



'No shortage of confidence'

MAZHAR UDDIN from Sylhet

Bangladesh left-arm spinner Taijul Islam helped the side overcome the absence of lead spinner Shakib Al Hasan and bagged his fourth five-wicket haul, finishing off the Zimbabwe first innings with his second-best Test figures of six for 108 yesterday. During the post-day press conference, however, he had to field more questions about his teammates' woeful batting performance which saw Bangladesh being bowled out for a paltry 143 than his brilliant spell of bowling yesterday.

The following are excerpts from the press conference:

Q: Are the regular batting failures a concern?

Taijul Islam (TI): If we talk about the batting failures, I would also like to remind you that our batsmen have done well previously and maybe this just happened all of a sudden. It can happen in cricket and we will try to do well in future.

Q: Did the performance in the Test series in West Indies play in the back of the mind?

TI: No, it was nothing like that and I think there was no shortage of confidence in our batsmen and bowlers. Before the defeat in the West Indies series we managed to beat big teams and it can happen in one or two series. The game is not over yet as there are still three days left in the Test.

Q: How do you feel after taking your fourth five-wicket haul?

TI: Obviously, it feels good as you don't get five-six wickets regularly, but I would rather want to look at it from the team's perspective. If my team does well it will feel better.

Q: Do you see any chances of a turnaround from here?

TI: Test cricket is a game of records, so we want to make a record in this game. We are still thinking of winning the game. We would want to restrict Zimbabwe under 150.



Bangladesh's batting was dismantled much in the same way that captain Mahmudullah Riyad's stumps were on the second day of the first Test against Zimbabwe at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday. Mahmudullah (Inset) was perhaps left wondering how they can recover after conceding a 139-run first-innings lead. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

TAIJUL'S FIVE-FORS	
8-39	against Zimbabwe in Dhaka, Oct 2014
6-108	against Zimbabwe in Sylhet, Nov 2018
6-163	against Pakistan in Khulna, April 2015
5-135	against West Indies in Kingstown, Sept 2014

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Underdogs when it comes to Tests

SAKEB SUBHAN

The debacle unfolding at the picturesque Sylhet International Stadium, Bangladesh's newest Test venue that is likely to be stained by an ignominious defeat suffered by the hosts, is a story of two parts. The ending is a familiar one -- Bangladesh cannot play Test cricket well, and it does not seem as if the cricketing establishment are too bothered by it.

The first aspect is not directly related to the latest in a long line of batting failures, but it speaks to the prevalent attitude. Head coach Steve Rhodes was excited about new pace prospect Khaled Ahmed and reportedly wanted to give him a Test debut at his home ground. However, another faction of the team management wanted to play with three spinners and just one specialist pacer in Abu Jayed. The latter won the argument.

One does not have to be an insider to know that Rhodes does not have much pull when it comes to making big decisions. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan belittled him in a recent

interview by saying that the Englishman is good at spotting young talent, the subtext being that he was not quite as good at running the serious business of the national cricket team.

There may even be something to the notion that Rhodes does not have much to do in ODI cricket as Bangladesh are a more than competent side in the format, but it is another story in Tests. Rhodes may have

TIGERS' SUB-200 STRETCH	
110 and 123	against Sri Lanka in February 2018
43 and 144	against West Indies in July 2018
149 and 168	against West Indies in July 2018
143	against Zimbabwe in November 2018

played just 11 Tests for England but he played 440 first-class matches in the 1980s and early '90s in a system that is far superior to Bangladesh's domestic scene.

In other words, he knows a thing or two about winning longer-version matches and he likely knows a bit more than a cricketing culture that has produced 10 wins in 108

previous matches. Zimbabwe have shown the value of bowling with two seamers with the new ball -- something that was obvious not so long ago but seems to have become a bad idea in Bangladesh. The prevalent idea now seems to be to let spin do the job, which at the best of times can only be half done by the bowlers.

Which brings us to the batting. In 13 innings since the start of the South Africa tour last September, Bangladesh have crossed 200 only thrice. Zimbabwe did not have to bowl magic balls on a wicket that required batsmen to spend time in the middle to score runs -- which Zimbabwe, playing their first Test of the year, had done -- as the hosts started dropping like ninepins to Zimbabwe's opening bowlers Kyle Jarvis and Tendai Chatara.

Opener Imrul Kayes and skipper Mahmudullah Riyad left their bats hanging, which just directed the balls into the stumps off the inside edge. Liton Das and Nazmul Hossain Shanto chased wide deliveries to be caught behind, while Mushfiqur Rahim defended a ball he could have left to suffer the same fate.

"We knew that they were going to come

and play in that one-day mode, which will present us with a lot of chances in the Tests because the field sets will be quite attacking," Chatara said after the day's play. "I think they haven't really adjusted from ODI cricket to playing Tests, where you leave many balls."

"It's Test cricket, there's five days of play so you have to play accordingly. If you ask enough questions and they're obliging, things will happen like that. We're just trying to complement our batters, who took a lot of time at the wicket. So we have to complement them by bowling in the right areas," Zimbabwe bowling coach Douglas Hondo added.

This is just Zimbabwe's ninth Test in the last two years, and Bangladesh's 18th; Zimbabwe have 12 ranking points, Bangladesh 1,268 and the Tigers have also won the last four matches between the teams. The worst aspect from the Bangladesh perspective is not that they still seem like underdogs when it comes to longer-version ability, but -- as is proven by their denial of someone who may actually have that awareness -- that they do not even acknowledge their lack of sense.

