

# SPORT



**The Export Leader**



It was all toil for the Bangladesh bowlers including star all-rounder Shikib Al Hasan in the ongoing second Test against Pakistan at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Tigers up against Mount Everest

BISHWAJIT ROY

Tamim Iqbal charmed the crowd with some elegant boundaries in the gentle afternoon sunlight after Shikib Al Hasan had entertained them in the morning during his unbeaten 89-run knock on the third day of the second Test at Mirpur yesterday.

Before leaving the field on unbeaten 32 in the second innings, Tamim created a small piece of history as he became only the second Bangladeshi batsman to cross the 3,000-run mark in Test cricket after Habibul Bashar.

The Chittagonian however has little scope to pay any attention to any such records as the hosts need something special from the opener, similar to the last Test in Khulna, to bring the game into life on the fourth day.

Much to the delight of the 10,000 odd holiday fans who turned up at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Pakistan skipper Misbahul Haq did not choose to enforce the follow-on despite gaining a 354-run first innings lead.

With a huge lead and two more days in hand, Pakistan will sniff their first win on the tour. On the other hand, Bangladesh, with one player short already, lost opener Imrul Kayes in pursuit of their 550-run target and finished the day on 63 for 1.

Tamim and Imrul had a reasonable start before Yasir Shah once again bowled the latter. The ball turned viciously from outside off and went past Imrul's drive. The left-hander was left bemused as the ball went through the gap between his bat and pad and disturbed the stumps.

If it was Pakistan's ploy to wait for the cracks on the pitch to further open, then they were suc-

cessful as quite a few deliveries kept low to further compound Bangladesh's woes.

The task will be tougher for the Tigers against a versatile attack to deprive Pakistan from a victory.

Earlier in the morning, paceman Wahab Riaz pounded in with aggression and took out Soumya Sarkar and Shuvagata Hom in quick succession to make sure Pakistan were in firm control of the Mirpur Test.

A length ball from Riaz did the trick after a barrage of short ones as Soumya hit it in the air and got caught at cover. Shuvagata was out for a golden duck while trying to fend off a short ball and getting caught at gully.

After hitting a few boundaries Tajjul

## 'Won't go down without a fight'

NAIMUL KARIM

To say that the Tigers have an uphill task ahead of them would be an understatement. They can either go for those 487 remaining runs or aim to merely survive at least 180 overs, either way the hosts are likely to give this one away.

The stats are heavily against them. Bangladesh have batted more than 180 overs just once -- at Galle in 2013 when they batted out 196 overs -- and the highest ever total chased down in the fourth innings of a Test is 418.

Even the generally optimistic

Shakib Al Hasan yesterday admitted that there was a very slim chance of surviving the last two days.

"It's difficult to be a soothsayer, but as per the current setting we are expected to lose this Test. The wicket isn't like the one in Khulna. There is uneven bounce here and the pitch is changing.

"All together, it's very difficult. But then again we can get inspiration from the last Test and if the top order can score centuries and have good stands then maybe it can have a good effect in the dressing room," said Shakib.

"Tamim [Iqbal] is set and Mominul [Haque] began well. If we can survive the first hour without

losing wickets then we can hope for something good... what I personally believe is that we won't leave this match without giving a fight," he added.

Pakistan decided against enforcing the follow-on despite taking a hefty lead but the decision surprised Shakib. "I don't know why they did that because they were in a good flow and it was their best time to attack. If we can put up a good stand tomorrow they will be thinking about the decision and it might get them a bit tensed," said the left-hander.

While skipper Mushfiqur Rahim's decision to bowl first invited criticism from various quar-

ters, Shakib felt that the hosts were 'lucky' to have won the toss.

"Had we chosen to bat and lost four or five wickets, the game would have been over by today [Friday]," he said.

He further revealed that apart from the injury of Shahadat Hossain, Jubair Hossain also injured himself right before the start of the Test.

"These kinds of things don't happen in a Test match. Then there were the no-ball wickets as well... maybe they would have been four or five down by lunch on the first day. Anyhow it was an unfortunate series of events," reckoned the left-hander.

## Shakib unhappy himself

NAIMUL KARIM

The crowd went wild yesterday as Shakib Al Hasan hooked and pulled the dangerous Wahab Riaz for a number of boundaries during his unbeaten 89. He also crossed the 1,000-run mark in Mirpur during the course.

However, while his batting was glorious to watch, his bowling wasn't up to the mark. The left-hander, who took two wickets in the two-match series, ended with a bowling average of 162.5, the worst in his 39-match career.

This is also the first time since February 2010 that he took less than four wickets in a series. In fact, in the last three Tests, he scalped just three wickets.

Shakib admitted that he was 'quite disappointed' with the way he bowled in the series. "I think the lack of bowling and confidence are some of the reasons. Maybe a few wickets will boost my confidence.

"I believe that the team is suffering

because of my bowling since I have always had a duty with the ball. It is an aspect that not many realise when I do well... but when I do badly the importance of my bowling can be understood," said Shakib.

Commentators, in the last few weeks, reckoned that the decline in Shakib's bowling form in the longer version was a result of the lack of first-class matches. While he has been a regular member of the Test side, the last time the left-hander took part in a 4-day domestic competition was back in 2012, when he played one National Cricket League game.

The left-hander however differed in opinion.

"I don't think playing domestic cricket would have had a huge effect on my bowling. It's just a mental issue, these things happen.

"It's only been the last three matches when I couldn't bowl as well as my team expected... maybe someone new has to take more responsibility," smiled Shakib.



Pakistan skipper Misbahul Haq plays a square-cut during his 72-ball 82 in the second innings of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Shahadat to have surgery

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will send pacer Shahadat Hossain abroad very soon for surgery on his injured knee.

