

BANGLADESH V PAKISTAN  
NEW ERA BEGINS HERE



## Shikib going back to IPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Shikib Al Hasan is likely to play two more IPL matches for his side Kolkata Knight Riders.

The ace all-rounder, who has so far played only two matches for KKR, needed to return and prepare for the just-concluded home series against Pakistan and was now seeking permission from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to play the rest of the tournament for KKR.

"Yes, he has expressed his desire to play the IPL and his application is under process as we need to talk with the team management," said BCB's CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury. The board will most likely allow Shikib -- who had a poor show with the ball in the two-match Test series and got only two wickets -- to play KKR's next two games against Mumbai Indians on May 14 and Rajasthan Royals on May 16 in Mumbai and advised him to join the Tigers' fitness camp on May 20.

The preparations will be in full swing for the coming home series against India, who will arrive in Dhaka on June 7 to play a one-off Test and three one-day internationals, beginning from May 30; but before that the players will take part in a gym session on May 18 and fitness session on May 20.

The national players will also play a longer-version Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) match that will start from May 24.



Bangladesh's second innings fell like a pack of cards after Tamim Iqbal (L) was dismissed by Pakistan paceman Imran Khan inside the first hour on the fourth morning at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



## An opportunity lost

AL-AMIN

We have a tendency of being lukewarm while appreciating good things, especially which are not of our own. Take for instance Pakistan opener Azhar Ali scoring his maiden double hundred and raising his bat in Mirpur on the second day of the second and final Test on Thursday. But unfortunately there were not many noticeable in the stands, which stood up and clapped a fantastic effort by the cricketer.

Of course the Tigers' fans will root for their beloved team and will cheer every single their batsmen take, a wicket their bowlers grab or a good fielding effort in the middle. But it is also equally important for the knowledgeable Bangladesh cricket fans to learn and appreciate the value of good things of the opposition team.

Weren't we entertained by Wahab Riaz, a left-arm fast bowler who has reminded us how exciting fast bowling can be with his express pace and short stuff? Wasn't Yasir Shah, who gave us the impression of two leg spinning legends -- Shane Warne and Mushtaq Ahmed -- are operating as one in Mirpur in the last two-odd days?

It is beyond any doubt the home series against Pakistan was by far the best for Bangladesh in terms of result as well as the full value of entertainment it provided. A 3-0 ODI series whitewash followed by a first-ever T20 win against Pakistan. If that was not enough, a magnificent draw in the first Test in Khulna riding on a world record second innings 312-run opening stand between Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes was something the fans will remember for a long time.

Bangladesh might not have risen to the expectation in the second Test which they ultimately lost by a margin of 328 runs with more than a day to spare, a success Pakistan would carry back home as some sort of solace.

It was understandably disappointing for the Bangladesh cricket fans, who were expecting a fight from the home side on the fourth day but painfully watched their batting heroes falling one after another attempting spectacular shots.

It was expected that our batsmen would struggle in trying conditions of Mirpur where the wicket not only offered turn but also produced variable bounce. But without criticising how badly we batted, be it in the first innings or in the second, it was more importantly a lost opportunity for our batsmen from gaining valuable

experience even in defeat. Tamim, Imrul, Shikib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, and Mominul Haq are our batting heroes. And they were up against Wahab and Yasir on a responsive wicket twice. Consider some of them playing 20 overs each against Wahab and Yasir; it could have been worth more than 200 days of batting in the nets or playing 200 first-class matches for them.

Australian batsman Shane Watson is considered one of the most exciting pullers in contemporary cricket. What he did against Wahab during that magical World Cup spell in Adelaide was an act of how to survive. It was a wise move and if our batsmen had applied themselves Shane's way, it could have done them a world of good. Instead what most of them did was more like an act of driving their fear away when a more appropriate approach should have been watching those turns and bounces and taking a few blows on the body. And it would have only bolstered their confidence ahead of yet another demanding series against India, who will be arriving here on June 7 for one Test and three ODIs.

It was probably an invaluable opportunity lost for both the Tigers and their fans to show some measured appreciation to their opposition.

### BD-PAK SCOREBOARD

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 557 for 8 declared (Azhar 226, Younis 148, Shafiq 107) and second innings 195 for 6 declared (Misbah 82; Shahid 2-23)

**BANGLADESH:** First innings 203 (Shahid 89 not out; Yasir 3-58, Riaz 3-73) and second innings 162/102

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Junaid	10.5	1	45	1
Imran	11	1	56	2
Yasir	21	3	73	4
Riaz	11	1	36	1
Hafeez	3	0	3	1

**Result:** Pakistan won by 328 runs and clinched the 2-Test series 1-0.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Azhar Ali.

