

Magical Mominul

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Those who decided to spend Friday doing something other than watching the third day of the first Test at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, missed out on what was perhaps one of the finest batting innings played by a Bangladeshi cricketer.

It was a day which, if one were to describe subtly, Mominul Haque ruled. His maiden ton, 181, powered the hosts to 380 for 7 at stumps. The fact that New Zealand are still ahead by 89 runs and hold a slight edge in the game was somewhat relegated to the shadow of Mominul's brilliance.

The most impressive aspect of Mominul's game was the patient manner in which he continued after reaching his century; by no means did his body language reflect the fact that this was just his first hundred.

Having raced his way to 77 off 71 balls on Thursday, the left-hander effortlessly continued with his innings in the morning, almost as though he had never left the field. He began by punching Doug Bracewell for two boundaries in the 31st over. The first one was what can now be described as a Mominul special -- back past the bowler, straight down the ground. The second one was driven through long-off. His intentions of flicking the odd delivery towards the leg side however almost got him to trouble when he edged one high in the air in the same over; the ball however landed in no-man's-land.

But that was as shaky as he would

Mominul Haque is only the third Bangladeshi to score a century against New Zealand and the fourth Bangladeshi to score 150 in a Test. His 181 is also the highest score by a Bangladeshi against New Zealand and the third biggest score by a Bangladeshi in Tests.

When he reached 16 Shakib became the fourth Bangladesh batsman to reach 2000 Test runs. Skipper Mushfiquir Rahim soon became the fifth when he scored 7.

The 121-run partnership for the fifth wicket between Mushfiquir and Mominul is Bangladesh's second-highest against the Kiwis.

get. He brought up his century three overs later, with a beautiful square drive through cover point. His celebration -- a mere show of the bat to the dressing room and a hug from Marshall Ayub at the other end -- reflected his calmness of mind. He knew he had a long way to go.

The 126-run stand for the third wicket came to an end after Marshall's nerves got the better of him in the 39th over. He chased a wide deliver from Corey Anderson and got a bottom edge to the keeper, giving the latter his

first international wicket.

Shakib Al Hasan came in at number five and the pair shared a 46-run stand before Shakib gave in to Kane Williamson in the first over after lunch, top-edging a delivery to the keeper in an attempt to cut through point.

Captain Mushfiquir Rahim joined Mominul for the sixth wicket and the pair went about with a cautious approach. Mominul curbed his shots and was concentrating more on the singles. In the 66th over, he tucked one to the leg side to become only the fourth Bangladeshi cricketer to reach 150.

The batsmen decided to up the rate right before tea. Mushfiquir was especially harsh against Williamson, who he smacked for two sixes in the 78th over -- over deep mid wicket and long on.

The momentum shifted after tea with the Kiwis employing the new ball. Mominul's tendency to overbalance while flicking to leg eventually led to his wicket. He missed a straight ball to be trapped in front off Anderson in the 93rd over. Mushfiquir followed for 67, edging one to the slips off Bracewell in the next over.

The seventh-wicket pair of Shohag Gazi and Nasir Hossain shared a brisk 70-run stand, in 18.2 overs, which took Bangladesh from 301 to 371 for 7. Nasir was at his fluent best as he smacked seven boundaries and a six in his 65-ball 46. He however became Ish Sodhi's first Test victim when he skied a short ball to short-midwicket.

At stumps, Gazi remained unbeaten on 28 with Abdur Razzak for company.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Pocket-sized Bangladesh batsman Mominul Haque smiles shyly while celebrating his maiden Test century, scored yesterday against New Zealand on the third day of the first Test at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. His muted celebration was a sign of the job not yet done as he went on to score 181.

Kiwis eye lead

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



After the third day's play yesterday, New Zealand batsman Hamish Rutherford said that the Kiwis, with a lead of 89 runs, still have a chance to win the game.

Speaking to reporters at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium he said: "We are in a good position. If we can get a couple of early wickets tomorrow (Saturday) that can put us in a very good state."

New Zealand's next aim is to snap up the remaining three Bangladesh wickets for as little as possible and set an appropriate target for them to chase in the fourth innings.

"If we can get them out with runs in our favour then those will be the runs that they will be worried about scoring. We can perhaps try to get them out in maybe two and half sessions [in the fourth innings], that is the ideal target," he said.

"The pitch might break in the last innings and the ball might turn more and along with that there will be scoreboard pressure. We have always thought we could probably take 2 or 3 wicket at a collapse," he added.

Rutherford also acknowledged Mominul Haque's innings, which kept them at bay for most parts of the day. "He batted very well. Once he got to a hundred, he really knuckled down and played very well," he said.

Mumbai to host Sachin's farewell Test

PTI, Mumbai

Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium is set to host the farewell Test for Sachin Tendulkar after the legendary batsman expressed a wish to play his landmark 200th match against the West Indies next month in front of his home crowd.

"Tendulkar has requested the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to hold his farewell Test at Wankhede Stadium," Mumbai Cricket Association president Ravi Sawant told PTI.

A top BCCI official said that Mumbai is almost certain to host the historic match though it will be made official only after the BCCI's tours and fixtures committee meets.

The BCCI is also planning a grand farewell for Tendulkar, it has been learnt.

The BCCI had squeezed in the home series against the West Indies to give Tendulkar an opportunity to retire in front of his home fans.

The first Test will be played from November 6-10 and the second from November 14-18.

'Never thought of such a big knock'

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong



It's not often that one comes across a scenario in cricket where a player who has scored

his maiden ton in Test cricket ends up being disappointed. Unfortunately for Mominul Haque, who fell 19 runs short of what would have been a spectacular double century, it was one of those days.

"There's no doubt, I am really delighted to score my first century, but I am sad because I missed out on a great opportunity. And I don't know when I can get such a chance again," Mominul told reporters at the post-day press conference.

Except for the time when he was dropped on 171 in the latter half of the day, Mominul's innings was flawless. A wide-angle analysis of his innings would show that the player scored in all parts of the ground. When the bowlers over-pitched he drove them straight back, the short-of-length deliveries were regularly cut through point and the bouncers were pulled away to the boundary.

It was as though Mominul had read the bowlers and the pitch to precision and all that was required from him was to use the wide variety of shots in his arsenal. Little did the Kiwis know about the immense amount of talent that the five-feet-four-inch player possessed.

A modest Mominul however stated that he had never expected to play such a big innings.

"I never thought of playing such a big

knock. At first I thought I would just score a hundred but I never thought of scoring 150," he said.

While he did reach his hundred early in the day through four boundaries, the player who started the third day on 77 admitted that he felt a bit of pressure.

"Yesterday (Thursday) when I came to bat, I got a lot of poor deliveries, and they probably did not know much about my weaknesses. Today though, while batting, there was slight pressure on me because the hundred was approaching," said Mominul.

"So I was a bit cautious, plus they bowled in good areas today," added the 22-year-old.

After arriving at the crease on Thursday with Bangladesh struggling at 8 for 2, he raced to 77 of 71 deliveries. Yesterday however, he depended more on singles. His scoring rate dropped further after he reached 150 before he was trapped in front towards the end of the day.

"Actually after I scored 150, they took the new ball and they bowled very well with it. The first two wickets [Tamim Iqbal and Anamul Haque] fell with the new ball as well. So Mushfiquir [Rahim] bhai and I had planned to play carefully," he said.

"We planned to wait for the bad deliveries. But at that time, they were bowling at good areas and the ball was keeping low as well," he added.

Opportunities to score double hundreds do not come that often and Mominul should have seized it. But just going by the sheer talent that the batsman displayed yesterday, one has a feeling that his next opportunity may not be that far away.

Siddikur misses the cut

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman missed the cut in the CJ Invitational after ending the second round with a cumulative score of eight-over-par 152 at the Haesley Nine Bridges Golf Club on the outskirts of Seoul yesterday.

Siddikur failed to keep up his brilliant performance of the Mercuries Taiwan Masters in the ongoing CJ Invitational after carding an even-par-72 in the first round in bad weather before following it with a dismal eight-over-par 80 to miss the cut of the 750,000-dollar event.

Korean Kim Tae-Hoon was on the top of the leaderboard with eight-under-par, followed by Kiradesch Aphiboarnat of Thailand with seven-under-par and Swedish Rikard Karlbeg with six-under-par as the second round was suspended at 6pm due to bad light. The round will resume today from 7am, according to Asiatour.com.

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 469 (Fulton 73, Williamson 114, Watling 103, Boulton 52 not out; Razzak 3-147, Gazi 2-79, Shakib 2-89)				
BANGLADESH: First innings (overnight 103-2)				
Tamim c Williamson b Boulton	0			
Anamul lbw b Bracewell	3			
Ayub c Watling b Anderson	25			
Mominul lbw b Anderson	181			
Shakib c Watling b Williamson	19			
Mushfiquir c Taylor b Bracewell	67			
Nasir c McCullum b Sodhi	46			
Gazi not out	28			
Razzak not out	1			
Extras: (lb-8, w-1, nb-1)	10			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 116 overs)	380			
To bat: Robiul, Rubel.				
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-8, 3-134, 4-180, 5-301, 6-301, 7-371.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Boulton	17	7	32	1
Bracewell	18	2	71	2
Martin	21	2	83	0
Sodhi	22	2	89	1
Anderson	14	7	23	2
Williamson	24	3	74	1

Mahmudunnabi, Tumpa champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudunnabi and Sonia Akter Tumpa became champions in their respective events of the First Security Islami Bank 12th National Long Range Swimming Championships held at Buriganga River in Munshiganj yesterday.

