

BANGLADESH-ENGLAND 1ST TEST - DAY 3

Hosts not losing hope

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

The fate of the first Test was all but decided on the first day and nothing that happened on the third day changed their momentum of the game on the third day at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong. England were in complete control despite Mushfiqur Rahim and Nayeem Islam associating in a record 113-run eighth wicket partnership for Bangladesh to give the home team a decent total. The tourists could even afford to lose five quick wickets in the second innings, but still ended the day with an overall lead of 434 with five wickets remaining.

While most neutral observers would call the Tigers dead and buried in such a situation, Tamim Iqbal for one was prepared to look at the bright side of things. Despite Bangladesh's poor record in the five day version of the game and the fact that they would have to climb largely unprecedented heights to achieve anything from this game, the left-handed opener stoically seemed to abide with the age old mantra: anything can happen in cricket.

"We guess they will declare the innings with a lead of about 500 runs. But we are not demoralized though we are in a very difficult situation. If two or three batsmen can make a big score than nothing is impossible. You can't dismiss a possibility of double hundred from one batsman," he said.

"A miracle can happen," he added. But he also admitted that the ball had started to spin so it would not be an easy task for them to handle off-spinner Graeme Swann, who played a major role to demolish Bangladesh in the first innings with a five-for. Realistically, there is however only one

possibility; England winning the match. The only question is whether it will be on the fourth or the fifth day.

Tamim said that his team was not surprised by their opponent's decision not to enforce follow-on as they believe England tried to give their bowlers some rest in the sizzling heat. And definitely this also gave the home team an opportunity to take a breather to prepare for the second innings batting.

Alastair Cook's side dominated the third day's proceeding also but still there was something for the Tigers to cheer after the way Mushfiqur and Nayeem batted after an early morning collapse. Things could have been different had not an unfortunate run out put an end to a very good eighth wicket partnership in the Bangladesh innings.

Early on, the focus was on local hero Tamim but a gem of a delivery from pacer Tim Bresnan sent the left-hander back to dressing room. Tamim, who later said that even the best batsman in the world would have been dismissed by this delivery, could add only five runs to his overnight score of 81 while nightwatchman Shahadat also could not survive for long which left the Mushfiqur and Nayeem pair to salvage some pride for their country.

It was refreshing for everybody to see the way two batsmen batted in the middle. There was no shortage of temperament or technique, particularly in the batting of Mushfiqur and they were all set to pass the second session without any damage but all went wrong after Nayeem turned blind for a second run which was cut short by brilliant fielding from Michael Carberry. His dismissal also buried the home team's hope.

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PHOTO: AFP
YOU BETTER TAKE COVER: Mushfiqur Rahim goes on the attack as England's close-in fielder Ian Bell jumps for safety during third day's play of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. Batting at No. 8, the Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman hit 79 to take the hosts' score to a face-saving 296.

Swann thanks Tredwell

SPORTS REPORTER from Ctg

England spinner Graeme Swann is a firm advocate of superstition. Which is why he always bowls with his sunglasses on, as he believes it will bring him better luck. And who would argue with the tall off-spinner, after he grabbed his fifth five-wicket haul in his short 17-match career in the first Test against Bangladesh at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday, with his sunglasses firmly in place.

But sometimes even the best bowling efforts need a special aid from a fielder. And in Swann's case it came from substitute fielder James Tredwell. Swann snared the wicket of Mushfiqur Rahim, who played brilliantly against the spinner, courtesy of a sensational catch by Tredwell at short-midwicket. It was an absolute blinder as Tredwell dove one-handed to his right to pluck Mushfiqur's firmly-struck slog-sweep out of the air. And Tredwell made no mistake to praise the fielder for his brilliant effort.

"It the best catch I've ever had taken off my bowling, I wish everyone could field like that. I was just overjoyed Cooky [Alastair Cook] was off the field because there was no chance he'd have caught that," said Swann with a smile.

"You're always told that if you're not playing to try and make an impact in whatever way you can. Taking the best

catch of your career is probably the best way to do that," he added.

Swann also said that it was not an easy job for him to return with a five-wicket haul in this kind of surface.

"Taking three wickets yesterday (Saturday) put me in good stead. It was hard work today, the pitch wasn't really responsive but I kept plugging away in the hope that if I got one another might follow and so it proved," he said explaining the reason behind his success.

