

# SPORT



Mushfiqur Rahim (L) and Shakib Al Hasan put on 58 runs, Bangladesh's third highest stand for the fifth wicket against England, in Chittagong yesterday to help the hosts inch closer to England's first innings total.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## Batters pick up where bowlers left off

SAKEB SUBHAN from Chittagong

There was some anxiety leading into this Test match around Bangladesh's batting because they had not played a Test match for nearly 15 months and they might not have been up to the task against a well-oiled England attack. But on the second day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday, the batsmen responded with a show of maturity after the bowlers had done the job and bowled out England for 293 in the first hour of play.

Bangladesh reached 221 for five at stumps with Shakib Al Hasan batting on 31 and Shafiqul Islam keeping him company as the nightwatchman. Although there were no huge innings or huge partnerships, the innings so far has continued to show that Bangladesh have gotten the strategy right and, for the most part, the execution as well.

The idea was to prepare a spinning pitch that aided their arsenal of spinners, but having done that they needed to ensure that the batsmen were able to negotiate England's more than capable spin trio of Gareth Batty, Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid.

দেয়ালে ড্যাম্প-এর কারণে প্রেস্টিজ পাংকচার আর নয়



## 'You're never set on this wicket'

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

Tamim Iqbal answered the call manfully when he was most needed yesterday. His innings of 78 off 179 balls, while falling short of his cherished century mark, was probably worth a hundred on a pitch where, in his words, a batsman could never feel settled. It was all the more valuable as he took the team through three crucial wickets, two (Imrul Kayes and Mominul Haque) before lunch and one before tea (Mahmudullah Riyad) and put Bangladesh in a position to overtake England's first innings score of 293.

"Look, I have really, really worked hard to score my runs today," said Tamim with a quiet chuckle when asked if he was disappointed at not scoring a third century against England,

and his eighth overall. "I had to work hard to take every run. If I got out playing the wrong shot then of course it would have been very painful. But I think the way I was playing, it was within my control, but it was just not to be.

"If it was [a] bigger [score] of course I would have been happy. But I'll take it."

This innings was another example of a more aware and cerebral Tamim. He quietly negotiated England's spell of good bowling, which saw rarely a bad ball being bowled until about after lunch. His first boundary came off the 48th ball he faced, off an Adil Rashid full toss that he creamed through cover in the 19th over.

He hit two boundaries off Ben Stokes in the 29th over but that over also contained an airy shot when he was lured into chasing a wide, slower ball. He then reset himself to concentrate and scored only 19 runs in the next 12 overs,

hitting his next boundary off Moeen Ali to bring up his 50 off 131 balls. He now seems to have picked up the priceless ability to pace his innings.

"I think I didn't try to do anything more than just the

basic," Tamim said. "I tried to play straight. The delivery that I got dismissed off, I could have got a single or two from it. I know that a bigger score would have helped the team but I am still hopeful that Shakib [Al Hasan] and the

two batsmen can take us to a strong position."

Regarding the wicket, Tamim said that it was difficult because the ball was turning a fair bit, but that the bounce was consistent. "The ball is turning a lot while the bounce is still fine. You may want to do many things when you are set but this is not the sort of wicket to think in that way.

"A batsman is never set on this wicket, even if he is batting on 70, 80 or 100. You will be in trouble if you think you are set. Something keeps happening every over. It is a difficult wicket."

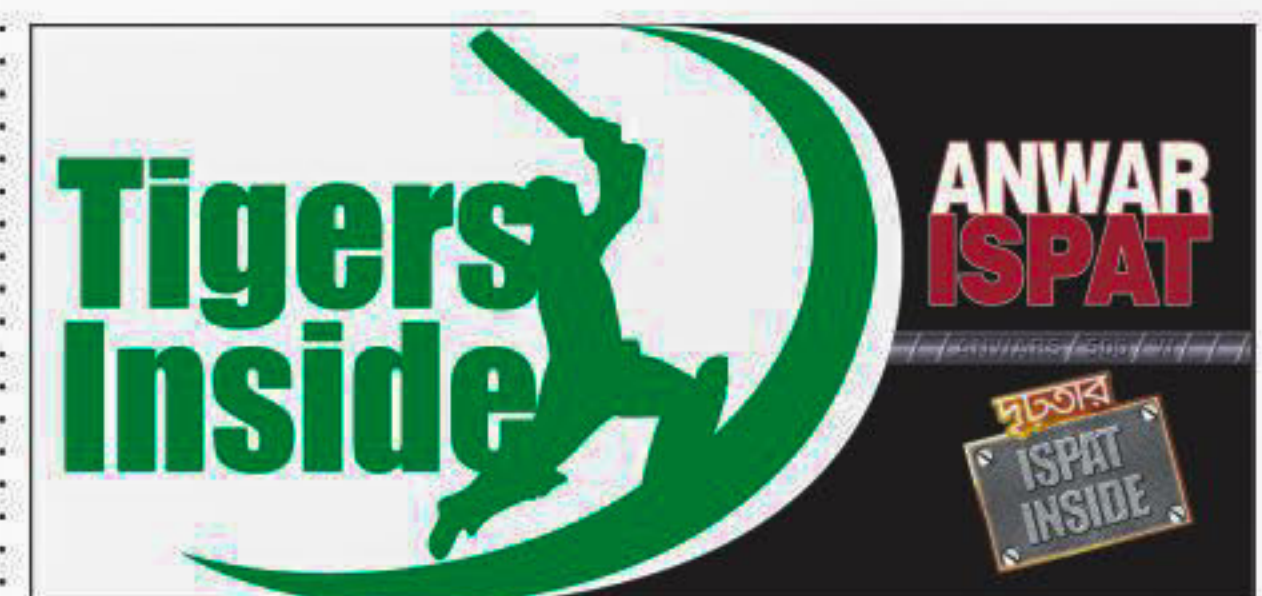
He also thought that Bangladesh were slightly ahead in the match while admitting that Mushfiqur Rahim's wicket late in the day pulled things back to near even.

"I think we are slightly at an advantaged position at the end of the second day. We still have wickets in hand and will gain the upper hand if we can bat well in the first session. If Mushfiqur



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal played the best innings of the first Test against England so far, scoring a solid 179-ball 78 to set the platform for his side.

PHOTO: STAR



The effort, crucially, was led by star opener Tamim Iqbal, who showed what an effect his changed outlook on batting and fitness has had. He played comfortably the best innings on either side, rarely looking troubled by a pitch on which the ball was turning square. His 179-ball 78 was an example to the rest of his teammates that it was possible to stay on this wicket and score runs, but it required exhaustive concentration.

But as much as application and skill, of which there was plenty from the big four of Tamim, Shakib, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad -- it was the attitude that was the most encouraging aspect of Bangladesh's batting.

Every bad ball the England bowlers bowled was punished and that was crucial on a pitch that could spring a surprise at any moment, like it did when Moeen Ali did in Imrul Kayes and Mominul Haque in a brilliant over before lunch.

But Riyad and Tamim responded to that with a 90-run third-wicket stand in the second session. On a pitch where runs were probably worth twice the number on the scorecard, Riyad's 38 was priceless but Mushfiqur's response after tea, which was taken when Riyad fell to Rashid, was even more so.

He came out attacking, but his judgement in picking the right balls to hit was impressive. He played out Rashid's over but then targeted Ali and hit him for back-to-back boundaries. There was even a reverse sweep employed off Batty late in the day.

Shakib, who came in after Tamim was dismissed, did much the same. Along with Mushfiqur, he ran aggressively between the wickets and in the 61st over, characteristically rubbish talks of a spinning wicket by charging down the track and hitting Batty against the spin for a straight, lofted boundary. England at one point operated without any slips as they tried to stem the flow of runs, but the hosts were not about to accommodate that wish.

The job is nowhere near done, with Mushfiqur's dismissal near the end of play bringing England right back into the game. But as they have shown throughout the day, Bangladesh in this Test have the wherewithal to bounce back from setbacks, which should be a source of optimism as they try to take the lead today.

## 'Mushy's wicket brought us back'

SPORTS REPORTER



### PREMIER CEMENT

#### BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND: First innings	R/B	4s/6s
(overnight 258-7)		
Cook b Shakib	4/26	0/0
Duckett b Mehedi	14/35	2/0
Root c Sabbir b Mehedi	40/49	5/0
Balances lbw b Mehedi	1/7	0/0
Moeen c Mushfiqur		
b Mehedi	68/170	8/1
Stokes b Shakib	18/34	0/1
Baird b Mehedi	52/126	8/0
Woakes c Mominul b Tajjul	36/78	5/0
Rashid c Sabbir b Tajjul	26/54	3/0
Broad c Mushfiqur b Mehedi	13/37	2/0
Batty not out	1/19	0/0
Extras: (b-14, lb-4, w-2)	20	
Total: (All out in 105.5 overs)	293	
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-18, 3-21, 4-83, 5-106, 6-194, 7-237, 8-258, 9-289, 10-293.		

