

Significant numbers

STAR SPORT DESK



In the process of piling up 455 for six in their first innings of the first Test against the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, the Tigers set some encouraging benchmarks in their cricketing history.

It was only their eighth score of 400 and above in their 74th Test, and their second highest overall, and also their second score over 400 against the West Indies. There is a good chance of their current innings overtaking the current highest of 488 against Zimbabwe at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong in 2005, as there are four wickets left and two settled batsmen in Mahmudullah Riyad and Nasir Hossain at the crease.

It was also by far their best response to an opponent's first innings score, their previous best being the 408 in reply to New Zealand's first innings score of 563 at the Sher-e-Bangla in 2010.

In the seven previous matches in which Bangladesh have crossed 400, they ended on the losing side five times, winning one and drawing one. Encouragingly for the hosts that one draw was achieved against the West Indies in Gros Islet in 2004.

400+ scores by Bangladesh in Tests

Score	Inn	Result	Opponents	Venue	Date
488	1	won	Zimbabwe	Chittagong	6 Jan '05
455/6	2	---	West Indies	Dhaka	13 Nov '12
427	1	lost	Australia	Fatullah	9 Apr '06
419	1	lost	England	Dhaka	20 Mar '10
416	1	draw	West Indies	Gros Islet	28 May '04
413	4	lost	Sri Lanka	Dhaka	26 Dec '08
408	2	lost	New Zealand	Hamilton	15 Feb '10
400	1	lost	India	Dhaka	10 Nov '10

Yesterday also marked only the sixth time that Bangladesh have faced 120 (roughly four sessions of play) or more overs in a Test match. Even better for the home side their current innings of 455 for six in 126 overs has seen the highest run rate, 3.61, of those six instances.

Overs	Score	RR	Result	Opponents	Venue	Date
153.3	400	2.6	Lost	India	Dhaka	10 Nov '00
149.3	488	3.26	Won	Zim	Chittagong	6 Jan '05
135.3	416	3.07	Draw	West Indies	Gros Islet	28 May '04
126.2	413	3.26	Lost	Sri Lanka	Dhaka	26 Dec '08
126	455/6	3.61	---	West Indies	Dhaka	13 Nov '12
123.3	427	3.45	Lost	Australia	Fatullah	9 Apr '06

OTHER LANDMARKS

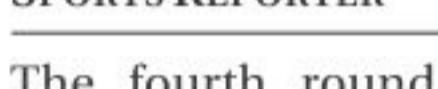
-- The 167-run partnership between Naeem Islam and Shakib Al Hasan is Bangladesh's highest fourth-wicket stand in Tests, overtaking the previous mark of 120 set by Habibul Bashar and Manjarul Islam Rana against the same team in Kingston in 2004.

-- There has been only one previous occasion when Bangladesh have managed more fifty-plus stands (6) in a single innings than the four in this game.

-- The 982 runs scored so far is the highest ever in the first two innings in a Test in Bangladesh. The previous best was 915 in the

ICC boss due tonight

SPORTS REPORTER



International Cricket Council (ICC) president Sir Alan Isaac will arrive in Dhaka tonight on a two-day visit.

"It's part of his (Alan Isaac's) routine visit to the member countries. He is also expected to watch parts of the fifth and final day's play of the first Test between Bangladesh and the West Indies," informed BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus yesterday.

Yunus also informed that Sir Alan is scheduled to make a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday, before departing from Dhaka on Sunday.

Jr tennis from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Focal Point 26th Bangladesh International Junior Tennis Championship gets underway tomorrow at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna with some 82 players including 26 girls from 19 nations taking part in the championship, an ITF Junior World Ranking Group-5 competition.

Australian Thomas Fancutt is the top seeded player in the boys' section while Ka Man Carina Ma of Hong Kong seeded top in girls' section.

The Moments

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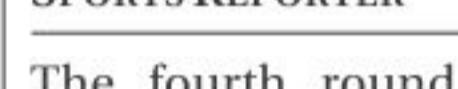
consistent line throughout the day. He bowled the right length, turned the ball and troubled the batsmen every now and then on top of being the most economical bowler. But he still had to wait for 21.2 overs for his first wicket, that of Mushfiqur Rahim's. His post-wicket celebration displayed how much the wicket meant to him.

Gayle's appeal

Apart from a six off the first ball of the Test match, Chris Gayle didn't do much in this Test match so far. He however made his presence felt when an edge off Mahmudullah clearly fell short of him in the slips.

The dashing left-hander, however, raised his hands and mockingly appealed for the wicket, an incident that received a humorous reaction from the majority in the stadium.

Mashrafe returns to NCL



SPORTS REPORTER

The fourth round of matches of the National Cricket League (NCL) is set to begin today at different venues across the country after a gap of three days. The round is expected to witness the return of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who had earlier taken a break from the longer version of the game due to fitness issues, for Khulna.

The injury-plagued pace bowler, who made a successful comeback to the shorter version of the game, had earlier stated that he was following a process that would eventually help him return to Test cricket. "I am hoping to make a start for

my team," said Mashrafe.

Khulna, who won the previous game against Chittagong by 10 wickets, will play Dhaka Metro at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium in Sylhet. Meanwhile, reigning champions Rajshahi will look to build on their winning run when they take on Chittagong at the BKSP. Hosts Barisal will square up against Sylhet at the Barisal Divisional Stadium and Dhaka will take on Rangpur in Bogra.

Currently, Khulna top the table with three wins in three games. They have 18 points and are six ahead of their closest competitors Sylhet and Dhaka Metro. Holders Rajshahi, having won their previous game are currently in fourth spot.

A Tigers day

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from 98 to 100. He bravely and patiently played eleven dot balls on 98 from fast bowler Tino Best, who tried a mixture of bouncers and fast short-of-length deliveries to unsettle Naeem, before steering the shaven-headed pacer towards the fine-leg boundary to reap his much-awaited and deserved reward.

Naeem's batting might not have the abundance of flair and charisma like that of Tamim Iqbal or Shakib Al Hasan but he has got the ability to cling to the crease for a long time, which was the reason behind his success yesterday. The most important thing is that Naeem played within his limitation as he only executed attacking shots when the ball was in his favoured zones.

One however cannot forget the effort of the ever-inspirational Shakib -- his 167-run association with Naeem, which was the highest for the fourth wicket by a Bangladesh pair after Habibul Bashar and Manjarul Islam Rana's 120-run stand against the same team in Kingston in 2004, shaped Bangladesh's fightback.

But after the lunch break the left-hander suddenly lost his cool and went for a drive against Ravi Rampaul only to find

the safe hands of substitute AB Fudadin at cover. Shakib smote ten fours and a six during his 143-ball 89.

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim joined Naeem to cause more frustration for the visitors as the pair added 76 runs for the fifth wicket before Mushfiqur offered a simple return catch to left-arm spinner Veerasammy Permaul. Naeem's partnerships with Shakib and Mushfiqur carried Bangladesh comfortably past the follow-on mark of 328 after Bangladesh resumed their innings on 164 for three.

Even the dismissals of Naeem and Mushfiqur in quick succession could not frighten the home tent as Riyad got back among the runs and Nasir also showed his temperament to raise hopes of Bangladesh taking the lead, which would be a huge achievement for Bangladesh cricket, especially as the Tigers are playing their first Test in 11 months.

True, all three batsmen threw their wickets away yesterday, but there wasn't the usual madness after the loss of wickets which had so harmed Bangladesh's Test profile previously. The day was undoubtedly a refreshing one and one that should instil the home team with a lot of confidence.

Naeem's hard work pays

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few before getting caught at mid-off, Naeem though, for the six and half hours that he spent at the crease, played an almost chanceless innings.

Naeem's game-plan, it seems, resembles the way he speaks, plain and simple. "My plan remains the same throughout. I play a very few shots. I play strokes only when the ball is within my zone, if it isn't I leave it," he said.

"Batting with Shakib also helped me. There was lesser pressure. The way Shakib and Tamim bat is always a delight to watch. I enjoy their batting but at the same time, I try to play my own game," added Naeem.

The 25-year-old batsman, who in fact belongs to a more senior batch as compared to most of the players in the current Bangladesh squad, claimed that his repeated attempts to return to the national side made him 'stronger mentally'.

"When you play bad, you naturally get dropped and you have to perform well to make a comeback. I feel it had helped

me," said Naeem.

"Before the NCL began, [chief selector] Akram bhai asked me to play at number 4 position for the team. That's when I thought I had a realistic chance to get back into the team. I have been putting in a lot of efforts since then," he added.

There are obviously a number of factors that could perhaps dilute the value of his innings: the flat wicket, the slow strike-rate or even the tired pock outside the off stump that eventually cost his wicket. He in fact acknowledged the disappointing end to his innings on his own. "It was just a bad shot," said a disgusted Naeem with a shrug of the head.

However, his innings displayed a refreshing change from the traditional aggressive batting approach followed by most of the top-order batsmen. Yesterday was perhaps one of those rare days when majority of the Bangladesh fans found it more entertaining to see a batsman 'grit' it out at the wicket, instead of playing those boundary-strokes.

Booters in Bangkok

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national football team reached Bangkok yesterday afternoon to play a FIFA friendly match against Thailand, who are 19 places above Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings.

The national team checked in at the Town Hotel in Bangkok and will have their first practice session today at the Thai-Japan Stadium ahead of Saturday's friendly match. Bangladesh have beaten Thailand twice and held them to a draw thrice in the 13 matches the two countries have played so far.

After playing the friendly against Thailand, Bangladesh will travel to Kuala Lumpur to play another FIFA friendly against Malaysia on November 20.

U-23s to play SL tourney

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh U-23 national football team will participate in the HE Mahinda Rajapaksa International Football Tournament, scheduled for December 3-9 in Nawalapitiya, Sri Lanka.

The tournament, organized by the Sri Lankan Sports Ministry, will feature four nations -- hosts Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Maldives.

Bangladesh's first game is against Pakistan on the opening day.

Daily Star start strong

SPORTS REPORTER

When the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur resounded with the roars of the Tigers of the Bangladesh national team yesterday, The Daily Star tigers roared at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium by clinching an emphatic all-wicket win over Daily Sangram in media cricket.

Fazlur Rahman channeled Tamim Iqbal as he punished the opponent bowlers by scoring an unbeaten 35. Chasing 54 in the six-a-side match, the former champions raced to 55 in only 2.1 overs without any loss.

Man-of-the-match Fazlur faced only eight balls and smashed four sixes in which three successive sixes came in the first three balls.

Amongst his spinners, Gibson gave the debutant Veerasammy Permaul a higher rating in terms of performance as compared to the lethal Sunil Narine. "He (Narine) didn't bowl as well as we expected him to bowl. But this is his third game in international cricket and it's a learning experience for him. On the other side, young Permaul bowled really well I

Sehwag roars back



PTI, Ahmedabad

Virender Sehwag cracked his first century in more than two years as India came up with a solid batting display to take control of the first cricket Test against England here on Thursday.

Sehwag, who has been woefully out of form for long, notched up his 23rd Test century with a run-a-ball 117, while Cheteshwar Pujara was just two runs short of his ton as the hosts cruised to 323 for four at close on the opening day.

Giving Pujara company was comeback man Yuvraj Singh, who was batting on 24, on a dry Sardar Patel track which has already shown signs of assisting the slow bowlers.

Off-spinner Graeme Swann did the damage for the visitors, scalping all the

four wickets that fell on the day, and pegged India back to some extent after offie offie Swann turned around the visitors' fortunes by sending back Gambhir and then Sehwag, Tendulkar and Kohli in quick succession.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA: First innings

Gambhir b Swann	45
Sehwag b Swann	117
Pujara not out	98
Tendulkar Patel b Swann	13
Kohli b Swann	19
Yuvraj not out	24
Extras: (b-1, lb-5, nb-1)	7
Total: (For 4 wkt in 90 overs)	323
To bat: Dhoni, Ashwin, Zaheer, Yadav, Ojha	
Fall of wickets: 1-134, 2-224, 3-250, 4-283	

Bowler O M R W

Anderson
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