

SPORT



We want to win by attacking: Shakib

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A series won through the defensive route with a drawn second Test will not satisfy Bangladesh. Skipper Shakib Al Hasan and his troop are instead planning for more all-out attack to sweep the two-match Test series by winning the second Test against West Indies starting at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The last series between the sides ended in a humiliating 2-0 defeat for Bangladesh in the Caribbean in July, which started with the ignominy of being bundled out for their lowest total of 43 in Antigua. Shakib said it will be special if the Tigers could clinch the series 2-0.

"I think it will be special for Bangladesh if we are able to win the series 2-0, and we want to win. We have taken all the preparations to achieve that but if it does not happen our aim will definitely be to win the series 1-0 as our ultimate goal is to win the series. But we don't want to win the series in a defensive manner and we are eying a series win with a positive frame of mind," Shakib told reporters after the training session in Mirpur yesterday.

There has been some concern that the focus on attack has also seen Bangladesh falling victim to their own trap, but Shakib said that the team management wants to ensure that the players

play their natural games instead of doing something out of the box.

"I always feel one should never come out from his individual style unless there is a demand from the team. I always believe and prefer that one should never change their game plan -- if Virender Sehwag got the opportunity to strike a boundary in the first ball of a Test match he would go for it and that remains the same in T20s and also in ODIs.

"I think it's important to have such an approach and I would never want a batsman who has the mindset of striking a four in the first ball of a T20 or ODI game to go and defend or leave his first ball of a Test match. I always want them to have that mindset as that's his natural game, with which he attained success and was selected for that reason. So there is no need to play differently and it's important they play their natural games. The team management never asked a player to do something out of the box," he said.

The only time Bangladesh have won a Test series against the West Indies was back in 2009 and the Tigers have a great opportunity to register their second ever series win against the Caribbean after their 64-run win in the first Test in Chattogram.

Shakib said that the Tigers will have to work really hard to avail this opportunity and that they will have to display mental strength as well as physical skill to ace the challenge.



Spinners Taijul Islam (R) and Mehedi Hasan Miraz (C) share a pointer or two with Nayeem Hasan during a practice session in Mirpur yesterday. (Inset) Mustafizur Rahman may seem to be a permanent fixture in the squad but the pace sensation could yet be replaced by Ariful Haque for the second Test against West Indies starting today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Expect the unexpected

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Skipper Shakib Al Hasan said that it would be better for Bangladesh to go into the second Test against West Indies with an open mind, but that advice could very well relate to the fans' expectations. West Indies and Bangladesh are two of the most unpredictable sides in world cricket and nothing should be taken for granted when they square off.

And as if Bangladesh's cricketing character was drawn from the surface on which they play a lot of their cricket, the pitch at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur will be a star character in the show of uncertainty.

The only thing that can be said for certain about the Mirpur wicket is that it will likely not be a batting paradise. While the team management have usually gotten what they asked for at Chattogram, where the home side used conditions well to seal a 64-run win in the first Test, the Mirpur wicket is a bit of a lottery with regards to how much it will aid Bangladesh's strength in spin.

"You can't always make predictions based on looking at the wicket, and that is true of pitches around the world," said Shakib in the pre-match press conference yesterday. "It's the same with Mirpur. Test cricket is a game of five days and the wicket changes from day to day, session to session. So it's best not to go in with a



Soumya Sarkar (L) and Shadman Islam are all set to open the innings in the second Test today, with the latter poised to make his debut.

PHOTO: STAR

fixed plan -- it's better for the team to play with an open mind."

Unpredictability is a recurrent theme with Bangladesh in home Tests. Three of their past four home series have ended in 1-1 draws, and the trend suggests that Bangladesh were reacting to their performance in the previous match.

Bangladesh scored 522 for seven in their most recent Test here against Zimbabwe before struggling to reach 200 in their second innings, but it is quite revealing that the last time a team scored more than 300 in Mirpur was in May 2015, when Pakistan scored 557

for eight. With this trend and as they mull a spin-heavy bowling lineup, the Tigers will do well to remember that the strategy almost backfired in the first Test as West Indies spinners Jomel Warrican and Devendra Bishoo enjoyed the conditions almost as much as the hosts.

The test for the hosts to win just their fourth Test series will be to buck the trend of unpredictability and outclass the opposition in both Tests of a series. Even if that does not happen, there is sure to be some twists and turns over the next few days -- that much can be predicted.

West Indies wary of spinners?

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It can be said that if West Indies plan to win the Dhaka Test and tie the series 1-1, they will have to deal with the Bangladesh spinners better than they did in the first Test in Chattogram, which the visitors lost by 64 runs. West Indies' struggle to handle the Tigers' spinners was evident through the way they lost all twenty wickets over the two innings of that match.

Bangladesh are likely to apply the same four-man spin attack, comprised of captain Shakib Al Hasan, Taijul Islam, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and 17-year-old Nayeem Hasan, in the Dhaka Test as well.

In turn, West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite said that they need to trust their technique and have a clear plan to tackle the spin quartet.

"Staying positive on this type of wicket is key. The bounce varied a lot in the first Test. We need to have faith in our defence and attacking methods. I think the key is to stay light on our feet and take each ball as it comes. I think we need to have clear minds on how we are going to do it [playing against the spinners]."

Brathwaite believes that his players have the resilience to bounce back and win the Dhaka leg but first they will need to rectify the mistakes they made in Chattogram.

"I think we gave them [Bangladesh] 40-

There will obviously be a balance. Spin did most of the damage in the first Test but it doesn't mean pacers can't take wickets. I think once we can bowl to our plans, we can build pressure and bring wickets. I am backing both spin and pace to do a good job. Staying positive on this type of wicket is key.



KRAIGG BRATHWAITE
WEST INDIES CAPTAIN

50 runs more in the first innings. We also dropped four catches. We need to improve on those aspects and also get some starts from the top five and get a big total in the first innings, it will put us in the right place to draw the series."



Mushfiqur Rahim's place in the squad for Bangladesh's second Test against West Indies became uncertain when the wicketkeeper-batsman injured his right thumb while training on Wednesday. As his situation improved, Mushfiqur was seen practising against spin at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. However, on the off chance that his condition deteriorates, Liton Das is being considered as backup for the wicketkeeper's position. Regardless, both cricketers are expected to feature in the second Test against West Indies, which begins today.

PHOTO: STAR

Rape case filed by weightlifter's mother

SPORTS REPORTER

The mother of a sexually-assaulted minor weightlifter yesterday filed a rape case against alleged perpetrator Shohag Ali with the Paltan police station.

The case, under section 9(1) of the women and children repression prevention act, was filed some two-and-a-half months after the incident which sent shockwaves through the sports fraternity.

Paltan police station's office-in-charge Mahmudul Haque confirmed to The Daily Star about the filing of the case against Shohag by the victim's mother.

Shilpi Saha, a Salish Kendra -- the rights organisation case following media offering support and victim's family -- against Shohag Ali the section of 9 (1) and the case number is 41 [29-11-2018]."

The incident reportedly took place at the National Sports Council (NSC) Tower on September 13 when Shohag, an office assistant of the Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation (BWF), allegedly assaulted a 17-year-old female weightlifter, who is now undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital.

Meanwhile, Naripokkho, a women's activist non-government organisation, in a statement said that they were stunned, agitated and upset by the incident.

Having demanded a proper and neutral investigation, Naripokkho urged the authorities concerned to bring the rapist and his accomplices to justice.



Nurul to lead emerging team

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The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 15-member squad led by Quazi Nurul Hasan for the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup, which will be jointly hosted by Pakistan and Sri Lanka, yesterday.

Bangladesh, placed in Group B, will face the United Arab Emirates in their tournament opener on December 6 at the SG ground in Karachi. The hosts and Hong Kong are the other teams in the group while India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Oman will face each other in Group A encounters in Colombo.

The semifinals and final of the tournament are set to take place in Colombo on December 13 and 15 respectively.

Squad: Nurul Hasan (C), Mosaddek Hossain (VC), Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Mizanur Rahman, Shafiqul Islam, Zakir Hasan, Saif Hassan, Yasir Ali, Tanvir Islam, Afif Hossain, Nayeem Hasan, Shoriful Islam, Qazi Onik Islam, Khaled Ahmed, Mohor Sheikh.



PHOTO: STAR

"Getting ready for the next mission. Cricket has given me life, love and friends and continues to give the strength to move ahead with conviction and resilience. The best is yet to come." Mashrafe Bin Mortaza wrote on his Facebook page after attending a gym session at the BCB Academy Gymnasium yesterday.