



## Will hone variations with Vettori: Taijul

MAZHAR UDDIN

Whether home or abroad, Bangladesh are a side that depends on its spin attack to take wickets in Test matches. Experienced campaigner Shakib Al Hasan has led the Tigers' spin department with the likes of fellow left-arm spinner Taijul Islam and young off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

Taijul, just one wicket shy of becoming the quickest Bangladesh bowler to the landmark of hundred Test wickets, has been consistently and silently performing his role.

Shakib holds the current record, having reached the mark in 28 Tests. Taijul is expected to play his 25th Test against Afghanistan in Chattogram next month and the 27-year-old will be hoping to reach the mark and become just the third Bangladesh player to bag 100 wickets.

While he needs just one scalp to reach the mark, Bangladesh will be hoping for a few more from him and the spin department as a whole. Bangladesh spinners have taken 124 wickets in the last 10 Tests, while seamers accounted for just 24.

Shakib (17), Taijul (45) and Mehedi (43) have accounted for 105 of those 124 wickets. At home, the spinners are even more instrumental, having picked 161 wickets in the last 10 home Tests, with the pacers bagging a meagre 15.

Taijul said it was a challenge for the spinners to pick the bulk of the wickets and at home, where pitches offer greater assistance to spinners than overseas conditions.

"Obviously, it is a bigger challenge for spinners when we play at home as there are times when pacers are able to bowl just four or five overs due to the slowness of the pitch, and we [spinners] have to take the responsibility of bowling longer spells. At the same time, I should also mention that Test cricket gives us enough time to adjust and adapt to the pitch and read the mindset of the batsmen," Taijul told The Daily Star yesterday.



Bangladesh's spin trio -- Shakib Al Hasan (R), Mehedi Hasan Miraz (C) and Taijul Islam -- have remained instrumental at home and so, much will be expected of the three come the one-off Test against Afghanistan.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

## Tigresses thump Netherlands

STAR SPORT DESK

The Bangladesh women's cricket team's preparations for the ICC Women's World Twenty20 qualifiers continued in auspicious fashion as they outclassed their Dutch counterparts by 65 runs in a one-off T20I in Utrecht yesterday.

The Tigresses scored a competitive 135 for three after choosing to bat first, riding on a 64-run opening partnership between Sanjida Rahman (39 off 49) and Ayasha Rahman (35 off 36). Nigar Sultana hit a run-a-ball 23 and Ritumoni finished the innings off with a flurry with a 14-ball 23.

After the exchange, the Tigresses kept the hosts to a paltry 70 for eight at the end of the 20 overs. Leading the way was left-arm spinner Nahida Akter, who took four wickets for just 11 runs from four overs. Leg-spinner Fahima Khatun took two wickets, while Shaila Sharmin and Jahanara Alam bagged one each.

Bangladesh next play their Thai counterparts on Monday, having beaten them in the first match of their 10-day Netherlands stay on Thursday.

### SPIN DOMINANCE

Bangladesh's spinners have taken 126 wickets in the last 10 Tests, while pacers have bagged 24 scalps.

Spinners accounted for 161 wickets in the last 10 home Tests with the pacers taking just 15.

Taijul, who played in eight of Bangladesh's last 10 Tests, has taken 45 wickets -- the highest over that period. Mehedi Hasan Miraz has 43 scalps in nine Tests and Shakib 17 wickets, having played four of the last 10 Tests.

Former New Zealand left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori has replaced former Indian spinner Sunil Joshi as Bangladesh's new spin coach and Taijul was looking forward to working on his variations with Vettori.

"Sunil Joshi helped me to work on bowling consistently at a certain area for longer periods which worked well for me. Vettori is a legend; it is very fortunate for the spinners of Bangladesh that we are going to get his input. We will try to learn as much as we can from him. Personally, I would like to work on my variations with Vettori. In Test cricket, the opponents do the homework before facing the bowlers and so, the variations are very important for a spinner," he said.

Taijul has taken 47 wickets in his last 10 Tests for Bangladesh, including four five-wicket hauls, but he informed that things have been difficult for Bangladesh recently in the absence of Shakib.

"Things are tough without Shakib bhai. He has the experience and he is the number one all-rounder in the world. The opposition batsmen play him carefully, which creates chances for bowlers like us. His presence makes our job easy. He will join in the next series, which is good news for Bangladesh."

## U-15s make flying start

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh made a dominating start to their title defence in the SAFF U-15 Championship with a 5-2 win over Bhutan at the Kalyani Stadium in Nadia, West Bengal yesterday.

The defending champions were in a spot of bother as Bhutan twice cancelled Bangladesh's lead during a goal-spree in the first 32 minutes, but the boys in red and green regained the lead just before the break and consolidated with two more goals after the break to take home a comprehensive opening win.

The win lifted Bangladesh to second position, equal on three points but behind leaders India on goal difference. Sri Lanka and Nepal have three points each too, from two matches apiece but they have an inferior goal difference while Bhutan have yet to open their account following consecutive defeats.

Al Amin Rahman gave Bangladesh the lead in the 15th minute with a header from a throw-in but Bhutan equalised two minutes later, taking advantage of Bangladesh goalkeeper Sabbir Gazi's hesitation. Al Mirad restored Bangladesh's lead from a goalmouth melee four minutes later, but a dreadful mistake from the Bangladesh goalkeeper helped the Bhutan boys draw level again.

However, Bangladesh went into the break with a lead as Shuvo Sarker, three minutes after coming off the bench, scored with a volley from in front of goal in the 45th minute.

Mirad scored his second goal with a tap-in following an excellent build-up in the 80th minute before substitute Emon Babu put the icing on the cake in the fourth minute of stoppage time with a curling free-kick from the edge of the box.

