

Tigers plan next step

SPORTS REPORTER

With the end of New Zealand's tour, the Tigers have completed another international assignment with their reputation as a tough team in home conditions enhanced. There were a number of encouraging signs in the performance of Mushfiquir Rahim's men in the drawn Test series, the 3-0 whitewash in the ODI series and the defeat in the one-off T20 International.

Eyes will now turn to how the Tigers handle their next assignment at home against Sri Lanka in January next year after an outstanding show against the Kiwis. Sri Lanka is scheduled to arrive in the capital on January 24 to play two Tests, three ODIs and a lone T20 International. There have however been discussions by the concerned authorities of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to see whether a home series with one-day and T20 matches can be arranged before the Sri Lanka series. The BCB may invite Zimbabwe if they feel that another home series before the January assignment would help the players.

The board also has a plan to arrange at least two rounds of the longer-version Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) before the home series against Sri Lanka, although the BCL was originally scheduled for May-June next year.

The national players have already returned to domestic competition as they started playing the ongoing Dhaka Premier League although national physio Vibhav Singh has recommended some rest, especially for those who played the whole series against New Zealand.

"I believe that few of the national players who played the whole series -- like Abdur Razzak (who played the ninth-round match yesterday) -- should have been given a rest from the League," Singh told The Daily Star last night.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has slowly been recovering from the illness but he will need three to four weeks to get back to full fitness while Tamim Iqbal will be out of action for 2-4 weeks with an abdominal strain.

National vice-captain Mahmudullah Riyad will also be out for five days due to back pain while Rubel Hossain, who missed the T20I due to fever, will need rest for five more days. There is however bad news for pacer Shafiqul Islam, who sustained an ankle injury during a practice session just before the ODI series to be ruled out from the series, as he will have to be out of action for ten weeks.

Meanwhile, head coach Shane Jurgensen left for Australia on Thursday night for 11 days' break. Upon his return he will chalk out a training programme for the players.



Debuting India batsman Rohit Sharma raises his arms after his century on the second day of the first Test against the West Indies at Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Rohit hits ton on debut

AGENCIES, Kolkata



Rohit Sharma stamped his class by hitting a sparkling century on debut as India recovered from a top-order collapse to take a firm grip of the first Test against the West Indies with a 120-run first-innings lead here on Thursday.

Sharma stole the thunder with his unbeaten 127 as the hosts, who were precariously placed at 83 for five at one stage, reached a comfortable 354 for six at close on an eventful second day's play.

Ravi Ashwin was the other batting hero of the day as he remained unbeaten on 92 as he combined with Sharma to pull India out of trouble. Sharma became the 14th

Indian to score a century on debut.

With retiring legend Sachin Tendulkar being given out in a contentious manner in his penultimate match, the in-form Sharma along with Ashwin added 198 runs for the seventh wicket to almost bat the visiting side out of the match on a tricky Eden Gardens strip.

Handed the Test cap by Tendulkar after his player-of-the-series performance in the recently-concluded ODI series against Australia, Sharma struck 16 fours and one six while facing 228 balls.

The 26-year-old Mumbai right-hander was playing in his maiden Test three years and nine months after playing his first ODI.

Ashwin played the perfect foil as the off-spinner made invaluable runs in their match-turning partnership

that helped India get past the West Indies first innings score of 234.

On a pitch that has started to crumble, the match is tilted in favour of India, who will be looking to seal the issue without needing to play on the final day.

For the elegant Mumbai batsman, who was assured of a Test debut on the morning of February 6, 2010 against South Africa before a freak collision with Wriddhiman Saha dashed his hopes, it was perseverance that paid off.

Having come after the unlucky dismissal of Tendulkar, Sharma showed amazing resilience.

As wickets started to tumble with Shane Shillingford (4 for 130) reducing the hosts to 83 for 5 in the first session, it was left to Sharma and Ashwin to do the recovery act.

SCOREBOARD				
WEST INDIES: First innings 234 (Gayle 18, Powell 28, Bravo 23, Samuels 65, Chanderpaul 36; Shami 4-71, Ashwin 2-52)				
INDIA: First innings (overnight 37-0)				
Dhawan b Shillingford	23			
Vijay st Ramdin b Shillingford	26			
Pujara c Ramdin b Cottrell	17			
Tendulkar lbw b Shillingford	10			
Kohli c Powell b Shillingford	3			
Sharma not out	127			
Dhoni c Ramdin b Best	42			
Ashwin not out	92			
Extras: (b-4, lb-8, w-1, nb-1)	14			
Total: (For 6 wickets in 102 overs)	354			
To bat: Kumar, Shami, Ojha				
Fall of wickets: 1-42, 2-57, 3-79, 4-82, 5-83, 6-156				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Best	14	0	53	1
Cottrell	15	3	53	1
Shillingford	41	8	130	4
Permaul	20	1	54	0
Sammy	12	1	52	0

Abahani stave off relegation

KHELAGHOR: 190 all out in 46.5 overs (Vandort 40, Sunny 4-22)
SHEIKH JAMAL: 194-4 in 35.2 overs (Munaweera 88, Mushfiquir 31)
Result: Sheikh Jamal won by six wickets.
GAZI TANK: 204 all out in 49.5 overs (Imrul

83)
KALABAGAN CA: 207-1 in 41.1 overs (Majid 102 not out)
Result: Kalabagan CA won by nine wickets.
VICTORIA: 134 all out in 40.1 overs (Nasir 35, Dawson 3-24, Enamul 3-18)

PRIME BANK: 138-3 in 26.1 overs (Saikat 81)
Result: Prime Bank won by seven wickets.
ABAHANI: 227 all out in 49.3 overs (Gregory Smith 62, Sohrwardi Shuvo 4-41)
BROTHERS: 200 all out in 46.1 overs (Samaraweera 28, Shamsul Alam Babu 5-37)

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh captain Mushfiquir Rahim chose not to take any rest after a remarkable home series against New Zealand as he led his side Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club back to the winning track in the Dhaka Premier League with a six-wicket victory against Khelaghor SKS at BKSP yesterday. The big story of the day however was that popular outfit Abahani avoided a relegation scare by winning their consecutive match.

The inspirational skipper might not

have contributed heavily as he scored only 31 runs but his team posted an easy win thanks to left-arm spinner Elias Sunny and Sri Lankan Dilshan Munaweera. Sunny took four wickets to dismiss Khelaghor for 190 and then Munaweera smote six fours and five sixes during an 81-ball 88 that saw Sheikh Jamal reach the target with six wicket in hand. It was Jamal's fifth win in nine matches.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, opener Abdul Majid hit an unbeaten 102 as Kalabagan Cricket Academy upset leaders Gazi Tank by nine wickets. Out-of-favour Imrul Kayes made 83 as Gazi posted 204 runs but Majid toyed with the

Gazi bowlers, smashing 12 fours and two sixes during his blazing hundred to make it a one-sided affair.

Shamsul Alam Babu hogged the spotlight at BKSP as the left-arm spinner spun Abahani to a 27-run victory against Brothers Union. Babu claimed five wickets for 37 runs to ensure Abahani's third victory in nine games as well as stamp out the threat of relegation. Brothers remained on nine points. It marks a scarcely believable turnaround as Abahani had lost six matches on the trot, before winning three on the bounce to avoid humiliation.

In a low-scoring match at Mirpur, Prime Bank won by 7 wickets against Victoria.

CNN-IBN, Kolkata



It was heartbreak for Eden Gardens as farewell man Sachin Tendulkar, expected to script a memorable innings in his swansong match on the iconic ground, got out cheaply to a contentious decision Thursday on Day Two of the India-West Indies Test match Thursday.

A pindrop silence descended on the Eden as umpire Nigel Llong raised his finger while the Windies players jumped in joy. The crowd was cheering every move of the cricketing genius since he came out to bat. The entire stadium rose as Tendulkar made the long walk back to the pavilion, but the ovation was tinged with sadness.

