

SPORT



Rookie pacer Kamrul Islam Rabbi (2nd from L) provided the Tigers with much-needed breakthroughs in his first over, first removing Jeet Raval and then getting the prized scalp of New Zealand captain Kane Williamson (R) two balls later on the second day of the second Test at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

'Still have work to do'

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan's three wickets towards the end of the day yesterday gave the Bangladesh team a reason to smile. The Bangladesh bowlers worked hard yesterday at Christchurch, but they just were not getting the rewards.

There were a few chances that were not taken on the field and a decision did not go their way as well. Right before tea, it seemed as though the hosts were on their way to taking a huge lead. However, the three wickets from Shakib helped the visitors come back into the game.

Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed, who bowled a beautiful opening spell yesterday, believes that the 'Tigers have a good chance of even winning the game.

"We have taken seven New Zealand wickets. We are not entirely pleased since we have some work left in the innings. We will try to bowl them out early. I think our batsmen also have to give us a big score in the second innings.

"We have won from such positions in the past. If we do our best we can win even in away conditions," said Taskin during the post-day press conference yesterday.

Playing just his second Test, Taskin believed that the pacers performed quite well yesterday and managed to utilise the conditions.

"All the bowlers contributed in different ways. Some bowled good spells and some took wickets while some checked the run-making. We bowled in the right areas, but we have to finish it better," said Taskin.

"All three pace bowlers did well. Rubel and I are fast bowlers so we could be aggressive. We could swing the ball with pace. We bowled according to plan," he added.

He believes that the momentum on a sporting wicket has shifted towards Bangladesh because of Shakib's spell at the end.

Unlike the wicket in Wellington, the track in Christchurch is likely to assist the bowlers as the Test progresses. As such, the third day will be quite crucial for the result of this game.

Going by Bangladesh's poor record in the second innings of a Test, a lot could depend on how much New Zealand score in their first innings. At the moment New Zealand are 29 runs behind with a set Henry Nicholls at the crease.

Bangladesh's highest total in the third or fourth innings of a Test away from home is 382, which they scored in Lord's back in 2010. It was a score they managed to reach courtesy of Tamim Iqbal's century.

Against New Zealand, they scored 282 while chasing 404 at Hamilton in 2010. Shakib Al Hasan scored a Test hundred back then. It is obvious that the Tigers will need a batsman to bat throughout if they want to have any chances of winning this Test.

Fielding lapses cost Tigers

AL-AMIN from Christchurch

When Taskin Ahmed appeared at the press briefing yesterday he said he was not too bothered with the dropped catches off his bowling.

"Some went through the slips and gully, but it wasn't my day. I might end up with 7-8 wickets when it is my day," the soft-spoken pace bowler said with an innocent smile on his face.

He might not be too concerned, but with as many as four catches dropped on the second day, sloppy fielding is increasingly becoming a luxury that Bangladesh can ill afford.

Dropped catches and very ordinary fielding are things that have troubled Bangladesh throughout most of the series. The butterfly-fingered Tigers dropped four catches in the first Test in Wellington. Not only that, they also dropped some crucial catches in the

preceding limited-overs series.

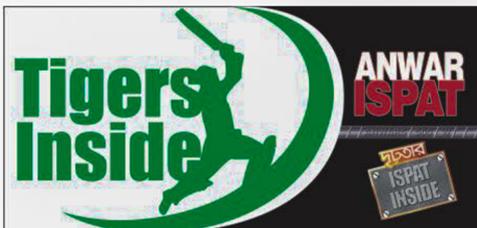
They do not have a good slip fielder and are lacking a sharp catcher in the silly mid-off or short square leg in the absence of Mominul Haque. They do not have many safe pairs of hands when it comes to taking catches in the

Bangladesh's pace bowlers have historically never been good fielders and Taskin, Rubel Hossain and Kamrul Islam are no exceptions.

Bangladesh have been trying to find a safe pair of hands in the slip cordon, but so far nobody, not even Soumya Sarker or Sabbir Rahman -- the two better fielders in the team -- could prove their worth in that sensitive position. But slip fielders are very important, especially in a Test match where you are not going to get a lot of chances.

Mahmudullah Riyad has been a total disappointment in the series so far. He failed with the bat and dropped many catches either fielding in the deep or in the slip. He is one of those fielders who can leak runs, turning a single into two.

In the present lot, Bangladesh have got four fielders who can match the high standards set by other teams. They are Shakib Al Hasan, Soumya, Sabbir and Mehedi Hasan Miraz. The rest are a captain's nightmare. And it's not the sign of a good team.



BD-NZ SCOREBOARD				
BANGLADESH: First innings 289 all out (Soumya 86, Shakib 59, Nurul 47; Southee 5-94, Boult 4-87)				
New Zealand: FirstinningsR/B4/6s				
Raval b Kamrul	16/45	3/0		
Latham c Nurul b Taskin	68/111	11/0		
Williamson c Nurul b Kamrul	2/2	0/0		
Taylor csub (Taijul)				
b Mehedi	77/103	7/2		
Nicholls not out	56/93	6/0		
Santner lbw b Shakib	29/61	3/0		
Watling b Shakib	1/4	0/0		
de Grandhomme b Shakib	0/3	0/0		
Southee not out	4/6	1/0		
Extras (lb-1, w-4, nb-2)	7			
Total (for 7 wickets in 71 overs)	260			
Fall of wickets:	1-45, 2-47, 3-153, 4-177, 5-252, 6-256, 7-256.			
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taskin	17	1	64	1
Mehedi	16	2	51	1
Rubel	15	2	54	0
Kamrul	13	3	48	2



Nadal bests Zverev in five-set thriller

AFP, Melbourne

Rafael Nadal's ageing legs outlasted German teenager Alexander Zverev in an epic five sets as Serena Williams sailed into the last 16 at the Australian Open on Saturday.

Nadal needed all his trademark grit against Zverev, 19, dubbed "the future of tennis", and his superior fitness told as he ground out a thrilling 4-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-2 win.

Germany's Zverev looked in discomfort as he won a punishing 37-shot rally nearly four hours into their contest as Nadal, still full of running, pressed his advantage in the final set.

It means Nadal, 30, follows fellow veteran Roger Federer into the last 16 of a contest now missing defending champion Novak Djokovic after his stunning defeat to Denis Istomin.

"Everybody knows how good

Alexander is," said Nadal, who will play France's Gael Monfils in the fourth round. "He's the future of our sport, and the present."

Williams, by contrast, had no such trouble as she brushed off fellow American Nicole Gibbs 6-1, 6-3 to maintain her charge towards a 23rd Grand Slam title. Williams has been in brilliant form and will take some stopping as she zeroes in on Steffi Graf's Open-era record.

The next player to take on Williams will be Barbora Strycova, who ousted France's Caroline Garcia.

"Obviously I'm here for one reason," said Williams, who again lifted her index finger in celebration at her victory, symbolising the number one.

"But at the end of the day, this is all bonus for me and I look forward to playing [Strycova]. I'm ready for her."

Elswhere 117th-ranked Istomin built on his win over Djokovic by beating Pablo Carreno Busta 6-4, 4-

Injured batsmen leave NZ

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's injured top order batsmen will return home this week in order to focus on their rehabilitation ahead of the India Test in February.

Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim and top order batsman Mominul Haque left New Zealand yesterday and are scheduled to reach Bangladesh today. Imrul Kayes on the other hand is scheduled to leave New Zealand today.

Mushfiqur injured his finger while batting in the first Test, while Mominul is nursing a bruised rib cage.

Imrul has a strain on his thigh muscle sustained on the fourth day of the first Test and will take a little over than a week to recover.

It's going to be a good Test: Latham

SPORTS REPORTER



New Zealand opener Tom Latham

believes that the second Test, like the first one in Wellington, is likely to have an exciting finish with both teams looking good.

Speaking to reporters after the second day yesterday, Latham said that the wicket at Christchurch would eventually deteriorate and that the spinners could come into play.

"I think the Test match is pretty even. The first hour tomorrow morning is going to be crucial for both teams, we've got Henry Nicholls in there on 50-odd and batting really nice. If we can build some partnerships with the tail hopefully we can swing the momentum back in our favour.

"There's still a bit of movement for the bowlers and it tended to swing more than Wellington. It quickened up from yesterday [day one] and might take bit of turn towards the end. Looks like the Test is going to be a good one," said Latham.

The Black Caps were in trouble early when a burst from Kamrul Islam Rabbi removed both Jeet Raval and Kane Williamson in a single over. That is when Latham and Ross Taylor got together to

rebuild the innings for the hosts with a 127-run stand for the third wicket.

While Latham scored 68, Taylor ended up scoring 77. Latham later on explained that it was quite difficult for them to score runs with the Bangladeshis bowling a good line. The New Zealand top order batsman in fact were beaten a number of times due to the pace and swing.

"At a critical time we lost two quick wickets before lunch. They didn't really give us anything to hit and we struggled to rotate the strike. For us to get through that tough time and put pressure back on them after lunch was good,"

said Latham.

He admitted that the three late wickets in the day took away a bit of the momentum from them. Latham however hopes they can take a good enough lead and put the pressure back on the Bangladeshis.

"It's pretty even with those three late wickets. It gave them a bit of momentum but if we can come in the morning get a few with the ball it'll swing it back into our favour.

"If we can get ourselves in a handy position and get as many as we can in front hopefully we can put the pressure on them with the ball," said Latham.



New Zealand got a taste of their own medicine as a ferocious Rubel Hossain bouncer struck Tom Latham flush on the grille of his helmet.

PHOTO: BCB

Shakir's 126 leads Shinepukur

SPORTS REPORTER

A brilliant 126 from Shakhir Hossain Shuvro led Shinepukur Cricket Club to a comfortable seven wicket win over Young Pegasus Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in the First Division cricket league yesterday.

Batting first, Young Pegasus were bundled out for 212.

In reply, Shakhir's century and Tawhid Hridoy's 68 led Shinepukur to a comfortable win with seven wickets. While the chase was a long one, they stayed on the wicket and ensured that there were no hiccups as they chased down the total with three overs to spare.

In the day's other games, Uttara Sporting Club beat Rapid Foundation by two wickets at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium (KSOAS), Orient Sporting Club beat Azad Sporting Club by four wickets at the outer ground of the KSOAS, City Club thumped Dhanmondi Progoti Sangha by seven wickets at the BKSP and finally Kalindi Krira Chakra beat Surjo Torun Club by five wickets in a game that also took place at the BKSP.