

SPORT

Tamim tuning back into form?

BISHWAJIT ROY

Pace duo Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Taskin Ahmed used the overcast conditions perfectly but Tamim Iqbal looked focused on his job during a preparation game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. A cautious and careful approach saw the batsman remain unbeaten (44 runs off 102 balls) before coach Chandika Hathurusingha gave him a rest following the rain interval. Tamim seemed to try his best to keep to the basics as it was the need of the hour for the opener to retain his place in the side. From being an automatic choice for a long time, the Chittagonian suddenly came under the scanner for his series of failures with the willow this year. His batting approach in particular led many to believe that there was something wrong and he needed a break.

Tamim is yet to make a stamp on international cricket in the year 2014; the left-hander's form remains a cause for concern for the team think-tank. The southpaw batsman has scored 6, 11, 0 and 31 in two Tests, 0 and 4 in two ODIs and 30, 2, 21, 30, 0, 5, 6, 16 and 5 in the nine T20 innings he has played

so far this year.

With such a sordid backdrop, the left-hander is going to play a series in West Indies. If he can rediscover his form during the series it would be great news for the think-tank, but anything less would create a big dilemma for them ahead of the next year World Cup.

Here lies a different challenge for the experienced opener and many have termed the Caribbean tour a mission to keep his place in the team. In that context yesterday's innings was a confidence-building knock for the batsman, who was drafted in the ODI squad along with three other opening batsmen.

"Tamim did exactly what was required to rediscover his form. He applied himself perfectly and looked very focused on his batting. It might not be his natural batting but he desperately needed this sort of approach, especially at a time when he has been going through a lean patch," said selector Habibul Bashar, who was watching the practice match from his room at the Mirpur headquarters.

"He is practising hard and it's nice to see him apply himself perfectly. We all know about his flashy style of batting and I agree that you should

have a few players in the side who have a license to play their shots. But a license doesn't mean you cannot understand the situation. We arranged a 60-over match because we wanted to see the players make the most of the practice out in the middle and it's nice that Tamim responded well to our idea," added the former national skipper.

Pace spearhead Mashrafe also spoke highly on Tamim's improved batting approach in the first practice game while he talking to the media after the match.

"Tamim has been practising hard since the end of the India series. I hope he gets back his form because he batted really well today. He batted in a different style as he took time to settle down in the middle. When a batsman is going through a bad patch, he needs to change himself and Tamim did it today. He played almost 100 balls and didn't give a single chance to the bowlers," said Mashrafe.

The cynical have been saying that Tamim recorded the fastest recovery from injury of his career, as he played the practice match after injuring his ankle on Monday. But cynicism aside, he needs to recover his rhythm as quickly for the good of himself and Bangladesh cricket.



Opening batsman Tamim Iqbal showed his true grit during a practice match in Mirpur yesterday, on way to rediscovering his form ahead of Bangladesh's tour of West Indies. PHOTO: STAR

Novak, Andy get going

AFP, Toronto

Wimbledon champions Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray warmed up their hardcourt games on Wednesday with victories in their opening matches at the Toronto ATP Masters.

World number one Djokovic, who beat Roger Federer in five sets in last month's Wimbledon final, needed almost two and three-quarter hours to extend his winning run to 10 matches as he beat Frenchman Gael Monfils, with the top seed reaching the third round after a 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/2) victory. Britain's 2013 Wimbledon winner Murray made light of an absence from the ATP Tour of over a month to defeat promising Aussie teenager Nick Kyrgios 6-2, 6-2 in less than an hour.

Djokovic, married last month, was playing for the first time since his All England Club triumph. Monfils was two points from completing the upset at 6-5 30-30, but Djokovic held on to force the tiebreaker in which he seized a 5-2 lead and converted on his first match point with a forehand winner.

India bowled out in Broad daylight

REUTERS, Manchester

England fast bowler Stuart Broad took six wickets as India were skittled out for 152 at tea on the opening day of the fourth Test on Thursday.

India captain MS Dhoni made a defiant 71 to help his side recover from a disastrous start when they slumped to eight for four after winning the toss.

But Broad and James Anderson had put England in control of the match inside two sessions, with the series level at 1-1.

Resuming in the afternoon session on 63 for five, India soon lost Ravindra Jadeja for a duck, lbw to Anderson.

Dhoni received solid support from Ravichandran Ashwin, however, and the pair added 66 runs in quick time. Ashwin had made 40 when he hooked a short ball from Broad and was well caught by Sam Robson running in from deep square leg. Dhoni reached fifty with his 11th four but Broad struck again, bowling Bhuvneshwar Kumar who was the fifth Indian batsman to make a duck.

Chancing his arm, Dhoni hit four more boundaries before heaving Broad straight to Chris Jordan at backward square leg

to give the tall fast bowler his fifth wicket.

He then bowled Pankaj Singh for another duck to complete superb figures of six for 25.

Anderson and Broad had taken full advantage of favourable conditions in the morning, obtaining prodigious swing to send back Gautam Gambhir, Murali Vijay, Virat Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara in quick succession.

It was a fine performance on his home Old Trafford ground by Anderson, who was cleared to play after being found not guilty of breaching the International Cricket Council's code of conduct in an incident with Jadeja during the first Test.

Gambhir, recalled to the side, was first to go for four when he got a leading edge to a full delivery from Broad and the ball flew straight to Joe Root at gully. Vijay, on nought, prodded at a perfect outswinger from Anderson and Alastair Cook took a straightforward opportunity at first slip.

Two balls later the out-of-form Kohli fell in identical fashion for a duck and Pujara drove loosely at a full ball from Broad, Jordan clutching a sharp catch at third slip to leave India in tatters at eight for four.

Dhoni and Ajinkya Rahane stopped the rot with a fighting fifth-wicket partnership of 54 as conditions for batting improved.

SCOREBOARD				
INDIA: First innings				
Vijay c Cook b Anderson	0			
Gambhir c Root b Broad	4			
Pujara c Jordan b Broad	0			
Kohli c Cook b Anderson	0			
Rahane c Bell b Jordan	24			
Dhoni c Jordan b Broad	71			
Jadeja lbw b Anderson	0			
Ashwin c Robson b Broad	40			
Kumar b Broad	0			
Aaron not out	1			
Pankaj b Broad	0			
Extras: (b-10, lb-1, w-1)	12			
Total: (All out in 46.4 overs)	152			
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-8, 3-8, 4-8, 5-62, 6-63, 7-129, 8-137, 9-152.				
Bowler				
Anderson	14	3	46	3
Broad	13.4	6	25	6
Woakes	10	1	43	0
Jordan	9	4	27	1
ENGLAND: Cook (capt), Robson, Ballance, Bell, Root, Moeen, Buttler (wkt), Jordan, Broad, Woakes, Anderson.				
Toss: India				

Phelps fails in his first return bid

AFP, Irvine

Michael Phelps failed in his first bid to qualify for his first international meet since the London Games, finishing seventh Wednesday in the 100m freestyle at the US Swimming Championships.

Phelps, whose record 22 Olympic medals include an astonishing 18 golds, ended a near two-year retirement in April.

But his first attempt to take his comeback to a new level by qualifying for a major international meet -- the Pan Pacific Championships later this month -- fell flat.

He was last at the turn and couldn't find the last-lap speed needed, settling for seventh in 49.17sec.

Nathan Adrian, the 100m free Olympic gold medalist in London, won in 48.31sec.

Ryan Lochte, whose own collection of 11 Olympic medals includes five golds, stormed to second from lane eight in 48.96.

Jimmy Feigen was third in 48.98 and Conor Dwyer was fourth in 49.06.

Bangladesh eager for turnaround

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh are eager to put up a good show in the three-match hockey series when they take on India in the second match at the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan ground today.

The home side surrendered a lead to suffer a 1-2 defeat to the visiting second-string Indian team on Wednesday and they are focused on doing better in the second match.

"The boys are fully concentrated on tomorrow's (Friday) match and eager to put up a good show. We made a few mistakes technically and tactically in the first match and will be trying to cover up those mistakes to catch up with the opponents," said Bangladesh's Pakistani coach Naveed Alam yesterday.

Catching up to India will surely not be an easy task for Naveed's charges as they could hardly impress and penetrate the opposition backline, save for some sporadic attacks. Instead, the Bangladesh backline often collapsed in the face of fast attacks and failed to keep the ball in the midfield to build up the game.

Bangladesh need to improve in these two areas to do better against India, who vowed to come hard in the second game to seal the series with a match in hand.

While both teams stand in opposition with a fierce desire to win today's match, on their rest day (Thursday) the two lineups travelled together in the city, visiting the New Market, Bashundhara Shopping mall before having dinner at Gulshan.

The day however did not go perfectly as it started with them being refused entry to the National Mausoleum in Savar, where VIP guests were being entertained and therefore it was not open to public.

Anvir also informed that a good relationship had been formed between the opposing players and officials during the series and that they have enjoyed sharing their experiences regarding hockey.

BD teams suffer defeats

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh men's chess team suffered a second consecutive defeat in the Open Section of the 41st World Chess Olympiad when they conceded a 1-3 defeat to 20-seeded Peru in the fifth round held in Tromso, Norway, on Wednesday.

GM Ziaur Rahman and GM Abdullah Al Rakib drew against GM Granda Zuniga Julio and GM Cordova Emilio respectively but GM Enamul Hossain Rajib and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar lost to GM Cori Jurge and GM Cruz Cristhian respectively. The Bangladesh men's team now have five match points and 10 game points.

In the women's section, Bangladesh's women followed in the footsteps of their male countrymen as they suffered a narrow 2.5-1.5 defeat to Iceland in the fifth round to have four match points and nine game points.

Sharmin Sultana Shirin beat Johannsdottir Johanna Bjorg and WIM Rani Hamid drew against Thorsteinsdottir Hallgrud, but WIM Shamima Akter Liza and WFM Zakia Sultana lost to WGM Ptacnikova Lenka and Fynnogadottir Tinna Kristin respectively.

SCOREBOARD				
PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight 261-4)				
Manzoor lbw b Prasad	3			
Shehzad b Prasad	4			
Azhar b Herath	30			
Younis c Withanage b Perera	177			
Misbah c Dickwella b Herath	31			
Shafiq lbw b Herath	75			
Sarfraz c Mathews b Perera	55			
Rehman c Sangakkara b Perera	50			
Ajmal c Jayawardene b Perera	12			
Talha not out	9			
Junaid c Jayawardene b Perera	0			
Extras: (b-1, w-5)	5			
Total: (All out in 140.5 overs)	451			
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-19, 3-56, 4-156, 5-293, 6-359, 7-388, 8-424, 9-451				
Bowler				
Eranga	31	13	78	0
Prasad	24	3	81	2
Mathews	15	7	25	0
Herath	38	9	116	3
Perera	31.5	1	137	5
Withanage	1	0	10	0
SRI LANKA: First innings				
Tharanga lbw b Junaid	19			
Silva not out	38			
Sangakkara not out	36			
Extras: (b-1, w-5)	6			
Total: (For 1 wkt in 34 overs)	99			
To bat: Jayawardene, Mathews, Withanage, Dickwella, Perera, Prasad, Herath, Eranga				
Fall of wicket: 1-24				
Bowler				
Junaid	10	3	38	1
Talha	7	3	26	0



England pacer Stuart Broad celebrates dismissing India opener Gautam Gambhir on the first day of the fourth Test at Old Trafford in Manchester on Thursday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Pakistan keep ahead

AFP, Galle

Younis Khan smashed 177 during a valiant fightback with the lower-order batsmen as Pakistan gained the upper hand in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle on Thursday.

Younis, who came in to bat at 19-2 on the first morning, anchored the innings admirably to enable the tourists to pile up 451 all out by tea on the second day.

Sri Lanka replied with 99-1 by close, comfortably tackling both pace and spin, but the batsmen will remain wary of the turn and bounce that will increasingly come into play over the next three days.

Left-arm seamer Junaid Khan trapped Upul Tharanga leg-before for 19 in the fifth over, but Kaushal Silva and Kumar Sangakkara settled in to put on 75 for the second wicket.

Silva was unbeaten on 38 and Sangakkara was on 36 with Sri Lanka still 352 runs behind the tourists.

The 36-year-old Younis, who is playing his 90th Test, batted for eight hours and 16 minutes, hitting 15 boundaries and a six in

his 24th Test century.

Pakistan, who resumed at their overnight score of 261-4, went to lunch on 347-5 with Asad Shafiq making 75 during a fifth-wicket stand of 137 with Khan.

The visitors added 32 runs in the first hour when left-arm spinner Rangana Herath broke through for Sri Lanka by trapping Shafiq leg-before. The batsman's appeal to the TV umpire went in vain.

Sri Lanka came close to removing Khan when he was on 156, but seamer Shaminda Eranga spilled a sharp return catch as the batsman failed to keep a drive along the ground.

Off-spinner Dilruwan Perera, who had gone without a wicket for four sessions, struck five times in the post-lunch period to hasten the end of Pakistan's innings.

Perera ended Khan's vigil soon after lunch by beating the well-set batsman in the air, resulting in an easy catch at short mid-wicket, a soft dismissal that came against the run of play.

Pakistan's wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed made 55 and shared a sixth-wicket stand of 66 with Khan when he too lobbed an easy catch to mid-on to give Perera his second wicket.