

# SPORT

No Tension with Digestion



**WHO IS THE BOSS?** Champion Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (L) spreads his arms after dismissing Australia's big-hitting batsman Glenn Maxwell (R) with a beautifully disguised delivery that the right hander, while charging down the wicket, missed completely and was stumped on the second day of the first Test in Mirpur yesterday.

## Soumya yields an inch

SAKEB SUBHAN

As impressive as the tangible successes on the field over the last two days has been Bangladesh's statements of intent that prefaced the first Test against Australia. The talk of blanking the Aussies 2-0 was not just empty bluster; it conveyed a hard-nosed attitude against the most hard-nosed cricketing tradition in Test cricket. By making such a big statement, the team had set itself up to play uncompromising cricket against a team that takes a mile if given an inch.

And to the Tigers' credit, they backed that bravado up in style for two days of Test cricket, allowing Australia to win just one out of six sessions -- the afternoon session yesterday, and that too marginally. But, with a lead of 86 and just two overs to go to the end of play, which was within touching distance of being reached without loss and with a major psychological advantage over their celebrated opponents, opener Soumya Sarkar yielded an inch.

The young opener danced down the track to left-arm spinner Ashton Agar, eager to hit the ball for a six over long on. The ball did go far, about eight storeys straight up in the sky, and landed in the juggling hands of Usman Khawaja at mid on.

"I was a bit surprised. I understood why he played it, because the man was up a bit and he wanted to take it downtown," said Agar with a glint in his eye after the day's play. "But at that stage of the game, with the wicket doing what it was doing, it was a bit of a risky shot. And fortunately for me it really paid off and I'm glad he made that mistake."

Agar said the last bit with a chuckle, indicating just how much succour Soumya's unnecessary adventurism had given the Aussies at the end of a tough day in the office.

Soumya's wild indiscretion may not prove very costly. His inclusion as an opener has always been cloaked in controversy because of his faulty technique against the moving ball, which accounted for his dismissal in the first innings. Counterbalancing that

deficiency is his undeniable talent, which was in full evidence in his first scoring shot yesterday -- a rifle-shot cover drive off the speedy Pat Cummins.

In Bangladesh's last Test, Soumya surrendered his wicket with a similar shot against Rangana Herath at the beginning of a tricky chase. It was a Test Bangladesh won, and perhaps that is why Soumya continues to find a place in the first eleven while hardened Test players like Mominul Haque and Mahmudullah Riyad are sitting it out.

In an otherwise uncompromising outlook, it has to be asked whether there is space for emotion behind including a batsman who has failed twice in two Tests to sublimate his baser desires to suit his team's needs. The question becomes louder when both his temperament and technique have proven to be not quite up to the mark for Test cricket.



**Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar trudges back to the dressing room after playing an expansive shot with only two overs remaining in the day's first Test in Mirpur yesterday.**

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### BD-AUS SCOREBOARD

**BANGLADESH: 1st innings 260** (Shakib 84, Tamim 71, Mushfiqur 18, Nasir 23, Mehedi 18; Cummins 3-63, Lyon 3-79, Agar 3-46)

**AUSTRALIA: 1st innings** R/B 4s/6s (overnight 18 for 3)

Warner lbw b Mehedi	8/15	1/0
Renshaw c Soumya b Shakib	45/94	5/0
Khawaja run out	1/2	0/0
Lyon lbw b Shakib	0/5	0/0
Smith b Mehedi	8/16	1/0
Handscomb lbw b Tajjul	33/67	6/0
Maxwell st Mushfiqur b Shakib	23/39	3/0
Wade lbw b Mehedi	5/9	1/0
Agar not out	41/97	2/1
Cummins b Shakib	25/90	1/1
Hazlewood c Imrul b Shakib	5/15	0/0
Extras: (b-15, lb-3, w-5)	23	
Total: (All out in 74.5 overs)	217	

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-14, 3-14, 4-33, 5-102, 6-117, 7-124, 8-144, 9-193, 10-217.

**Bowler** O M R W

Shafiqul	6	0	21	0
Mehedi	26	6	62	3
Shakib	25.5	7	68	5
Tajjul	8	1	32	1
Mustafizur	8	3	13	0
Nasir	1	0	3	0

**BANGLADESH: 2nd innings** R/B 4s/6s

Tamim not out	30/70	2/0
Soumya c Khawaja b Agar	15/53	3/0
Tajjul not out	0/9	0/0
Extras:	0	
Total: (For 1 wkt in 22 overs)	45	

Fall of wickets: 1-43.

To bat: Imrul, Sabbir, Shakib, Mushfiqur, Nasir, Mehedi, Shafiqul, Mustafizur.

**Bowler** O M R W

Hazlewood	3	1	3	0
Cummins	2	0	5	0
Lyon	9	3	11	0
Maxwell	3	0	17	0
Agar	5	0	9	1

## Another special Shakib feat

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan became

only the fourth bowler in Test cricket history to take five or more wickets in an innings, against each of the nine Test playing oppositions, on the second day of the Dhaka Test yesterday.

Shakib, the top all-rounder in all forms of cricket, finished the first innings with figures of five for 68 as the visitors crumbled to 217 all out, chasing Bangladesh's total of 260.

The 30-year-old had removed nightwatchman Nathan Lyon in the final hour of the first day, and followed it up with four more crucial wickets. He got the better of top-scorer Matt Renshaw with a loopy delivery and then removed a dangerous Glenn Maxwell with an absolute

### SHAKIB'S RECORD

Best bowling figures against each Test opponent

COUNTRY	FIGURES	VENUE	DATE
Australia	5/68	Dhaka	Aug 27, 2017
England	5/85	Chittagong	Oct 20, 2016
Zimbabwe	6/59	Dhaka	Oct 25, 2014
West Indies	5/63	Dhaka	Oct 29, 2011
Pakistan	6/82	Dhaka	Dec 17, 2011
India	5/62	Chittagong	Jan 17, 2010
New Zealand	7/36	Chittagong	Oct 17, 2008
South Africa	6/99	Centurion	Nov 26, 2008
Sri Lanka	5/70	Dhaka	Dec 26, 2008

peach before mopping up the tail by dismissing Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood. The five-for made him only the fifth Test cricketer, after Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan, Sri Lanka's Rangana Herath and South Africa's Dale Steyn, to take five or more wickets against all nine other Test playing nations. The two newest members of the Test community -- Afghanistan and Ireland -- are yet to play a Test match. This bowling feat could not have come at a better time for the left-armed spinner as he is playing his 50th Test match for his country. Shakib had already made an impact in the game on Sunday with his aggressive knock of 84 off 133 deliveries. He was involved with a massive 155-run fourth wicket partnership with Tamim Iqbal as Bangladesh salvaged a precarious start to go to a position of strength.

## Proud to play with him: Mehedi

SPORTS REPORTER



Young off-spinner Mehedi Hasan was supposed to play the lead role in Bangladesh's three-pronged spin attack against

Australia. He was on equal terms with his more illustrious teammate Shakib Al Hasan as their combined effort reduced the Aussies to 144-8 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Both, with three wickets each, were engaged in a competition to mop up the resolute tail. However, it was premier all-rounder Shakib who excelled and joined an exclusive league of bowlers that have taken five wickets against all the Test playing nations.

Shakib joined the elite club of Sri Lankan spinners Muttiah Muralitharan, Rangana Herath, and South African fast bowler Dale Steyn when he dismissed Patt Cummins and had last batsman Josh Hazlewood caught by Imrul Kayes at

short leg, leaving Australia all-out on 217.

It capped off a brilliant day for Shakib after his astounding 84 in Bangladesh's first-innings total of 260 on the opening day. And his achievement excited the youngster Mehedi so much so that he said it was a privilege for him to bowl alongside the best all-rounder in the world.

"Shakib bhai is dominating in all the three formats of the game and it feels good to have someone like him in our country and to get the opportunity to play with him is special. I can't finish talking about him and we all know that there is only one Shakib bhai and I feel good that he is creating many records and I am playing with him. He shares a lot of experiences with us," Mehedi told reporters after the second day's play.

Mehedi, who took the crucial wicket of Australia captain Steven Smith, also finished the day with figures of 3/62 from his 26 overs.

The 19-year-old, who also had David Warner and Matthew Wade, informed that it feels good to dismiss arguably the world's best batsmen how-

ever, he also added that there is still a lot of game left and he is looking forward to continuing that.

He, however, credited skipper Mushfiqur Rahim for giving him the advice that outfoxed Smith.

"Mushfiqur bhai told me that if I could bowl around the wicket to Smith, then he will get stuck, he won't be able to play how he wants and he won't be able to use his feet. He likes to go forward and come down the track, so if the ball turns there will be a stumping chance or a catching opportunity. That is what I tried to do, follow Mushfiqur bhai's advice," Miraz revealed at the end of the day.

