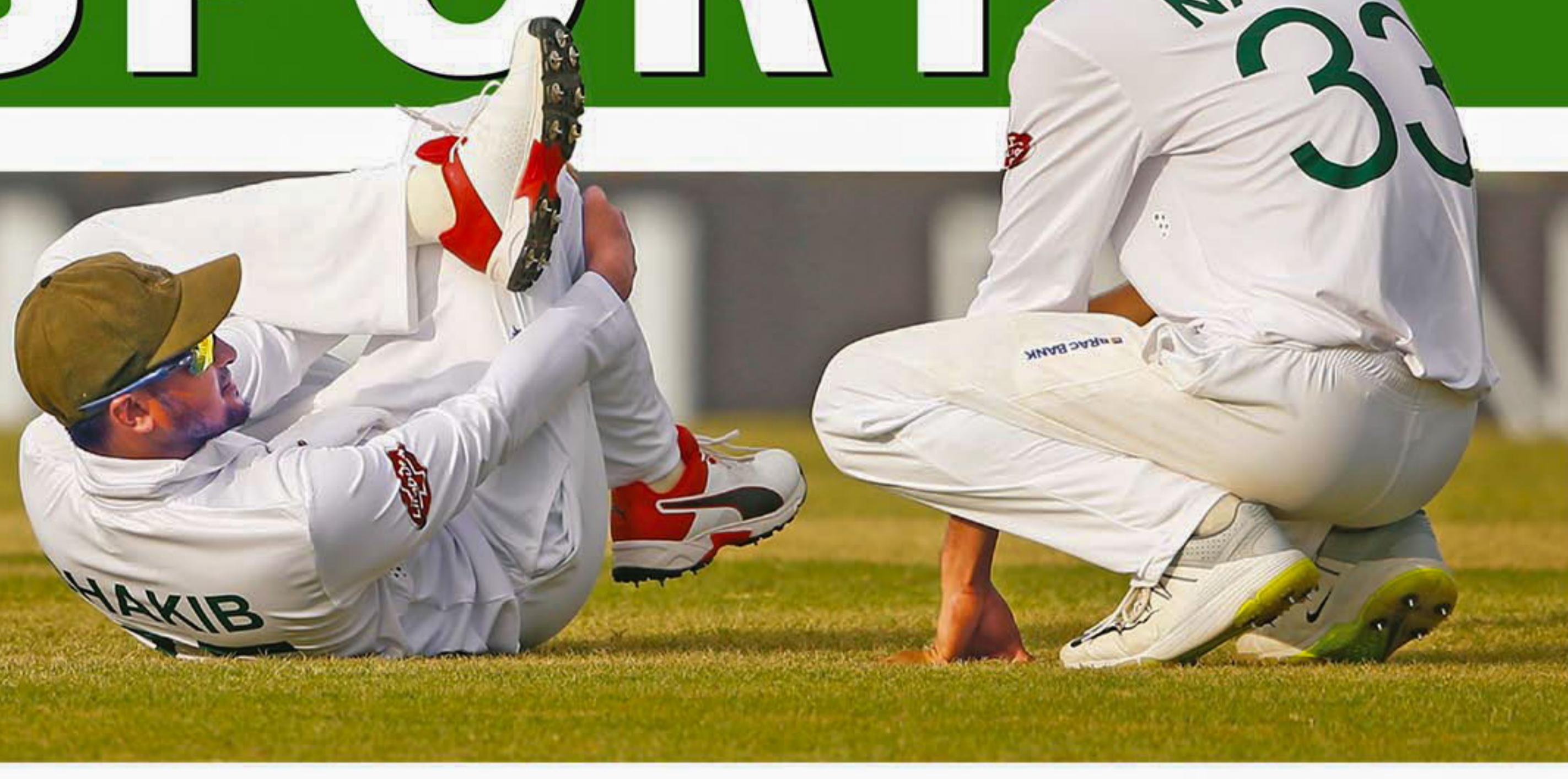


SPORT



Just before the end of the first day's play, young spinner Nayeem Hasan, who bagged two important wickets, may have been discussing with skipper Shakib Al Hasan how a few more wickets could have given the Tigers the upper hand in the one-off Test in Chattogram yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

It's a proud moment: Shah

SPORTS REPORTER FROM CHATTOGRAM

Afghanistan batsman Rahmat Shah came agonisingly close to becoming the first player to score a hundred for the side in the longest format of the game when he was dismissed on 98 during the second Test against Ireland in March earlier this year.

That missed opportunity seems to have had a huge impact on the stylish right-hander as he displayed sheer class and determination to finally achieve the feat in his very next Test match, the one against Bangladesh which began yesterday.

The 26-year-old created history by becoming the first Afghan to score a century in Tests. More importantly though, the ton helped his side avert a crisis as Afghanistan were struggling on 48 for two at one point on the first day of the one-off Test at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury stadium in Chattogram.

Rahmat took his time at the crease, adjusted to the pace of the pitch and negotiated the good deliveries with tremendous focus and concentration as Afghanistan went on to post 271 for five.

Rahmat and fellow veteran batsman Asghar Afghan paired up to add 120 runs for the fourth wicket against the hosts, who opted for an all-spin bowling approach.

The right-hander eventually reached the feat



Afghanistan batsman Rahmat Shah became the first player for his country to score a Test century when he it a brilliant 102 yesterday on Day One of the Chattogram Test. PHOTO: STAR

with a boundary off a Nayeem Hasan delivery but was ultimately dismissed on 102.

"I dreamt of becoming the first centurion for Afghanistan so naturally I was very upset when I got out on 98 against Ireland. Today, I got the chance and scored a century. It is a proud

THE FIRST PLAYERS TO SCORE TEST CENTURIES FOR THEIR COUNTRIES

AUSTRALIA: Charles Bannerman (165) in Melbourne in 1876-77.
ENGLAND: WG Grace (152) at The Oval in 1880.
SOUTH AFRICA: Jimmy Sinclair (106) in Cape Town in 1898-99.
WEST INDIES: Clifford Roach (122) in Bridgetown in 1930.
NEW ZEALAND: Stewie Dempster (136) in Wellington in 1930.
INDIA: Lal Amarnath (118) in Bombay in 1933.
PAKISTAN: Nazar Mohammad (124 not out) in Lucknow in 1952.
SRI LANKA: Sidath Wettimunay (157) in Faisalabad in 1982.
ZIMBABWE: Dave Houghton (121) in Harare in 1992.
BANGLADESH: Aminul Islam (145) in Dhaka in 2000.
IRELAND: Kevin O'Brien (118) in Dublin in 2018.
AFGHANISTAN: Rahmat Shah (102) in Chattogram in 2019.

moment for me. I was the first person to have a half century [in Tests] for the country and now the full century," a jubilant Rahmat told reporters yesterday.

Rahmat said the feat was made possible through hard work he put in at the four-day practice matches which prepared him for the longer version. Rahmat also opined that his side are in a good position in the ongoing match despite having lost an extra wicket.

"It was my plan to play on the front foot. They were bowling with good line and length and had a good field setup for me. It was not easy for me to score runs that is why I was using the crease and coming on the front foot," he said.

Tigers' spin ploy yet to bear fruit

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

It was anticipated that the one-off Test between Bangladesh and Afghanistan would be a battle between the spinners of both sides and that seemed to be what was in store when Tigers' skipper Shakib Al Hasan opted for an all-spin attack.

After the first day Afghanistan, playing just their third Test match, were the happier team courtesy of Rahmat Shah, who became his country's first Test centurion, and Asghar Afghan's unbeaten 88 as the visitors posted 271 for five at stumps yesterday.

With the aim being to outplay the opposition with spin, the home side were desperately hoping for assistance from the pitch at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS) in Chattogram, where Shakib gambled on winning the toss and batting first.

But luck did not favour the hosts as Rashid Khan won the toss and expectedly opted to bat. There was then not much of a threat from a Bangladesh spin department that has less variety when compared to Afghanistan's wide range of spinners in leg-spinners like Rashid Khan, Qais Ahmed, chinaman bowler Zahir Khan and off-spinner Mohammad Nabi.

While an all-spin attack may seem unusual, it is now the second consecutive home Test that Bangladesh have opted for the strategy, with the second Test against West Indies last year, which they won by an innings and 184 runs, also being devoid of home pacers.

One could criticise the tactic but the team management recognized the reality of not having any express seamer who could trouble batsmen regardless of pitch and conditions.

But things did not go in Bangladesh's favour as the likes of Shakib, Taijul Islam, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Nayeem Hasan -- all conventional spinners -- mostly rely on help from the pitch and so tried to bowl in good areas as there was no real help from

the pitch throughout the first day.

However, the first session belonged to the Tigers courtesy of some tight bowling from Taijul, who provided the first breakthrough by dismissing Ihsanullah and then scalped Ibrahim Zadran courtesy of slight turn. Mahmudullah Riyad picked the third wicket of Hashmatullah Shahidi just before lunch, raising hopes of Bangladesh turning the screw on their less experienced opponents in the second session.

But due to a lack of diversity in the bowling line-up and the absence of substantial purchase from the pitch despite some odd deliveries keeping low, the spinners looked helpless in the second session. Credit must also be given to the two Afghan batters Rahmat and Asghar for their composed, judicious run-scoring.

Both made sure they covered the line of the ball and also took big strides to negate whatever spin was on offer and started to score freely.

Shakib used as many as eight bowlers, which included seven spinners along with Soumya Sarkar's medium pace, but they were all largely ineffective due to an unresponsive pitch.

It was young Nayeem who, because of his height, had some sort of variation in his off spin and had the batsmen in two minds because of his extra bounce. He brought Bangladesh back into the game with two wickets in the 70th over, including centurion Rahmat off a loose shot immediately after the right-hander brought up the landmark.

It will be interesting to see how the pitch behaves in the coming days, but for Bangladesh it is almost proven that even the spinners -- considered the main weapon in Tests -- are handicapped without the help from the pitch.

It seemed to be a simple assignment against the newest Test team, but on the evidence of the first day, it will not be an easy road for the Tigers as they will have to bat last against a varied spin department, having already conceded a competitive total.

BD qualify for T20 WC



Bangladesh are ecstatic as all-rounder Jahanara Alam rattled the stumps of the Irish opener Mary Waldron with a brilliant yorker. PHOTO: COLLECTED

SPORTS REPORTER

An unbeaten 37-ball 32 from Sanjida Islam helped Bangladesh register a dominant four-wicket victory over their Irish counterparts in an ICC Women's T20 World Cup qualifier match in Dundee, Scotland yesterday.

With this win, the Tigresses have already qualified for the showpiece event of women's cricket for the second time in a row.

Having emerged unbeaten from the group stages, Bangladesh continued their winning run in the qualifying tournament by chasing down Ireland's sub-par total of 85 all out in 20 overs with nine balls to spare. Opener Moshida Khatun scored a 15-ball 13 while Ritu Moni contributed with a 27-ball 15 in the middle. However, it was Sanjida's match-winning unbeaten knock, featuring three boundaries, which helped the Tigresses book a spot in the final.

Earlier, after being asked to bat, Bangladesh leg-spinner Fahima Khatun dealt heavy damage by picking up three wickets for 18 runs in four overs. The

BD-AFG SCOREBOARD

AFGHANISTAN: First innings R/B 4s/6s

Ibrahim c Mahmudullah	0	M	R	W
b Taijul	21	69	3/0	
Ihsanullah b Taijul	9	36	0/0	
Rahmat c Soumya				
b Nayeem	102	187	10/2	
Hashmatullah c Soumya				
b Mahmudullah	14	32	2/0	
Asghar not out	88	160	3/2	
Nabi b Nayeem	0	3	0/0	
Zaai not out	35	90	4/1	
Extras (lb, nb-1)		2		
Total (For 5 wkt in 96 overs)	271			
Yet to bat: Rashid Khan (c), Yamin Ahmadzai, Qais Ahmad, Zahir Khan.				
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-48, 3-77, 4-197, 5-197.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taijul	31	4	73	2
Shakib	17	1	50	0
Mehedi	22	4	59	0
Nayeem	13	0	43	2
Mahmudullah	4	0	9	1
Soumya	4	0	26	0
Mominul	4	0	9	0
Mosaddek	1	0	1	0

BANGLADESH: Soumya Sarkar, Shadman Islam, Monminul Haque, Moshfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan (capt), Mahmudullah Riyad, Liton Das, Mosaddek Hossain, Mehedi Hasan, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan.

U-19s to face UAE

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under-19 team will begin their Asian Cricket Council Under-19s Asia Cup campaign when they take on their counterparts from the United Arab Emirates today at the FTZ Sports Complex (BOI) in Katunayake.

The match will get underway at 10:30am Bangladesh time.

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Mosaddek	1	0	1	0

I am really happy as there is a huge respect for Test cricket.

Taijul Islam
Bangladesh spinner



UNDER-17 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Success leads to 2nd edition

SPORTS REPORTER

Unilever Bangladesh has organised the second edition of the Clear Men's U-17 Football Championship, which will take place across the country from September 15, following the impressive turnout of school teams which made the inaugural edition such a success last year.

Throughout the course of the competition, a selection panel will select six footballers -- a goalkeeper, defender, midfielder, striker and two wingers -- who will get the opportunity to attend a week-long training camp at Manchester City Club ground. In addition, the six lucky booters will get to watch the current English Premier League champions, Manchester City, in action at their home venue, the Etihad Stadium.

With 272 schools from across the country in participation, the first round of the championship, which will be played on a knockout basis through the Khulna and Rangpur Divisions while it will end through the Mymensingh and Dhaka Divisions on October 18. The 16-team final round will begin on October 22 while the tournament final is set to take place on October 30.

This announcement was made at a city hotel yesterday with some of the footballers who participated in the first edition in attendance. Jogen Larka, a striker of defending champions Sonadighi High School of Rajshahi, was one of the few who came forward to talk about his experiences on the occasion. It should be mentioned that the grade-11 student recently visited Brazil, where he underwent a one-month training programme.

"When we started this championship last year, we didn't know whether we would be successful or could contribute to Bangladesh football but it was a life-changing experience as the tournament turned into an pure entertainment with a lot of spectators watching each of the matches," said

Nafees Anwar, marketing director of the personal care unit of Unilever Bangladesh during the jersey unveiling and press meet yesterday.

Anwar added that fashion house Sailor and Chinese mobile manufacture Tecno are involved with the tournament.

Rezwaniul Huq, a representative of Tecno and Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin were among others present on the occasion.



BFF president Kazi Salahuddin (C) along with organizers and players of Men's U-17 Football Championships pose during the trophy unveiling ceremony at a city hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



CAN'T SIT IDLE! There was no room for pacers in the one-off Test against Afghanistan and Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan had warned before the match that the fast bowlers need to gain the team's trust in order to find a spot in the playing eleven. That is probably why (From L-R) Abu Jayed, Taskin Ahmed and Ebadot Hossain combined to form a refreshment squad for the players