

SPORT



Bangladesh off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz celebrates the dismissal of Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Mendis on the second morning of the opening Test at the Galle International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'All I can say is brain-fade'

SAKEB SUBHAN from Galle



Bangladesh's end-of-day and end-of-session blues continued yesterday. Openers Soumya Sarkar and Tamim Iqbal had held off Sri Lanka's opening burst, although both survived chances, and were looking comfortable on Bangladesh's fourth century-plus opening stand.

However, Tamim Iqbal's 'brain-fade' as described by coach Chandika Hathurusingha after stumps, took a bit of the gloss off the effort. The picture grew much duller when Mominul Haque stepped back to a sharp turner from Dilruwan Perera and was trapped in front with six overs to go to the close.

From 118 for no loss Bangladesh ended the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle on 133 for two, 361 runs adrift of Sri Lanka's 494 all out.

"He [Tamim] hasn't spoken to me yet," coach Hathurusingha said about Tamim's run-out 10 overs from the close. The left-handed opener had played and missed at a ball from Lakshan Sandakan down the leg side and, perhaps thinking that the ball had brushed his pad and gone past the keeper, set off for a run only for keeper Niroshan Dickwella, who was appealing for a caught behind, to whip off the bails.

"But what I think, you know, the buzzword now is brain-fade, isn't it, in cricket? That's what happened there," said Hathurusingha with a smile.

"Very disappointed because we were cruising at that time. They were batting very well, there were no demons at that time. Actually he [Tamim] batted really well. I was very pleased with the way he approached the innings. He probably thought that the ball had gone past the keeper. Only thing I can say is brain-fade."

The press conference was held in a pretty jovial mood, as both sets of media personnel knew Bangladesh's Sri Lankan coach well. However, he rued the lack of experience in his bowling ranks.

"I am not quite happy with the young bowling attack we have. You take Shakib [Al Hasan] out, the other bowlers have played 15 Test matches between them.

"I am disappointed in the no-ball [Subashis Roy's no-ball dismissal of Kusal Mendis on the first day], but you can't do anything about it. On a flat wicket, losing the toss and keeping them under 500 is a fairly good effort. Obviously, would have liked to get that wicket; it would have been different."

Despite the end-of-day wickets and the missed opportunity on the first day, Hathurusingha seemed in a confident mood ahead of the third day.

"I would think it's an even day for both teams. There is a long way to go in this Test match. And it's too early to predict something. Getting 133, we are 360-odd runs behind.

"The wicket is still good. The wicket is going to get slower and a little more spin-

MOMENTS

SPORTS REPORTER from Galle

LINES OUT TO GET SUBASHIS

In the sixth over of the first day Subashis Roy had prematurely rejoiced at picking up Kusal Mendis's wicket first ball, only for the eventual centurion to be recalled after replays showed that Subashis had overstepped the line. In the seventh over of the second day, Subashis was again celebrating what he thought was Mendis's wicket, only to be let down again. A top-edged hook went to fine leg and Mustafizur Rahman caught it, but had no awareness that he stepped on the rope at the same time the ball nestled in his hands. Subashis's premature celebration came to an abrupt halt when he saw the dejection on his teammates' faces and, more importantly, the umpire signalling six.

TAMIM SHOWS HOW IT'S DONE

Mendis, he of three lives and nearing a maiden double-century, seemed determined to test his luck to the limit. In the 104th over he stepped out to Mehedi Hasan Miraz but the drift away ensured that he did not middle it. Perhaps Mustafizur's gaffe was fresh in everyone's minds, and Tamim showed just how to handle catches like that and he did it almost nonchalantly. He ran back, took the catch inside the boundary and tossed it up, before stepping back over the line to reverse the momentum and complete a fine catch.

AND HOW IT'S NOT DONE

Having displayed immense calm in taking that catch and also substantial cool to reach 57 in Bangladesh's reply, Tamim produced the most here-brained moment of the day, which is saying something. A leg-side ball from left-arm chinaman bowler Lakshan Sandakan appeared to clip Tamim's pad on the way through to the keeper, who went up in appeal for a caught behind. Umpire Aleem Dar could not be swayed, but Tamim was already out as he inexplicably ran down the pitch and Niroshan Dickwella was only too happy to whip the bails off. The best guess doing the rounds is that Tamim thought the ball had gone past the keeper, but on a day of gifts he may have wanted to thank the keeper for dropping him on 28.