## 'Wrong 'cos it didn't work'

NAIMUL KARIM

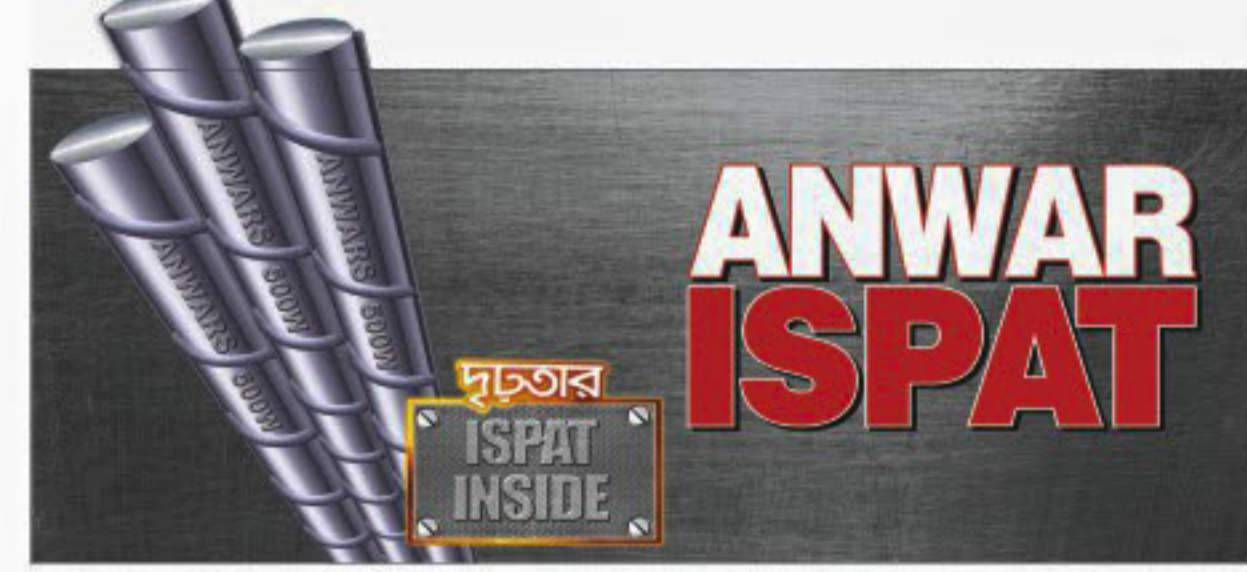
Dropped catches, an injured ring finger and his worst batting average in a series, 11.00, in the last five years; Mushfiqur Rahim will want to bury the memories of the just-concluded Test series against Pakistan as soon as possible.

Now, there's no question regarding the wicketkeeper-batsman's ability or his commitment to the team, he still remains Bangladesh's most consistent batsman. However, the chink in his armour becomes visible when he takes certain decisions as captain, with the latest being his choice to bowl in the Mirpur Test.

It therefore wasn't a surprise that that was the very first issue raised in the post-match press conference yesterday.

"We had three pacers in the side including Soumya [Sarkar] and to bowl first was a collective decision of the team management. If it seems wrong then that's only because the outcome wasn't favourable. If it was, then people wouldn't have talked as much," said Mushfiqur.

When asked if the team management had considered the



top order's good batting form and whether they thought of giving them a chance to continue that run he said, "That was obviously in our minds. To be honest, many of you thought that we should have batted first, but we reckoned that the pitch would have helped the bowlers more in that session."

"If Shahadat [Hossain] weren't injured the outcome could have been different. But yes, what I feel bad about is that we couldn't bat up to our expectation," he added.

Mushfiqur's initial argument was logical. After all, the Tigers could have applied more pressure with an additional pacer and they also could have had two extra wickets in the first session had their bowlers not overstepped.

However, the statements that he made, about his bowling attack, further into the press conference, left many confused.

The skipper was disappointed with his side's bowling attack and believed that even Zimbabwe had a 'more effective' pace attack than the Tigers.

"Our bowlers are way behind our batsmen in terms of effectiveness. They need to work harder. They need to practise harder and learn how to take 20 wickets. We have been able to do that only against Zimbabwe."

"The kind of wickets we play on in our first-class circuit, it allows pacers to bowl just 10 to 12 overs and then the spinners dominate. I know I have said this number of times, but we need wickets on which pacers can improve themselves," he said.

"We have a lot to work in the bowling area. Because when batsmen come out to bat and see that they are 600 runs behind then it becomes difficult for them," he added.

Mushfiqur's statements truly reflected the dire scenario of Bangladesh's bowlers. Shikib Al Hasan hasn't been in form, Mohammad Shahid was making his debut, Shahadat Hossain hasn't generally been a wicket-taker, while Soumya only just began his international career as a batsman.

Taking all those statements into account, the decision to bowl first continues to remain a puzzle.

## SUPERCRETE CEMENT

**SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY**

Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

## YASIR SHAH

Yasir Shah's turners were bound to be dangerous as the Test match progressed into the fourth day, and the leg-spinner, with his four-wicket haul in the second innings, lived up to the expectation. His flighted turners were bowled at the right lines and confused Bangladesh's top-order. If that wasn't enough, the hosts also had to battle against the googly, which he slyly slipped in every now and then. Shah's 4 for 73 ensured that the game ended before the Tea on the fourth day.

## 'Regained our confidence'

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan skipper Misbahul Haq felt the Test series win against Bangladesh has helped regain the team's confidence following defeats in the ODI series and the lone T20I.

Speaking to reporters after the end of the second Test in Mirpur yesterday, the 40-year-old batsman said it was really important for his side to regain the confidence themselves and also the confidence of their supporters.

"I think overall it was a good performance. I think we dominated throughout this Test series. Even the first Test was pretty much in our hands but there was a really good performance by Bangladesh to save the match. But I think overall if you see it in both the Test matches, we dominated throughout," said Misbah.

When asked if it was a 'face-saving' win, Misbah replied in the negative. "I think we should be aware of the fact that there has been a lot of changes. Bangladesh team was more experienced in the T20 and one-day cricket. They have been playing with the same team for the last four or five years. So they were having that edge and I think they deserved that victory."

But in the Tests, everything was the other way round. We were the more experienced team; we were doing really well, so I think we proved that again," said the 40-year-old.

Misbah's decision not to enforce the follow-on on Bangladesh raised quite a few eyebrows. He however cleared his stance by saying that he did not want to give Bangladesh any chance at all.

"To me, you sometimes take decisions if you have the chance, to totally take the opposition out of the game

so that there is no chance whatsoever for the opposition to get back in the game. When you have that much time, and you have the opportunity to rest your bowlers and you know the pitch will deteriorate every hour every session, the sensible decision is to first take your opponent out of the game, and then take your time to bowl your opponent out by exerting pressure," said Misbah.

Pakistan coach Waqar Younis, who was equally happy with the win, believed that the more experienced side had aced the series.

Waqar, however, reckoned that the hosts had begun the second Test 'on the backfoot'.

"I got this feeling that they (Bangladesh) did not come hard in the second Test. They did not really look to win the Test. They were probably thinking to draw the match and that's why they were left behind," said Waqar.

## Mominul equals Viru, Gauti & Viv

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh might have ended the Test series against Pakistan on a dull note having lost the second Test by 328 runs within four days, but it was not so doom and gloom for young Mominul Haque, who recovered from a rough patch during in the World Cup by scoring some healthy runs in the Test series.

The 23-year-old left-hander scored 182 runs in four innings, including

### MOMINUL HAQUE CAREER STATS

Tests: 14; Runs: 1380; HS: 181; Avg: 60.0; 100s: 4; 50s: 9

**50 IN CONSECUTIVE TESTS**

12: AB de Villiers

11: Mominul Haque, Vivian Richards, Gautam Gambhir, Virender Sehwag.

the 68 in the second innings of the second Test yesterday, which made him only the fourth batsman to rack up 50-plus scores in eleven consecutive Tests. The other three to have achieved the same feat are: Virender Sehwag, Vivian Richards and Gautam Gambhir, with only South Africa's ODI skipper AB de Villiers having scored 50s in 12 consecutive Tests.

Mominul's achievement went somewhat unnoticed. The batsman, who hasn't been able to convert those 50s into hundreds lately, didn't even prefer to talk about these statistics. Mominul has nine 50s and four hundreds in his Test career.

The batsman from Cox's Bazar will have his opportunity to equalling De Villiers's record when Bangladesh play against India here in the lone Test match next month.

## Run-fest continues

SPORTS REPORTER

The run-flow continued unabated in the ongoing round of the Bangladesh Cricket League as several batsmen thrived on centuries on the third day of the four-day competition.

In reply to Central Zone's 413, South Zone smacked 538 for 8 by stumps yesterday, and against all odds, managed to take a sizeable lead in Fatullah. The run-riot was driven by three centuries as opener Shahriar Nafees scored 161, young Mosaddek Hossain scored 153 while former national all-rounder Shohag Gazi smacked 106 off 102 balls. While Mosaddek hit seven sixes,

Gazi hit eight. Anamul Haque, too, contributed with a fluent 83.

The day's other game in Chittagong, too, witnessed run-fest where North Zone scored 384 runs before being bowled out. Former national opener Junaid Siddique cruised his way to 193 before being run out by Nafees Iqbal.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**EAST ZONE:** 473  
**NORTH ZONE:** 384 in 107.5 overs (Junaid 193; Nazmul 3-100, Kapali 2-34)  
**CENTRAL ZONE:** 413  
**SOUTH ZONE:** 538 for 8 (Shahriar 161, Mosaddek 153, Shohag 106 not out; Mosharrarf 7-171)



Finally, there was something to cheer for Pakistan. Here they celebrate after their 1-0 Test series win yesterday at Mirpur, where they suffered a 3-0 ODI whitewash and a T20 defeat.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED