

SPORT



While slip catching still remained a thorn in Bangladesh's side, this particular run-out chance that off-spinner Mehedi Hasan (L) made a mess of was the low point of the Tigers' disappointing opening day of the one-off Test against India at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

'We bowled too many short balls'

NAIMUL KARIM from Hyderabad

It was not a good toss to lose for Bangladesh yesterday. They had to toil hard on a wicket that was flat and barely had anything in it for the bowlers.

Yes, there was a bit of movement initially, but as the day progressed, the wicket became slightly slower and it turned out to be easier for the batsmen to negotiate the Bangladeshis.

The only visible movement was when Taskin was given the old ball in the 50th over. He managed to reverse swing the ball for a couple of overs, but then again he had to be taken off soon. One was left wondering if it would have been better had Bangladesh included an extra pacer.

In addition to all of that, the other problem that Bangladesh's pacers might have faced was adjusting to these conditions after returning from New Zealand.

Kamrul Islam Rabbi and Taskin had bowled a number of short-pitched deliveries in New Zealand. The duo, especially Rabbi tried to use a similar strategy in Hyderabad yesterday, but miserably failed. According to Taskin, the bowlers might just be suffering from the New Zealand blues.

"The thing is, after lunch, the wicket slowed down and they picked the deliveries well. The bouncers initially carried well to the keeper, but after the wicket got slow, the half-short balls went for boundaries. We couldn't bowl completely full either as

driving the ball was also easy. You had to bowl a good line," said Taskin during the post-day press conference.

"On such a wicket... we are new players... yes today we bowled too many short balls, maybe that's why there were many runs. That may be because he [Rabbi] bowled many short balls in New Zealand, but the two conditions are different. Hopefully we will be able to recover tomorrow," he added.

This is Taskin's third Test. He debuted in New Zealand in conditions that were more favourable for bowling. As a result, he found life quite difficult on the first day here.

"Honestly speaking, this was a new experience for me because I am only playing the third Test in my career and this is in India. Every team scores big here in Test cricket and bowling on this flat wicket [for long periods] is a new experience for me. I tried other things. I tried to bowl reverse swing as well. But they are the number one team in the world and they handled it well," said Taskin.

"This is the kind of wicket where bowlers have to be patient. The batsmen batted almost flawlessly. You can't bowl loose deliveries and you have to be patient.

"I have bowled against [Virat] Kohli in one-dayers before. In Tests I feel that you will suffer if you bowl a bad delivery to him. He left the good deliveries and always hit the bad ones. To survive here we have to bowl a tighter line and length," he added.

Taskin felt that it would have been a better day had Bangladesh not given 65 runs in the last nine overs and instead restricted India to 300-odd for three.



Young Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed (R) bowled with a lot of heart even though the wicket at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium had nothing to offer for the bowlers on Day One. PHOTO: AFP

BD-INDIA SCOREBOARD

INDIA: First Innings	R/B	4s/6s
Rahul b Taskin	2/4	0/0
Vijay b Taijul	108/160	12/1
Pujara c Mushfiqur b Mehedi	83/177	9/0
Kohli not out	111/141	12/0
Rahane not out	45/60	7/0
Extras: (lb-5, nb-2)	7	
Total: (For 3 wks in 90 overs)	356	
To bat: Saha, Ashwin, Jadeja, Kumar, Yadav, Sharma.		
Fall of wickets: 1-2-2-180, 3-234.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taskin	16	2	58	1
Kamrul	17	1	91	0
Soumya	1	0	4	0
Mehedi	20	0	93	1
Shakib	13	3	45	0
Taijul	20	4	50	1
Sabbir	3	0	10	0

BANGLADESH: Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarkar, Mominul Haque, Mahmudullah, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim*, Sabbir Rahman.

Fielding lapses continue

SPORTS REPORTER from Hyderabad

Ever since Bangladesh's dismal fielding performance in New Zealand, the team management has been putting an extra focus on the Tigers' catching and throwing abilities. Bangladesh's assistant coach Richard Halsall, upon his return from New Zealand, did say that they were going to analyse the fielding and work on it in depth.

When Bangladesh took the field yesterday it seemed as if the management did make a few changes as far as their fielding strategy was concerned. For instance, Taijul Islam was fielding at point at the start of the game. It's not very often that you get to see the slow left-armed field at that position. One generally gets to see a more agile Sabbir Rahman over there. After all, that position does require the fielder to be extremely athletic.

Sabbir, on the other hand, was fielding at gully, an equally important place especially with the way the Indian batsmen were chopping and

cutting the deliveries.

A beauty of an outswinger bowled by Kamrul Islam Rabbi to Cheteshwar Pujara had the batsman edging, but keeper Mushfiqur Rahim failed to dive to take what should have been a regulation chance.

Shakib Al Hasan was seen fielding at slip when the spinners were bowling. Now it's not uncommon for Shakib to be positioned at the slip cordon, however, in the past Imrul out, the management probably believed that Shakib had the second best pair of hands for that position. Unfortunately for him and the team, there were two edges -- in Mehedi Hasan Miraz's second over with Cheteshwar Pujara on 12 -- that just missed the outstretched hands of the all-rounder yesterday. The first one was out of reach but he reacted late to the second.

On the whole, Bangladesh's fielding performance should frustrate Halsall and the rest of the management. That's not because they were below-par.

While some of the diving stops on the ground were quite impressive, they will be frustrated because one of their

better fielders was not able to answer the call when his team needed him the most.

A brilliant diving effort from Rabbi confused Chetashwar Pujara in the 19th over. Rabbi fired in the throw towards the bowler, Miraz, with both Pujara and Vijay stuck at the other end. All the former under-19 skipper needed to do was catch the ball, but he failed. He could have taken his sweet time to take the bails off.

But then again, that is how the game goes. There are times when Miraz takes one-handed blinders and then there are moments like yesterday, when he failed to grasp the ball with both his hands.

The frustration was clear during Taskin Ahmed's press conference after play yesterday.

"Had that run-out taken place, we probably could have taken five to six wickets today instead of three. But then, catches and run-outs are part of the game. We are hoping to start afresh tomorrow. That's all we are thinking of right now," said Taskin, who incidentally missed out on a few wickets due to fielding errors in New Zealand.

Tigresses' chance to rebound

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's team will try to bounce back from their heavy defeat against their Pakistani counterparts when they meet Scotland in their third match of the ICC World Cup Qualifier at the Colombo Cricket Club ground today.

Bangladesh had made a flying start by defeating Papua New Guinea, but their batting blues returned against Pakistan in the second game as they were comprehensively beaten.

The Rumana Ahmed-led side possesses a good bowling unit, especially in the form of spinners who contribute heavily, but the main problem lies with their batting. They will need to show their prowess with the willow today if they want to ensure a place in the ICC Women's World Cup.

Azmir shines with the ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Azmir Ahmed was dismissed for 29 runs after scoring a gigantic double-hundred in the previous round, but he shone with his spin as Agrani Bank secured a 111-run victory against Ruppangji Tigers Cricket Club in their First Division Super League match at BKSP-4 ground yesterday.

Agrani scored 206 runs before wrapping up their opponents for 95 runs, as Azmir, their most successful bowler, took three wickets for 16 runs.

Asif Iqbal hit 122 runs as Orient Sporting Club (257-4) defeated Kakrail Boys Club (256-7) by six wickets at the Jahangirnagar University ground.

At the Fatullah Outer Stadium, Tawhid Hridoy made 123 as Shinepukur Cricket Club (254-6) outclassed Udayachal Club (109-10) by 175 runs.

Aslam Hossain scored 117 at BKSP-3 to help Surjo Torun Club (260-2) beating Kalindi Krira Chakra (256-10) by eight wickets.

Vijay makes it two in two against Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER from Hyderabad

Murali Vijay seemed an extremely happy person at the end of the day yesterday. He had just completed back-to-back centuries against Bangladesh -- the first one was a powerful 150 at Fatullah back in 2015 -- and his score of 108 helped India see off the early threat.

Of course, his mood at the post-day press conference could have quite easily been different had he been run-out in the 19th over yesterday. Fortunately for him Mehedi Hasan Miraz failed to collect the throw when Vijay was yards out of the crease. Had Miraz collected it, Vijay would have been walking back to the pavilion for 35 thanks to a misinformed call from his partner Cheteshwar Pujara.

Vijay admitted it himself: "We need to work on that. If I would have been out, there would have been a different conversation with Pujara (laughs). I will have a talk with him."

The blunder aside, the Pujara-Vijay associations are generally quite reliable. Their 178 run-stand was the eighth century stand between them. Their partnership average is 67.47, which is already the third-highest

among Indian batting partners who have shared at least 1,000 runs.

"We really like each other's company out there in the middle. He has a solid game and he makes things easy for me. We both share a good rapport and that makes it easy," said Vijay.

Pujara was dismissed for 83 and failed to score a hundred. In the process, however, he broke Chandu Borde's 52-year-old national record for most first-class runs in a season with 1605 at 89.16 in 2016-17.

"I think he's going to become a great player, he's a great player. It's a great honour to move along with him and pick his brains. We are totally different characters in the dressing room because we don't think the same way but once we go to the middle, we enjoy the company and enjoy each other's success. He's been a fantastic role model for all the youngsters in India. Hopefully he can continue doing the great work," said Vijay.

Towards the end of the game Virat Kohli raced to a century and overtook Vijay's score. Vijay reckons that Kohli's quick runs could be very crucial to how the Test pans out.

"He has taken his game to a different level at the moment. End of the day, you can see we are 354 [356] and I thought it would be great if we were 340. The 10-20 runs extra just happened because of him."



DON'T WORRY. WE WILL BOTH GET HUNDREDS WHEN WE RETURN: India captain Virat Kohli (R) shares a light moment with opener Murali Vijay as they head for the Tea break on the opening day of the one-off Test against Bangladesh. PHOTO: AFP

New financial model benefits Bangladesh

STAR SPORT DESK

The International Cricket Council's (ICC's) new financial model is set to benefit Bangladesh most, provided that it is passed in the next ICC

Board meeting in April. The new model seeks to be more equitable and that is made clear by the fact that seven boards will be getting an equal share of the projected 2.5 billion dollar revenue from 2015-2023.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will see a handsome increase to their previous expected maximum haul of 80 million dollars as they stand to make 115 million dollars.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India -- which oppose the new model that replaced the Big Three formula -- will make up to 260 million dollars; a sharp decrease from their previous 445-million-dollar figure.

Two new members, Afghanistan and Ireland, were also included in the calculations and they stand to make up to 55 million dollars each.

SHARE OF REVENUE		
MAXIMUM SHARE OF \$2.5BN FOR 2015-2023		
COUNTRY	OLD(M)	NEW(M)
INDIA	445	260
ENGLAND	150	125
AUSTRALIA	115	115
PAKISTAN	100	115
SOUTH AFRICA	95	115
SRI LANKA	85	115
NEW ZEALAND	85	115
WEST INDIES	90	115
BANGLADESH	80	115
ZIMBABWE	75	80
AFGHANISTAN	0	55
IRELAND	0	55

Malinga recalled

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka on Thursday recalled veteran fast bowler Lasith Malinga to the squad for a series of T20s in Australia this month after his recovery from a long-running knee problem.

The 33-year-old has not played international cricket since last February when Sri Lanka suffered an early exit from the Asia Cup after being plagued by injury worries.

Malinga gave up Test cricket in 2010 after deciding he was unable to withstand the rigour of five-day matches but has continued to make himself available for T20s and 50 over cricket.

Thilanga Sumathipala, president of the Sri Lankan cricket board, told reporters that Malinga had proved his fitness and even pencilled the former skipper in for the next 50 over World Cup being played in England in 2019.

Inaugural inspiration needed

SPORTS REPORTER from Hyderabad

So, India have hammered 356 runs at a run-rate of 3.95 on the first day of their inaugural home Test against Bangladesh. There was plenty of hitting involved, especially towards the end when Mushfiqur Rahim decided to take the new ball.

But how big or small is this total compared to India's performances this year? A glance at the records shows that 2016 has been a run-fest for India. Of the 11 Tests they have played, they crossed the 500-run mark on five occasions. Their average first innings score is a staggering 487 with the lowest

being 316 and the highest 759.

New Zealand had managed to restrict them for 316 back in September in Kolkata, whereas India tore apart the English in their last Test when they posted 759 runs in Chennai. It was also the game in which India posted their highest run-rate, 3.98. Yesterday, India, thanks to a flurry of boundaries towards the end, finished the day with a run-rate of 3.95.

On a batting paradise, India will want to go on and perhaps surpass the total they had made against England.

It goes without saying that Bangladesh will need to get early wickets today. The wicket is not offering much, but Bangladesh's bowlers also

need to be a bit more disciplined. They seemed to lack the patience. Another aspect that Bangladesh probably missed out on is reverse swing. While Taskin was swinging it a bit, he did not get to bowl many overs.

Bangladesh's batting statistics against India paint a dismal picture. Their highest score against them is the 400 they posted in their inaugural Test in Dhaka in 2000, which they certainly need to better if they are to do well here.

It will be quite fitting and a happy occurrence for Bangladesh if they beat their inaugural Test score on their inaugural tour of India in order to maintain their hopes of avoiding defeat.