Facing offie Shane Shillingford,

Tendulkar tried to defend from his crease and the ball straightened past the outside edge and hit the back leg quite high. Tendulkar, who has been the victim of dubious decisions on a number of occasions earlier, went out silently but anguish and pain were writ large on his face.

Heading towards the dressing room, Tendulkar made his displeasure over the decision known when he gestured to the team video analyst about the height of the ball. Tendulkar hit two crisp boundaries in his short 41-minute stint at the crease scoring 10 runs facing 24 balls. Rarely does the fall of an Indian wicket trigger unending roars from the home crowd. But the iconic stadium witnessed loud cheers when opener Murali Vijay fell in the morning, for the next man in was none other than the batting maestro himself.

ICC WORLD T20S

Tickets go on sale Nov 17

SPORTS REPORTER

The tickets for next year's ICC World Twenty20 will now go on sale from November 17 instead of November 10.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) in a statement yesterday said the process has been delayed by a week to further analyse and streamline the technicalities in order to ensure more convenience and access to tickets for local and overseas fans.

Tickets will be available on ICC's website and at nearly 100 official ticket sales counters / booths located in MoneyGram outlets in designated branches of National Credit and Commerce Bank and Agrani Bank.

The ICC World Twenty20 will be staged from March 16 to April 6 in Bangladesh.

Entry to the women's group-stage matches in Sylhet will be open to the public at no charge. Entry to the women's semifinals and final, which will be played before the men's corresponding matches in Dhaka, will be on the same match ticket as the men's.

MSC back on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Holdings Mohammedan SC returned at the top of the points table of the Rupahali Sarees Premier Division Chess League at the close of the sixth-round game at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hallroom yesterday.

Mohammedan defeated Faith Chess Club 4-0 to earn the maximum of 10 match points from five games, two points ahead of Bangladesh Navy Chess Team and Leonine Chess Club.

Leonine defeated Titas Club 2.5-1.5 to earn eight points from six games while Navy enjoyed a rest day having eight points from five games.

In the day's other games, Gopalganj Chess Club beat Access Group Chess Club 3-1 and Pritam-Prism Chess Club beat Sreejan Chess Club 2.5-1.5.

NADAL number one again

AFP, London



Rafael Nadal guaranteed he will finish 2013 on top of the world rankings with a 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (8/6) victory over Stanislas Wawrinka at the ATP World Tour Finals on Wednesday.

Nadal arrived for the prestigious season-ending event knowing two Group A victories at London's O2 Arena would be enough to ensure he couldn't be caught by second-placed Novak Djokovic in the race for the number one ranking.

The Spaniard achieved that aim in typically dominant fashion, beating Swiss seventh seed Wawrinka 24 hours after opening the tournament with a straight-sets win over David Ferrer.

It is the third time Nadal has finished a calendar year in pole position in the rankings -- and the first since 2010 -- and he celebrated with a jubilant jig

around the court.

He is the first player to end a year at number one three years after his last season-ending top spot.

The 27-year-old's straight-sets victory over Wawrinka also booked his place in the semifinals of the Tour Finals, with one group match against Tomas Berdych still to come.

Nadal's return to the top is a remarkable achievement given he only came back in February after seven months out with severe knee tendonitis that threatened to cut short his career.

"I had a lot of emotions today, it's the perfect scenario to be the year-end number one," Nadal said.

"After missing this tournament last year, it's been an unbelievable comeback.

"Being number one at the end of the season is something really difficult as there are some unbelievable competitors out there.

"But without my team behind me, it

would be hard to think about achieving this, especially after what happened last year.

"Stan played really great. He had chances at the end and I was a bit lucky, but I'm happy to be through to the semifinals in the last tournament of the year."

Since his return from injury, Nadal has won the French and US Open titles, as well as eight other tournaments, and a maiden triumph at the Tour Finals would be a fitting end to such a memorable campaign.

Asked where his rise back to the top rated among his numerous epic feats, the 13-time Grand Slam champion said: "It's one of the best things that I did in my career.

"To come back to the number one after three seasons, that's very difficult in our sport, and especially after a very serious injury.

"It's an emotional thing for me, for sure."

