

SPORT



The weather yesterday lifted long enough for a whole day's play on the third day of the second Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand but the gloom was there for the Tigers. Here the Bangladesh players are seen leaving the field after stumps were drawn for the day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Another chance slipping away

BISHWAJIT ROY



It would be premature to predict the result of a Test match after the third day but the outcome of yesterday's rain-free third day's play of the second and final Test at Mirpur has diminished Bangladesh's chances of realising the pre-match dream of winning a Test match against a higher-ranked side.

Instead, the conscientious batting effort from New Zealand, particularly the tail-enders' valiant efforts, made it clear that the Tigers will have to come out with their best to save the match as well as the series.

Shakib Al Hasan had his tenth five-for as the left-arm spinner got two more wickets on the day but his wonderful success was overshadowed by the Kiwis' number six, seven and tenth batsmen. Corey Anderson hit his maiden hundred in his second appearance through a planned but aggressive batting display while BJ Watling carried on from his first Test hundred with an unbeaten 59 and, supported by the lucky Ish Sodhi who was not out on 55, guided the tourists to stumps with a healthy lead of 137 and two wickets in hand.

At the end Bangladesh must regret their poor batting in the first innings, especially with the New Zealand lower order demonstrating the meaning of purposeful batting, the lack of which cost Bangladesh a valuable opportunity.

But the Tigers had a brilliant start once the day's play commenced twenty minutes after scheduled time due to light rain, when Ross

Taylor edged Shakib to Nasir Hossain at first slip in the fourth. Taylor walked back soon after completing his half-century in his 50th Test match and his departure seemed to give the Tigers control of the match as New Zealand were reduced to 127 for four from the overnight score of 107 for three with the spinners looking to get some assistance from the third-day pitch.

Kane Williamson and Anderson fought the visitors back brilliantly with calculated batting, especially against the spin. Shakib took the maximum load since his recovery from injury and created problems for the duo, but their 140-run fifth-wicket stand put their team in a strong position. Tamim's well-judged catch sent back Williamson for 62 and debutant pacer Al Amin Hossain brought the home team back with his maiden wicket, that of Anderson, who hit 116 off 173 balls with 13 fours and two sixes.

But New Zealand went from 287 for six to end the day on 419-8 thanks to Watling and Sodhi, who must thank Shohag Gazi, who dropped an easy return catch, and Tamim Iqbal who also missed a chance at long off. Their uneaten 84-run ninth-wicket stand once again exposed the Bangladesh bowling attack's inability to wrap up the tail.

Anything can happen in cricket but it would be overly optimistic to expect a Bangladesh win from this position.

Bangladesh have only crossed the 400 mark once and 300 ten times in the second innings. As things stand, 400 is the minimum they would require both in terms of runs and the time they have to spend at the crease, so the odds are firmly stacked against the Tigers.

BD-NZ SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: First innings 282 all out (Tamim 95, Ayub 41, Mominul 47, Shakib 20, Mushfiqur 18, Nasir 19; Wagner 5-64, Sodhi 3-59)					
NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 107-3)					
Fulton lbw b Shakib	14				
Rutherford c Mominul b Shakib	13				
Williamson c Tamim b Razzak	62				
Taylor c Nasir b Shakib	53				
McCullum c Rubel b Shakib	11				
Anderson c Gazi b Al-Amin	116				
Watling not out	59				
Bracewell c Mushfiqur b Shakib	17				
Wagner c Marshall b Nasir	8				
Sodhi not out	55				
Extras: (b-4, lb-4, wb-2, nb-1)	11				
Total: (For 8 wickets in 133 overs)	419				
To bat: Boult					
Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-32, 3-101, 4-127, 5-267, 6-287, 7-318, 8-335.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Al-Amin	16	3	58	1	
Gazi	34	8	77	0	
Shakib	40	13	97	5	
Razzak	19	1	84	1	
Rubel	18	1	81	0	
Nasir	3	1	7	1	
Mominul	3	0	7	0	

BD Army hold Indians

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army played out a 1-1 draw with visiting Indian Army in a friendly football match at the Army Stadium in Banani yesterday.

This was the first time the defence forces of the two neighbouring countries took part in such a friendly match, which was an entertaining 60-minute affair, attended by a large audience which included BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, members of Swadhin Bangla Football Team, army officials and students of different schools of the capital.

Tareq Aziz gave the home side the lead eight minutes into the second half before Samtu Subba restored parity four minutes later.

SHAKIB'S return

NAIMUL KARIM



Shakib Al Hasan's five-wicket haul yesterday -- the tenth of his career -- came after a gap of 22 months; the longest between five-fors of his career so far. The last time he picked up five wickets in an innings was against Pakistan at Mirpur in December 2011.