HATHURU'S BANGLA TURN

When Hathurusingha, the prodigal son, returned to his native land in charge of the opposition and faced up to the press at the post-day press conference yesterday, the Sri Lanka media manager (who runs the pressers for both teams) asked for questions in English first, which meant that questions in Sinhalese would follow. It seemed a bit odd that a Bangladesh coach would be answering questions in a language that the Bangladeshi scribes would not understand. When the English questions ended, it was asked whether Hathurusingha would mind questions in Sinhalese, and he agreed. When no more questions were forthcoming, the media manager jokingly asked whether he knew any Bangla, to which Hathurusingha said "a few words". Then, before he got up, he said 'Dhonnobaa' with a mischievous smile. At least we know where his allegiances lie as long as he is wearing a Bangladesh jersey.

POSTCARD FROM THE ISLAND

SPORTS REPORTER from Galle

THE TOWN ON THE EDGE

It must be counted as a stroke of good fortune that a tourist's first stop in Sri Lanka is the seaside city of Galle. It is often thought that the cities of the Indian subcontinent are culturally similar, but Galle, the administrative capital of the Southern Province, seems to be occupying an alternate reality and presents a bit of a culture shock to those coming from Bangladesh.

The city is dominated by the Galle Fort, and that is where the alternate reality is at its most vivid.

Nestled inside walls first built by the Portuguese in 1588 and then fortified by the Dutch from 1649 onwards is a town within a city, and to put it simply it is a surreal blend of European architecture with a subcontinental way of life, with each influencing the other. Narrow, cobbled streets weave between houses built closely together in an old-world colonial style. The streets are uncommonly neat for the subcontinent, with primly maintained shop fronts and restaurant seating out on the street.

Walking through the old-world streets among people of multiple ethnicities, it is easy to imagine that you are in a place on the edges of the harsher world. In a sense that is exactly where the Galle fort is -- to its south is

the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, and beyond that, no major landmass in the southward direction for more than 5,000 miles -- and even then it is the near uninhabitable Antarctica.

THE CRICKET GROUND

The Galle International Stadium is one of the most picturesque grounds in the world and can easily give the Adelaide

of cricket may not draw your eyes away from the ship on the horizon that makes its way from the edge of the Galle Cricket Club stand to your right to the foot of the Fort over the length of a session.

It must have a calming effect on players, as even the restless and mercurial Mohammad Ashrafu settled down



A view of one section of the iconic Galle Fort.

PHOTO: SAKEB SUBHAN

Oval and Newlands Cricket Stadium a long enough to score 190 here in 2013. And, speaking of culture shock, half the ground is visible at ground level from the street in front of Galle Fort -- unthinkable for a stadium in Bangladesh. Lots of people watch international matches for free lined up on the footpath, or for those needing a higher view, from atop the ramparts.

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North Zone win maiden title

SPORTS REPORTER



BCB North Zone became the new Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) champions after earning three points from their drawn game against Islami Bank East Zone at Fatullah yesterday.

In addition to that, the four-day competition ended with yet another achievement from veteran Tushar Iman. Although he got the opportunity to bat just two overs in Prime Bank South Zone's second innings at the BKSP, he became the highest run-getter in a single season by eclipsing Liton Das's 1232 runs.

As expected, both games ended in draws with a hundred from Nazmul Hossain at Fatullah and a 113-run effort from Shadman Islam at BKSP being the highlights of the day apart from Tushar's unbeaten 12-ball 28 -- featuring five fours and one six -- which saw him finish the season with record a 1249 runs.

Tushar, who scored 731 runs in the six matches at an average of 91.37 and also hit two double hundreds, was quite conscious that he

was chasing another record. That is why he decided to open the innings and went for the kill, ultimately finishing the job in style.

However, Jahurul Islam was still the happiest man in the end as North Zone secured a maiden title.

"It was all about the team effort and that helped clinch the title. We were consistent in our performances," said Jahurul.

Jahurul said that it was not easy to secure results this season as the wickets were mostly flat, especially at the BKSP.

"I am not a hundred per cent sure but maybe the omission of bonus points encouraged teams to draw out the first innings as long as possible for a lead, which ultimately made it difficult to get a result. Overall the standard of the tournament was good but in my opinion it could have been much better had there been sporting wickets," Jahurul added.

At Fatullah, Nasir Hossain assisted Nazmul Hossain with 63, steering North Zone to 295 for 8, at which point they declared. Chasing an improbable 454, East Zone ended at 128 for 3 in 36 overs. Shafiu finished with a match haul of eight wickets.

BCB North Zone players celebrate their maiden Bangladesh Cricket League title after a draw against Islami Bank East Zone in their last match of the league at Fatullah yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

ROLL OF HONOUR

Season	Champions
2012-13	Central Zone
2013-14	South Zone
2014-15	South Zone
2015-16	Central Zone
2016-17	North Zone

POINTS TABLE

Teams	Mat	W	L	D	Pts
North Zone	6	2	0	4	22
South Zone	6	1	0	5	16
East Zone	6	1	2	3	13
Central Zone	6	1	3	2	10

SCORES IN BRIEF

NORTH ZONE: 374 and 295-8dec (Junaed 40, Nazmul 122 not out, Nasir 63; Saifuddin 3-66, Jayed 2-45)

EAST ZONE: 216 and 128-3 in 36 overs (Tasamul 44 not out; Shafiu 2-37)

Result: Match drawn.
Player-of-the-match: Farhad Hossain.

SOUTH ZONE: 749-8dec and 33-0 in 2 overs (Tushar 28 not out)

CENTRAL ZONE: 415 all out in 143.5 overs (Shadman 113, Saif 50, Taibur 90; Al-Amin Hossain 2-47, Razzak 2-139, Nazmul 4-100)

Result: Match drawn

Player-of-the-match: Shahriar Nafees.

PERFORMER OF THE DAY

MEHEDI HASAN MIRAZ



On the first day of the Test against Sri Lanka Mehedi Hasan Miraz was guilty of bowling a bit flat. However, he corrected himself yesterday. His primary focus was to bowl slower and give the ball more flight and that is what made his variations a lot more effective. Despite getting hit for repeated boundaries, Mehedi persisted with his technique and got rewarded with the wickets of Kusal Mendis and Niroshan Dickwella. A quicker one trapped Dilruwan Perera in front and he finished with a well-deserved four-wicket haul. He topped his bowling effort by taking a brilliant, running catch at long on to dismiss Lakshan Sandakan and bring an end to the Lankan innings.

Shakib top in all formats

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has overtaken India's Ravichandran Ashwin as the top-ranked player in the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) Test All-Rounder Rankings. The change in the rankings was announced by the ICC through a press release yesterday.

Ashwin, who scored 20 runs in his last four innings against Australia, now has 434 rating points while Shakib has 441 and is on top. He received his highest rating, 443, during the recent Test against New Zealand in Christchurch. At the moment, Shakib is rated as the best all-rounder in all three formats of the game according to ICC rankings.

Although the left-hander only managed to take one wicket in the first innings of the ongoing Test between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, he has had a relatively good time in recent Tests. He scored a double hundred against New Zealand in Wellington and then scored two half-centuries in the next two games. However, while he has been among the wickets column recently, he is yet to record decent bowling figures this year.

BD-SL SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA: First Innings (overning 321 for 4)	R/B	4s/6s
Karunaratne b Mehedi	30/76	2/0
Tharanga b Subashis	4/14	1/0
Mendis c Tamim b Mehedi	194/285	19/4
Chandimal c Mehedi		

b Mustafizur	5/54	0/0
Gunaratne b Taskin	85/134	7/0
Dickwella c Mahmudullah		
b Mehedi	75/76	6/1
Perera lbw b Mehedi	51/77	7/1
Herath c Soumya b Mustafizur	14/19	3/0
Lakmal run out	8/29	1/0
Sandakan c Mehedi b Shakib	5/15	0/0
Kumara not out	0/1	0/0

Extras: (b-4, lb-10, w-4, nb-5)	23
Total: (All out in 129.1 overs)	494
Fall of wickets: 1-15, 2-60, 3-92, 4-288, 5-398, 6-432, 7-457, 8-480, 9-494, 10-494.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mustafizur	25	5	68	2
Taskin	21	3	77	1
Subashis	24	4	103	1
Mehedi	22	1	113	4
Shakib	32	1	100	1
Soumya	3	0	9	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	10	0

BANGLADESH: First Innings	R/B	4s/6s
Tamim run out	57/112	6/0
Soumya not out	66/133	7/1
Mominul lbw b Perera	7/17	1/0
Mushfiqur not out	1/14	0/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-1)	2	
Total: (For 2 wickets in 46 overs)	133	

To bat: Mahmudullah, Shakib, Liton, Mehedi, Taskin, Mustafizur, Subashis.
Fall of wickets: 1-118, 2-127.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lakmal	5	0	15	0
Kumara	7	0	38	0
Perera	13	3	32	1
Herath	11	1	30	0
Sandakan	10	5	17	0

Premier b'ball starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Unimed Unihealth Premier Division Basketball League gets underway today at the Dhanmondi Indoor Basketball Gymnasium. A total of ten clubs will take part in the league, said a press release from the Bangladesh Basketball Federation. Unimed and Unihealth Manufacturing Limited's managing director M Mosaddek Hossain will inaugurate the league as the chief guest of the opening ceremony, which will get underway at 4:00pm.