"He [Shahadat] has suffered damage to ligament and meniscus and surgery is a must for him and the bowler himself has already learnt about the real picture of the injury. We are doing the primary work for the surgery to be done either in India or Australia, but it is the board which will take the final decision," said BCB's physician Debashis Chowdhury yesterday.

Shahadat twisted his right knee during the lunch break on the first day of the second Test against Pakistan at Mirpur after hurting the same knee while bowling the first delivery of the match.

## 'You've to respect the game also'

SPORTS REPORTER

It came as a surprise when Pakistan decided to bat in their second innings rather than enforcing the follow-on despite gaining a 354-run first innings lead after dismissing Bangladesh few minutes before the lunch break on the third day of the final Test at Mirpur yesterday.

Pakistan's spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed however explained the reason behind the decision while he was talking to the press after the day's play.

"We still have two days and plenty of time left. We had a plan to bowl them out within the first hour or so to bowl again, but they [Bangladesh] lingered on a bit forcing our main bowler to bowl a longer spell; also the pitch may behave differently in the final two days. All these elements played a role for the decision," Mushtaq explained.

"This is Test cricket; you don't have to finish the game in three days. You got to be professional and see the limitation of the team and the bowlers as well. You have plenty of time left in the match and you have to respect the game also. It was a team decision and we have to stick to that," he continued.

With big total and two days in hand, Pakistan are in good position to win the Test series but Mushtaq was not ready to take everything for granted.

"Cricket is a funny game. You got to focus on what you can do well. We are in a good position but still we have to bowl well, we have to catch well, we have to field well and have to play very smart cricket and we have to be professional," he warned.

When asked about weather forecast, Mushtaq said: "We have been tracking the weather report, but you cannot control the weather."

## Ireland-England lone ODI washed out

AFP, Malahide

Rain meant only 18 overs were possible as the lone one-day international between Ireland and England at Malahide ended in a washed-out no result on Friday.

The rain, which interrupted play after 79 minutes, did not relent and the umpires called the match off shortly after 3:00pm local time (1400 GMT).

England's debutant captain James Taylor won the toss and had no hesitation in asking their hosts to bat first in overcast conditions.

Taylor's team, without members of the side that featured in the recent third Test defeat by the West Indies in Barbados, featured five players making their first appearance in a one-day international.

Two of them, Mark Wood and David Willey, took a wicket each as Ireland slumped to 56 for four when the rain arrived.

Paul Stirling was the first batsman dismissed, too slow to react to William Porterfield's call for a quick single and wicket-keeper Jonny Bairstow's direct hit left the Middlesex batsman well short.

Porterfield struggled to impose himself against accurate bowling and Wood got his reward when he forced the Ireland captain to play on, for just seven from 27 balls, in the seventh over as Ireland declined to 23 for two.

BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD				
<b>PAKISTAN:</b> First innings 557-8 dec (Azhar 226, Younis 148, Shafiq 107; Tajjul 3-179, Shahid 2-72, Shuvagata 2-76)				
<b>BANGLADESH:</b> First innings (overnight 107-5)				
	R/B	A/B		
Tamim lbw b Junaid	4/4	1/0		
Imrul b Yasir	32/46	6/0		
Mominul c Sarfaraz b Junaid	13/34	2/0		
Mahmudullah c Azhar b Riaz	28/32	4/0		
Shakib not out	89/91	14/2		
Mushfiqur b Yasir	12/24	3/0		
Soumya c Azhar b Riaz	3/13	0/0		
Shuvagata c Shafiq b Riaz	0/1	0/0		
Tajjul b Hafeez	15/22	3/0		
Shahid c Azhar b Yasir	1/20	0/0		
Shahadat absent hurt	-	-		
Extras: (lb-2, w-2, nb-2)	6			
Total: (All out in 47.3 overs)	203			
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-38, 3-69, 4-85, 5-107, 6-113, 7-119, 8-140, 9-203.				
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Junaid	6	2	26	2
Imran	7	0	31	0
Riaz	15	2	73	3
Yasir	15.3	4	58	3
Hafeez	4	1	13	1
<b>PAKISTAN:</b> Second innings	<b>R/B</b>	<b>A/B</b>		
Hafeez c Mushfiqur b Shahid	0/4	0/0		
Aslam c Mahmudullah b Shahid	8/39	0/0		
Azhar c Shuvagata b Soumya	25/38	4/0		
Younis c & b Tajjul	39/55	4/0		
Misbahul c sub (Hasan) b Mahmudullah	82/72	9/3		
Shafiq b Shuvagata	15/25	2/0		
Sarfaraz not out	18/14	2/0		
Extras: (lb-2, w-6)	8			
Total: (For 10 wickets dec in 41.1 overs)	195			
Did not bat: Riaz, Yasir, Junaid, Imran.				
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-25, 3-49, 4-107, 5-140, 6-195.				
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Shahid	10	4	23	2
Tajjul	10	0	56	1
Soumya	9	0	45	1
Shakib	8	0	43	0
Shuvagata	2	0	18	1
Mahmudullah	2.1	0	8	1
<b>BANGLADESH:</b> Second innings	<b>R/B</b>	<b>A/B</b>		
Tamim not out	32/42	6/0		
Imrul b Yasir	16/29	3/0		
Mominul not out	15/13	3/0		
Extras:	6			
Total: (For 1 wkt in 14 overs)	63			
To bat: Mahmudullah, Shakib, Mushfiqur, Soumya, Shuvagata, Tajjul, Shahadat, Shahid.				
Fall of wickets: 1-48				
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Junaid	5	0	19	0
Imran	4	1	22	0
Yasir	3	0	7	1
Riaz	2	0	15	0