The dip was not down to a loss of form, but because of injury troubles that surfaced in August 2012 as a result of the substantial bowling burden that he undertook in the first four years of his career. In November last year during the series against the West Indies, he complained of pain in his right shin and was diagnosed with exertional compartmental syndrome, which led to him undergoing a surgery in February this year.

It was a lingering concern coming into this series that Shakib's effectiveness has been diminished as a bowler, because in the aftermath of his surgery and recovery the Bangladesh Cricket Board sports physician said that he would have to be used 'carefully' and that he would not be able to take on the workload of his pre-injury days.

Prior to the injury, the left-hander took five-wicket hauls in almost every series for Bangladesh since 2008. It began in October 2008 with Shakib's career-best figures of 7 for 36 against New Zealand in Chittagong. In the next two months, Shakib took three five-wicket hauls: two against South Africa in November and one against Sri Lanka in December.

On the tour of West Indies in July 2009, Shakib led the side with an all-round performance which included a five-for in the second Test. On the next six tours, he picked up four five-wicket hauls and took a total of 48 wickets -- thrice as much as next-best Shahadat Hossain's 15.

Bangladesh's over-dependency on him however led to the beginning of his injury troubles in August 2012. Subsequently he underwent surgery on February 26 and missed out on the tour of Sri Lanka. He returned for the tour of Zimbabwe in April, but did not make much of an impact with the ball.

The New Zealand series is an important one for the all-rounder. The task was made more difficult when he fractured his thumb during the Caribbean Premier League last month. There was talk about how the team management wanted to gradually increase the load on Shakib, who stated that he did not know the number of overs that his body would let him bowl in a match.

His tenth five-wicket haul in itself may not have a great significance; he probably still has a long way to go. But his bowling for most parts of this innings displayed a venom that was often seen in his bowling before he met with his injury.

Win still an option for Nasir!

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With two days remaining and the Kiwis ahead by 137 runs, many expect the Tigers to play to save the Test. For Nasir Hossain, though, a win is still a plausible option.

"We have a chance to save or win this game. We have to bowl them out first, keep them within a 160-run lead. If we can then score around 300 to 350 in the second innings, and then create pressure for them, we have a chance to win the Test match. If we can bat long, we can force a draw," he said after the day.

Nasir also said that they want to avoid the mistakes they made in the first innings. "We have to bat well in the second innings and not repeat the mistakes. We just could not take advantage of a good batting wicket. Some of our batsmen's shot selections were wrong," he said.

He further stated that the wicket had not behaved to Bangladesh's liking. "The ball turns when it is new, otherwise I don't think the spinners are getting any help. Because there hasn't been much sunlight, the wicket is still good and fresh. A bit of sun would have helped deteriorate it a bit more," he said.

"They have only one spinner so if the sun does come out, we will be in an advantageous position," he added.

Corey shows the way

SPORTS REPORTER



When senior New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor departed on the third morning

yesterday, the second Test was still wide open, with the visitors still 155 runs behind Bangladesh's first innings with six wickets in hand. First Test centurion Kane Williamson was still at the crease, but Bangladesh sensed an opening because the man coming in, Corey Anderson, was playing only his second Test and was known more as a hard-hitting all-rounder who had hit only two centuries in six years of first-class cricket.

But when he departed as the sixth wicket to fall, he had notched his maiden Test century and New Zealand were five runs ahead. "It is obviously a good feeling to score a hundred for your country. It took me a lot longer in first-class cricket, but I guess I have learned my trade," said Anderson after the day's play.

He shared in a 140-run stand with Northern Districts teammate Williamson, who helped the centurion rein in the attacking instincts. "I

am someone who gets carried away when I am hitting the ball. He knows me well enough to mention a couple of things, and rein me back in," revealed Anderson.

In doing so, the newcomer displayed qualities that Bangladesh may yet sorely regret not embodying in their first innings. Coming in to bat at a difficult time, Anderson took his time to get going. "They bowled well, so Kane had to adjust and soak up the pressure. I wasn't feeling that I got stuck. Runs will come after a little while. Once you started playing a few shots, the field started moving around. It felt like we were going on top as the day went on. It's good to have a position where we have ended up."

Anderson thought that because of the rain over the first two days the pitch had not broken up and was still playing well, evidenced by the unbeaten 84-run ninth-wicket partnership between BJ Watling and Ish Sodhi that has effectively shut Bangladesh out of the match.

"It [the wicket] felt a little bit sticky but it's still a good one. We have our work cut out with the ball, we have to stick to our plans," Anderson said.



PHOTO: STAR

New Zealand's Corey Anderson raises his arms after reaching his century yesterday.

Mashrafe in for first 2 ODIs

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has returned to Bangladesh's 15-man one-day international squad for the first two ODIs against New Zealand. Mashrafe last played against the West Indies last year.

Apart from Mashrafe, Naeem Islam, Anamul Haque and Shafiu Islam also returned.

