



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Shakib Al Hasan (2nd from R) is congratulated by teammates as his late double-strike brought smile to the Bangladesh camp at the end of the first day of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.



Crown Cement has been contributing to nation building since its inception. All recent mega structures of the country like Jatrabari-Gulistan Flyover, Kuril Flyover and Hatirjheel Project are built with Crown Cement.

Guided by 'wily old foxes'

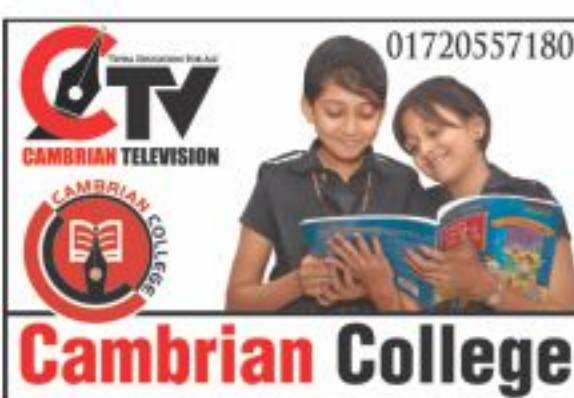
SPORTS REPORTER from Ctg

It is quite astonishing how regularly Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara have stood up for Sri Lanka over the last 14 years. At 49 for two the visitors were in a vulnerable position, but the 36-year-olds calmly soaked up the initial pressure and then unleashed an attacking partnership worth 178 for the third wicket.

"They are wily old foxes and we try our best to learn from them. They work hard in practice. They always talk about cricket in the outfield and in training," said Sri Lanka's vice-captain Dinesh Chandimal.

"We were a bit disappointed with the way we got out. I played a rash shot and Mathews also got out. But we still have Kithuruwan and Dilruwan, hopefully they are going to get more runs tomorrow," said Chandimal.

"It was not easy to bat in these conditions. The ball came on to the bat really slow. When you get set, you definitely have to bat throughout the innings. Sangakkara did that. I think if we can score 200 more runs tomorrow, that will be a good total," he added.



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SCOREBOARD

Sri Lanka: First innings				
Karunaratne c Mahmudullah b Al-Amin	31			
Silva lbw b Gazi	11			
Sangakkara not out	160			
Jayawardene lbw b Mahmudullah	72			
Chandimal c Kayes b Shakib	27			
Mathews b Shakib	5			
Vithanage not out	0			
Extras: (b-5, lb-2, nb-1)	8			
Total (for five wickets in 92 overs)	314			
Fall of wickets: 1-39, 2-49, 3-227, 4-294, 5-312				
Bowler				
Al-Amin	19	4	56	1
Gazi	30	4	98	1
Razzak	4	1	6	0
Shakib	15	1	70	2
Mahmudullah	22	2	70	1
Nasir	1	0	2	0
Shamsur	1	0	5	0
Toss: Sri Lanka				

'All depends on the start'

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong



The first day in Chittagong ended much like the second day in Mirpur had. Then too, with Sri Lanka on 375 for five, there were hopes that Bangladesh could wrap it up quickly. That is the hope now with Sri Lanka ending on 314 for five, but Bangladesh will further hope to avoid the spate of dropped chances and a double-century from a seasoned Sri Lankan -- in Mirpur it was Mahela Jayawardene, in Chittagong it is Kumar Sangakkara -- if they are to have any hope of levelling the series.

Bangladesh all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad was well aware of the importance of starting strongly.

"Everything depends on the start tomorrow (Tuesday). If we can take two early wickets then we would be

breaking into their tail," said Riyad at the post-day press conference.

"It is a little tough to make predictions about this wicket. We hope that there will be spin. This morning it spun for a while with the new ball while it didn't during the middle period and then turned again with the (second) new ball.

"We have to work harder. Sangakkara is looking very good so his wicket will be crucial," he added.

While the hosts made a good start -- they reduced the visitors to 49 for 2 -- they were blown away by a 178-run stand for the third wicket between Sangakkara and Jayawardene. Riyad admitted that the hosts got bogged down a bit in the middle session.

"There were times when we did miss the length. Sometimes when the ball doesn't turn, spinners get frustrated. We did bowl a few bad balls but when we regrouped, the discussion was about containing the runs and that's

why we came back well at the end of the day," said Riyad.

Riyad himself broke the stand by trapping Jayawardene plumb in front in the 71st over -- a crucial dismissal that broke the flow and led to two more wickets at the end of the day.

"At that time (during the stand) Gazi and I were bowling. Since the ball was not spinning and they were playing comfortably, we tried to contain them. We waited for them to play a bad shot and fortunately a breakthrough came our way," said Riyad.

"It is not being defensive, just a different tactic. They are good players of spin, so it becomes necessary to contain the runs when there's no turn at all," he added.

In the lead-up to this Test, there has been much talk about whether the hosts can come back into this series. Well, the stage has been set for a turnaround, it all now depends on

BPL fixing verdicts by month end

CRICINFO, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) tribunal's verdicts into alleged match-fixing and spot-fixing will be read out on February 26 and 27. Both sides will give final arguments for two weeks after the hearing ends on Thursday. The BCB will announce the verdicts.

The full hearing began on January 19 from which time all nine accused have appeared at the tribunal building in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Sanctions will be announced according to article 6 of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's anti-corruption code.

The lone pacer conundrum

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

The Bangladesh team think-tank seemed to take a U-turn when they fielded only one seamer in Al-Amin Hossain in the second Test against Sri Lanka yesterday; the first such instance in the team's Test history. In the first Test in Mirpur they had departed from their two-pacer tradition by picking a third seamer -- here they took a step in the other direction. The move surprised everyone, including Sri Lanka batsman Dinesh Chandimal.

"Yes we were all surprised with one seamer. Normally in Test cricket, in any condition, any team will bowl two seamers," said Chandimal at the post-day press conference when asked about the Tigers' play.

Mahmudullah Riyad also fielded questions about the strategy. "I think the team management -- coach and captain -- did what they thought would be good for the team. There is no swing or bounce so we thought we should use an extra spinner. We took another option. Team did what is best," said the former vice-captain.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed echoed Riyad's sentiment.

"You can think about a lot of 'ifs and buts' after watching the match but before the match you have to take a decision on a particular plan," said Faruque when asked whether he felt after watching the

first day's play that it would be have been much better if another pacer was in the team.

According to a team insider, the management respected the wishes of captain Mushfiqur Rahim. One wonders whether this desperation to prolong the batting line-up is a return to a more defensive mindset. The three pacers' performance in Mirpur was nothing special, but playing with the solitary seamer means a team forgoes the option to change gears in tough times. Bangladesh might have made the first mistake by leaving out a recent performer like Robiul Islam and might have just settled for the omission of the struggling Rubel Hossain.

But even if Rubel Hossain had remained, his ability to swing and skid the old ball could have proved a good option for the captain. Mushfiqur did face certain problems yesterday, especially when Jayawardene and Sangakkara were on the field, with the batsmen having gotten used to the repetitive style of spin bowling.

The coming days will tell us if the unusual bowling make-up will pay dividends or not. However, the basic point remains that no matter what the bowling strategy, Bangladesh need plenty of work in their bowling department; as their recent performances, whether on responsive or non-responsive pitches, have been

Pakistan blasts Big 3 proposal

AFP, Lahore

The Pakistan Cricket Board on Monday lashed out over controversial plans to reform cricket's governing body, describing the proposed revamp as unjust.

Moves to restructure the International Cricket Council (ICC) to hand power to India, Australia and England, the game's financial powerhouses, were passed in principle during a board meeting in January.

In an in-house meeting, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) termed the proposed plan as "not in line with the principle of equity nor in the interest of game of cricket".

Members of the PCB's governing board said in a statement that they had serious concerns over the planned revamp proposed by the cricket boards of India, Australia and England to give their countries a greater say in the running of the game.

It comes after Pakistani cricket legend Imran Khan on Friday blasted the proposals, saying they would take the game back to the days of colonialism.

The PCB said it had asked chairman Zaka Ashraf to seek guidance from Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and "to apprise him on this matter of immense significance and of national interest, which will have wide reaching impact on future of cricket in Pakistan".

The PCB said it had received a detailed presentation on the proposal, which it would discuss at the next ICC board meeting.

South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are now the only three of the ten ICC full members who are still against the report, which will next be put on table at the ICC meeting in Singapore on February 8.

The plan needs approval from eight of



Sachin Tendulkar receiving the Bharat Ratna award from Indian president Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sachin receives Bharat Ratna

AFP, New Delhi



Retired cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar was awarded India's highest civilian award on Tuesday, the Bharat Ratna, making him the first Indian sportsman to receive the honour.

Tendulkar, who at 40 is the youngest-ever recipient, was congratulated by President Pranab Mukherjee during a brief ceremony that saw thunderous applause at the presidential palace.

The cricketer announced his retirement from the game in November, ending his 24-year career during which he became the world's leading scorer in both Test and one-day cricket.

In retirement, he has begun promoting social causes such as sanitation and has been named a member of the upper house of the Indian Parliament, leading to speculation he might one day enter active politics.

In 2008, he received the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian award.

At the ceremony Tuesday, he walked up to the dais with folded hands, greeted the president and accepted the award amid a din of camera flash-lights and applause from the audience, which included his family.

Sangakkara clinic puts SL ahead

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



Birthday boy Mahmudullah Riyad lifted Shohag Gazi on his shoulders to celebrate the wicket of Mahela Jayawardene, depriving the right-hander of a deserved hundred. It

was the wicket that broke the ice but it was the two wickets in the last half hour from leading spinner Shakib Al Hasan that helped Bangladesh finish the first day of the second and final Test against Sri Lanka with some relief at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

Compared to their performance on the first day at Mirpur, one must consider it a good start for the Tigers but Sri Lanka were still in the driving seat with 314 runs on the board and five wickets in hand, thanks to Kumar Sangakkara who was undefeated on 160.

Left-arm spinner Shakib provided the late success with the second new ball in trying conditions but he must thank Dinesh Chandimal and visiting skipper Angelo Mathews as both simply threw their wickets away in a sudden bout of madness after the two batting geniuses, Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene, put on a flawless 178-run partnership for the third wicket.

It was a perfect stage for the two senior Sri Lanka batsmen and they once again showed their class by neutralising the spin-heavy Bangladesh attack, which fielded only one pacer in Al-Amin in the match, to take their team to a commanding position after being reduced to 49 for two.

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim lost the all-important toss but he had reasons to go for a good lunch after his two opening bowlers, pacer Al-Amin and spinner Shohag Gazi, took one wicket each. But Jayawardene, the centurion in the first Test, joined his favourite batting partner to seize the home side's early momentum.

Kaushal Silva was undone by the low bounce of Gazi who started bravely by flighting the ball, while fellow opener Dimuth Karunaratne hit a short wide one from Al-Amin directly to the man at point. The home side may have then had visions of a stunning day but the two senior Sri Lankan batsmen applied themselves brilliantly on the languorous Chittagong surface.

Bangladeshi bowlers were often too short in their bowling and fed the batsmen loose deliveries. Surprisingly Shakib was the most expensive. Even though the bowlers lacked variation on the non-responsive wicket, Jayawardene and Sangakkara concentrated heavily on their jobs; a lesson the Tigers can take when they bat.

To add to Bangladesh's woes, Abdur Razzak went off the field with a hamstring problem in his left leg after bowling a mere four overs.

During his near five-hour stay at the crease, the left-handed Sangakkara profited most from his pull shot against the short pitched deliveries especially from Riyad and all his three sixes came over deep midwicket. Jayawardene meanwhile took his time to adjust to the pitch's pace but gradually settled down to capitalise on the spin attack during his 147-ball 72.

Having drawn level with Sangakkara's 33 tons in Mirpur, Jayawardene missed a chance in Chittagong but his batting, along with Sangakkara's, provided yet another advertisement of masterful batting.

Sk Jamal face United Sikkim

SPORTS REPORTER

Smarting from their 1-2 defeat at the hands of Kolkata Mohammedan, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club are looking to bounce back in the IFA Shield tournament when they take on United Sikkim at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata, India today.

The match will get underway at 6:45 (BST) after the match between Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan, who are on top and second position of the group with six points and three points respectively.

A draw in the first match will get Mohammedan through to the semifinals, leaving Sheikh Jamal DG with some chance to progress to the last four, subject to their win over United Sikkim, who were forfeited full points against Mohammedan, due to fielding an unregistered player, despite ending the match 1-1.

However, Sheikh Jamal will need nothing short of a win against United Sikkim to keep their hopes alive, but it will be an uphill task against as some of the key players are injured.