cup Maradona was not playing at the same level as before and that made it easier for him.

Regarding Messi, Matthaus said that the Barcelona striker deserved to be the best player in the world.

"Messi is the best."

On his own country's chances in South Africa, Matthaus was confident that Germany would perform well despite lack of star players.

"Germany always play as a team and are a difficult team to beat."

However his favourite for the World Cup is Spain.

"Spain are playing a very high level of football, a level at which no other team are currently playing but that doesn't necessarily mean that Spain are going to win the World Cup," were the German legend's own words.

On Thierry Henry's handball against

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4