

### BANGLADESH-ENGLAND TEST SERIES IN REVIEW

# Team Tigers is the star

BISHWAIT ROY

It has become a common practice that the team think-tank searches for some positives after the conclusion of any series. On most occasions they quickly single out

some important individual efforts for praise. However, if someone dissects the performance of Shakib al Hasan's men in the recently concluded series against England there will be much more to cheer about for the Tigers, than is usual.

Obviously there were some individual achievements,

which one can easily spot. If Tamim Iqbal reassured everybody about his aggressive batting then wicketkeeper batsman Mushfiqur Rahim has enhanced his reputation as the most compact batsman of his generation. One may have a lot of questions about his keeping but Mushfiqur, the vice-captain, looked more assured as a batsman throughout the series than any of his colleagues and the little right-hander provided a glimpse of a consistent performer, which is not so common in our cricket. The right-hander's batting---79 and 95---in the first Test was something special from any Bangladeshi batsman because it has hardly been seen that someone can carry his form from one goodinnings into the next.

In his brief stay (for 19 runs) at Lord's in his debut, Mushfiqur caught the attention of many who believed that he had the talent to become a good batsman. He provided further fuel to that in the just concluded series after improving his technique and temperament against both the slow and the pace bowlers. Mushfiqur provided the strong impression that he is

ready to get a permanent promotion in the batting lineup just at the moment when the Tigers are searching for a reliable option in the number three or four position.

Also, captain Shakib once again provided ample evidence as to why he is considered as the most confident guy in the team. It was not only that the Magura-lad led his team from the front on the field but he also showed his off-the-field character as the young man was safe and sound even after two big incidents---the sudden outburst of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza following his omission after the first one-day and then the retirement announcement of Rokibul Hasan prior the first Test at Chittagong.

So the refreshing fact was that there was more than one performer in the series. But what was the brightest aspect for Bangladesh cricket from this series?

Without any doubt it is their performance as a team throughout the entire length of this series. It's often happened that the Tigers stunned their big opponents by winning one game but proved agonisingly

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



PHOTO: AFP FILE

Mushfiqur Rahim was consistent throughout the just concluded one-day and Test series against England. Here he bats on the first day of the second Test at The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur where his sloppy keeping also showed a marked improvement.

### BANGLADESH V ENGLAND TEST SERIES

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MOST RUNS							
Player	M	I	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50
A Cook	2	4	342	173	114.00	2	0
I Bell	2	3	261	138	130.50	1	1
K Pietersen	2	4	250	99	83.33	0	2
T Iqbal	2	4	237	86	59.25	0	3
M Rahim	2	4	207	95	51.75	0	2
MOST WICKETS							
Player	M	Wkts	Best	Ave	5	10	
G Swann	2	16	5/90	25.25	2	1	
S Hasan	2	9	4/62	38.88	0	0	
T Bresnan	2	7	3/63	32.28	0	0	
A Razzak	2	7	3/132	58.42	0	0	
J Tredwell	1	6	4/82	30.16	0	0	

# Calling, better mentors

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

When we first started playing cricket, the game is more individual than collective. We join an academy or a club where we play with hundreds of other kids and compete with them. More than scoring runs and taking wickets, it is about who has the best shots, who knows all the bowling grips and who can take the most catches. Then as is the case in any group activity in Bangladesh, the measure of one's background regularly becomes part of the competition.

As we grow up, we stay in team environments more than we play in them. We eat, drink and then we play together for a few months. Then we go away, come back again and the process continues until we become redundant as a player.

During the course of a career a player could be a star or he could be a hard worker without much talent. But he has to be a team player.

He must conform to team ethics and be ready to accept the mechanism. A player has to realise he's part of the system and not the system itself. It evolves as he grows and sooner he realises this, the better.

And just like a cricketer must understand all these norms, it is imperative for the people who handle them on a day-to-day basis to realise what goes around in a cricketer's head. A young kid would first encounter a coach, then a club official and if he's good enough, several other coaches, trainers, physiotherapists

before meeting the man who matters most: the selector. He is then exposed to the unfamiliar surroundings of a national cricket team where mostly foreign coaching staff and board officials become his next to skin. If he does well, he is the apple of their eye. If he doesn't, he's an eye sore and must be eliminated.

The difference is such a thin line in Bangladesh that these handlers love to take full advantage of this. The typical handler usually thinks he's next to God to this player. The player obliges for a long time and since he's kept half-baked (read educated) by these handlers, he is confused mostly and only comes to a realisation when he becomes a flop.

Some of these handlers are from a different generation. Their minds are entrenched into the senior-junior state of mind. They cannot stand a young pup. They cannot stand his earring. They would rather sit back and enjoy criticising him and the moment his bat stops scoring, they swoop on him.

These people think that some guests are more important than others. They would make them sit separately even though that culture was been outlawed twenty years ago and with much pomp.