The Bangladesh team's head coach Mostafa Anwar Parvez expressed his satisfaction over the victory. "A win is always pleasing, and this was an important win in the first match. The heat was oppressive, but the players tried their best. We would have been happier had the scoreline



Emon Babu (C) is congratulated by his teammates after his curling free-kick wrapped up a 5-2 win for Bangladesh against Bhutan in their first match of the SAFF U-15 Championship at the Kalyani Stadium in Nadia, West Bengal yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

been 5-0, but mistakes from the goalkeeper and the defence didn't let that happen. We'll work on these areas and will try to keep winning," Parvez told reporters after the match.

Bangladesh's No. 9 Al Mirad, who scored two goals, said he was happy with his performance

and was looking forward to the next match.

Bangladesh's next match is against Sri Lanka tomorrow while they will take on Nepal and India on August 27 and 29 respectively. The top two teams from the five-team round robin league will advance into August 31's final.

## Australia on brink of retaining Ashes

Hazlewood takes five as England skittled for 67

AFP, Leeds



Josh Hazlewood took five wickets as England were bowled out for just 67 on the second day of the third Test at Headingley on Friday to leave Australia on the verge of retaining the Ashes.

This was England's lowest Ashes total since 1948 and the fourth time in 18 months they had been dismissed for under a hundred in a Test.

Fast bowler Hazlewood took 5-30 in an England innings wrapped up inside 28 overs.

Ashes-holders Australia, looking to go 2-0 up with two to play in this five-match series -- then strengthened their grip to be 171-6 in their second innings at stumps, a commanding lead of 283 runs. Marnus Labuschagne was 53 not out.

A miserable day for England also saw captain Joe Root out for a duck on his Yorkshire home before he dropped a routine slip catch when Labuschagne had made 14.

England's woes were compounded after tea when rising star Jofra Archer -- who had taken 6-45 in Australia's first-innings 179 -- limped off midway through an

over with cramp, although he did return to the field.

Labuschagne was dropped for a second time, on 42, when wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow failed to hold a tough low chance diving to his right.

Earlier, Joe Denly, with 12, was the only England batsman to reach double figures.

By staging both the World Cup and the Ashes with a short turnaround between the two showpiece events, England had denied several batsmen first-class preparation for the very different demands of Test cricket.

By contrast, a number of Australians had appeared for English county sides -- Labuschagne, the only batsman to so far score 1,000 first-class runs this season was with Glamorgan -- or featured on the Australia A tour of England. England's Test batting problems, however, predate this season.

Friday's slump came after England had been dismissed for 58 by New Zealand (Auckland 2018), 77 by the West Indies (Bridgetown 2019) and 85 by Ireland at Lord's last month. What made this latest rout all the more troubling was that the sunny conditions were far easier

for batting than Thursday's grey skies that confronted Australia.

Opener Jason Roy fell for nine in familiar fashion when he edged an intended drive off a wide Hazlewood ball to David Warner, holding the first of four catches at first slip. Root was then out for a second-ball nought, following a golden duck at Lord's, when nicking a fine Hazlewood delivery to Warner.

Stokes gave his wicket away when he carved at a wide James Pattinson half-volley he could barely reach, with Warner holding a fast edge high above his shoulder.

Denly fought hard only for his 49-ball stay to end when caught behind following an inexplicably extravagant drive off Pattinson.

England were 54-6 at lunch, with Bairstow and Jos Buttler falling cheaply either side of the interval, before Hazlewood ended the innings when he clean-bowled No 11 Jack Leach.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 179 and second innings 171 for 6 (Labuschagne 53 not out, Wade 33, Head 25; Stokes 2-33, Broad 2-34)  
**ENGLAND:** First innings 67 all out (Denly 12, Burns 9, Roy 9; Hazlewood 5-30, Cummins 3-23, Pattinson 2-9)

## Pacers rattle Sri Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Trent Boult and Tim Southee led New Zealand's charge against Sri Lanka on day two of the rain-hit second Test in Colombo on Friday.

The pacemen claimed two wickets each as Sri Lanka reached 144 for six at lunch when rain came down and no further play was possible.

Dimuth Karunaratne moved from his overnight 49 to score 65 and provided the only bit of resistance in the morning session, which saw 29.3 overs bowled.

Boult took two early wickets in one over after Sri Lanka resumed the day at 85 for two.

Dhananjaya de Silva on 32 and Dilruwan Perera on 35 were at the crease.

Southee, like Boult, also delivered a double-wicket maiden as the duo put on a superb display of seam bowling under overcast conditions.

Boult got overnight batsman Angelo Mathews caught behind for two to reach a landmark of 250 Test wickets -- only the third Kiwi bowler to achieve the feat.

"Today's a special day for Trent. He's become the third highest wicket-taker for New Zealand," New Zealand bowling coach Shane Jurgensen told reporters.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**SRI LANKA:** First innings 144 for 6 (Karunaratne 65, Mendis 32, De Silva 32 not out; Boult 2-33, Southee 2-40)

## Lankans to tour Pakistan next month

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan will host Sri Lanka for six limited over internationals starting next month, the two cricket boards said Friday, another step towards reviving international cricket in Pakistan after years of isolation.

In a joint statement, the cricket boards said the ODI series will begin on September 27 in Karachi where they will play the other two ODI matches on September 29 and October 2.

The Sri Lankans will then move to Lahore for their three T20 matches between October 5 and October 9.



Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood scalped five wickets for just 30 runs to have England bundled out for a paltry 67 in the first innings on the second day of the third Ashes Test at Headingley in Leeds yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS