

SPORT



No point in playing Tests like this: Riyad

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet



The ongoing home series against Zimbabwe, Test cricket's lowest-ranked side, was seen as the perfect platform for Bangladesh to test the depth of the team in the longest format of the game as they were playing without two of their most experienced cricketers in Test and T20I Shakib Al Hasan and opener Tamim Iqbal.

But from start to finish Bangladesh looked like underdogs on their own soil. The team selection was an early sign of their muddled mindset as they opted for only one seamer, and coach Steve Rhodes admitted on Monday that they were not able to read the pitch properly. Most costly however was the inability of the batsmen to adapt to the style of Test cricket as they crumpled to a comprehensive 151-run defeat in the first Test at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

The batsmen were unable to post 200 runs for their eighth consecutive innings as they were bundled out for 143 and 169 runs while being totally outclassed in the span of three and a half days.

"It's hard to explain such a batting display but I can say one thing -- we were unable to display the amount of discipline required in Test cricket. The wicket was pretty good even today [Tuesday] and maybe one or two balls did turn a bit. I think we need to work on the discipline issue more and have to increase the self-belief as our batting has not been good for quite some time now," a dejected Mahmudullah told reporters after the defeat yesterday.

Bangladesh had started the day needing to score 295 to win with two days in hand and all wickets intact, but the batsmen seemed to be caught between batting time and going for runs. Mahmudullah said that the plan was to remain positive and look to win the game but the manner of dismissals was disappointing.

"On quite a few occasions, the way we got out was pretty lame and it made us look back which is not right, especially in Test cricket. We have to talk to each individual about what they were actually thinking. We too don't like taking responsibility for such a batting failure as it's a matter of individual image and it's also about representing Bangladesh. Obviously, we want to give something back to Bangladesh," he said.

Mahmudullah disagreed when asked whether Test cricket had taken a back seat in the frenzy surrounding the upcoming

We are in good form in one-day cricket but we are unable to bring that discipline to Tests. If we continue to play like this I don't know where we will stand in Test cricket. We too don't like taking responsibility for such a batting failure as it's a matter of individual image and about representing Bangladesh.

Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad

World Cup, but admitted that batting failures have become a huge concern. There were a lot of questions about selection and the decision to have just one seamer in the line up, but Mahmudullah backed the decision and focused on the batting failure.

At one point, however, the stand-in captain apologised for the disappointing show from his team and said that he hoped to make a comeback in the next Test.

"As a captain and as a player, it's hard to accept such defeats as the spectators come to watch us play well. We were unable to perform and we apologise for that. We always hope that they will continue to support us as they have till now. Bangladesh did manage to come back hard from tough situations in the past," he added.



PERFORMER OF THE DAY

SHIPSHAPE SIKANDAR



Off-spinner Sikandar Raza claimed three crucial wickets as Zimbabwe beat Bangladesh by 151 runs in the first Test at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

Raza took the wickets of both the Bangladeshi openers and that of captain Mahmudullah Riyad. He ended with tidy figures of 3 wickets for 41 runs off 17 overs with 1 maiden.

The 32-year-old Zimbabwean trapped Liton Das leg-before-wicket to give his team the opening breakthrough when the score was 56. His next victim was Imrul Kayes who was clean bowled for 43 to leave Bangladesh at 83 for 3.

Skipper Mahmudullah who promoted himself to number four but could not rescue his side as he perished for 16, giving a catch to substitute fielder Craig Ervine at short leg off Raza.

Raza then took a spectacular catch at cover on the stroke of lunch to hand debutant Mavuta his maiden Test wicket and send back Nazmul Hossain which put Zimbabwe only five wickets away from their first win in five years since defeating Pakistan at home in 2013.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

ZIMBABWE: First innings 282 (Williams 88, H Masakadza 52, Moor 63 not out; Tajjil 6-108)
BANGLADESH: First innings 143 (Ariful 41 not out, Mushfiqur 31; Jarvis 2-28; Chatara 3-19, Raza 3-25)

ZIMBABWE:	Second innings	R/B	4s/6s
H Masakadza lbw b Mehedi	48/104	7/0	
Charl b Mehedi	4/33	0/0	
Taylor lbw b Tajjil	24/25	4/0	
Williams b Tajjil	20/65	2/0	
Raza b Tajjil	25/30	3/1	
Moor c Liton b Tajjil	0/1	0/0	
Chakabva c Mahmudullah b N Islam	20/65	2/0	
W Masakadza lbw b Mehedi	17/60	1/0	
Mavuta c Ariful b N Islam	6/4	0/1	
Jarvis not out	1/3	0/0	
Chatara lbw b Tajjil	8/4	2/0	
Extras: (b-4, lb-4)	8		
Total: (All out in 65.4 overs)	181		
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-47, 3-101, 4-121, 5-121, 6-130, 7-165, 8-172, 9-173, 10-181.			

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tajjil	28.4	8	62	5
N Islam	6	1	27	2
Jayed	7	1	25	0
Mehedi	19	7	48	3
Mahmudullah	4	1	7	0
Mominul	1	0	4	0

BANGLADESH: Second innings (overnight 26-0)

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Liton lbw b Raza	23/75	3/0		
Imrul b Raza	43/103	6/0		
Mominul b Jarvis	9/13	2/0		
Mahmudullah csub (Ervine)				
b Raza	16/45	0/0		
N Hossain c Raza b Mavuta	13/32	1/0		
Mushfiqur c W Masakadza b Mavuta	13/44	0/0		
Ariful c Chakabva b W Masakadza	38/37	4/2		
Mehedi c Chakabva b Mavuta	7/15	0/0		
Tajjil c Taylor b W Masakadza	0/3	0/0		
N Islam lbw b Mavuta	0/1	0/0		
Jayed not out	0/11	0/0		
Extras: (b-5, lb-2)	7			
Total: (All out in 63.1 overs)	169			
Fall of wickets: 1-56, 2-67, 3-83, 4-102, 5-111, 6-132, 7-150, 8-151, 9-155, 10-169.				

Result: Zimbabwe won by 151 runs and led the 2-match series 1-0.

Player-of-the-match: Sean Williams.

Tigers' frailty exposed

MAZHAR UDDIN from Sylhet



Test cricket is so named because it tests temperament, adaptability, patience and above all, the ability to push the limits of discipline as an individual as well as a team.

Unfortunately there were no signs of any of those attributes from Bangladesh's batsmen as they fell to a humiliating 151-run defeat on their own soil against Zimbabwe, handing the southern African country their first away win in 17 years.

Batting has been the biggest concern for Bangladesh and it is the common culprit in their defeats in four of the five Tests they played this year. The other Test, the first of the year, was a draw against Sri Lanka in Chattogram.

Their sub-200 streak continued for the eighth successive innings during yesterday's defeat at the Sylhet International Stadium.

The batsmen's temperament has been repeatedly exposed as ill-suited to Test cricket and there is now a big question mark about their inability to stay longer at the crease, as is evidenced by the fact that there have been just two half-centuries by Bangladesh batsmen across those eight innings.

Bangladesh's batsmen have faced more than 100 deliveries in those eight innings only twice. Imrul Kayes faced 103 balls for his 43-run knock in the second innings yesterday, and before that Tamim Iqbal played 105 balls in his 47 during the second Test against West Indies at Kingston in July.

In both innings against Zimbabwe -- Bangladesh were bundled out for 143 and 169 runs -- their shot selection has been questionable.

"I think we played too many strokes and maybe we are doing it emotionally. We need to correct this and be more selective about how we play certain bowlers in certain situations. More importantly we were unable to build even after short partnerships. We failed from top to bottom," skipper Mahmudullah Riyad told reporters after

the defeat yesterday.

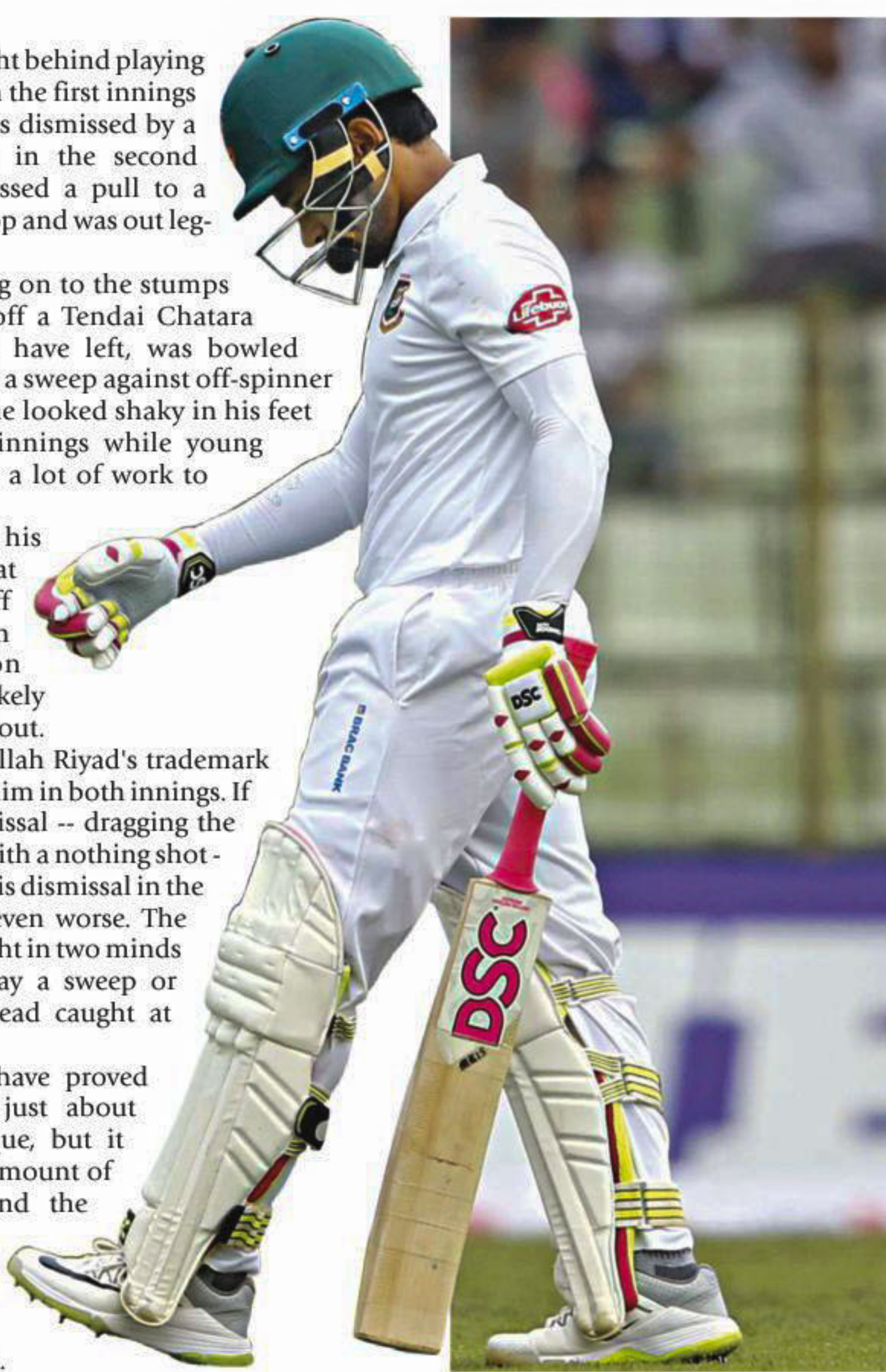
Liton Das was caught behind playing away from his body in the first innings off Kyle Jarvis and was dismissed by a rather poor delivery in the second innings when he missed a pull to a Sikandar Raza long hop and was out leg-before.

Imrul, after playing on to the stumps in the first innings off a Tendai Chatara ball he could easily have left, was bowled around his legs trying a sweep against off-spinner Raza. Mominul Haque looked shaky in his feet movement in both innings while young Nazmul Hossain has a lot of work to do on his technique.

The manner of his dismissal -- caught at cover trying to pull off another long hop from leg-spinner Brandon Mavuta -- was an unlikely and strange way to get out.

Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's trademark initial shakiness cost him in both innings. If his first-innings dismissal -- dragging the ball onto the stumps with a nothing shot -- was disappointing, his dismissal in the second innings was even worse. The right-hander was caught in two minds about whether to play a sweep or defend and was instead caught at short leg off Raza.

The whole team have proved that batting is not just about having good technique, but it also requires a great amount of mental toughness and the Tigers have some serious work to do in that regard in order to change their fortunes in Test cricket.



SYLHET UPHOLDS TRADITION



While it hosted its first Test in 1999, Bangladesh's maiden Test was held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium against India. The visitors won by 9 wickets.



Bangladesh played Zimbabwe a year later at the MA Aziz Stadium's inaugural Test in Chattogram. It was another loss for the hosts, this time by 8 wickets.



In 2006, the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium hosted its first Test, between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The visitors won, again by eight wickets.



The Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura has hosted only one Test, between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in 2006. The visitors won that match by 10 wickets.