The 30-year-old spinner also said that his side was in a very good position despite

losing a few quick wickets in the second innings.

"We picked the best possible team to win this game. I've got no qualms because at four hundred ahead after three days we're in a magnificent position and that is testament to the team we picked. Yes, we lost a couple of wickets at the end which isn't ideal but with two days to play I think we're in the box seat," he observed.

"I'm not particularly surprised with the attack we've got, three seamers and one spinner. It was deemed the best way to go so I'm more than happy," he added.

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PHOTO: AFP

Teammates appreciate England spinner Graeme Swann (C), who accounted for five Bangladesh wickets for 90 runs, on the third day of first Test in Chittagong yesterday.

Tigers under huge lead

BISHWAJIT ROY from Ctg

Bangladesh spinners found England top-order wanting in the second innings after a record 113-run eighth wicket partnership between Mushfiqur Rahim and Nayeem Islam, but still the visitors were in the driver's seat at the end of the third day's play of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here yesterday.

Left-arm spinners Shakib Al Hasan and Abdur Razzak equally shared four wickets as England were reduced to 131 for five in their second innings but it was already good enough for them to extend their lead to 434 runs by stumps after they gained a 303-run lead in the first innings.

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CHITS FROM CHITTAGONG

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Ctg

England looked ordinary for a while when Mushfiqur Rahim and Nayeem Islam added 113 for the eighth wicket but that could have been for the stifling weather.

But suddenly in the 90th over, they sprung to life. First it was debutant Michael Carberry who created a superb run out to get rid of Nayeem for 38. Next ball, Mushfiqur's fantastic 79 was cut short by substitute James Tredwell. The Kent man leapt to his right and took a brilliant one-handed catch. Bangladesh could not add another run to their total as they were shut off for 296.

COOK'S MILESTONE

Alastair Cook reached 4000

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Liza earns 1st IM norm

SPORTS REPORTER

WFM Shamima Akhter Liza earned her first norm of International Master when she drew against Saif Uddin Lablu in the ninth and final round of the Parachute International Chess tournament at the conference room of Uni Resort in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Liza needed only half a point to achieve her first IM norm when she took on Lablu with 4.4 points from eight outings and she finally finished fourth out of ten competitors, securing five points.

The former junior champion, who skipped all competitions organised by the new ad-hoc committee, was out of action for seven months and returned with a bang.

"After achieving the first norm of International Master, I am happy but not overjoyed because I have a long way to go to earn two more IM norms," Liza told the Daily Star by phone from Cox's Bazar.

The lady from Narayanganj earned the FIDE Master title in 2007, but she only came to

know it later. Asked whether she took much time to earn the first norm of IM, she said that she could not prove her worth only because of the lack of GM competitions in the country.

But she is now looking forward to preparing herself by playing more games. "It was not easy to play against the opponents who are far better than me as I was the ninth-ranked player out of 10 participants in the tournament," said Liza, who now has 2092 rating.

Sub-continent's first GM Niaz Murshed in collaboration with Marico Bangladesh Limited had organised the Women's GM tournament in a bid to help the country's chess players to earn norms and two players -- Liza and tournament champion WIM Kiran Mohanty of India -- achieved norms from the tournaments.



SHAMIMA AKHTER LIZA

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BFF to sell WC tickets

SPORTS REPORTER

Some 250 tickets of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa have been allotted to Bangladesh Football Federation and the BFF has asked interested persons to apply for tickets to them.

"To get the match tickets of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, interested people have been advised to send their appeals to the federation providing details of their required tickets by March 21," said a press release yesterday.

BFF general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi said they have been allotted at least 20 tickets for each match though the tickets for the semifinals and final are less than twenty.

First win for Chargers

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Deccan Chargers got their first Indian Premier League victory of the season after their impressive 31-run over Chennai Super Kings at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai last night.

Andrew Symonds smashes 50 and shared a 95-run third wicket stand with Herschelle Gibbs, who made 45, as Deccan made 190-4 from 20 overs.

In reply, Chennai lost early wickets and never recovered as they only managed 159-9 from their 20 overs with 42 each from MS Dhoni and Albie Morkel.

