

# SPORT

## THE YEAR OF SPORTS CELEBRATING 2014

## LIONS IN TIGERS' DEN



## MOMENTS

### THE 'SILVA' LINING

Halfway through the innings yesterday it seemed as though the Bangladeshi bowlers just did not want to send Kaushal Silva back to the pavilion. Silva was dropped thrice and was once caught behind off a no-ball. Mushfiqur Rahim dropped him twice, once off Al-Amin Hossain (when Silva was on 39) and the second time off Shakib Al Hasan (on 129). Debutant Shamsur Rahman failed to hold on to an edge off the batsman at gully when Silva was on 42. But of all the opportunities lost, the catch off a no-ball when Silva was on 40 -- which was denied as Al-Amin's back foot had broken the stumps at the other end -- was perhaps the most demoralising moment of the day.

### THE HESITANT HUNDRED

Silva's highest score before this match was 95. He made that against Pakistan in the last series after in a pain-staking 221-ball effort. When he entered the 90s for the second time yesterday, his nerves had got the better of him and it seemed as though it would produce a similar result. He was stuck on 98 for four overs. It was a period which saw him get beaten numerous times and almost get himself run-out. He however, weathered the storm and eventually pulled his way to his first century in the 70 over.

### RUBEL'S WIDE AND NASIR'S KICK

There were two instances that perhaps best summed up the frustrating day that the hosts had on the field. The toll on Rubel Hossain was evident after he had the worst possible start with the new ball -- bowling a wide down the leg side which didn't even land on the pitch!

The second was when Nasir Hossain grasped an edge off Kumar Sangakkara's bat inches from the ground after fumbling it twice in the air. Reacting with a mixture of both relief and irritation, Nasir kicked the ball away.

### BALL OF THE DAY

Shakib Al Hasan's high-pedigree bowling was perhaps the only bright spot on an otherwise horrendous day for Bangladesh. The delivery that bowled Dinesh Chandimal -- pitching on a good length on middle stump and drawing the batsman forward, then spinning past the bat to hit the top of off -- was something special.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

After his team dropped several chances on a day when they were subjected to a leather hunt by Sri Lanka's batsmen, Bangladesh all-rounder Nasir Hossain kicks the ball away in frustration after finally catching Kumar Sangakkara on the second day of the first Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.



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# Boldness in Dubai, Al Amin rues missed chances

NAIMUL KARIM

At the end of the day yesterday Bangladesh's players probably found themselves muttering those evergreen 'if only' and 'things could have been different' phrases that have long been a part of their bad days.

Bangladesh had given away at least five opportunities on the field yesterday, including four dropped chances. Three of those took place in the morning session and the game, in those age-old words, 'could' have indeed taken a different turn had those chances been taken.

There will be far more testing times ahead for the hosts as the pitch has been slowing down and exhibited quite a bit of turn yesterday.

"Never before was I called for a no-ball because of breaking the stumps. Not in any form of cricket; I felt unlucky. It felt a little bad that I was not getting the wickets despite having bowled well," said Al-Amin at the post-match press conference.

"But despite that I didn't get bogged down and tried to keep myself calm. I told myself that more opportunities will come," he added.

His constant effort eventually led to him getting the prized scalp of Kumar Sangakkara.

"Despite the early misses, when I got Sangakkara's wicket I felt really good because generally when he hits form he plays for a long time, so it felt good to stop him," said the 24-year-old with a wry smile.

But even that wicket had its share of drama with Nasir Hossain fumbling the catch twice at first slip before grasping it inches from the ground.

"Initially thought that that was dropped too! But after I saw the catch, I thought finally something was going my way," the

bowler recalled.

While the Bangladeshis made a hash of their chances, Kaushal Silva utilised the opportunity to amble through to his first Test century.

"Getting the century was really good for me. I had some luck and I managed to capitalise on that," said Silva. The player who is on a comeback trail stated how important reaching the three-figure mark was for him.

"After being dropped (after playing three matches in 2011) I was determined to somehow play for Sri Lanka again. Not only that, I had a hunger to score runs and show who I am -- my talents and my ability," said Silva.

The batsman felt that the wicket would only get more difficult to bat on in the coming days.

"The ball was coming on to the bat well yesterday (Monday). But it was slower today. If it gets slower and starts to grip and turn it will be harder for the batsman. The spinners might have a better chance on this wicket," said Silva.

The manner in which the ball turned towards the end of the day yesterday would have probably caused a few flutters in the home camp as they may have to face a tougher challenge in the second innings.

Despite the trying times, there remained a hint of optimism in Al Amin, who believes that his side are still capable of drawing the match.

"We have to make the most of the morning session and bowl them out as soon as possible tomorrow (Wednesday), hopefully within 450. With regards to our batting, I feel that our batters did not bat to their ability in the first innings. The likes of Mushfiqur (Rahim), Mominul (Haque) and Shakib (Al Hasan), they are capable of

BISHWAJIT ROY



Even though an international game was taking place at the

Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, the cricket lovers' attention was divided between actions on the field on the second day of the first Test and happenings off it, in a boardroom in Dubai.

While news of Bangladesh's bold stance against the Big Three's controversial proposal was a source of encouragement and inspiration, the Tigers' on-field showing, especially the dropped catches at the beginning of the day's play, turned out to be a dampener.

The latest news from Dubai will certainly ease the tension among cricket fans regarding the country's future in Test cricket, but Mushfiqur Rahim's men were ill at ease as Sri Lanka strengthened their position by taking a 143-run lead with five wickets in hand at stumps.

On a chilly afternoon the small crowd were charmed by silky strokeplay from Mahela Jayawardene, which followed a fortuitous maiden century from Kaushal Silva. But passions rose late in the day when two quick wickets by the local bowlers warned the faithful and ended another day that belonged to the visitors.

A gem of a delivery from leading left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan that clipped the bails of Dinesh Chandimal and off-spinner Shohag Gazi's wicket of night-watchman Suranga Lakmal brought some solace for the home side, but Jayawardene's presence as an overnight batsman will temper their hopes.

If purposeless batting on the first day put the Tigers in danger, then missing chances one after another on the second day put the match all but out of their grasp, and unfortunately captain Mushfiqur was the main culprit.

Pacer Al Amin Hossain was the most unlucky man yesterday. Like his pace colleagues Rubel Hossain and Robiul Islam the right-arm paceman lacked penetration but made up for that by bowling in the right channels.

Lady luck finally smiled in his favour when Kumar Sangakkara, after playing out the second session with Silva, played a loose cut to edge to first slip where Nasir Hossain held a one-handed catch on the third attempt. The catch came as a huge relief following the earlier sloppiness.

The diminutive right-hander Silva had showed his strength of patience but he must thank his luck for making 139 runs.

Shakib provided the long-awaited breakthrough by removing Dimuth Karunaratne but Bangladesh could have also had the wicket of the other

opener as the bowlers created opportunities in overcast morning conditions that assisted the seamers.

Keeper Mushfiqur grassed a simple catch when Silva was on 39 as the right-hander was squared up by Al Amin's probing line outside off. The same batsman edged the same bowler again but unfortunately the Al Amin's back foot knocked the non-striker's bail off before delivery and as per the recent amendment to the laws, it was declared a no-ball.

Then it was Shamsur Rahman who deprived Al Amin again when Silva, then on 42, drove away from the body and edged low to the debutant who failed to catch it to his right at gully.

Silva however played some brilliant shots during and ordinary post-lunch bowling from spinners Shakib and Gazi, who were guilty of dropping too short, helped both Silva and Sangakkara improve the run rate.

Bangladesh skipper re-introduced his best bowler Al Amin after taking the new ball and the ploy worked as the pacer got rid of Sangakkara while Silva was finally trapped leg-before by Shakib after surviving a close call and yet another dropped catch, also by Mushfiqur.

Despite the amateurish fielding effort Bangladesh claimed five wickets. The visitors however managed 315 runs on the day, so the hosts not only have to bowl well today but also need a good fielding

## Abahani go top

SPORTS REPORTER



Title contenders Abahani took solo lead in the Bangladesh Premier League after beating promoted Uttar Baridhara Club 2-0 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Earlier, Muktijoddha Sangsod also recorded an identical 2-0 win over Chittagong Abahani to move to fourth position with 10 points from six outings, six behind the new league leaders.

Having played a match less than Abahani's six, Sheikh Jamal are in second position with 13 points while holders Sheikh Russel KC are in third position with 10 points from six matches by virtue of superior goal difference.

Abahani gave little room to newcomers Uttar Baridhara and took the lead in the 12th minute with a strike from midfielder Shahedul Alam Shahed.

Shahed was played a cut-back by Osei Morison from the right side touch line and the former national midfielder made room

on his left to drive a low left-footer past goalkeeper Piaruzzaman to put Abahani ahead.

Abahani doubled the lead three minutes into the second half following a miscued clearance from defender Rony. Winger Towhidul Alam put a lob inside the box and Rony cleared it with a weak header, which went straight to Awudu Ibrahim and the Ghanaian hitman drove a powerful shot from the edge of the box to ensure Abahani's fifth victory in six matches.

In the earlier match, Muktijoddha Sangsod dominated the proceedings against Chittagong Abahani to notch up their third victory in six matches, thanks to a brace from Nigerian hitman Nkwocha Kingsley. Muktijoddha Sangsod took the lead through Kingsley, who saw his header off an Eleta Kingsley cross find the back of Chittagong Abahani net kissing the far post.

After resumption, the ball was mostly confined in the midfield and Nkwocha ensured the victory four minutes before the end by scoring his fourth goal of the league from inside the box.

## BFF MPs felicitated

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin hoped that the executive committee members of the federation, who have recently been elected Members of the Parliament, would play a greater role in the development of country's football.

"They are football organisers and they know very well what to do for the development of football. It is an honour for us that three of our members have been elected MPs," said Salahuddin during a reception accorded to the MPs at the BFF House yesterday.

BFF vice presidents Arif Khan Joy and Kazi Nabil Ahmed and member Shamsul Haque Chowdhury were elected MPs from different constituencies.



PHOTO: STAR

Many a cricketer has been known for superstitious eccentricities over the years. But none of them could probably beat Sri Lanka opener Kaushal Silva's. The right-hander goes through a bizarre ritual of buckling his gloves, swinging his left arm exactly ten times and swaying back before every ball he faces.

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### SCOREBOARD

<b>BA</b>				
Bangladesh: First innings 232 (Shamsur 33, Shakib 55, Mushfiqur 61, Shohag 42; Lakmal 3-66, Eranga 4-49, Herath 2-50)				
<b>SL</b>				
Sri Lanka: First innings (overnight 60-0)				
Karunaratne c Robiul b Shakib	53			
Silva lbw b Shakib	139			
Sangakkara c Nasir b Al-Amin	75			
Jayawardene not out	42			
Chandimal b Shakib	40			
Lakmal c Nasir b Shohag	0			
Extras: (b-8, w-12, nb-6)	26			
Total: (For 5 wickets in 108.2 overs)	375			
To bat: Mathews, Vithanage, Perera, Eranga, Herath.				
Fall of wickets: 1-118, 2-273, 3-302, 4-374, 5-375.				
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Robiul	14	1	43	0
Al-Amin	25	2	87	1
Rubel	17	0	74	0
Shohag	16.2	3	44	1
Shakib	27	4	94	3