

SPORT



New Zealand opener Tom Latham walks off to applause after notching his career-best score of 177 against Bangladesh on the fourth day of the first Test at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

350-plus will be ideal: Taskin

SPORTS REPORTER



Prior to this Test, Taskin Ahmed had played just 10 first-class games in the last five years. So

when he admitted that he went through a challenging experience in his debut Test, it was not a surprise.

"It was strenuous," Taskin said when asked how his experience was after stumps in Wellington yesterday.

"There's a lot of pressure on your body. I bowled 29 overs and fielded for 150 overs. The fatigue affects your body. But I did enjoy a lot on the field. This is a very big thing for me, to play Test cricket. Inshallah this Test will end well.

"Until this Test I used to just watch Test cricket on TV, so this experience was very big and new for me. Bowlers have to be patient and bowl in the right areas consistently and then you have to be fit physically as well. But this is not an issue. This is my first Test and I will try to learn from the mistakes I committed here," explained Taskin.

On a track that has produced more than 1,000 runs in just two innings and has helped batsmen a lot, Taskin got the key wicket of Kane Williamson, a player he had dismissed twice during the limited-overs series. The 21-year-old explained the strategy he used against the world-class batsman.

"He has a few strong zones and I tried not

to bowl in those areas. I tried to consistently bowl in the areas that he is weaker in and I got his wicket. I think that's a big deal, to get him as my first Test scalp. But you know, in order to get wickets you need to be lucky and I could have gotten more.

"But that does not matter. The players and coach have appreciated me and have told me that I have done well considering that this is my first Test. They are happy, but personally I want to do even better. Hopefully I will get more chances in the future," he said.

Bangladesh lost three wickets at the death yesterday and with Imrul Kayes unlikely to bat they are effectively four down for 66. Taskin admitted that the visitors were under pressure.

"The situation is pretty tough for us at the moment because we lost a couple of wickets. But, we will try to start afresh on the fifth day. I think if we can provide them a target of around 350-plus, the bowlers will remain calm, because this is a really good wicket to bat on," said Taskin.

"The wicket may be flat, but we also need to be careful because New Zealand have a brilliant bowling attack and our batsmen will need to exercise caution. It's true that we are under a bit of pressure, but I think that can be released if we have a 100 to 150-run stand tomorrow," he added.

Furthermore Taskin said that the mood in the dressing room was not too bad since the players were already looking for a fresh start on day five.

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'Need three wickets in the morning'

SPORTS REPORTER



A few weeks ago, Pakistan lost to Australia by an innings at the Melbourne

Cricket Ground in a game that saw the third innings of the match begin on the fifth day. Pakistan were bundled out in the last two sessions of the day in a match that was supposedly played on a batting-friendly track for most parts of the game.

Tom Latham, who led New Zealand's reply in the first innings with a fighting 177, reckons that the same can happen in this Test. The hosts, who until Day Four were hoping to avoid the follow-on, are now sensing a late win.

"Funny things happen on the last day of a Test as we saw in the Test against Pakistan in the last series. It's a massive job for us to do in the morning. If we can get three quick wickets, then you never know," said Latham after stumps in Wellington yesterday when asked how he assessed the current situation of the game.

Bangladesh are poised at 66 for three and are 122 runs ahead with Imrul Kayes injured. Latham reckons that the wicket at the Basin Reserve on the fifth day will be good enough for a reasonable chase.

"The game is probably about par at the

moment. With them 500 and us 50 behind, it's pretty pleasing," said Latham.

When asked if he thought that the visitors were under pressure, he said: "Possibly. They have been ahead a lot in this match. If we can get three wickets in the morning, get into that middle and lower tail. There's still plenty of overs in the day and anything can happen."

"It would be [pretty remarkable if New Zealand go on to win the Test]. It was a massive score. We batted our way back into the game and our bowlers did a great job. Funny things can happen in the morning. We have our plans. If we can stick to them and get a

bit of luck then hopefully we may be batting tomorrow," he added.

With regards to his innings, he was a bit disappointed not to have reached the double hundred.

"Obviously as a batsman you always want more and never want to get out. In the context of the match, it was pretty pleasing to make a significant contribution to the side and just build partnerships with the top order," said Latham.



BD-NZ SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: First innings 595 for 8 dead (Tamim 56, Mominul 64, Mahmudullah 26, Shakib 217, Mushfiqur 159, Sabbir 54 not out; Bout 2-131, Southee 2-158, Wagner 4-151)

NEW ZEALAND: First innings R/B 4s/6s (Overnight 292 for 3)

Raval c Imrul b Kamrul	27/39	3/0
Latham lbw b Shakib	177/329	18/1
Williamson c Imrul b Taskin	53/55	8/0
Taylor c Mahmudullah b Kamrul	40/51	6/0
Nicholls c Mehedi b Shakib	53/135	5/0
De Grandhomme c Imrul		
b Subashis	14/16	1/1
Watling c Imrul		
b Mahmudullah	49/106	6/0
Santner b Subashis	73/103	6/3
Southee lbw b Mahmudullah	1/3	0/0
Wagner c Imrul b Kamrul	18/31	2/1
Bout not out	4/23	1/0
Extras: (b-10, lb-3, w-16, nb-1)	30	
Total: (All out in 148.2 overs)	539	
Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-131, 3-205, 4-347, 5-366, 6-398, 7-471, 8-473, 9-504, 10-539.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mehedi	37	5	116	0
Subashis	26.2	6	89	2
Taskin	29	4	141	1
Kamrul	26	4	87	3
Shakib	27	2	78	2
Mahmudullah	3	0	15	2

BANGLADESH: Second innings R/B 4s/6s

Tamim b Santner	25/44	2/0
Imrul retired hurt	24/38	2/1
Mominul not out	10/13	1/0
Mahmudullah c Watling b Wagner	5/9	0/0
Mehedi run out	1/8	0/0
Extras: (nb 1)	1	
Total: (For 3 wickets in 18.3 overs)	66	
To bat: Shakib, Mushfiqur, Sabbir, Taskin, Subashis, Kamrul.		
Fall of wickets: 0-46 (retired hurt), 1-50, 2-63, 3-66.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bout	4	0	21	0

Wounded Tigers need calm

AL-AMIN from Wellington



When Imrul Kayes picked up the lone fielder on the on-side while

pulling Tim Southee in the first morning of the opening Test against New Zealand at Basin Reserve, the gut feeling was that he should be thrown into the Tasman Sea.

But after standing behind the wicket as a sub for injured Mushfiqur Rahim for two days, when he came out to bat with Tamim Iqbal again on the fourth evening and got injured after scoring a fine 24 that interestingly featured a mighty six over mid-wicket against the same bowler, his return to the field on the fifth and final day today is what everyone would desperately want.

The work-horse in the Bangladesh team injured his left thigh while completing a quick single. His departure on a stretcher sparked a collapse as Bangladesh slipped from 46 not lost to 63-3 at stumps on the fourth day, a lead of 122 runs going into the fifth and final day with seven wickets still standing. But considering the gravity of his injury and his inability to move without any support yesterday, the prospect of his return to bat is gloomy. Besides, with Mushfiqur still recovering from a thumb injury, Bangladesh are technically five wickets down going into the final day. The ideal situation would have been both being rested to prepare for the second Test in Christchurch from January 20.

But with Mominul at the crease and



After the unfamiliar grind of keeping for the better part of two days and then immediately opening the batting, Bangladesh opener Imrul Kayes's body gave way in the form of a thigh injury that needed him to be stretchered off the Basin Reserve yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

Shakib Al Hasan to come out in the morning, Bangladesh will hugely depend on the two left-handers to bat out the entire morning session apparently to save a Test match in which they were on top for almost four days.

Although Mushfiqur batted in the nets on the fourth morning and was sitting at the dressing room with his pads on, he will not be able to stand behind the wicket even if he comes out to bat today. The condition of Imrul was not at all inspiring.

When he returned to the team hotel at around 9:00 pm last night after having the X-ray, a barefooted Imrul descended from a high van on crutches.

Getting the information that he has returned Mushfiqur came down to take him to his room. Imrul moved along on the support and was not able to land his left foot on the ground. Although there was no fracture, he needs a miracle for the pain to alleviate quickly, and that steely resolve if he is to come out and bat again. But that possibility is very slim.

The duo's respective injuries also put the Bangladesh think-tank in a dilemma about the third keeper if they are to field again today. However, the best possible option for Bangladesh in desperate times would be to bat as long as possible, which is not a tough task on a flat wicket. What they need is not to press the panic button.



New Zealand pacer Neil Wagner ducks into one of the four bouncers from Bangladesh pacer Kamrul Islam Rabbi that hit him on the helmet. PHOTO: AFP

Twin tons power India

AFP, Pune

Skipper Virat Kohli and Kedar Jadhav hit centuries to help India chase 350 and stun England by three wickets in the first ODI in Pune on Sunday.

Kohli (122), who was leading the limited overs side for the first time, and Jadhav (120) put on 200 runs for the fifth wicket as India achieved the target with 11 balls to spare.

his nerves to take India home with his unbeaten 40 off 37 deliveries. Ravichandran Ashwin (15 not out) hit a six to finish off the match in style.

Earlier, England posted their highest-ever ODI total against the hosts in India.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 350 for 7 in 50 overs (Roy 73, Root 78, Stokes 62, Pandya 2-46, Bumrah 2-79)

INDIA: 356 for 7 in 48.1 overs (Kohli 122, Jadhav 120; Ball 3-67)

Result: India won by three wickets.

Player-of-the-match: KM Jadhav.

Pakistan end 12-yr drought

AFP, Melbourne

Pakistan beat Australia by six wickets in the second one-day international at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday, their first ODI win on Australian soil for 12 years.

The win was also Pakistan's first ODI victory at the MCG since 1985 and levels the five-match series at 1-1.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 220 all out in 48.2 overs (Smith 60, Head 29, Maxwell 23, Wade 35, Faulkner 19; Amir 3-47, Junaid 2-40, Imad 2-37)

PAKISTAN: 221 for 4 in 47.4 overs (Sharjeel 29, Hafeez 72, Babar 34, Malik 42 not out; Starc 2-45, Faulkner 2-35)

Result: Pakistan won by 6 wickets and 5-match series level 1-1.

Player-of-the-match: Mohammad Hafeez.

BCB names 30-man preliminary squad

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a 30-member preliminary squad for its tour of India and Sri Lanka

in the coming months. While Bangladesh are scheduled to play a one-off Test in Hyderabad in India in February, they will be playing three ODIs, two T20Is and two Tests in March in Sri Lanka.

The Test in India will begin on February 9 in Hyderabad. The Tigers are also expected to play a three-day warm-up game in Hyderabad which is expected to begin on February 3. The schedule of the warm-up game however has not been confirmed as yet.

The schedule of the Sri Lanka series also has not been declared yet by either of the cricketing boards. According to BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon, the delay has taken place since Sri Lanka wanted to play

five ODIs instead of the two T20Is. However, BCB did not agree to that proposal.

Bangladesh will return home from New Zealand on January 26 and will get barely a week before they pack their bags again and travel to India for their one-off Test.

SQUAD

Abdul Majid, Anamul Haque, Al Amin Hossain, Alauddin Babu, Ebadat Hossain, Imrul Kayes, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Liton Kumar Das, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Mominul Haque, Mehedi Hasan Siddique, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mustafizur Rahman, Mosaddek Hossain, Nasir Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Nurul Hasan, Rubel Hossain, Shafiqul Islam, Shakib Al Hasan, Subashis Roy, Shuvagata Hom, Soumya Sarkar, Sabbir Rahman, Tajjul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Tamim Iqbal, Tanbir

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

SHAKIB AL HASAN

89 for two is an analysis that will soon be lost among greater exploits by Shakib Al Hasan, the bowler. But yesterday as Bangladesh were looking to dismiss hosts New Zealand cheaply enough to gain a first-innings lead, Shakib's quality shone over the quantity of wickets. Opener Tom Latham and number five batsman Henry Nicholls's fourth-wicket stand had swelled to 142 pretty quickly, and there was a fear that the Mushfiqur-Shakib epic on Day 2 may find a Kiwi rendition. But Shakib, as he invariably does, brought Bangladesh back by getting Nicholls caught off a drifter at leg slip, before getting centurion Latham plumb in front while sweeping. These were body blows for the Kiwis and went a long way in ensuring a lead for Bangladesh.