

BANGLADESH V ENGLAND 1ST TEST Tigers show their grit

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

When Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan turned up for the post-match presentation, the small crowd at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium welcomed him by clapping. The performance of the all-rounder in the first Test was nowhere near expectation. Rather his poor decision to field first on a placid track had added some extra burden on the young Bangladesh skipper. The surprise 'retirement' of Rokibul Hasan on the eve of the match didn't help Shakib's cause either. So, it was his team's fighting spirit that went some way in quelling the pressure on Shakib despite the fact that they went down by 181 runs. Also, some decent batting performance from Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad, ton-maker Junaed Siddiqui and none other than Mushfiqur Rahim re-established the claim that 'this young side is improving.'

"After hard work on the field under such scorching heat it was not so easy to bat but I must say the boys showed their character in the end. I think we fought back in the second innings brilliantly especially it was encouraging the way Junaed Siddiqui and Mushfiqur Rahim batted through two sessions," said Shakib in a post-match briefing.

"England have a long tradition in the game and it's a very good side but we fought hard and again gave the impression that we have the ability to do something special on home soil. Even we could achieve something big from this game had two batsmen (Junaed and Mushfiqur) survived at least forty minutes after lunch break," he added.

"Before the start of the day's play, Jamie (Siddons) said that the team still has three batsmen in Junaed, Mushfiqur and Naem Islam who have got the ability to score big runs. We never lost hope. After performing the job with the gloves for 140 overs it was not so easy for Mushi (Mushfiqur) to play such a good knock. We had a confidence also on Junaed because he played some good innings while Naem may not have played a big knock but we all know that he is capable," Shakib continued.

He said that after the first session of the fifth day morning they were sensing something big when Junaed and Mushfiqur continued their good showing to go for a happy lunch. "After the first session we thought of something big and the mood in the dressing room was fantastic. England bowlers worked hard and put the ball in right areas to put pressure on the two batsmen but Junaed and Mushfiqur played sensibly to frustrate them. Things could have been different if these two batsmen survived for quite sometimes after the break," said Shakib.

The Bangladesh captain however was not frustrated with the result of the Test rather he was delighted with the bright spots.

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PHOTO: AFP
IT COMES AT LAST: Bangladesh batsman Junaed Siddiqui spreads his arms to salute the crowd upon reaching his maiden century on the final day of the first Test against England at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

High praise for duo

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

Junaed Siddiqui slammed his maiden hundred and most importantly played an ideal longer-version innings but it was wicketkeeper batsman Mushfiqur Rahim who hogged the spotlight after his back-to-back half-centuries in the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Understandably the little man, who scored a face-saving 79 in the first innings, was disappointed as he missed his second Test hundred at the very same venue for only five runs. But still his brilliant batting in the first Test once again provided the evidence as to why he is considered as the most sound batsman in his generation. The right-hander's technique and temperament are simply outstanding. Consistency is a big issue in Bangladesh cricket and the recent batting performance of the Bogra lad show that he is going to set an example in this regard. Whenever he comes to bat he looked the most assured batsman in the middle.

"As I said earlier I'm not satisfied with my keeping but I want to continue my good form in batting and I believe it does help in my 'keeping also because I am working hard," said Mushfiqur, who stepped down to charge Swann only to see his stumps dismantled.

England spinner Graeme Swann got wickets in both innings so it's better to know how he judged the batsman. "Mushi is a fine player. Small men are very hard to bowl at, and he's got a simple

game plan that makes him hard to get out. First innings there was luck with that catch, but it was nice of him to run past the ball today. It felt like when we got Michael Clarke out at the Lord's Ashes Test, when someone bats like that and you can't see a way to get them out, it's nice when they help you like that," praised the spinner, who took ten wickets to script his team's victory.

Junaed also praised his partner highly with whom he associated 167 runs in the sixth wicket to stage a good fight-back in the match.

"The batting became easy when you have a partner like Mushi (Mushfiqur Rahim). He is now enough matured," said the left-hander, who got his maiden hundred in his 15th Test match.

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Cook pleased with win

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

It was yet another comprehensive Test victory for England against the Tigers when they posted a 181-run win in the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday. But without any doubt the success didn't come easy. If someone is still apprehensive about Bangladesh's ability to push their opponents in the five-day game then he or she would be better advised to listen to Alastair Cook's summing up the Tigers performance.

"It's a really good win on that pitch to get twenty wickets was a fantastic effort. It was a long, hard five days but to win like that was excellent. Everyone has contributed well. Test cricket is supposed to be hard and it was hard graft at the end to get those 10 wickets," said the young English skipper, who led from the front with a massive hundred to take a 1-0 lead in the series.

"Full credit to the two batsmen (Junaed Siddiqui and Mushfiqur Rahim) and their partnership. Junaed and Mushi batted very well - but once we got that chance I'm very pleased with the way we jumped in and wrapped it up. Once we got the one wicket it folded nicely," he continued.

The young England skipper also admitted that they were a little bit frustrated after the way the two batsmen carried on their good work.

"The way those two fought, they didn't give us any chances, because if you apply yourself and bat really well, it's really hard to get a wicket. The 100 and 90 they got is fully deserved. It was easy to get frustrated but the way we kept our emotions in check to keep our skill level high was very important," he said.

Cook also said that patience was the key behind their success in the game.

"Naturally you get frustrated but I was pleased with the way we kept banging away as a side. Somebody said we got 42 edges out of 400-odd balls. Things didn't quite go our way but we stuck together as an 11. Emotion does sometimes take over but we still executed our skills well. It was important that we reiterated exactly what we were trying to do, how we wanted to get them out and what areas to bowl and it worked.

"I was quite pleased how calm I kept in that heat. Last night was probably the worst time for me, towards the end of that session when we'd been in the field all day. But we kept calm because we knew they couldn't keep doing what they were doing, we just had to keep believing it would happen and thankfully it did," he continued.

The England skipper highly praised his bowlers' efforts and said he didn't feel the absence of one extra bowler.

"The wicket lost a lot of pace as well so it got easier to play the short ball, but yeah, they adapted well. If the wicket does have pace it's a good option for a number of their top-order players. We certainly bowled less short balls at them, but the bouncer is always an option for our three quicks. We did change a little bit.

"You always wish you had more bowlers in hindsight, but we've won a game comfortably after a lot of hard work, so five bowlers is always a luxury, but it was a decision we made. Swanny (Graeme Swann) got ten and all the other bowlers

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Dilshan writes movie script

CRICINFO, undated

From the creator of the 'Dil-scoop', here comes his latest creative offering. And this time the canvas has shifted from the cricket field to the big screen. Yes, after electrifying the cricket world with his audacious batting at the top of the order, Sri Lanka's Tillakaratne Dilshan is now set to dazzle tinsel town.

Dilshan, who had started writing a film script almost two years ago, confirmed it was now ready. Speaking to the Times of India Dilshan said, "I am relieved now as I am done with the script." And true to his unconventional batting style, Dilshan said he had worked on a "different" plot line. "It's [the script] is very different from the conventional ones. I have added a twist to it by putting in love and loads of thrills and drama," he said. Though it is set

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Independence Day tennis from Mar 29

SPORTS REPORTER

Runner Group Independence Day Tennis tournament will begin at National Tennis Complex in Ramna on March 29.

The tournament comprises seven events -- men's singles and doubles, women's singles and doubles, boys' U-14 singles, boys' U-12 singles and girls' U-12 singles.

A total of Tk 1.40 lakh will be distributed as prize money and the interested local and foreign participants have been requested to send their entries by March 27, said a press release.

What to WATCH

- SuperSport2**
Indian Premier League
Delhi Daredevils v Mumbai Indians
Live from 8:30pm
- SuperSport3**
UEFA Champions League
Barcelona v Stuttgart
Live from 1:45am (Thursday)
- SuperSport7**
UEFA Champions League
Bordeaux v Olympiques
Live from 1:45am (Thursday)



An AFP file photo shows the British fans, known as Barmy Army, enjoy their time in the stands of the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

Zim confirm tri-series

India, Lanka the other teams

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe Cricket has confirmed that India and Sri Lanka will tour the country for a ODI tri-series between May 28 and June 9 this year. Each team plays the other twice before the final at the Harare Sports Club. India will stay back for two Twenty20 matches at the same venue on June 12 and 13.

The announcement follows the postponement of New Zealand's tour of the country over security issues. The tri-series kicks off with the home side taking on India at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, which will host the first three games.

ITINERARY
May 28: Zim v India, Bulawayo
May 30: India v SL, Bulawayo
June 1: Zim v SL, Bulawayo
June 3: Zim v India, Harare
June 5: India v SL, Harare
June 7: Zim v SL, Harare
June 9: Final, Harare

Kallis gets RCB off the mark

CRICINFO, undated

Bangalore Royal Challengers defeated Kings XI Punjab by eight wickets in an Indian Premier League match on Tuesday.

Royal Challengers reached the victory target of 204 runs with seven balls to spare to log their first points in the tournament.

Jacques Kallis remained unbeaten on 89 while Robin Uthappa scored 51. Manish Pandey Contributed 38.

At the halfway mark it seemed as if Kings XI Punjab had scored enough to record their first victory of the tournament, but Royal Challengers Bangalore went after the target with such vengeance that Punjab were punished for trespassing on private property. At the forefront of the chase was the reborn Twenty20 basher

Although Punjab were overpowered by a better batting side on that day, they could have restricted Bangalore had they bowled better lengths. The spinners in particular were guilty for dropping the ball on a length which sat up nicely for the batsmen to rock back and

Chennai tame Kolkata

STAR SPORT DESK

Chennai Super Kings opened their IPL account inflicting a 55-run defeat on Kolkata Knight Riders yesterday, their first defeat of the season.

Batting first, Chennai Super Kings amassed 164 for three in twenty overs, courtesy of some superb power-hitting from skipper MS Dhoni and S Badrinath. Dhoni remained not out on 66 and Badrinath on 43 to make sure they put a huge score for Kolkata to chase.

In reply, Kolkata lost their first wicket off the second ball and kept losing wickets regularly since. They were ultimately bowled out for 109 in 19.2 overs. Wriddhiman Saha was the top scorer with 22 while South African Justin Kemp starred with the ball taking three wickets to thwart the run chase.

SCORES IN BRIEF
Chennai Super Kings: 164 for three in 20 overs (Dhoni 66 not out, Badrinath 43 not out, Vijay 33, Raina 18; Shukla 1-37)
Kolkata Knight Riders: (Saha 22, Karthik 21, Ganguly 11; Kemp 3-12, Balaji 2-9)
Result: Chennai Super Kings won by 55 runs

A little part of England

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong

England's famed supporter group of Barmy Army were a constant presence over five days at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong and the group professed themselves satisfied with the result of the first Test as well as the environment in the games.

But they were most impressed by how friendly the Bangladeshi people are.

"Everyone always has time for a hello and always extends their hand to shake. We have had a lot of requests for photographs and the environment in general has been excellent," said Kev Carling, an England supporter who lives in Newcastle.

The Bangladeshi people are much friendlier than compared to other cricket playing countries, said Carling who has visited Australia, India and Sri Lanka with the England cricket team.

"Bangladesh is a very young country in cricket and they are not winning matches but they are improving. I didn't think that the Test

match will go to the fifth day, but the local boys were fantastic," said Carling who is a welder by profession.

Another middle-aged man, Linz who came from England before the third ODI and arrived in the galleries everyday has come to learn some words in Bengali and he charmed the viewers and hawkers in the gallery.

"Bangladesh's cricket is improving and young players are doing well. But, there is a big problem that the players bear a mentality of offering huge shots and scoring hurriedly, even in the Test matches," said Linz who has already visited all the Test playing countries with the England team.

"Bangladesh still has lack in applying technique for the Test matches since the batters bat like in one-dayers. Captain Shakib also took a wrong decision electing to field first after winning the toss in the last Test," he said also criticizing England's captain Alastair Cook for not sending the hosts follow-on in the third day.

"Comparing the other cricket playing countries, I feel

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BFF to shift from BNS for few days

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation is planning to shift three matches of the Bangladesh League to Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium from Bangabandhu National Stadium following the preparation of Independence Day celebrations at the Big Bowl.

The National Sports Council had earlier asked the football governing body to

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Muktis sixth after win

SPORTS REPORTER

Struggling Muktiyoddha Sangsad posted their third victory in the Bangladesh League when they defeated Farashganj 1-0 in their away match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Rony Islam separated both the sides in the first-half to help the freedom fighters' side leapfrog from 12th position to joint sixth position along with Aramabgah KS and losing Farashganj, who all have 10

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Muktiyoddha Sangsad's Rony Islam goes on a celebratory lap after scoring the goal in their 1-0 win over Farashganj in the Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR