

SPORT



Bangladesh centurion Tamim Iqbal (R) and half-centurion Mominul Haque provided the home side with a valuable platform on a testing wicket, putting on a 170-run second-wicket stand against England on the first day of the second Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

TIGERS' TOP CENTURY PAIRINGS

stands	Pair	Highest	Avg
5	Habibul Bashar-Javed Omar	167	41.28
4	Imrul Kayes-Tamim Iqbal	312	47.73
4	Mominul Haque-Tamim Iqbal	170	66.46
3	Habibul Bashar-Hannan Sarkar	114	50.93
3	Junaid Siddique-Tamim Iqbal	200	37.33

Another Tamim special

NAIMUL KARIM



Tamim Iqbal's knocks against England have almost always been memorable. From his feisty centuries at Lord's and Manchester to his imperious hundred at Mirpur yesterday, he has always had his guard up against the

English.

The left-hander's near flawless 104 yesterday, which saw him hit 12 fours, was his third Test hundred against England, the most he has scored against a single side.

As far as numbers are concerned, it is not just the centuries that are doing the talking. He has five half-centuries as well. Tamim now averages a staggering 63.27 against England in eleven innings, having crossed the 50-run mark in eight of the 11 occasions that he has padded up against England.

Tamim's hundred yesterday eventually turned out to be a lot more important than it initially seemed it would be. It was a difficult start with the opener requiring 19 balls to get off the mark. However, once he got set, he punished anything that he thought was hittable.

The highlight of his knock came in the 12th over when he dispatched Chris Woakes for three fours in an over. The first was glanced through square-leg, the second creamed through point and the final one was the best of the lot as he smashed Woakes through mid-wicket for another four.

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India-NZ ODI series decider today

PTI, Visakhapatnam

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's leadership as well as finishing skills will be put through a stern test when an inconsistent India will take on a rejuvenated New Zealand in the series-deciding fifth and final ODI on Saturday.

With the series locked at 2-2, Dhoni and his men will be eager to clinch the issue while history beckons Kane Williamson's men as they have a glorious opportunity to taste their maiden success in a bilateral ODI rubber.

The only thing that can play spoilsport is the cyclone threat which can lead to complete washout.

While Dhoni's captaincy may not be under immediate threat but a series loss against New Zealand will certainly raise questions about 'Captain Cool's' ability to marshal his resources after his much publicised admission of being unable to rotate strike lower down the order.

'Won't defend the collapse'

SPORTS REPORTER



At 171 for 1 and with two set batsmen at the crease, Bangladesh were more than cruising in the morning yesterday. Tamim Iqbal was executing his strokes to perfection and Mominul Haque had rediscovered his form. The pair, hailing from the Chittagong division, had put the visitors under immense pressure.

What followed next though seemed like a picture from Bangladesh's cricketing past, as the hosts went on to lose their last nine wickets for just 49 runs. Unlike the Chittagong Test, most of the wickets that fell yesterday were not as a result of unplayable deliveries. England's bowlers did do well, but the application shown by Bangladesh's middle order was questionable. And perhaps that was the reason Tamim did not try to defend his teammates when questioned about the collapse at the end of the day's play yesterday.

"I won't defend the collapse. I absolutely won't do that. But what I honestly feel is that it was a little easier to bat in between overs number 10 and 35.

"The first ten were difficult but then it got easier because we were attacking and we also got boundary balls. When you are among the runs, batting on any wicket becomes easy. In addition, the way Mominul batted, everything seemed good.

"I can't defend or give an explanation for the collapse. We played a few bad shots. We only have ourselves to blame. If we could have scored 100 more runs then the match would have been in

our hands because the ball started to turn towards the end," explained Tamim.

"I am not trying to give an excuse but you have to understand that we don't generally face reverse



Mahmudullah Riyad typified Bangladesh's reckless batting approach, standing his ground and poking at a ball away from his body which took the edge and comfortably carried to slip.

PHOTO: STAR

swing that often in domestic cricket or anywhere else. So there is a lot to learn from here.

"It wasn't a panic attack. But yes in general everyone tends to get a little puzzled when one or

THE WORST COLLAPSES

Date	Score at 2nd wkt	Final score	Runs by last 8	Opp
Apr 2013	102	134	32	Zim
Mar 2013	14	61	48	SL

two wickets fall. They bowled well, no doubt, but we could have handled them a little better.

"Because of the collapse, my century feels a lot more important. We had a good stand, Mominul and I, and if we had managed to score 50 more runs, then maybe the reverse swing would not have affected us as much.

"You can't blame an individual for the collapse. Right from me to [Kamrul Islam] Rabbi, everyone is at fault," he added.

Despite being bundled out for just 220, Bangladesh managed to scalp three wickets at the end of the day and England finished on 50 for 3. The left-hander feels that the hosts can come back strong on day two.

"The three wickets we got were very crucial. If we can get a good start in the morning then the amount of runs that we have put on the board can actually turn out to be enough," hoped Tamim.

"At this moment the game's even. If we get two early wickets tomorrow, we will be ahead. If they [England] get a partnership they will be ahead. Let's see what happens," he added.

