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Shohag Gazi

Top of the World

During the first Test match between Bangladesh and New Zealand (October 9-13), 22-year old Shohag Gazi achieved the cricket equivalent of the moon landing by slamming an unbeaten 101 and bagging 8 wickets including a hat-trick. No human in the 136-year-old history of the sport had done it before. For a man who learned to play cricket with a tennis ball, it was a long journey from his humble home in Patuakhali. He made his first-class debut in the 2009-10 season, starting off with a five-wicket haul against Chittagong Division. The following season he was the highest wicket taker in the National Cricket League, taking 41 wickets. In 2012, against West Indies, he became the first off spinner to bowl the first over of a Test match on debut, ripping through the batting order and claiming 9 wickets. By his third Test against Sri Lanka, Gazi was the lead bowler of the Bangladesh team. Despite all the adulation and fame he has received from the sport, he remains impeccably mild mannered and self-effacing. His success is emblematic of Bangladesh's growing aspirations at the regional and global stage. He embodies what Bangladesh can become: the world's best at something. Gazi has transcended the heritage of a society divided and handicapped by politics and ideology at a time when people of this country desperately needed something to believe in.