

SPORT

TIGERS on top

BISHWAJIT ROY from Khulna

Shakib Al Hasan swung his bat in sheer frustration after being dismissed cheaply in the second innings yesterday. He was unhappy because he could not fulfil the twin-target the Tigers wanted to achieve against Zimbabwe on the fourth day of the second Test at Khulna.

Shakib did take a five-for earlier in the morning to help Bangladesh fulfil their first target of folding the Zimbabwe first innings as quickly as possible -- the visitors resuming on 331-5 could add only 37 runs to their overnight total before being dismissed.

When he came into bat after achieving a rare double -- a century followed by a five-wicket haul -- the Tigers needed him to pick up the pace in an effort to take a considerable lead before the match entered into the fifth morning.

He was hardly responsible for his demise because the ball Malcolm Waller fired targeting his leg kept a bit low, and on any other day Pakistani umpire Aleem Dar could not have bothered to raise his dreaded finger.

His dismissal suddenly changed the complexion of the game with the Tigers slipping to an uncomfortable 145-5 after captain Mushfiqur Rahim was out for a first-ball duck. Waller almost got his hatrick when Shuvagata Holm nicked one behind that, fortunately for Bangladesh, flew between the wicketkeeper and the lone slip.

A cool and collected Mahmudullah Riyad, unbeaten on 63, however steered the nervy Tigers to 201 without further damage and a lead of 266 runs. Shuvagata also looked comfortable after that early bump and stayed unbeaten on 23.

It certainly put Bangladesh in pole position to push for a victory on a weary fifth day wicket with Shakib leading a three-pronged spin attack.

Earlier, Zimbabwe were bundled out for 368 just before lunch despite Regis Chakabva's maiden hundred.

Shakib, who took the crucial wickets of Hamilton Masakadza and Waller, finished with a figure of 5-80, his 13th five-wicket haul and his second double (hundred and five wickets) after his first against Pakistan (144 runs and 6-82) at Mirpur in 2011.

Bangladesh's second innings started briskly before Tamim Iqbal was dismissed for 20. To lose Tamim early was a setback as the left-hander looked to bat according to the demand of the team in contrast of his slow first innings batting, as the opener laced fours boundaries during his 25-ball knock while his opening partner Shamsur Rahman cautiously played 71 balls to score 23.

While Mominul seemed to come out of his shell with six magnificent boundaries, he gave away his wicket, satisfied with yet another half century. Riyad was not out playing 143 balls.

The remaining ordeal was to take ten second innings wickets of Zimbabwe but the question remained whether the home bowlers will get enough time to succeed.

After third day's play many, including Shakib, predicted a draw but the fall of ten wickets gave the match new life and with a healthy lead and the pitch showing good signs, the Tigers are in a comfortable position as they are unlikely to lose, even if they do not win.



Bangladesh batsman Mahmudullah Riyad flicks the ball on the outside to take the Tigers to safety with a composed unbeaten half-century on the fourth day of the second Test against Zimbabwe at Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna on Thursday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Imrul in for Shamsur

SPORTS REPORTER from Khulna

The selectors made one change to the 14-member squad for the third and final Test against Zimbabwe as opener Shamsur Rahman made way for Imrul Kayes.

The final Test starts at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong on November 12.

"Actually we dropped Shamsur for his form. On the other hand, Imrul is now fit and recently made a hundred for a BCB XI in India," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed yesterday.

Shamsur scored 8, 0, 2 and 23 in his last four innings of the ongoing series against Zimbabwe.

SQUAD
Mushfiqur Rahim (captain), Tamim Iqbal (vice-captain), Shakib Al Hasan, Imrul Kayes, Mominul Haque, Rubel Hossain, Shuvagata Hom, Mahmudullah Riyad, Shafiqul Islam, Jubair Hossain, Shahadat Hossain, Marshall Ayub, Tajjul Islam, Anamul Haque.

Safety first for hosts

BISHWAJIT ROY from Khulna

While Mushfiqur Rahim is no Michael Clarke, Bangladesh is not Australia either. The comparison came to the minds of many as they pondered whether the Bangladesh captain would declare at their overnight score of 201 for 5, with an overall lead of 266 runs, to give his bowlers time to take ten Zimbabwe wickets on the fifth and final day of the second Test.

They believed that tradition showed the Aussie captain would have taken this risk. The ball already started to keep low and Zimbabwe will be up against three Bangladesh spinners in the fourth innings at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium, so they thought, a 267-run target would be good enough for the home team to confirm the series victory.

But the reality is that the Tigers cannot afford a defeat here and that's the reason the team think-tank wants to secure safety first.

Bangladesh will try to bat one-and-a-half-hour to set a target of at least 350 for the visitors. The hosts' first target will be ensuring that they do not lose. The logic was as Bangladesh were leading the series 1-0, they would not take unnecessary risks as the situation was not a do-or-die one for them.

The team management however was confident that two sessions will be good enough for them to make sure the Zimbabweans fall into the web of the local slow bowlers, considering the fact that some rough patches and cracks have developed on the pitch.

"We are not going for a draw, rather we want a result. It's yet to be decided when we will declare and it will be decided by the captain and coach. It is tough to even score 150 runs in the fourth innings. So it will be tough for Zimbabwe as the ball started to keep low already," said Mominul Haque, when asked about his team's target during the press conference after the fourth day's play yesterday.

"In my opinion we are in a good

position," said the left-hander who scored a half-century to cross the 1,000-run mark.

Zimbabwe were also looking to win the match and bounce back in the series as it's their do-or-die game to keep the Chittagong Test alive. The third and final Test will take place in the port city from November 12 to 16.

"It's not about survival; it's about winning the game. If we get into a position to win the game, we will go for the win. We need to take five more wickets quickly and see what score we can chase down. If it's reasonable, we will go for it. Anything around 300 or less is chase-able, especially if we play the spinners well," said Elton Chigumbura, making his team's position clear during the post-day press briefing.

He also found nothing wrong with the pitch.

"It's still a good wicket to bat on. I think there were only a few balls that misbehaved, so I think that won't change too much tomorrow [Friday]," hoped the all-rounder.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD				
BANGLADESH: First innings 433 (Shakib 137, Tamim 109, Mahmudullah 56; Panyangara 2-49, Chatura 2-61, Waller 2-65)				
ZIMBABWE: First innings (overnight 331-5)				
Raza lbw b Tajjul				11
Chari c Tamim b Tajjul				25
Masakadza b Shakib				158
Taylor c Mominul b Shakib				37
Ervine c Rahim b Shakib				17
Chigumbura c Mominul b Shakib				1
Chakabva lbw Tajjul				101
Waller c Rahim b Shakib				6
Chatura c and b Rubel				0
M'shangwe c Rahim b Rubel				0
Panyangara not out				1
Extras: (b-2, lb-7, w-1, nb-1)				11
Total: (All out in 135.1 overs) 368				
Fall of wicket: 1-17, 2-84, 3-151, 4-181, 5-189, 6-336, 7-350, 8-351, 9-351				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shahadat	11	2	24	0
Tajjul	32.1	6	96	3
Shakib	41	11	80	5
Jubair	19	2	64	0
Rubel	22	6	55	2
Shuvagata	7	0	27	0
Mominul	1	1	0	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	13	0
BANGLADESH: Second innings				
Tamim c and b Panyangara				20
Shamsur c Taylor b Waller				23
Mominul c Chakabva b Waller				54
Mahmudullah not out				63
Shakib lbw b Waller				6
Mushfiqur c Chakabva b Waller				0
Shuvagata not out				23
Extras: (b-4, lb-4, w-3, nb-1)				12
Total: (For five wickets in 64 overs) 201				
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-75, 3-131, 4-145, 5-145				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Chigumbura	6	2	13	0
Panyangara	8	2	34	1
Chatura	7	3	19	0
Waller	21	4	48	4
Raza	6	0	22	0

Rayudu puts India 2-0 up

AGENCIES, Ahmedabad

Ambati Rayudu slammed his maiden hundred as India produced yet another comprehensive batting performance to beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in the second one-day international at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

India now lead the five-match series 2-0, after their big win in Cuttack on Sunday in the first match.

Batting first, Sri Lanka scored 274 for eight in stipulated 50 overs with skipper Angelo Mathews scoring 92. In reply, India never looked in any sort of trouble as they chased down the target with minimum fuss in only 44.3 overs.

With Virat Kohli promoting him at No 3, the 29-year-old Rayudu justified his skipper's faith scoring an unbeaten 121 off 118 balls with the help of 10 fours and four sixes in an innings that was paced perfectly.

Earlier, skipper Mathews struck a fighting 92 to lift a struggling Sri Lanka to 274 for eight after opting to bat on a slowish Motera track.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 274 for 8 in 50 overs (Mathews 92 not out, Sangakkara 61, Dilshan 35, Prasad 30 not out; Patel 2-39, Ashwin 2-49, Yadav 2-54)

INDIA: 275 for 4 in 44.3 overs (Rayudu 121 not out, Dhawan 79, Kohli 49; Prasanna 3-53)

Result: India won by 6 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Ambati Rayudu.

God, bro brought Tendulkar here

AFP, Mumbai



Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar spoke of how central his strong Hindu faith and his older brother have been to his sensational cricket career as he launched his autobiography on Wednesday.

Releasing the long-awaited book "Playing It My Way", retired Tendulkar told an audience in Mumbai that he missed the moment that his team won the 2011 World Cup because he was "superstitious" and praying.

"Unfortunately I missed that last moment but it was all worth waiting for," he said. "I was actually there inside the stadium but I was praying."

The 41-year-old, the only man to score 100 international centuries, said he believed "there are certain things which the Almighty controls and we can only go out and give our best".

"It [faith] has given me inner strength, it has given a new dimension to my life," he said.

Tendulkar also spoke of his closeness to his big brother Ajit, who introduced him to his childhood coach.

"We have lived this dream together. I knew that whenever I went into bat, mentally he was there with me, even though we were miles and miles apart," he said.



MASTER OF THE MASTER: Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar (L) presents a copy of his autobiography to his childhood coach Ramakant Achrekar as his daughter Sara looks on in Mumbai on Wednesday.

Habiganj boys lose again

SPORTS REPORTER

The school kids of Habiganj suffered another big defeat in the ATN Bangla National Hockey Championship when they lost to Mymensingh 12-1 in their second match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The Habiganj team, comprising of school students are participating in the meet as part of their national school championship.

Habiganj will now play their third and final match against Patuakhali, who lost to Chittagong 2-4, while Chittagong and Mymensingh will lock horns for the final spot of the 10-team final round.

In the day's other match, Comilla beat Sylhet 5-0.

ITF Jr Tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

HSIA Ho Chao of Chinese Taipei upset top seed Sabina Mirnova of Uzbekistan to move into the girl's singles final in the ITF Junior Tennis Championship at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

Ho Chao beat Sabina 6-2, 6-3 to set her final clash against Maria Dominique of Philippines, who beat Japanese Runa Ichinose 6-2, 6-4.

The semifinals of the boy's singles turned into all India affair as Ballekere Ravikumar, Shramay Dhawan, Dhruv Sunish and Somani Parikshit advanced to the last four after defeating their respective rivals in the quarterfinals.



BFF president Kazi Salahuddin (L) and Channel 9 managing director Enayetur Rahman exchange the MoU papers.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangabandhu Gold Cup coming to life

BFF sings Tk 30 crore deal with Channel 9

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangabandhu Gold Cup International Football Tournament finally gathered the desired momentum after cash-strapped Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) signed a 30 crore taka five-year deal with Channel 9 yesterday.

According to a MoU signed at the BFF House, the private satellite channel will pay taka six crore for each of the five editions of the tournament, which will be held in January every year. Channel 9 will hold the exclusive TV and sponsorship rights of a tournament which is expected to feature six teams, including the hosts in next January's inaugural edition.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and Enayetur Rahman, managing director of Channel 9, signed the deal on behalf of their respective organisations, overcoming the last obstacle in BFF's pursuit to give the country's footballers and fans a taste of international flavour at least once a year.

"It is a good day for the BFF and I want to thank Channel 9, who first propositioned me to sponsor the Bangabandhu Gold Cup. This type of tournament is not being held these days because of the players' commitments to the professional football league and the schedules of the AFC and FIFA.

However, the participating teams have

promised us to take part in the Bangabandhu Gold Cup every January. That's why we have signed a five-year deal with Channel 9," explained BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, adding that they will also have the sole right of gate money.

Of the five invited teams, Singapore and Malaysia officially confirmed their Olympic and national football teams respectively, while Thailand, Laos and Bahrain have verbally confirmed their participation. The BFF is also in deep touch with Qatar and Pakistan in case any team pulls out.

Apart from Singapore, Bahrain are also expected to send their Olympic team as at that time Bahrain national team will be busy with the Asia Cup in Australia while Thailand and Laos are expected to send their senior sides, informed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, adding that they are still planning to hold the tournament in Dhaka and Sylhet.

"We have grown interest in football after beaming the matches of ISL (Indian Super League) live in Bangladesh and we are hoping that Bangabandhu Gold Cup will be watched in 50 countries," said Channel 9 MD Enayetur Rahman, adding that they would soon contact broadcasters outside the country.

Enayetur also said that they have a plan to bring the Bangabandhu Gold Cup outside the country to Thailand or Malaysia as both of the countries showed a positive attitude to host the Gold Cup every alternate year.

Rafa leaves hospital

AFP, Madrid

Rafael Nadal was all smiles Wednesday saying he felt fine as he left the Barcelona hospital where he underwent appendix surgery earlier this week.

"Everything went well. It was a simple, common-place operation," said Nadal, who went under the knife on Monday.

"I'm doing fine," he reassured reporters.

But the 14 time Grand Slam winner would only answer "when I'm better" on questions concerning a return to the court. The Mallorcan said before surgery on Monday he would need five weeks to recover.

Nadal ended his season after a quarter-final loss at the Swiss Indoors last month, missing last week's Paris Masters and the season-closing World Tour Finals starting Sunday in London.

The Spaniard hopes to be fully fit again in time for the first of next year's four Grand Slam events - the Australian Open which starts in Melbourne in mid-January.