Mushfiqur's advice turned out to be golden. Shafiqul Islam had tied Smith down early in the morning, and Smith tried the trademark shimmy down the wicket to Miraz's round-the-wicket angle. The young off-spinner was alive to the opportunity and fired it in at Smith's dancing toes, which on this occasion worked against the batsman, who was yorked and looked back to see that he was missing his leg bail.

### BCB AGM on Sept 30

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to hold its AGM (Annual General Meeting) and EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) on September 30. "We had a board meeting today (Monday) where we decided to hold the AGM and EGM on September 30. We have also formed a five-member committee comprising Enayet Hossain Siraj, Mahbub Anam, Lukman Hossain Bhuiyan, Ismail Haider Mallick and our CEO to work on it," said BCB president Nazmul Hassan after the board meeting at BCB's Mirpur headquarters last night.

The BCB called the meeting yesterday to fix the AGM and EGM date after obtaining the full verdict of the Supreme Court.

On July 26, the Supreme Court had ruled that the BCB is the only authority which can make amendments to its constitution and that the National Sports Council (NSC) could not. The highest court of the country ruled that 'the BCB is at liberty to amend its constitution at any time as per provision in Article 11.1 of Article 26 of its constitution so that the requirements of the International Cricket Council are met subject to the approval of NSC'.

Hassan, who became the first elected BCB president in October 2013 under that amended constitution that was taken to the court of law, called it a 'landmark' ruling for Bangladesh cricket.

### PERFORMER OF THE DAY

SHAKIB AL HASAN



After his innings best with the bat on Sunday, ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan reminded everyone of his value with the ball as Bangladesh scuttled Australia out for 217 to take a first-innings lead of 43 runs. The left-arm spinner accounted for five of the batsmen--crucial ones at that -- to stifle the visitors' innings. He got rid of Matt Renshaw, the top-scorer of the innings, with an arm ball that took the edge to the first slip before completely bamboozling the aggressive Glen Maxwell with a peach, beating him in flight and turn as the batsman tried to go for a big swing. The five wickets ensured Shakib became only the fourth bowler in Test cricket to take five or more wickets in an innings against all nine Test playing nations.

## 'Tough cricket coming up'

SPORTS REPORTER



The wicket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium seems as much of an actor as the two teams playing the match. Footmarks had shown up by the end of the first hour on Sunday, the first day of the match, and over the first two days there has been turn and bounce both even and uneven, while also offering surprisingly good carry for the pacers, particularly those from the southern hemisphere.

21 wickets in two days is ample evidence of the wicket's partiality towards the bowlers, and Shakib Al Hasan said on Sunday that he didn't expect the game to last five days. With the sun unexpectedly beating down on the barren, grey surface, there were some spitting cobras as Bangladesh reached stumps on the second day with a lead of 88 runs and only one wicket lost. Australia spinner Ashton Agar, who claimed the solitary wicket, said that he expected the wicket to play even more of a role in the coming days.

"It's definitely getting a bit harder. Off the good stuff [the lighter areas near the middle of the pitch] though, it's not too bad, although it is starting to spin a bit more off the good part of the wicket," Agar, who also scored an unbeaten 41 in Australia's 217 all out, said after the day's play. "It's going to be some pretty tough Test cricket for the next few days. It's going to get harder and harder to bat on. They bowled well and Shakib [Al Hasan] got five wickets, Mehedi [Hasan Miraz] bowled really accurately as well. When you hit a good length it's pretty hard to score, sometimes you have to take a risk and that's often when they get a wicket."

Mehedi, meanwhile, insisted that the bowling has to be up to the mark for the pitch to be utilised: "As important is the fact that our bowlers are bowling very well, bowling in good areas. No matter how the wicket plays if you don't bowl in good areas it is hard to get wickets. Shakib bhai bowled very well, it was outstanding. Apart from him, the rest of us like myself, Tajjul [Islam] and Mustafizur [Rahman], although he didn't get wickets -- he bowled in good areas and checked the runs."

Even with his team's back against the wall, Agar was excited by the conditions. "This is what spinners love. When the ball jumps and spins, especially off the good part of the wicket, this is what we really like."



**THE JUGGLER:** Australia's Usman Khawaja made a meal of a regulation catch before finally holding on to it on his fourth attempt to dismiss Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar, the only casualty for the Tigers before stumps on the second day of the first Test in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED