

SPORTS



A solid performer in Bangladesh's domestic circuit, Abdul Mazid showed that he has much to offer in internationals too as he blended in a mix of patience and aggression for his 95-ball 106 for the BCB XI against England XI in the first day of the second two-day tour match at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Lesser-knowns rule the day

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

An unexpected name came to the fore on the first day of England XI's second warm-up encounter with the BCB XI at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

TOUR MATCH
Abdul Mazid, a 25-year-old opener who had so far plied his trade in the domestic circuit as a consistent if not brilliant performer, turned on the heat on the visitors in more ways than one in the already hot conditions in the morning session. He scored a 95-ball 106 as BCB XI were all out for 294 late in the day, before England XI played out four overs for two runs without losing a wicket.

An England attack comprising almost their entire tour arsenal was put to the sword as the niceties of seeing off the shine were summarily dismissed by the flashing blade of the Dhaka Division and Victoria SC batsman.

At the other end was a struggling Soumya Sarkar, who later retained his position in the Test squad. By the time he had offered a catch to cover fielder Gareth Batty off Chris Woakes in the eighth over to be dismissed for four,

BCB XI had reached 51 and his lesser-known partner 42 off 29.

In the company of the young Nazmul Hossain Shanto, who seemed comfortable against England's mixture of pace and spin, Mazid blossomed further. The terribly slow outfield reduced the value for shots hit along the ground, so Mazid adopted the aerial route.

He hit 14 boundaries and a six before lunch and was brutal whenever the England bowler's erred. Anything too full, be it from the spinners or pacers, was deposited over mid off for boundaries. He rocked back for anything short and employed a whip-like pull. Pacers Woakes, Ben Stokes, Steven Finn and Stuart Broad along with spinners Gareth Batty, Moeen Ali and Zafar Ansari were treated with equal disdain.

Such was his dominance that he went to lunch on 92 off 86 balls, narrowly missing out on a rare century in a session as Nazmul played out a maiden before lunch, which BCB XI reached on 227 for one.

But curiously, he did not resume after lunch, the official story being that he was suffering from cramps. Instead Mominul Haque, not even in the team list before the match, came out to bat with Nazmul and was bowled by Moeen Ali for one.

England XI, mainly through left-arm spinner Zafar Ansari who finished with four for 68, then managed to peg back BCB XI after a 77-run partnership between Mosaddek Hossain (47 off 49) and the impressive Nazmul.

Nazmul was batting in assured fashion, mixing caution with aggression as he scored 72 off 130 deliveries before mistiming a lofted attempt off an Ansari short ball and offering a simple catch to Ben Duckett at point.

The 150 or so spectators finally got what they were waiting for early in the third session as Mazid returned, after Tanveer Haider was caught behind off Broad in the 64th over, to complete his ton.

He did not waste any time, taking a single off the first ball he faced from Stuart Broad, before cutting Finn for four. The 100 was completed with a lofted hit over cover for two in the over after that. A boundary and a two followed off Broad, but in the same over he was bowled trying to heave over the top.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BCB XI: First innings 294 (Mazid 106, Nazmul 72, Mosaddek 47, Nurul 39; Broad 2-43, Ansari 4-68, Batty 2-55)
ENGLAND XI: First innings 2 for no loss.

Four newcomers in squad for first Test

SAKEB SUBHAN from Chittagong



Necessity and strategy combined to bring about a total of six changes and four new names to the Bangladesh squad for the first Test against England starting in Chittagong this Thursday.

Sabbir Rahman, Mehedi Hassan Miraz, Nurul Hasan and Kamrul Islam Rabbi were the fortunate four to see their names in a spin-heavy Bangladesh Test squad for the first time. The two Test players returning to the squad are off-spinning all-rounder Shuvagata Hom Chowdhury and pacer Shafiqul Islam.

Quite unusually, Shafiqul and Rabbi are the only two pacers in the squad, which while hinting that there is a debut in the offing for the latter, points more strongly to a flat Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium pitch on Thursday. While there are precious few pace options, Al-Amin Hossain may feel aggrieved, as he has been known to be an effective bowler against left-handers, a style of batsmen England are packed with.

SQUAD

Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarkar, Imrul Kayes, Mominul Haque, Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad, Shuvagata Hom, Mushfiqur Rahim (Captain), Sabbir Rahman, Mehedi Hassan Miraz, Shafiqul Islam, Tajjul Islam, Kamrul Islam Rabbi and Nurul Hasan.

England's left-handers, according to chief selector Minhajul Abedin, was the reason that two off-spinners -- Shuvagata and Under-19 graduate Mehedi -- were included. Shuvagata, who is more a batting all-rounder as his haul of 109 wickets from 60 first-class games suggests, seems to be the only really contentious choice.

Miraz's elevation on the other hand is just reward for his success at the Under-19 level, where he captained Bangladesh to the semifinals in this year's U-19 World Cup at home, and his consistent performances in

first-class cricket -- where he averages 40.3 with the bat and 23.48 with the ball for Khulna Division.

"He has been playing well in Under-19 and domestic cricket. We think that he has a lot to offer and we have a lot to gain from him in longer-version cricket," Minhajul said about Miraz. When asked if the youngster who will turn 19 a day after the end of the first Test was ready, the chief selector replied: "Since we have picked him, of course he is ready."

One young player who has retained his place is the troubled Soumya Sarkar, who was out for four yesterday and scored a subdued 33 in the first warm-up, was given some support by head coach Chandika Hathurusingha.

"We are worried about his form as well," said the Sri Lankan. "He probably wants more runs under his belt to get his confidence back; that is why we have given him more chances. Form is temporary, he is a class player. He is still in our plans."

Minhajul added that the ability of Rabbi, the Barisal Division captain, to bowl at pace with the old ball was crucial in the decision to include him.

"I enjoy playing the longer version much more than the shorter version. I have been captaining the Barisal team for a while and I have a special focus on longer version," Rabbi told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday. "I like to bowl reverse with the older ball. This is just the start; hopefully I can do well."

One inclusion that was not surprising but will bring much joy for fans as he is already a star in the shorter formats was Sabbir Rahman's. Hathurusingha said that he will try to look for ways to get him into the 11 come Thursday.

"I feel really happy to be in the Test side. There were many people who said that I was fit only for ODIs and T20 but that's not right," said Sabbir yesterday. "I'll try to prove that I am good in the longer version as well. The thing that I like the most about Test cricket is that I can play dot balls and get time to get set. I think that will help me a lot. Hopefully I can do well."



SABBIIR RAHMAN

NURUL HASAN

KAMRUL ISLAM

MEHEDI HASSAN

Siddikur ends at 57th

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished at 57th position in the Venetian Macao Open which concluded at the Macau Golf and Country Club yesterday. The two-time Asian Tour winner carded two-over-par (73) in the final round on Sunday for an aggregate score of two-over-par (286).

Having done admirably in the first two rounds when he had placed himself inside the top ten, the 31-year-old golfer endured a freefall in the third round after a disastrous six-over-par (77).

The title race, meanwhile, went down to the wire after a tie between India's Anirban Lahiri and Thailand's Pavit Tangkamolprasert, with the Thai youngster coming out on top to clinch the title of the 1.1 million dollar event.

A brief burst in the spotlight

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Two days before the start of the ODI series against England, Abdul Mazid, as part of the Dhaka Division team, had just finished a National Cricket League four-dayer against Khulna Division. He had scored 96 in his only first-class outing in this rain-marred season.

Three days later the consistent but so far unspectacular opener was named in a BCB XI team to face England XI in a two-day warm-up. In the first day of that match yesterday, he smote his far better-known opponents to all parts of the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong for a 95-ball 106.

"They like to bowl in one spot; they don't change their lines and lengths too much," was his assessment of England's bowling.

Although his strike rate paints the batsman going hell for leather, yesterday's innings was not so. His 16 fours and one six were punctuated by 52 dot balls.

"I tried to play the ball on its merit," he said. "Maybe I got more bad balls, which is why I had more scoring shots."

Mazid is no stranger to centuries -- his highest first-class score is the unbeaten 253 against Dhaka Metropolis in February 2015 -- but is realistic enough to know that this innings against the tourists is not enough to elevate him to the highest level. He was speaking moments after the Test squad was named, and the 25-year-old was not in it.

"I am not thinking about that. It is important to keep performing, especially in matches like this, but in the end it is up to the selectors."

Yasir second fastest to 100

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan's leg-spinner Yasir Shah became the second joint-fastest bowler to take 100 wickets in all Test cricket on the fourth day of the first match against West Indies in Dubai on Sunday.

The 30-year-old dismissed tail-ender Miguel Cummins to complete 100 wickets in his 17th Test match, the fastest Pakistani to the milestone.

England's right-arm medium-pacer George Lohmann reached 100 Test wickets in just 16 Test matches in 1896 which still is a world record in Test cricket's 140-year-old history.

Player	Matches
George Lohmann (ENG)	16
Charlie Turner (AUS)	17
Sydney Barnes (ENG)	17
Clarrie Grimmett (AUS)	17
Yasir Shah (PAK)	17

I wanted Taskin in the warm-up: Chandika

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha sought to clear the air yesterday about the discussion surrounding fast bowler Taskin Ahmed's Test prospects by saying that it was he who insisted upon Taskin's inclusion in the two-day warm-up between BCB XI and England XI.

The Sri Lankan's clarity came a day following his apparently strong opposition to talk about Taskin playing longer-version cricket. On Saturday, Hathurusingha hinted that Taskin had not played any four-day cricket (he did play 10 first-class matches, albeit three-and-a-half years ago) and added: "I don't want to destroy somebody's career."

He insisted yesterday that Taskin was included in the warm-up not for any immediate Test debut but just to see how he fared with the red ball in hand. "I think a lot of you got it wrong," Hathurusingha chuckled in a press

conference at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday. "I talked about the coming two Test matches. We have a plan for him to play four-day cricket. Because the NCL [National Cricket League] stopped, I suggested that they put him here -- you all wrote that I didn't know he was playing."

"That is his process for getting into Test cricket. If he keeps performing like this, he will most likely play Test cricket in favourable conditions," Hathurusingha said, perhaps referring to the 'favourable' conditions in New Zealand at the end of the year.

Hathurusingha's opposition to Taskin's Test prospects on Saturday seemed at odds with the noises heard out of the management a couple of days earlier that did not completely shut the door on a Taskin debut in the second Test. That in turn raised speculation about there being discord between the newly revamped selection panel of which Hathurusingha -- along with the three selectors, the team manager and cricket operations committee -- is a part.



TASKIN AHMED

Kohli anchors India to victory

AFP, Dharamsala

Bowlers set up India's comprehensive six-wicket win over New Zealand in the first one-day international as batting mainstay Virat Kohli anchored the hosts' chase in the low-scoring encounter in Dharamsala on Sunday.

The hosts, who were chasing a modest 191 for victory, rode on the 60-run partnership between Kohli (85 not out) and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni to center home in 33.1 overs.

But it was the bowling led by debutant medium-pacer Hardik Pandya (3-31) and Amit Mishra (3-49) that helped topple New Zealand for a lowly 190 and set the platform for the big win.

New Zealand pacer Doug Bracewell checked India's brisk start after getting Rohit Sharma lbw for 14 after the batsman missed a fuller delivery while trying to flick it on the leg side.

Ajinkya Rahane did not last long after losing his opening partner as he was caught behind off James Neesham for 33, his knock laced with 4 fours and 2 sixes.

Kohli then put on 40 runs with Manish Pandey (17) as the duo looked to stabilise the chase at the picturesque Dharamsala ground.

SCORES IN BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: 190 all out in 43.5 overs (Latham 79 not out, Bracewell 15, Southee 55; Yadav 2-31, Pandya 3-31, Jadhav 2-6, Mishra 3-49)

INDIA: 194 for 4 in 33.1 overs (Rahane 33, Kohli 85 not out, Pandey 17, Dhoni 21; Bracewell 1-44, Neesham 1-40, Sodhi 1-34)
Result: India won by six wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Hardik Pandya.

Bishoo's eight-for sets the stage

AFP, Dubai



West Indies leg-spinner Devendar Bishoo took a career best 8-49 and his Pakistani rival Yasir Shah completed 100 wickets

on Sunday as the first day-night Test was poised for an exciting finish in Dubai.

Bishoo finished with 8-49 to wreck Pakistan to a paltry 123 in their second innings before West Indies -- set a daunting 346 to win -- finished the fourth day on 95-2.

West Indies will need another 251 runs for an improbable win while Pakistan's hopes rest on Shah to take a

1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Earlier it was Pakistani leg-spinner Shah who became the second joint-fastest bowler to take 100 wickets in Test cricket during his 5-121 which bundled West Indies out for 357 in their first innings.

Pakistan, who scored 579-3 declared in their first innings, did not enforce the follow-on despite West Indies coming up 23 runs short of the follow-on target of 380.

West Indies, who hold the record for the highest run-chase in all Test cricket with their 418-7 against Australia at Antigua in 2003, kept Shah at bay with Leon Johnson (47) and Darren Bravo (26

not out) adding 60 for the second wicket.

West Indies lost opener Kraig Brathwaite for six when he was bowled by fast bowler Mohammad Amir who also dismissed Johnson leg-before.

Marlon Samuels was the other not out batsman on four on a day when wicket fell like nine pins.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PAKISTAN: First innings 579 for 3 declared
WEST INDIES: First innings 357
PAKISTAN: Second innings 123 all out (Aslam 44, Azam 21; Bishoo 8-49)
WEST INDIES: Second innings 95 for 2 (Johnson 47, Bravo not out 26, Samuels not out 4; Amir 2-26)



Bangladesh's ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (L) took part in Lifebuoy's 'Give us a high5' campaign on Saturday, visiting the Bangladesh Bank High School in Motijheel and encouraging children to wash their hands on Global Handwashing Day.

PHOTO: COLLECTED