BRIEF SCORES

DECCAN: 190-4 in 20 overs (Symonds 50; Ashwin 1-26).

CHENNAI: 159-9 in 20 overs (Morkel 42; Vaas 3-21).

Result: Deccan won by 31 runs.

NATIONAL SCHOOL HOCKEY

Kasba clinch title

SPORTS REPORTER

Kasba High School of Rajshahi emerged champions in the Ecstasy National School Hockey Championship with a hard fought 2-1 win over Armanitola High School of Dhaka in the final at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

After the barren first half, Kasba High School pressed hard to take up three successive penalty corners and converted the last one through Mahbubul Alam to take a lead in the 41st minute. But the joy of the visitors lasted only four minutes before Raihan Uddin pulled one back for the Old Dhaka school through a field goal.

After levelling the margin, Armanitola, a place from where many star players came out to

represent the national team, looked more impressive with Raihan and Rakib penetrating the Kasba backline, but they could eventually not split it.

From a counter attack, Kasba sealed the fate of the match in the 61st minute and this time too Mahbub found the back of the net with a fine combination with Rony to lift the title of the school hockey, which took place after six years.

Winning team captain Sagar Hossain was very happy after beating Armanitola.

"We toiled hard in the last month in training and we deserved the title. We all are happy after winning the final," said Sagar, a student of class IX.

Sagar believed they could have won the

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Kolkata bang Bangalore

CRICINFO, undated



DLF A LEAGUE

It wasn't as resounding a thrashing as Brendon McCullum's ruthless innings in the opening game two years ago, but it was still a massive win for Kolkata Knight Riders in front of a heaving Eden Gardens crowd. Angelo Mathews followed up his fire-fighting effort with the bat on Friday by starring with the ball to pin down Royal Challengers Bangalore, before fireworks from Kolkata's openers ensured Shah Rukh Khan's team began their campaign with victories over both of last year's finalists.

Kolkata were in control right from the start when Bangalore's young batting talent failed, and the visitors were left to thank the experienced Jacques Kallis, who made a mad dash from South Africa after playing the Pro20

final on Friday evening, for holding the innings together. However, even his batting, an unbeaten 65 on a slowish track, couldn't save Bangalore from getting a pasting.

Their troubles began when the surprise move to open with Sreevats Goswami didn't work out. The pint-sized Goswami was hemmed in by a series of Charl Langeveldt bouncers, and his ploy of backing away to heave the ball to the leg side didn't quite work. Manish Pandey also didn't replicate the wonderful form of his domestic season, looking tentative in his short stay before his attempt to flat-bat Mathews down the ground ended in a bottom-edge onto the stumps.

Next in Bangalore's youth brigade was Virat Kohli, talked up by coach Ray Jennings as a future Indian captain, but he lasted only four deliveries before striking a dipping delivery from Murali Kartik to deep midwicket. With two

deliveries left in the Powerplay, Bangalore were down to 20 for 3.

Kolkata's new-ball bowlers had done their job, and they were backed up by some intelligent bowling from Mathews and Kartik to put Bangalore on the mat. Mathews sent down several slower bouncers which the batsmen struggled to pick, and Kartik varied his pace and effectively used the assistance provided by the track.

It was Kartik who provided the fervent crowd their next chance to scream. Bangalore's new signing, Eoin Morgan, had started his IPL career confidently with a sensation-ally-timed off-drive for six off the second delivery he faced, but he was bowled by a short, slow ball, through with his reverse-sweep before the ball arrived.

All the while Kallis was starved of strike, though he had shown glimpses of form,

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PHOTO: STAR
WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS: Players of Kasba High School of Rajshahi party with the Ecstasy National School Hockey Championship trophy after they beat Armanitola High School of Dhaka in the final at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

What to WATCH

SuperSport5
Bangladesh v England
First Test, Day Four
Live from 9:30am

SuperSport2
Indian Premier League
Rajasthan Royals v Delhi Daredevils
Live from 8:30pm

ESPN
English Premier League
Liverpool v Portsmouth
Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v England
First Test, Day Four
Time: 9:30am
Venue: Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chittagong

Bangladesh League
Ctg Mohammedan v Mohammedan
Time: 3:30pm
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong

Sheikh Russel v Brothers Union
Time: 5:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium