



Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim (L) takes the road to dressing room after he was clean bowled by Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah on the final delivery of the second day of the second Test in Mirpur on Thursday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh in dire straits

SPORTS REPORTER



The sight of Mushfiqur Rahim trudging a long way back to the dressing room with his head hanging over his shoulders perfectly portrayed the state of the Tigers at the end of the second day's play of the second and final Test against Pakistan at Mirpur yesterday.

The Bangladesh captain was the last batsman out on the last ball of the day, a googly from Yasir Shah that the right hander tried to cut on the back-foot but was clean bowled.

An expert may term Mushfiqur's dismissal an irresponsible shot from a responsible batsman. But for many it was only an extension of wrong planning; a ridiculous decision to bowl first followed by poor batting in the last session of the second day.

The impact; the dreadful prospect of a follow-on -- if not an innings defeat -- against a Pakistan bowling attack that whispered in the ears 'welcome to the real Test on a responsive wicket'.

The Tigers, who had to bat only one session after Pakistan declared their first innings on 557 for 8 at tea, were tottering at 107 for 5 going into the third day. They still need another 251 runs to avoid the follow on with four wickets remaining, as injured pace bowler Shahadat Hossain won't be able to bat.

But will that really matter for a team that has lost the better half of its batting in one session just to give a rude reminder to its captain that there is little difference between the first and sixth sessions of a Test match.

After fielding for almost two days under scorching summer sun, the Tigers' batting lacked the mental discipline against an attack that sprang to life on a wicket that produced bounce and turn.

Tamim Iqbal paid the penalty for shuffling across against Junaid Khan. It was almost a replay of the second innings of the first Test in Khulna, where he got the benefit of the

Overnight dream comes true

SPORTS REPORTER

Azhar Ali's innings in the last two days resembled the undying spirit of an artist trying his best to perfect a masterpiece. There might have initially been a few false strokes, but towards the end he managed to express himself exactly the way he wanted to.

The 30-year-old looked nervous at the start of his innings. He wasn't timing the ball as well he would have liked to and he was even dismissed by a delivery that was later deemed a no-ball.

However, he regrouped himself, played patiently and at the end of it all reached the mark that he was looking forward to -- the double hundred -- in style, by whacking Shakib Al Hasan for a six.

"Overnight, I was thinking about the double hundred, but at 127 you can't really say for sure if you were going to reach that mark," a smiling Azhar told reporters at the post-day press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

"So I just tried to play according to the situation. And that required me to be calm. I did that and after that we started rotating the strike and it got easier from then on," he added.

By staying calm, Azhar referred to the first hour on the opening day yesterday, when both Azhar and Asad Shafiq remained quiet and barely score runs. However, once they negotiated the early period, they went on to build a 207-run stand which tired the hosts.

"I think the best part about our batting was that we all stuck to our roles and played as a unit to put up a big score. And the icing on the cake was that we got five wickets which was very important for us in this session," said Azhar.

"I think we are in a very good position but we have to play good cricket in all five days until it's over. We have to come back and play hard cricket and get 15 more wickets," he added.

While his 226 played a big role in the innings, Azhar believed that the visitors scalping five wickets in 28 overs was the turning point of the game.

"The bowlers bowled really well. They [Bangladesh] fielded for a long time and our bowlers bowled in good areas. This is the result of work done in between the two Tests and it's paying off now, which is pleasing," said Azhar.



THE FINE ART OF BAKING

BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

| PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight 323 for 3) | R/B | A/G |
|---|---------|------|
| Hafeez c Mushfiqur b Shahid | 8/16 | 1/0 |
| Aslam c Shahadat b Tajjul | 19/58 | 2/0 |
| Azhar c Mahmudullah b Shuvagata | 226/428 | 20/2 |
| Younis c Shuvagata b Shahid | 148/195 | 11/3 |
| Misbahul b Shakib | 9/22 | 0/1 |
| Shafiq c Mahmudullah b Shuvagata | 107/167 | 9/1 |
| Sarfraz not out | 21/21 | 3/0 |
| Riaz c Imrul b Tajjul | 4/9 | 0/0 |
| Yasir b w b Tajjul | 0/1 | 0/0 |
| Extras: (fb-8, w-2, nb-5) | 15 | |
| Total: (For 8 wickets decd in 152 overs) | 557 | |
| Did not bat: Junaid, Imran | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-58, 3-308, 4-323, 5-530, 6-545, 7-552, 8-557. | | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|--|-------|-----|-----|---|
| Shahadat | 0.2 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Soumya | 17.4 | 1 | 57 | 0 |
| Shahid | 31 | 10 | 72 | 2 |
| Tajjul | 51 | 3 | 179 | 3 |
| Shuvagata | 16 | 0 | 76 | 2 |
| Shakib | 30 | 3 | 136 | 1 |
| Mominul | 3 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Mahmudullah | 2 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Imrul | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| BANGLADESH: First innings | | | | |
| Tamim Iqbal b Junaid | 4/4 | 1/0 | | |
| Imrul b Yasir | 32/46 | 6/0 | | |
| Mominul c Sarfraz b Junaid | 13/34 | 2/0 | | |
| Mahmudullah c Azhar b Riaz | 28/32 | 4/0 | | |
| Shakib not out | 14/27 | 1/0 | | |
| Mushfiqur b Yasir | 12/24 | 3/0 | | |
| Extras: (fb-2, w-2) | 4 | | | |
| Total: (For 5 wickets in 27.5 overs) | 107 | | | |
| To bat: Soumya, Shuvagata, Tajjul, Shahadat, Shahid. | | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-38, 3-69, 4-85, 5-107. | | | | |

Kyrgios KOs Federer

AFP, Madrid

Australia young gun Nick Kyrgios knocked top seed Roger Federer out of the Madrid Open on Wednesday with a stunning 6-7 (2/7), 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (14/12) victory.

The fast-paced contest took more than two and a half hours and denied top seed Federer any chance at a fifth title at the claycourt Masters event.

Kyrgios, who knocked Rafael Nadal out of Wimbledon last year, sent down 22 aces to Federer's 15 and next faces John Isner of the United States.

The Swiss saved five match points in the deciding tiebreaker while having two of his own annulled by the big-hitting Australian youngster, ranked 35th.

Imrul sides with Mushy

SPORTS REPORTER



THE FINE ART OF BAKING

There were no heroes for Bangladesh yesterday. No miraculous partnership from the opening pair; nothing special from the slow left-armers; even the salvage shown by the top order throughout the series was missing.

For once, Bangladesh took a leaf out of their pre-World Cup era book and looked quite helpless. Despite their opponents' mammoth 557, there was a sense of hope -- based on their performances in the recent past -- and many believed that the batsmen would be able to shrug off their tiredness and put up a brave display.

However, some good bowling from the visitors combined with some mindless stroke-play from the Tigers, have almost shut the door on the hosts.

If the team management wasn't exactly sure whether bowling first on this wicket was a bad decision, they must have been kicking themselves by the end of lunch yesterday.

Regardless, opener Imrul Kayes defended the captain's decision to bowl first, saying that things would have been different had they got wickets off the deliveries which were later deemed as no-balls.

"We have an experienced captain who understands the game well. We have the coaches and a good team management. There was something in the wicket on the

first day. It was our bad luck that [Shahadat Hossain] Rajib got injured.

"We were playing with three pace bowlers [including Soumya Sarkar]. If we could have properly used the conditions, they wouldn't have scored so many runs," said Imrul.

"Pakistan's batsmen saw what was on that wicket on the first day. We could also realise that while fielding. I think that's why our management -- captain and coach -- decided to field first. If those two catches were not no-balls, we could have had a different match," he added.

While Imrul stated clear-cut reasons behind the team's decision to field first, he couldn't explain the reason behind Bangladesh's batting collapse. The top-order looked tired and were dangerously slashing away at anything that was outside the off-stump.

"Batsmen try to take responsibility but it doesn't always come off. They bowled well and with discipline. As a top-order we failed in this innings," said Imrul.

"We lost five early wickets today. But if we keep thinking about it we will go further on the back-foot. We have to be positive," he added.

However, the hopeful left-hander still believes that the likes of Shakib Al Hasan, Soumya Sarkar and Shuvagata Hom can get set and give Bangladesh the 251 runs it need to avoid following on.

Talukdar thrives under pressure

SPORTS REPORTER



Rony Talukdar may not have received an opportunity to open his international account despite making the 14-member national ODI squad, but that didn't deter him from continuing his good run in the domestic circuit.

The opener hammered 106 for Walton Central Zone on the first day of the second round of the Bangladesh Cricket League at Fatullah yesterday. He hit a staggering 20 boundaries -- 19 fours and a six -- in his 129-ball innings.

The value of his knock was evident from the fact that Central Zone finished the day on a below-par 248 for 7. He received support from Rakibul Hasan, Shamsur Rahman and Marshall Ayub, all of whom got starts but failed to carry on.

South Zone, who boast a good bowling attack, did well to restrict their opponents despite the early onslaught from Talukdar. Young left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman bowled 14 overs, going for just two runs an over and finishing with figures of 1 for 28. Skipper Abdur Razzak finished with figures of 2 for 75.

In the other game in Chittagong, Islami Bank East Zone finished the day on 250 for four, courtesy of half-centuries from Alok Kapali, Shadman Islam and Asif Ahmed.

Kapali and Asif remained unbeaten on 86 and 52 respectively, while Shadman scored 69. BCB North Zone started off well and had taken three quick wickets. However, a 93-run stand between Kapali and Asif brought East Zone back into the game.

Kapali and Shadman hit ten fours each, while Asif hit five fours and a six.



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (L) congratulates Pakistan's Azhar Ali as the latter leaves the field after being dismissed for 226 on the second day of the second Test in Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR

KKR, Sunrisers victors

AGENCIES, New Delhi



Piyush Chawla took four wickets as defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders beat Delhi Daredevils by 13 runs in their return leg clash of the IPL at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday.

Chasing a stiff 172-run target, Delhi managed 158 for 6 in their 20 overs as Chawla spun a web to outshine his weaker teammates Sunil Narine and Brad Hogg.

Earlier, Sunrisers Hyderabad kept their

play-off hopes alive by pulling off a well-deserved seven-run victory over Rajasthan Royals in a rousing contest in Mumbai.

SCORES IN BRIEF
HYDERABAD: 201 for 4 in 20 overs (Morgan 63, Dhawan 54; Watson 2-36)
RAJASTHAN: 194 for 7 in 20 overs (Smith 68, Faulkner 30; Kumar 3-44)
Result: Hyderabad won by 7 runs.
KOLKATA: 171 for 7 in 20 overs (Yusuf 42, Uthappa 32, Pandey 22, Chawla 22; Tahir 2-46)
DELHI: 158 for 6 in 20 overs (Iyer 40, Tiwary 25, Duminy 25; Chawla 4-32)
Result: Kolkata won by 13 runs.

SUPERCRETE CEMENT

SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY

Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

AZHAR ALI

After Shakib Al Hasan got Misbahul Haq out in the very first over of the day it didn't seem like the batsmen would go on to make big ones. However, Azhar Ali took up the challenge. He remained patient and negotiated the first hour calmly almost putting a dead bat to each and every delivery he faced. However, once the nervy period was over, he shifted gears and took the attack to the tired Bangladesh bowlers. The runs, which first came in the form of singles, started flowing after lunch. He smacked Shakib for a six to bring an end to the nerves and reach his double hundred in style.