



England captain Alastair Cook (L) exults after scoring a century as Kevin Pietersen applauds on the first day of the first Test against Bangladesh at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

SIDDONS BEING REALISTIC 'Only one winner from here'

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



From start to finish of the opening day's play of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium the question was; what's the point of fielding first on a placid surface after loading the side with spinners?

The surprise decision of home captain Shakib Al Hasan definitely made the opponents happy, as it would not be an easy task to bat after fielding under such scorching heat in the port city. The English batsmen took full advantage of the poor decision to take control of the match as they scored 374 for three before stumps were drawn for the day and the batting of captain Alastair Cook (158 not out) and Kevin Pietersen (99) showed how easy the wicket was to bat on.

Was it the lack of confidence on the batsmen that forced the home team to take this surprise decision? Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons however came up with a more surprising explanation behind the decision as he said that their experience against New Zealand and some one-day matches made them believe that it would spin from day one.

"In hindsight it was probably a bad decision, but we thought we knew a bit about the Chittagong wicket, and we thought that it would spin from day one, and get flatter and flatter like it has in the past, but for some unknown reason it didn't turn and was probably as flat as it normally is on days three and four here. Hindsight, bad decision, but we expected it to spin a lot more than that," explained Siddons while speaking in the press conference after the day's play.

Captain Shakib Al Hasan echoed his coach's sentiment and said that things could have been worse if they batted first and lost some quick wickets.

"I have same opinion as my coach," said Shakib.

"Our strength is our spin, so it didn't matter whether we bowled first or second. Our quicks on this wicket weren't going to be the answer on that pitch, and won't be throughout the game, they won't play a massive part. We didn't play four spinners; two genuine spinners and two part-time off-spinners who are both batsmen really," added Siddons.

The match scenario was however very much clear to the Australian after the first day's domination of the England side and he was looking for an extraordinary performance from his charges to bounce back in the game.

"I don't think two teams can take the game from here, I think we are pretty much nearly out of the game, unless we bowl terrifically in the morning, and then we have to bat the house down. I expect them to make somewhere around 500 and that's if we bowl well. Then we need to make a bit more than that," opined Bangladesh coach.

"We've probably put ourselves out of the game which we tend to do a lot in the first day or first session of a game. Our two fast bowlers bowled really poorly and let the team down, and our two spinners didn't put the ball in the right areas. It's been a difficult day, and only one team can win," he added.

So, only a magical performance can salvage the party for the home side.

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- SuperSport5**
Bangladesh v England
First Test, Day Two
Live from 9:30am
- SuperSport2**
New Zealand v Australia
Fifth ODI
Live from 7:00am
- SET Max & SuperSport2**
Indian Premier League
Mumbai Indians v Rajasthan Royals
Live from 3:15pm
- Kings XI Punjab v Delhi Daredevils
Live from 8:15pm
- SuperSport7**
Hockey World Cup Final
Australia v Germany
Live from 6:35pm
- Bundesliga**
Bayern Munich v SC Freiburg
Live from 11:25pm
- ESPN**
English Premier League
Tottenham v Blackburn
Live from 6:40pm
- Chelsea v West Ham
Live from 8:55pm
- Hull City v Arsenal
Live from 11:25pm
- SuperSport5**
Primera Liga
Sporting v Athletic Bilbao
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)
- Sevilla v Deportivo
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)

Kevin delivers at last

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



Kevin Pietersen hogged the spotlight in the one-day series for all the wrong reasons. He looked feeble against left-arm spin and the onus was on Pietersen to bounce back in the Test series. He did what he should have, in grand style, but missed the much-deserved hundred for just a single run.

The 29-year-old batsman however was not too disappointed missing the magical three figures and he was as modest as he could be while talking about his hard work for coping with left-arm spin.

"Probably at the end of your career you look back and think one run could have made a difference to me personally, but for the team 99 was very important. One run is really insignificant, though it may not look it on the scoreboard, and I've had taken 99 this morning that's for sure. Funny things happen to cricketers on 99 all around the world," said the soft-spoken batsman.

"Sometimes you hit a patch when you don't know where your next run is coming from and I've had that for the last couple of weeks. I've had to make an adjustment to the way I play left-arm spin. With umpires giving more lbw decisions on

the front foot and the boys bowling a lot more for lbw you have to make adjustments. The three top bowlers in the world are Daniel Vettori, Shakib Al Hasan and Ray Price," he added.

Pietersen also said that his work with batting coach Andy Flower and kind words from Indian batsman Rahul Dravid helped him to learn how to handle spin bowling.

"I've made them with some really hard work with Andy Flower, who was a really fantastic player of spin, and some really kind words from Rahul [Dravid]. At the end of the day they don't bat for you but you've got to find information. It's one of those where I've played with Rahul in Bangalore, played a lot Test match cricket against him and in two weeks I'll be spending four weeks with him. It's great to spend time speaking to people like that and he's helped a heck of a lot," he informed.

"I've felt fine against the seamers since Dubai but it's just been left-arm spin I've had to work out. I won't stop learning and I won't stop working hard because you are never too good for anything," he continued.

The former England captain was also looking for a big score from his young skipper Cook and the youngster delivered.

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Lara lauds Tendulkar

ANI, Mumbai

Ace West Indies cricketer Brian Lara has applauded Sachin Tendulkar's double-century in One-Day International cricket, and says if he has a son then he would like him to bat like Tendulkar.

Lara, who is on a personal visit to India, praised Tendulkar for his other numerous records and his endurance.

"We speak a lot about cricket and about batting techniques. And I think we have a very quiet and discreet appreciation of each other's talent. That is something well known around the world. And of course, we do feed on each other. In the past, I have picked up many DVDs on Sachin and looked at the way Sachin bats and his composure. And if I had a son, I would

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Barmy Army rule the galleries

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong



The famed Barmy Army, a supporters' group of the England cricket team, made their presence felt with few local fans turning out at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here yesterday.

The Barmy Army were spread across the stands at the club house, special enclosure and galleries with flags of different sizes.

According to Ed Dumbleton, almost two hundred fans have arrived in the port city to cheer on their team.

"Around 200 people of the Barmy Army arrived in Chittagong on Thursday form England and will enjoy the two Test matches before departing the country from Dhaka," said Dumbleton who sat in the gallery.

A chef by profession, Dumbleton has toured India with the England team a few years ago.

While the few who turned up to support the hosts cheered, it was a surprisingly low turnout by recent standards.

Weekly holiday, first day of the Test match against England and slashed ticket prices could not outweigh a lack of star presence, heat and the fans' trouble with the remote location of the stadium (at the northwest corner of the city).

With no Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Mohammad Ashraful around, it was tough to bring in the crowd in the hot weather. Add to that the venue itself is a disadvantage as it is very difficult for the local fans to get a ride back to town.

The makeshift ticket-counter at the entrance was empty throughout the day while usually some viewers arrive at the venue even after Friday prayers.

But it was a different story for the fans who came to support the visitors.

Andrew Matthews, a first-timer Barmy Army, praised the English boys for the huge score and hoped it will be a competitive match.

"This is my first visit with the Barmy Army and I'm enjoying in Chittagong," said Englishman Matthews, who is a banker in Australia.

MSC still waiting on official letter

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan Sporting Club is waiting to get the official letter from the Bangladesh Football Federation after the Bangladesh League Committee fined Beanibazar SC following an appeal from the Motijheel-based outfit.

After being reportedly attacked by the spectators at Sylhet Stadium on Tuesday, the popular Mohammedan submitted a letter to the games governing body giving them an ultimatum to scrap hosts Beanibazar from the ongoing Bangladesh League in 48 hours, that ended at 8:pm (Friday) otherwise they would consider boycotting the league.

"We have yet to get the official decisions of the league committee and will take next course of action soon after receiving the letter and I can't understand why the letter has not reached the club as the meeting took place on Thursday," said ad-hoc committee member Mustaqur Rahman.

Rahman, however, could not understand on which clause of the bylaws the league committee took such insignificant decision after hosts Beanibazar failed to provide security to their players and officials after the match against them.

He added that they would sit today afternoon to decide their stance.

The BFF general secretary said that they could not deliver the league committee's decision to Mohammedan because the meeting ended late on Thursday night, but they would make sure it reached Mohammedan Club by the first hour of Saturday.

Cally returns for the Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER from Ctg

Her love for Bangladesh cricket encouraged her to visit the country again. Cally Barlow, wife of late Eddie Barlow, came here on Thursday to watch the Tigers' Test against visiting England.

She was talking about her fond memory in Bangladesh during Barlow's stint as national coach at the crucial juncture of the game in the international arena.

"I came here to watch the match. Bangladesh cricket is in my heart and I regularly follow Bangladesh's matches whenever I get the chance," said an emotionally choked Cally while talking with the reporters at the press box of the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium during first day play of the first Test yesterday.

Cally, who is living in Derbyshire, also recalled her memories with Eddie Barlow who died in December 2005.

School hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Armanitola High School of Dhaka moved into the final of the Ecstasy School Hockey Championship with a 2-0 win over Pourashava High School of Dinajpur at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Ali Khan put Armanitola High School ahead in the 17th minute converting a penalty corner while Arshad sealed the victory through a field goal in the 44th minute to take the Old Dhaka school to the final where they will face the winners between Jessore Municipal Preparatory High School and Don Barguna Zilla School, who will play the second semifinal today.



Action from the Ecstasy school hockey championship semifinal between Armanitola High School and Pourashava High School at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.



FOR THE LOVE OF ENGLAND: Barmy Army, the famous England supporters group, enjoy the Chittagong sun during the first day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

KKR start with a win

SPORTS REPORTER



After two poor campaigns on the trot, Kolkata Knight Riders will be delighted to have started on the right foot with an 11 run victory over Deccan Chargers in the DLF Indian Premier League III opener at the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Mumbai on Friday.

The Knight Riders looked out of the running for large parts of the game but a spirited bowling effort from all their bowlers saw them restrict the Deccan Chargers to 150 for 7 chasing 162 for a victory.

Captain Adam Gilchrist did not look very secure but scored 54 off 35 balls to put the Chargers into the box seat. However his departure to fellow countryman Brad Hodge stirred a collapse from which the Chargers never recovered.

South African Charles Langeveldt took 2 for 26.

Earlier, Angelo Mathews and Owais Shah both scored unbeaten half-centuries to push Kolkata Knight Riders to 162.

Mathews scored 65 and Shah got 58 as Kolkata Knight Riders recovered from 31 for four to set a reasonable target for Deccan Chargers.

Strike bowler Chaminda Vaas came up big for the Chargers with a three-wicket burst to swing the early initiative for his side, including the wicket of Manoj Tiwary from the first ball of the innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 161 for 4 (Mathews 65 not out, Shah 58 not out; Vaas 2-22)
DECCAN CHARGERS: 150 for 7 (Gilchrist 54, Laxman 22, Gibbs 19; Langereveldt 2-26)
Result: Kolkata Knight Riders won by 11 runs.

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HOCKEY WORLD CUP Australia face Germany in final today

AFP, New Delhi

Australia defeated the Netherlands 2-1 on Thursday to qualify for a third successive final against defending champions Germany in the men's field hockey World Cup.

The Kookaburras recorded their 10th win in a row over the Dutch in major competitions to set up Saturday's title clash between the top two teams in the sport.

RATING CHESS Minhaz, Javed share lead

SPORTS REPORTER

FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagor and FM Javed shared lead in the Prime Bank 12th International Rating Chess Tournament at the end of the seventh round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Sagor drew with Javed in the seventh round as both earned six points from seven matches.

Four players -- FM Khandoker Aminul Islam, Firoz

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