Rajshahi seek title

SPORTS REPORTER

The sixth and final round of the National Cricket League will get underway today with Rajshahi Division in pole position to grab the title while Dhaka Division will be hoping to hold on to their Tier-2 top spot over the next four days and be promoted to the top tier next season.

Rajshahi will have the home advantage when they take on Barisal Division at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium. With just over four points separating Rajshahi (25.31) from Rangpur (21.09), the current leaders will be hoping to win and, failing that, that Rangpur do not win the other Tier-1 against defending champions Khulna Division at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura. It is by no means a foregone conclusion as there has only been one result in the five Tier-1 matches so far.

Both Tier-2 matches will take place in Cox's Bazar, with Dhaka taking on Sylhet Division Chattogram Division squaring off against Dhaka Metropolis.

MOMENTS

MOMENT OF JOY IN THE PRESS BOX

The second day was a disappointing one in the Sylhet press box as the home side had a horrible outing against Zimbabwe. Despite the positive start to the day with Bangladesh managing to pick five quick wickets to bundle out Zimbabwe for 282, courtesy of Taijul Islam's six-wicket haul, the home batsman wasted the opportunity. They kept losing wickets in clusters and at one stage were reeling at 49 for five. The environment in the press box also became gloomy and there were questions about whether the Tigers, with five wickets in hand, would be able to score the 33 runs needed to avoid the follow-on. Not long after, when Mehedi Hasan Miraz struck a boundary off Kyle Jarvis to take the score to 82, it was a small moment of joy as the journalists in the press box applauded. Those who think the applause was a sarcastic one, probably did not see the regularity and inevitability with which the first five batsmen returned to the pavilion.

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

After the young boy who ran onto the field and hugged Mushfiqur Rahim on the first day, there was another pitch invasion at the Sylhet International Stadium during the second day's play yesterday. This time, however, it was a dog that hogged the spotlight as it ran towards the pitch in the middle of

Bangladesh's innings and delayed proceedings for a while. The security personnel did eventually manage to guide the dog out of the ground without much difficulty. However, it was not the first time that a dog stopped play at the picturesque venue. A similar incident took place during a Bangladesh Premier League game last year and the canine intruder literally dodged the security staff for quite some time before finally deciding to leave the ground.



BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

Zimbabwe: 1st innings	R/B	4s/6s		
H Masakadza lbw b Jayed	52/105	4/2		
Charu b Taijul	13/31	2/0		
Taylor c N Hossain b Taijul	6/15	0/0		
Williams c Mehedi				
b Mahmudullah	88/173	9/0		
Raza b N Islam	19/52	2/0		
Moor (not out)	63/192	6/0		
Chakabva c N Hossain b Taijul	28/85	2/0		
Masakadza c Mushfiqur b Taijul	4/28	0/0		
Mavuta lbw b N Islam	3/14	0/0		
Jarvis c Mehedi b Taijul	4/9	0/0		
Chatara c Liton b Taijul	0/1	0/0		
Extras: (b-1, lb-1)	2			
Total:	282			
Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-47, 3-85, 4-129, 5-201, 6-261, 7-268, 8-273, 9-282, 10-282.				
Bangladesh: 1st innings	R/B	4s/6s		
Liton c Chakabva b Jarvis	9/25	1/0		
Imrul b Chatara	5/13	1/0		
Mominul c H Masakadza b Raza	11/38	1/0		
N Hossain c Chakabva b Chatara	5/5	1/0		
Mahmudullah b Chatara	0/2	0/0		
Mushfiqur c Chakabva b Jarvis	31/54	5/0		
Ariful (not out)	41/96	3/0		
Mehedi & b Williams	21/33	3/0		
Taijul Islam c Chakabva b Raza	8/24	0/0		
N Islam c Charu b Raza	4/15	1/0		
Jayed run out (Taylor/Chatara)	0/1	0/0		
Extras: (b-7, lb-1)	8			
Total: (all out in 51 overs)	143			
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-14, 3-19, 4-19, 5-49, 6-78, 7-108, 8-131, 9-143, 10-143.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Jarvis	11	2	28	2
Chatara	10	4	19	3
Mavuta	6	0	27	0
Raza	12	2	35	3
Masakadza	8	2	21	0
Williams	4	0	5	1
Zimbabwe: 2nd innings	R/B	4s/6s		
H Masakadza (not out)	1/8	0/0		
Charu (not out)	0/4	0/0		
Extras:	0			
Total:	1			
Yet to bat: Taylor, Williams, Raza, Chakabva, Moor, Mavuta, Jarvis, Chatara, Masakadza.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taijul	1	0	1	0
N Islam	1	1	0	0

Homes are not only made of walls
But a reflection of boundless dream

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

METICULOUS JARVIS

Zimbabwe took a crucial 139-run first innings lead as hosts Bangladesh were bowled out for 143. Tendai Chatara claimed three wickets to rip through the top order and Sikandar Raza followed it up with three to finish the second day on a high note for the tourists.

But if discipline was the key to Zimbabwean bowlers' success, then pacer Kyle Jarvis was the standout performer in testing the patience of Bangladesh's batsmen. His tactic of changing the lengths while bowling in the right channel worked a charm and provided good support to the other bowlers.

The 29-year-old right-arm pacer took two vital wickets in his 11-over spell. A sharp, outswinging delivery took the outside edge of Liton Das's bat to nestle in the safe gloves of Regis Chakabva and later he got the most prized scalp when Mushfiqur Rahim edged to the keeper after the tea interval.