The ODI series will be especially important for Mashrafe who has been working hard to return to international cricket. The last time New Zealand toured Bangladesh in 2010, they lost the series 4-0.

Bangladesh will play three ODIs against New Zealand. The first and second ODIs will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on October 29 and 31. The last ODI will take place at Fatullah on November 3.

SQUAD

Mushfiqur Rahim (captain), Mahmudullah (vice-captain), Anamul Haque, Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan, Nasir Hossain, Abdur Razzak, Shohag Gazi, Rubel Hossain, Muminul Hoque, Naeem Islam, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shafiu Islam, Ziaur Rahman, Shamsur Rahman.

CIMB Classic starts today

ASIAN TOUR.COM

Siddikur Rahman believes Asian players will hold no fear when they take on the stars from the PGA TOUR at the 7-million-dollar CIMB Classic which starts today.

Siddikur, who is making his fourth straight appearance at the CIMB Classic, will be among the elite 78-man field including world number three Phil Mickelson, four-time Major winner Ernie Els, 2012 Masters Tournament winner Bubba Watson and defending champion Nick Watney at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club.

"If I can do something exceptional, it will be good for me. There's nothing to be afraid of this week, nothing to be scared of. I'll just go for it," said Siddikur.

MSC players' no to camp

SPORTS REPORTER



While some of the title-contenders have started their pre-season training camp long ago, one powerhouse, namely Mohammedan SC is still struggling to start their camp due to a row over non-payment of advance money to players.

Players' rebellion has been a common phenomenon for the Motijheel outfit in the last few seasons due to unpaid wages during the season, but this time it has struck the club even before the start of season, which is scheduled to get underway from November 3 through the Federation Cup.

The players, who are supposed to play for the Black and Whites this season, have been asked to join the camp but top players denied joining and asked for clearance of

advance payment. Interestingly, the club cannot even pressurise the players as they have not completed the players' transfer formalities yet, with only seven days left to close of the transfer window.

"We have asked the club management to start the camp after completing the players' transfer but we have been training individually," said a national player yesterday seeking anonymity, who also added that the club is expected to sit for a meeting on Thursday to resolve the crisis.

Mohammedan manager Amirul Islam Babu also admitted that they could not complete the players' registration formalities due to constraint of fund.

The row over non-payment of advance has already cost Mohammedan as few of their top players have been poached by their rival clubs. Mohammedan has lodged complaints to the football's governing body on this issue, but are yet to get any decision.

Tahir puts SA on top

AFF, Dubai



Leg-spinner Imran Tahir came to haunt the country of his birth, Pakistan, by claiming a maiden five-wicket haul to give South Africa early control of the must-win second Test on Wednesday.

The 34-year old finished with a career best 5-32 while fit-again paceman Dale Steyn took 3-38 to bundle Pakistan out for 99 all out in 36.4 overs at Dubai Stadium before South Africa finished the day on 128-3.

They lead by 29 runs and enjoyed a good day in their bids to level the two-Test series after losing the first game by seven wickets in Abu Dhabi last week.

Graeme Smith was unbeaten on 67 and nightwatchman Steyn was three not out.

In the morning session Pakistan's top-order batsmen were so dismal that number nine Zulfiqar Babar top-scored with 25 not out and opener Shan Masood made 21. It was the 16th time that Pakistan were bowled out for below 100 in a Test innings.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: First innings					
Manzoor c Du Plessis b Steyn	0				
Masood b Tahir	21				
Azhar lbw b Morkel	19				
Younis c de Villiers b Steyn	10				
Misbah lbw b Tahir	2				
Shafiq b Tahir	10				
Akmal b Tahir	0				
Ajmal run out	0				
Zulfiqar not out	25				
Irfan b Tahir	0				
Junaid b Steyn	4				
Extras: (b-5, lb-3)	8				
Total: (All out in 36.4 overs)	99				
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-38, 3-52, 4-60, 5-60, 6-60, 7-64, 8-76, 9-76.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Steyn	13.4	2	38	3	
Philander	5	2	9	0	
Morkel	5	1	12	1	
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings					
Petersen lbw b Babar	26				
Smith not out	67				
Elgar c Azhar b Ajmal	23				
Kallis lbw b Ajmal	7				
Steyn not out	3				
Extras: (b-1, w-1)	2				
Total: (for three wickets: 49 overs)	128				
To bat: De Villiers, Duminy, Du Plessis, Philander, Morkel, Tahir.					
Fall of wickets: 1-37, 2-91, 3-119.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Irfan	9	0	29	0	
Junaid	12	2	34	0	
Ajmal	18.4	4	42	2	
Babar	7.2	2	7	1	
Azhar	2	0	15	0	
Toss: Pakistan					
Umpires: Rod Tucker and Ian Gould.					