#### BANGLADESH: First innings R/B 4s/6s

Tamim c Baird b Batty	78/179	7/0
Imrul b Moeen	21/50	3/0
Mominul c Stokes b Moeen	0/3	0/0
Mahmudullah c Root b Rashid	38/66	3/0
Mushfiqur c Baird b Stokes	48/77	6/0
Shakib not out	31/60	3/0
Shafiqul not out	0/9	0/0
Extras: (lb-4, w-1)	5	
Total: (For 5 wks in 74 overs)	221	
To bat: Sabbir, Mehedi, Tajjul, Kamrul.		
Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-29, 3-119, 4-163, 5-221.		

#### PERFORMER OF THE DAY



#### TAMIM IQBAL

On a very difficult pitch at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong which troubled even the best of England's batsmen, Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal played a calm and collected 179-ball innings. The left-hander deviated from his typically aggressive approach, hitting only seven fours, and showed another side to his game with a restrained innings which yielded 78 runs -- the highest score by a single batsman in this Test so far. Tamim stayed at the crease in the port city's scorching heat for almost 55 overs before he was caught behind off the wily spin of Gareth Batty, but by then he had already laid the platform for the Tigers.

on the turning track at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. He bowled at a good line and beat the batsmen a number of times before being rewarded with the crucial wicket of Tamim Iqbal.

On a spinner's paradise, the slower bowlers are likely to dominate the remaining three days of the match. England, in fact, lost all their wickets to spinners. This was only the third time that Bangladesh's spinners managed to achieve this feat, and a majority of the credit should go to 18-year-old Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

Miraz's figures of 6 for 80 are the second best recorded by a Bangladeshi on debut. It led to England getting bundled out for 293, their lowest against Bangladesh in Tests.

The turning track did make life extremely difficult for the batsmen and they had to sweat it out. Just ask Tamim Iqbal. He posted his

career's sixth slowest 50-plus score yesterday. However, as of day two, the pitch doesn't seem unplayable. Batsmen who are ready to fight it out can score runs.

When asked if the pitch could deteriorate in the coming days, Batty said: "There are rough bits. As the game goes on there will always be a ball that spins big, it's just the balls in between. You need to look at the run rate, hold the game, don't let them [Bangladesh] get away from you and hopefully the nick comes. [Ben] Stokes's wicket [of Mushfiqur Rahim] got us back."

With the wicket expected to be more venomous in the coming days, Bangladesh will want to take as big a lead as possible in the first innings. So far, they have only managed to take the lead on seven occasions, with their highest margin being 78.



England off-spinner Gareth Batty picked up his first Test wicket in 11 years by dismissing the dangerous Tamim Iqbal during the second day of the first Test in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## BCCI agrees to trial DRS

AFP, New Delhi

India ended its long-standing opposition Friday to cricket's Decision Review System (DRS), announcing it would be included on a trial basis in next month's Test series against England.

Indian cricket board president Anurag Thakur said that its major concerns had been addressed by upgrades to the system.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will deploy the DRS "in toto in the series between India and England... on a trial basis to evaluate the improvements made to the system," Thakur said in a statement.

"We recognise the enhanced role of technology in sport and BCCI will lead such initiatives in coming days, and enrich the viewer experience."

The Test series begins on November 9.

## DAY'S MOMENTS

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

### Damned if you do...



#### PREMIER CEMENT

Umpire Kumar Dharmasena continued to have a torrid time as the Decision Review System proved him wrong twice yesterday and a total of five times so far in the match.

When DRS did prove him right, in the 64th over when he turned down an appeal for leg-before by Chris Woakes against Mushfiqur Rahim, replays showed him to be only half right because half the ball was hitting the stumps, in which case the umpire's decision stands.

### The Mushy reversal

Mushfiqur's propensity for the slog-sweep, his favourite shot, has caused a bit of consternation in recent times as he has gotten out playing that shot a few times in the two ODI series against Afghanistan and England recently.

But he showed yesterday that he is not one to be cowed by criticism. In the 60th over, on a spinning pitch no less, he pulled out an even riskier shot -- the reverse sweep against the off-spin of Gareth Batty which went over first slip for four.

There was no meaningful glance back at the press box, but there was no need for that as the bat did the talking.

### Stoking the fire

Ben Stokes's face-off with the beloved Tamim Iqbal during handshakes after the second ODI put paid to any hope of love from the home crowd. But he showed yesterday that he was not here to make friends. Shafiqul Islam, the nightwatchman, dug out a full delivery that was rolled away and came to a stop inside the crease. Shafiqul went to pick it up, but Stokes shouted something at him, and for his part Shafiqul just left it there for an England player to pick up.