'We need big partnerships'

SPORTS REPORTER



When Tamim Iqbal hit Moeen Ali for two consecutive, inside-out boundaries in the 40th over and reached his century it seemed as though England's most effective spinner of the series might not be as deadly in the second Test.

However, Moeen did not break down. He remained calm and hit back with a brilliant five-wicket haul.

Some good bowling in tandem between Ben Stokes, who reversed the ball, and Moeen helped them scalp the last nine wickets for just 49 runs. It was a big recovery after a poor morning session, which saw England's spinners and pacers thwarted by Tamim and Mominul Haque.

While England did lose three wickets at the end of the day and that took the sheen off a brilliant comeback by the visitors, Moeen believed that the game is still in the balance.

"It's been a good cricket game so far and obviously the three wickets we lost put us back a bit. But I think overall, we are pleased to bowl them out for 220 from 170 for 1. It's been a good day," said Moeen after the day's play yesterday.

When asked if the visitors were confident of taking a lead, he said: "It's a tough one. We need a couple of big partnerships and in order to take any sort of lead we have to play well. It's a long way away. We have some good

batters. Hopefully if we bat well tomorrow, we will try to bowl them out again."

While the pitch at Mirpur witnessed tum from day one, Moeen said that it was different from the one in Chittagong.

"In Chittagong, the spin was more consistent. Here the straight ball is more dangerous. In Chittagong it spun one way, but here there is both spin and the straighter one. I think it will behave the same way throughout the Test," said Moeen.

When asked if the England team

were happy with the pitch, Moeen said that he personally was.

"If it seems, I don't get to bowl much. If it spins I do," he smiled.

"I think it's good. People get tested with techniques and stuff. It is difficult, but if you play well you get rewarded," he added.

Moeen, who was delighted to scalp a five-wicket haul, hopes that he can carry on the momentum with the bat and help England take the all-important first innings lead in the Test.



England spinner Moeen Ali was on song during the first day of the second Test in Mirpur yesterday, claiming a five-wicket haul as he raided Bangladesh's batting order.

PHOTO: STAR

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

TAMIM IQBAL



On a pitch that even most of England's seasoned Test players failed to get going on, there were two Bangladeshi batsmen, Tamim Iqbal and Mominul Haque, who made an impact. However, it was Tamim's flame that shone brighter as the left-hander made his third century against his favoured opponents.

His 104 off 147 deliveries provided Bangladesh with a solid platform which they eventually failed to build on but his might be the knock that catapults the hosts to a first innings lead. The new Tamim, who opts for serenity rather than unyielding aggression, played 19 dot balls before finally getting off the mark. However, it is not as if the destructive element has evaporated -- the left-hander showed his nature with 12 boundaries -- but he found an immaculate balance, picking out the bad balls and dispatching them. He did go on a mini-rampage in the 12th over, smashing three boundaries off Chris Woakes, but went back to his zen approach before sheepishly throwing away his wicket -- the only blemish in a brilliant performance.

PREMIER cement

BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: First Innings				R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim Iqbal	b Moeen	104/147	12/0				
Imrul Kayes	c Duckett b Woakes	1/3	0/0				
Mominul Haque	b Moeen	66/111	10/0				
Mahmudullah	c Cook b Stokes	13/26	1/1				
Shakib	c Bairstow b Woakes	10/32	0/0				
Mushfiq	c Cook b Moeen	4/12	0/0				
Sabbir	c Bairstow b Stokes	0/6	0/0				
Shuvagata	c Bairstow b Woakes	6/18	1/0				
Mehedi	b Moeen	1/6	0/0				
Tajul	not out	5/12	1/0				
Kamrul	c Root b Moeen	0/10	0/0				
Extras: (b-1, lb-9)		10					
Total: (All out in 63.5 overs)		220					
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-171, 3-190, 4-196, 5-201, 6-202, 7-212, 8-213, 9-215, 10-220.							
ENGLAND: First Innings				R/B	4s/6s		
Cook	b Mehedi	14/12	3/0				
Duckett	c Mushfiq b Shakib	7/5	0/1				
Root	not out	15/33	2/0				
Bairstow	c Mushfiq b Mehedi	9/18	2/0				
Moeen	not out	2/7	0/0				
Extras: (b-1, lb-2)		3					
Total: (For 3 wickets in 12.3 overs)		50					
To bat: Stokes, Bairstow, Ansari, Woakes, Rashid, Finn.							
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-24, 3-42.							
Bowler				O	M	R	W
Woakes	9	3	30	3			
Finn	8	1	30	0			
Moeen	19.5	5	57	5			
Ansari	6	0	36	0			
Stokes	11	5	13	2			
Rashid	10	0	44	0			
ENGLAND: First Innings				R/B	4s/6s		
Cook	b Mehedi	14/12	3/0				
Duckett	c Mushfiq b Shakib	7/5	0/1				
Root	not out	15/33	2/0				
Bairstow	c Mushfiq b Mehedi	9/18	2/0				
Moeen	not out	2/7	0/0				
Extras: (b-1, lb-2)		3					
Total: (For 3 wickets in 12.3 overs)		50					
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Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-24, 3-42.							
Bowler				O	M	R	W
Mehedi	6.3	1	26	2			
Shakib	6	2	21	1			