

# SPORT



TOUGHEST  
BALL

টেক্সট ডিজাইন  
অর্জিত থেকে  
লাল সর্বাঙ্গের বিজয়



GPH  
GPH ispat



Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim (L) shakes hands with his South Africa counterpart Hashim Amla after the second Test ended in a draw following the abandonment of the fifth day's play due to wet outfield at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO:  
FIROZ AHMED

## Mushy not happy too

SPORTS REPORTER



Nobody could be happy with the way the second and final Test and with it the two-match series ended yesterday and Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim was no exception. When many had raised question for choosing this rainy season for the series, the home side's skipper however believed that Cyclone Komen worsened the situation.

"Just because of the cyclone the weather got worse. I reckon we could have had a result in this Test in three days, considering the wicket," was the observation from the little man who also reminded of the limitation arranging the series in this season.

"We could have gotten plenty of lessons had we played -- to bat on this difficult wicket with plenty of patience and then score runs. These are things that we missed to take lessons from. I don't think we played very badly. I think 246 is a very good score on this wicket. It's not as though, oh the rains came and saved us. I think on any other wicket this score is equivalent to 350. Many were telling me that it's good that it has rained, but personally I never felt that because I batted on that wicket and I knew that it would have been difficult to score on that wicket. So I think in this Test we have learnt a lot," Mushfiqur summarised the first day's performance.

Like the other series, Mushfiqur reminded that changes in domestic cricket could only help them to get big scores at international level.

"For example, look at Liton [Das]. He scores freely in domestic cricket. But why can't he do it here? Because of the pressure. We aren't able to sustain that pressure. So at least in domestic cricket if we have a good wicket that will help us. If that happens we will be able to score 70 or 80 runs here if we can score a 100 or 150 in domestic cricket.

"Right now what happens is that if we score 100s in domestic cricket, we are scoring 30, 40 or 50 in Tests. This is a big difference. This won't change overnight. We have to keep this in mind in domestic cricket. We have to play as long as possible, whether we score 200 or 250 we have to bat for as long as possible. This is our next challenge and we have two more Tests this year, hopefully we can change that," he reflected on the failure of converting the good starts into big ones.

The Bangladesh Test skipper was hopeful about a good series against Australia, who will arrive in Dhaka on September 28 to play two Tests, but right now they want a break and enjoy their recent success.

"As a team we have set a benchmark in the last few series. We have played well in both the Test and ODI series, although there is plenty of room for improvement. We have to make sure that we continue that and play well against Australia. I think now is the time to enjoy this moment for the achievements that we have made and enjoy the break. We have a fitness camp coming up and then there's a skill

## 'A bizarre series'

SPORTS REPORTER



The inevitable took place at Mirpur yesterday. The second Test between Bangladesh and South Africa has been called off and the match ended as a draw.

While that was an ending that was predicted, but not many expected the match to be called off at as early as 9:00

areas on the ground that needed to dry up and that that could happen only after the sun came out.

"And we wouldn't have been able to play too many sessions after that. So I guess, a decision was taken considering all these circumstances," said the skipper.

"We were eager to play. We were planning to declare today. South Africa would have the whole day to face. The result doesn't matter. It would have been good had we gotten some game-time at least. We could have gained something.

"To be able to play against the number one team would have been good for us. We could have learnt aplenty, especially against this disciplined bowling attack," he added.

His South Africa counterpart Hashim Amla shared a similar sense of frustration and even went on to describe the Test series as one of the most 'bizarre' series he has ever played.

"We were really surprised by how dry the outfield was. In South Africa if we had rains like these in the last three days, the whole field would have been under water.

"The drainage has been very good, but although it's not raining now the outfield is pretty damp and probably has an element of risk in it for the players," said Amla.

"And it is the most, one of the most bizarre Test series I have ever played. I don't think I have played a Test series where out of 10 days of cricket, six days have been rained off. So it's been unique in that sense. But it's damp so there's nothing much we can do," he added.

## Unfulfilled Amla

SPORTS REPORTER



South Africa skipper Hashim Amla was a disappointed man in the manner in which his side's tour ended yesterday. Not only have the consistent rains compelled the visitors to return home with 'unfulfilled conditions', the top-ranked Test side have also lost five rating points as a result of the drawn series.

While it was something bound to happen, as per the rules, the champion cricketer though wasn't too impressed.

"It's a difficult one to understand really. You

of fit to be playing cricket, but that's not my decision.

"That's the decision of whoever makes the calls. We played some one-day games and we got those completed. Maybe the one-dayers might be a bit more suitable, I don't know, it's for the guys to judge," he added.

While the rains didn't allow the South Africans to complete the goals that they had for this series, Amla still believed that there were quite a few positives.

"Certainly in the first Test our opening partnership was really good. I know it was just two innings but that's a positive. We saw glimpses of talent from your younger players.

"I was joking with the guys that I think we came on this tour with a purpose and thanking that at least Dale [Steyn] got his 400 wickets.

"Had we batted first then he would have had to wait another three months before getting a chance to get that wicket," quipped Amla.

"So, a few positives here and there. But with so little cricket it's difficult to be so concise," he added.

Amla was also impressed with the way Bangladesh played in this series and believed that the Tigers would soon be able to do well in Tests as well.

"Bangladesh has definitely improved in the last couple of years. Their one-day records have been better than all the other formats. But there's no doubt that a team that improves in ODIs, they are probably naturally going to improve in Test cricket as well.

"I believe they are now off for a few months and they have got Australia coming here. So I think the more Test cricket they play the better for them, no doubt about that. Obviously Australia being a good team, it will be a good

### BD-SA SCOREBOARD

**BANGLADESH:** First innings 246 for 8 (Imrul 30, Mominul 40, Mahmudullah 35, Mushfiqur 65, Shakib 35; Steyn 3-30, Morkel 1-45, Duminy 3-27)  
**SOUTH AFRICA:** Amla (capt), Van Zyl, Elgar, Du Plessis, Duminy, Vilas, Bavuma, Morkel, Philander, Steyn, Harmer.  
**Result:** Match drawn and 2-match series ends 0-0.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Mushfiqur Rahim.  
**Player-of-the-series:** Dale Steyn.



can understand if it's a 1-1 draw where you have played enough cricket to make a true reflection. So perhaps this is something that can be relooked at from the ICC perspective.

"I mean us losing points seems a little strange considering we haven't played a lot of cricket but I am sure that's something the ICC will probably have a look at," said Amla at the post-match press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

When asked if the events that took place during this series was a message to those responsible regarding hosting series during this time of the year in Bangladesh, he said, "I don't know what the weather is like in Bangladesh, but certainly if it's like this then it doesn't kind

difficult to be so concise," he added.

Amla was also impressed with the way Bangladesh played in this series and believed that the Tigers would soon be able to do well in Tests as well.

"Bangladesh has definitely improved in the last couple of years. Their one-day records have been better than all the other formats. But there's no doubt that a team that improves in ODIs, they are probably naturally going to improve in Test cricket as well.

"I believe they are now off for a few months and they have got Australia coming here. So I think the more Test cricket they play the better for them, no doubt about that. Obviously Australia being a good team, it will be a good

**SUPERCRETE CEMENT**  
**SUPER PERFORMER OF THE SERIES**  
Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

### DALE STEYN



Rain might have played havoc in the two-Test series between Bangladesh and South Africa, but it failed to stop a determined Proteas pace demon Dale Steyn from joining the exclusive club of 400 wicket-takers. The right-arm quick struck thrice in the first Test in Chittagong,

which was hit by rain after the third day's play, to move to within a wicket of the elite club.

He reached the landmark on the first morning of the second Test in Dhaka by having Tigers opener Tamim Iqbal caught behind. The fiery fast bowler also claimed two more wickets to turn the tide around before rain intervened so much so that it spoiled the next four day's play. The series ended in a damp draw but Steyn at least heads home happy with that unique landmark and the man-of-the-series trophy to show for.

## Abandoned for a third time!

SPORTS REPORTER



While the race for the champions in the Manyavar Bangladesh Premier League has already been sealed, with Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club comfortably defending their title, the remainder of the league is being stretched beyond schedule, thanks to a particular fixture between third-placed Sheikh Russel KC and relegation threatened Farashganj SC, which has now been abandoned for a third time.

This fixture, which started on Friday, was deferred to the next day after only four minutes of play was possible due to heavy rainfall. There was less rain on Saturday, yet the match had to be abandoned as one of the teams felt the pitch was unplayable. Even though the other team were eager to take field, the match commissioner, after much deliberation, decided in favour of abandoning the match. It could be argued that a number of matches during this

monsoon season have been held on the soggy and unplayable pitch of the Bangabandhu National Stadium, thanks to the poor drainage system in place and the lack of options at hand.

However, things took a comical turn when the match in question that started yesterday after a day's break was abandoned for a third time after only 14 minutes of play. This time though there was no hand of the weather gods in the affair, rather it was a refereeing decision and the resulting unprofessionalism on part of the teams, which led to the abandonment.

Sheikh Russel, fighting to claim the second position, earned a spot kick following a foul on their striker Mithun Chowdhury inside the Farashganj danger zone. Mithun's teammate Jean Jules Ikanga duly dispatched the spot kick, but as he was taking the kick, some of the players rushed inside the box, including Sheikh Russel striker Kingsley Chigozie, who elbowed Farashganj's Mahafuz Babu. The referee, Joshimuiddin, ordered a

retake of the spot kick while showing the culprit, Chigozie, a yellow card. The decision did not go down well with the Farashganj players and they demanded that a red card be shown to the Nigerian. As the referee didn't pay heed to this demand, the Farashganj players left the field and never returned within the stipulated time, forcing the officials to call it a day.

Match commissioner Sheikh Badruddin informed that they would submit their report to the league committee for a ruling about the match.

Whatever the decisions come, the repeated abandonment of the match and the resulting logjam has forced the game's governing body to reschedule the fixtures, according to which the league will now end a week later than previously scheduled July 13. That will, in turn, mean that the time span for Bangladesh national team's camp for the August 29 friendly in Malaysia and subsequent FIFA World Cup Qualifying fixtures against Australia and Jordan



Kingsley Chigozie (far right) and Mahafuz Babu engage in a tussle as Jean Jules Ikanga is about to take the spot kick during the BPL fixture between Sheikh Russel and Farashganj at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO:  
STAR