

SPORT



WRONG SEAT? A serious Mustafizur Rahman (2nd from L) waits for his turn to bat, his game's weaker facet, while Bangladesh's most tactically-sound batsman, Mushfiqur Rahim (L) has a laugh alongside his teammates Mosaddek Hossain and Shakib Al Hasan (R).

PHOTO: AFP

We are all mentally prepared: Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal has said that the visitors are confident of putting an end to their poor form away from home in the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka.

Brimming with confidence after scoring a century in the warm-up game, the left-handed opener believes that if the visitors can play to best of their ability, they could cause surprises.

"We all know one thing, this is a very important series for us. And we feel that this is a series which we should be able to win. If we can play to the best of our ability, we will have a good opportunity. There is no doubt that they [Sri Lanka] are a very good young side. But if we play our best, we can do well," Tamim told a small group of Bangladeshi reporters who reached Sri Lanka for the series yesterday.

Bangladesh's coaching staff, which is dominated by Sri Lankans, have helped the boys prepare hard and it's an aspect that has concerned the opposing captain Rangana Herath as well. From head coach Chandika Hathurusingha to batting coach Thilan Samaraweera, there must

have been a number of ideas exchanged between the players and the coaches. And so, Tamim hopes that the Tigers can use this advantage.

"If you have someone in your team who has worked with Sri Lanka or has grown up in Sri Lanka, his information will definitely be useful. However, how much we can utilise that depends upon us. Everyone in the world can give you information. How you apply that on the field is the biggest matter," Tamim explained.

"The thing that my team and I will focus on is the process. We have to face the first ball and then think about the next 20 and then the next 30 and progress steadily. Instead of thinking of something big, we need to keep the process right.

"Just because I scored a century in the warm-up game, does not mean that I will do very well in the Galle Test. I need to keep my process right. If that's right, everything else will go well," said Tamim.

"The boys are steadily getting ready. The way we are training, everyone will adjust to the conditions before the start of the Test on March 7. Everyone's very serious and I am sure that we are all mentally ready for this series," the Test vice-captain added.

Peshawar canter to PSL title

STAR SPORT DESK

Peshawar Zalmi claimed the trophy of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) with a convincing 58-run victory over an uninspired Quetta Gladiators in Lahore yesterday.

Security concerns faded into the background as fans packed the Gaddafi Stadium to witness international stars alongside some of Pakistan's biggest names ply their trade in the country which has been deprived of international cricket since 2009 – barring a tour by Zimbabwe in 2015.

The one-sided final saw Peshawar pile on 148 runs for six wickets, before Quetta were dismissed for 90.

Kamran Akmal scored 40 with six fours and a six for the eventual victors, while Darren Sammy scored 28 off 11, featuring one four and three sixes – two of which came in the last over.

After the exchange, Peshawar lost wickets at regular intervals, with Bangladeshi export Anamul Haque making just three of nine balls in a nervy innings, as they meekly surrendered the trophy.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PESHAWAR: 148 for 6 in 20 overs (Akmal 40, Sammy 28; Emrit 3-31)

QUETTA: 90 all out in 16.3 overs (Ervine 24, Sarfraz 22; Asghar 3-16)
Result: Peshawar won by 58 runs.

Mashrafe bowls after 2 months

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh limited overs skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza bowled with a cricket ball for the first time in nearly two months yesterday.

The 33-year-old had fractured his right thumb during the final T20I against New Zealand at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui on January 8 and has been under rehabilitation ever since.

Prior to yesterday, Mashrafe was asked by the Bangladesh Cricket Board's medical team to practice bowling and catching.

At a nearly-empty BCB National Cricket Academy ground, Mashrafe bowled four overs with the hard ball for the first time and he didn't feel too bad.

"The main problem, isn't there anymore. The way my situation was a few days ago, I thought I would need more time to recover. But then I progressed quite quickly. I have managed to bowl alright today. There is a bit of pain, but that's normal. I will have to play with that pain. I have a bit of a problem with my fitness, I think.

"I bowled three overs without any problem. At the start of the fourth over I had to force myself a bit. So that means I will have to work harder with my trainer. That's not a problem, it will be okay in a few days time," Mashrafe told reporters at the ground.

"I have tried to control my eating habits outside the ground. I have increased just two kgs. This will decrease in a few days. I am running and working out. But there is a difference between working out on your own and working with a trainer. I will start working with a trainer now and hopefully will get fit quickly."

With regards to Mashrafe's progress, BCB sports physician Debashish Chowdhury said: "We have asked him to take it slow because the fracture is complex. We will be happy if he recovers completely by the 15th," said Debashish.



Australia nose ahead after fascinating Day Two

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD



Virat Kohli baited Steve Smith into trading barbs as emotions threatened to boil over after India fired their first shot of the series on a riveting day of Test cricket on Sunday.

In one of the most intense days of Test cricket in recent memory, Australia's charge towards retaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy hit a speed hump against a revved up Indian team which rose from their slumber just in the nick of time.

Australia showed their newfound resilience on the second day, producing one of their most patient displays with the bat in the Twenty20 era, to edge into the lead. And they did it without major contributions from on-field generals Smith and David Warner.

Instead it was the youngest player in the side, Matt Renshaw, and the maligned Shaun Marsh who led their side into the black by scrounging precious half-centuries; however the road to victory is littered with booby traps.

The visitors made it to stumps on 6-237, an advantage of 48, but the second Test remains in the balance. Any fourth-innings run chase in excess of 150 will be fraught on a wicket that is already offering sharp turn and enough grubbers to trouble even the world's best batsmen.

Newcomers who have discovered the game via Twenty20 may have quickly lost interest but purists would have been captivated by every ball.

Australian teams have paid a heavy price for aggression in Asia over the years but Smith's men are, to adopt Paul Keating's famous line, prepared to do India slowly rather than taking the wham, bam thank you ma'am approach.

Rarely have Australia batted a full day and scored fewer than the 197 runs, at a tortoise-like 2.19 an over, they garnered on the second day.

They were helped by India's continued

ineptitude with the decision review system, the hosts squandering three referrals – two of which were used in hope – and failing to use it when justified.

Kohli has failed to land a blow with the bat but the combative captain, along with talismanic spinner Ravi Ashwin, whipped the crowd into a lather in the first session, turning the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium into a hostile cauldron.

No player was given a hotter reception than Smith, who only days ago ran the gauntlet by publicly declaring the home side was feeling the pressure.

Kohli greeted the Australian captain with several choice words as he marked his guard and did not relent throughout Smith's perilous stay at the crease.

The pair were constantly at it. Not even the drinks break provided sanctuary for Smith from Kohli, who was intent on getting inside his opposing number's head.

Smith's 81-minute knock of eight, which ended when he was caught in close off Ravindra Jadeja's underused left-arm spin, will go down as a failure in the scorebook but he did well to last that long.

Renshaw was also in the thick of the drama, angering Ashwin and Kohli by holding his ground and preventing the Indian spinner from fielding off his own bowling.

Given a life on 29 by Kohli, Renshaw batted for nearly four-and-a-half hours before his concentration gave way on 60.

"There was a bit of talk but that's because they're trying to unnerve each other," Renshaw said.

"We know they're trying to get under our skins because we have a 1-0 lead in the series."

Marsh, too, has rewarded selectors who, somewhat controversially, preferred him ahead of Usman Khawaja. The West Australian would have

been out on 14 had India referred a caught behind, and on 44 had a successful lbw shout overturned and was saved by a no-ball from Ishant Sharma.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 189 (Rahul 90, Nair 26; Lyon 8-50)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 237 for 6 (Warner 33, Renshaw 60, Marsh 66, Wade 25 not out; Jadeja 3-49)



Opener Matt Renshaw (L) and Shaun Marsh scored precious half-centuries yesterday as Australia took a 48-run lead going into the third day of the second Test against India in Bangalore.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Pakistan cricket fans get a rare opportunity to watch their cricketing stars and celebrate in their own den during the final of the Pakistan Super League between Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium in Lahore yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Tushar can't stop scoring

SPORTS REPORTER



He isn't likely to get a call into the national team any time soon or any time in the future. He may not even be included in Bangladesh's second-string tours due to his age. But that doesn't stop Tushar Imran from scoring runs.

He has already surpassed 1000 runs this season and at the rate he is going, it won't be a surprise if he becomes the first ever Bangladeshi player to score more than 10,000 first-class runs by next season. He is also the highest run-getter of the Bangladesh Cricket League at the moment.

Can anything stop Tushar Imran? Apparently not.

He, along with Mohammad Mithun scored centuries to help Prime Bank South Zone make a good start in the final round of the competition. They finished the day on 325 for 2 against Walton Central Zone at the BKSP in Savar.

After electing to bat first, Imrul Kayes laid the platform with a 126-ball 57. He put on 88 with Fazle Mahmud for the opening wicket. However, they both were dismissed by the 39th over. That's when Mithun and

SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE VS WALTON CENTRAL ZONE

PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE: 325 for 2 (Mithun 127 not out, Tushar 101 not out, Imrul 57, Fazle 39; Mosharraf 1-91, Shuvagata 1-94)

BCB NORTH ZONE VS ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE

BCB NORTH ZONE: 305 for 5 (Forhad 108, Junaid 84, Nasir 40, Nazmul 33; Saifuddin 2-42, Kapali 1-19, Afif 1-23)



MITHUN...127 not out



TUSHAR...101 not out



FORHAD...108

Tushar joined hands to score an unbeaten 213-run partnership for the third wicket.

While Mithun scored three sixes and 13 fours during his 127, Tushar remained unbeaten on 101 with nine fours.

In the day's other game at the Khan Shaheb Osman Alit Stadium in Fatullah, league leaders BCB North Zone were driven by Forhad Hossain's 108 as they finished the day on a positive 305 for 5 against Islami Bank East Zone. Forhad was well supported

by Junaid Siddique's 84.

With 19 points, North Zone are the favourites to win the BCL this season. If they draw this game and take a first innings lead, they will get three points which will be enough for them to win the championship.

Second-placed South Zone have 13 points at the moment. A win will give them six points, whereas, an innings victory will give them seven. Therefore, they will hope North Zone have a bad day on the field today.