Mahmudunnabi of BKSP clocked a time of 3:53.11 hours to cover a 12-kilometre distance which started from Fatullah Launch Ghat in Narayanganj and ended at the launch ghat in Munshiganj. Meanwhile, Sonia of Bangladesh Navy took 2:35.07 hours to cover 8 kilometres which started from Char Syedpur Purichar and ended at the launch ghat in Munshiganj.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangladesh Under-19 booters train at the Arbil 2nd Stadium in Iraq yesterday on the eve of their AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers Group C match against Pakistan.

U-19s take on Pakistan today

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Under-19 football team are looking forward to wrapping up the qualifying round of the AFC U-19 Championship with a victory when they face winless Pakistan in their final group match at the F Hariri Stadium in Iraq today.

Despite the moral-shattering 6-0 defeat to Iraq, the boys never gave up in the second match against Kuwait; even after being reduced to ten men. They grew in confidence to overcome the early dismissal with a 1-0 win. In the process they kept their hopes of playing the 16-team final round alive as one of the six best runners-up from nine qualifying groups.

An outright victory in today's match against Pakistan will ensure that Bangladesh finish second in Group C but they will have to wait for the results of the remaining seven groups, which all are supposed to be completed today at different venues.

Dutch coach Rene Koster praised the mentality, maturity, team spirit and fighting attitude the boys showed in the match against Kuwait and hoped to continue their show against Pakistan.

"This is the attitude we want to see in every Bangladesh team. They displayed their determination, ability and ball possession capacity, which we want them to do in every match," Rene was quoted as saying in a BFF media release.

The little colossus

AGENCIES, Undated



Tributes poured in for Sachin Tendulkar in the English and Australian media a day after the Indian great announced retirement from Test cricket next month.

The English media described him as a "superhero" and compared him with the likes of football legend Pele and tennis superstar Roger Federer in greatness in his field.

In his column for the 'The Times', former England captain Mike Atherton described Tendulkar as the "superhero for our times" and wrote about the adulation he received from the fans in cricket-mad India.

Describing Tendulkar as "superhuman" for having almost all the cricketing records in his name, tabloid 'Mirror' compared him to legends of other sports in greatness.

"In cricket, only Sir Don Bradman's average of 99.94 or Brian Lara breaking the world record twice -- which was like man walking on the moon and then landing on Mars 10 years later -- come close to Tendulkar's cen-

tury of international hundreds and double century of Test caps for superhuman endurance," the newspapers said.

"And in other sports, perhaps Pele's 1,281 career goals, Sir Steve Redgrave's five Olympic gold medals in consecutive Games or Roger Federer's 17 Grand Slam titles compare with the Little Master for greatness," it said.

"Never has a cricketer been as venerated, if not actually worshipped, by his own people."

A write-up in the 'Guardian' newspaper said considering the burden of expectation of one billion people he had to carry, Tendulkar's achievements dwarf those of all his contemporaries.

"Tendulkar has around a billion of them (fans) ... shows the size of the burden he has laboured under. No one, in any sport, has performed so consistently, under such pressure, over such a long period of time. By that measure, the margin between Tendulkar and the rest is as wide as the gap between Bradman's batting average and the next best," the newspapers said.

Calling Tendulkar a global superstar, a 'SkySports' writer said what sets Tendulkar apart from the other greats of his era was his

record all over the globe.

"He averaged over 40 in every nation, thriving against the all-conquering Australian team, posting 11 centuries and 16 fifties in 39 matches against the Baggy Greens.

"His retirement has long been on the cards since that magical moment and with all nations conquered, 100 international hundreds and 200 Test matches under his belt, he and bowling attacks across the globe can finally sleep easy."

A report in 'The Independent' quoted England pace spearhead James Anderson as expressing "awe" for Tendulkar.

"He's one of the best I have ever bowled at, definitely. You can be standing at mid-on watching him bat and you're in awe, I know you shouldn't be when you're on the field, but you could tell he was very, very special at what he did," Anderson said.

"Any time you get someone who is classed as one of the greats -- like Ponting or Lara -- it does feel a little bit more special," he added. "Every time I got him out I got that feeling."

In Australia, with the headline 'Tendulkar departs as a deity of cricket', 'Sydney Morning

Herald' said that the Indian batsman combined brilliance with incredible longevity and none of his contemporaries commanded god-like status like he did.

"A batting genius who has played the game for almost a quarter of a century, he combined brilliance with incredible longevity. He outlasted fellow greats such as West Indies champion Brian Lara, Australian legend Ricky Ponting and Indian teammate Rahul Dravid, and inspired a new generation of players who wanted to be like him," the newspapers said.

"The others were all champions, and South Africa's relentless all-rounder Jacques Kallis is still going, but none of his contemporaries commanded Tendulkar's god-like status, which coincided with India's rise as a cricket superpower," it said.

"Daily Telegraph" said it's now accepted by the cricketing world that Tendulkar and Bradman are the greatest batsmen in the history of the game.

"The cricketing cognoscenti are largely united when it comes to naming history's two greatest batsmen: Sir Donald Bradman and Sachin Tendulkar," the newspaper said.