They know that times have changed but they're rooted to their principles! It is not true that every coach, trainer, selector, organiser, club official, manager or senior cricketer is evil but when the opportunity is so few for so many, it is easy to slip into that mindset.

The Rokibul Hasan retirement circus and the earlier incident with Mashrafe Bin Mortaza illustrates how players in this

country behaves when they are pushed to the precipice or when they develop a bloated ego.

That bloated ego of course doesn't refer to Mashrafe. The lion-heart they call him and why not. He plays on legs that have seen more battering than any fast bowler in recent memory. It is hard to imagine any human being even walking with such wounded knees, ankles, calves and foot, let alone play cricket at the highest level.

After several years of service in the toughest condition, he was treated like a rookie by his handlers. He was eased into the national setup, given enough comfort and then given the boot after one bad spell.

There was an alleged 'cold shoulder treatment' in the dressing room and after nine years in the family, Mashrafe felt out of place.

He walked out of the mess and while it was totally wrong, the blame on his part is only a fraction.

In the same breath, Rokibul wasn't pushed to the precipice. He wasn't mistreated and definitely he did not feel out of place.

He was made a scapegoat after the Ireland defeat last year but he recovered from that and made his way into the national team. And no sooner had he done that, hare-brained Rokibul decided to retire as a form of protest.

Look at it this way: he gave up his job so that he could stop wrongdoings in the circuit. But while he looks like a hero or a rebel, scratch beneath the surface and something more sinister comes up.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

### Contracts given to women cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

Twelve women cricketers have been brought under one-year contract of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday. The cricketers have been placed in Grades 1, 2 and 3, said a press release from the BCB.

Cricketers under Grade 1 will earn a monthly salary of 10,000 taka, while players in Grade 2 and 3 would get 8,000 taka and 6,000 taka per month respectively.

The following cricketers have received contracts:  
GRADE 1: Salma Khatun, Sathira Jakir Jessy, Aysha Akter, Panna Ghosh.

GRADE 2: Suktara Rahman, Champa Chakma, Farzana Houque Pinky, Lota Mondol.

GRADE 3: Rumana Ahmed, Shohela Akter, Fatema Tuz Zohora, Tithi Rani Sarkar.



PHOTO: STAR

GERMAN INSPIRATION: Bangladesh men's national hockey team coach Gerhard Peter Rach of Germany shows some tricks to a group of young women hockey players at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Country's ace swimmer Dolly Akhter (L) flashes V sign after winning the 100m breaststroke in the Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games at the Belia Ghata Swimming Pool in Kolkata yesterday.

### PCL deferred to March 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The start of this year's Port City Cricket League (PCL) has been deferred to March 28 due to visa complications.

The tournament was due to open today at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium but most of the players, organisers and broadcasters did not receive the required visa of United Arab Emirates.

"Due to visa complications, the tournament will now start on Sunday. The fixture will be bodily shifted accordingly," said Sirajuddin Mohammad Alamgir, one of the top organisers of the PCL.

A total of eight teams, one from India, are scheduled to take part in the Twenty20 tournament.

Chittagong Mohammedan are scheduled to take on Top Sports Noakhali and Dhaka Sports Club take on Bangladesh Biman in the two opening day matches.

Satellite TV channel ATN Bangla will telecast all the matches live.

### End of IPL for Martyn

CRICINFO, undated

Damien Martyn, the former Australian batsman, has headed home after being excluded from a trimmed Rajasthan Royals squad. He played only one game in the tournament after being surprisingly picked at the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction, despite being out of top-level cricket for several years.

"By the time you read this I'll be heading home," Martyn wrote on his blog. "The Rajasthan Royals squad has been trimmed to 19 players and it looks like all-rounder Shane Watson might join us next week. That's the nature of professional cricket and I knew from the start what my role in the squad was and how this might happen."

### INDO-BANGLADESH BANGLA GAMES IN KOLKATA

# Bangladeshis rule Day 1

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi athletes enjoyed a successful day yesterday, the first day of competition of the Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games in Kolkata yesterday.

Shooters grabbed six gold medals out of eight, athletes bagged four out of nine, and swimmers grabbed five out of seven on offer on the day.

Men's kabaddi team too had a great outing beating their cross-boarder counterparts 31-17 points but men's kho kho team went down by 22-9 points.

The gymnastics event was dominated by West Bengal as they took both gold and silver in two events while Bangladeshi gymnasts had to remain content with bronze. The women footballers played out a goalless draw with their west Bengal counterparts.

In the Beliaghata swimming pool, Dolly

Akhter set a new meet record taking gold in the 100m breaststroke event in 1.17:06 minutes. Mahfuza Akhter took silver in this event. Dolly, who won a bronze in the recently concluded SA Games, also won a silver in the 50m free style.

Anik Islam and Kamal Hossain also took gold in record time in their respective events of 50m freestyle and 200m breaststroke. Rubel Rana, and Shajahan Ali also won gold. Bangladeshi swimmers won four silver and a bronze from a total of seven events in the pool.

In the athletics track of the Yuba Bharati Krirangan, Nazmun Nahar Beauty, Sumita Rani, Al Amin and Asadul Islam won gold in their respective events as Bangladesh bagged 4 gold, five silver and two bronze from nine events.

Bangladeshi shooters were most impressive taking six gold, six silver and same number of bronze from eight shooting events at the Asansol shooting ground.

### Club Cup to set off a busy schedule

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani take on Police AC while another powerhouse Mohammedan SC face off with Ajax SC when the season's curtain-raising hockey tournament, the Dhaka Bank Club Cup, sets off on Sunday at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

The tournament is estimated to have a budget of around 3.4 lakh taka out of which 3 lakh will be provided by sponsors Dhaka Bank. The rest of the amount will be borne by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF), it was announced at a press conference at the conference room of BHF with federation president Khandaker Jamiluddin in the chair.

Anvir Adil Khan, secretary of BHF and Niaz Mohammad Khan, deputy managing director of Dhaka Bank were also present on the occasion. Niaz Mohammad Khan handed over the cheque of Tk 3 lakh to Jamiluddin at the end of the press conference.

Jamiluddin thanked the sponsors for sticking with hockey through thick and thin. He also claimed that after a year in the doldrums the hockey arena would be abuzz this year with tournaments starting with the Club Cup. The Club Cup will be followed by the national league, youth hockey, women's hockey, Asian Games qualifiers and tribal hockey competition.

The two-week long Club Cup will stage the final on the 12th of April which will be followed by the hockey league that starts on the 15th of April.

Current champions Abahani and runners-up Sonali Bank

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

### Kedar snaps Delhi streak

CRICINFO, undated

David Warner exploded at the top and Kedar Jadhav provided a fiery finish to charge Delhi Daredevils to a strong 183, which they defended with relative ease in the Indian Premier League yesterday. It was Delhi's first win after three losses and also marked Royal Challengers Bangalore's, who were restricted to 166, first loss at home.

The pitch was drier than the previous tracks at the Chinnaswamy Stadium and Bangalore had to do much of the damage against the new ball if they were to hunt down the strong total. However, Jacques Kallis and Manish Pandey were kept relatively quiet by tight spells from Dirk Nannes and Umesh Yadav.

Nannes hit the deck hard and moved the ball enough to upset batsmen's timing and Yadav, the fastest Indian bowler currently going around in the circuit, with speeds consistently ticking over 140 kmph, surprised the batsmen with his line, length and bounce. And it wasn't all brawn from the youngster; he kept it relatively full to Kallis but hurled a few short deliveries at Pandey to keep him on a leash.

Bangalore's second opportunity to break free came in the eight over with the introduction of Andrew McDonald and Amit Mishra. It was the make or break moment, with Bangalore needing 129 from 13 overs, but Mishra slipped in fine spell to turn the game decisively in Delhi's favour. Mishra removed Kallis with a googly and induced Robin Uthappa to edge the reverse-sweep to inflict a double-strike from which Bangalore couldn't recover. McDonald went for 18 runs in his first seven deliveries -- Uthappa producing the shot of the day with a nonchalantly-hit six over the straight boundary -- but bounced back in his second over by taking out Pandey, and when Rahul Dravid ran himself out in the same over the chase had derailed.

There was just one other moment of thrilling drama and it was provided by AB de Villiers, who jumped back at long-on to take an amazing one-handed catch, even as the ball appeared to have passed him, to get rid of Praveen Kumar.

The Delhi bowlers produced a disciplined performance, but it was their batsmen who set up the game. There were three phases of play in Delhi's innings -- an explosive start by Warner

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

### INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

# Sachin puts Mumbai atop

CRICINFO, Mumbai

Sachin Tendulkar was the rudder, Shikhar Dhawan provided propulsion. They combined for a 92-run opening partnership which charted Mumbai Indians' course for success against Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League at the Brabourne Stadium yesterday. The victory helped the hosts steam past Royal Challengers Bangalore and take top spot in the league with a game in hand.

Chennai also had several things going for them as they sought to nip their budding losing streak: MS Dhoni had returned, Matthew Hayden bludgeoned Zaheer Khan to seize the initiative, and Suresh Raina and S Badrinath forged a partnership of 142, the second best of the IPL. However, their bowling attack is perhaps the competition's weakest and Dhoni had too many

chinks to find cover for against a ruthless batting line-up. Muttiah Muralidaran apart, none of the others caused a flutter, and Mumbai cruised home with an over to spare.

Opener Dhawan hammered a 34-ball 56 to take Mumbai to 92 by the ninth over. And when Tendulkar was

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



**SuperSport3**  
Bundesliga  
VfL Bochum v Eintracht Frankfurt  
Live from 1:45am (Saturday)

**SuperSport2**  
Indian Premier League  
Rajasthan Royals v Deccan Chargers  
Live from 8:30pm  
New Zealand v Australia  
Second Test, Day 1  
Live from 3:30am (Saturday)

**ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm