

# SPORT



The Bangladesh team were reduced to being spectators as India piled on the runs during the second day of the first Test between the sides at the Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore yesterday. (Inset) Bangladesh pacer Abu Jayed was the only bright spot on the day for the Tigers, picking up four wickets, including the prized scalp of India captain Virat Kohli for nought. PHOTO: BCCI/AFP

## 'Prepared to struggle with new faces'

SPORTS REPORTER from Indore



Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo said that there needs to be a structural rethinking of the team and its culture before Bangladesh can compete in the highest form of the game.

Test cricket really tests the abilities of the players and not an inch is given and the coach mentioned that Bangladesh's inexperience in the game and his own knowledge of the team would help him shape the Tigers after two days' cricket at Indore, where India dominated first with the ball and then bat.

Bangladesh perhaps made an error in picking only two seamers in the side on a pace-friendly wicket and while Domingo cited that they "did not err in reading the wicket", he was adamant that they felt playing a batsman would add balance.

"Hindsight is a great sight. We definitely considered playing three seamers but then it leaves you very light in the batting order," he said.

The first two days proved that the team were a long way from competing against India. Abu Jayed was able to bowl with conviction but the spinners were taken for runs.

The dependence on spin is a crutch that has been present for a long time. When one speaks of structure, everything needs to be taken into account, starting with the pitches in the country themselves.

"Bangladesh's strength is obviously playing spinners, there is no doubt about that. The record says that, spinners have always picked up wickets but it [pacers] is something we need to develop in our game. To provide opportunities to fast bowlers to perform, to provide good wickets where they can become a factor in the game and where they can bowl 18 to 20 overs in a game. I think maybe the wickets in Bangladesh don't allow that.



RUSSELL DOMINGO

"Instead of bowling seven to eight overs in a four-day game, they should be bowling 18 to 20 overs," he reiterated.

The approach of some of the players in a format that needs patience raises a few questions. Domingo, in charge of just his second Test and only getting to know his team, warned that he was ready to restructure with new players and 'siphon out' players who could perform in the game's format.

"There's no doubt that the structure of the team needs to change, otherwise the results are going to be the same. I need to sit with the selectors to plan the way forward. I need to identify the players that can take the team forward. If it means that we need to go with some new faces and struggle for a period of time, I don't think it is any different to what is happening at the moment. There are some fantastic players in our side that need to be respected. We need to value their performances for Bangladesh but we also need to take decisions in the best interest of the team."

He was hopeful of making changes that would make the side more suited to Test cricket. Whether he will be allowed to make such changes remains to be seen, but he believes he needs to sit down with the team's think-tank first.

"I need to discuss these things with the selectors and captain, and plan a way forward."

## Pressure released by lack of pacers

ABDULLAH AL MEHEDI from Indore

Bangladesh took to the field in the morning session on Day Two hoping to find means to thwart the India batting line-up from getting a big score after starting the day with an overnight score of 86 for one.

The means were pretty much going to be what they were on Day 1: the pace unit. India had shown what was possible and Bangladesh needed to replicate those scenarios.

Ebadot Hossain and Abu Jayed Rahi started proceedings and it was the latter who got the ball talking in the morning session.

At good pace, he got the ball to swing, mostly inwards to the batsman, and used the seam in a way that was enabled lateral movement.

But just like on Day 1, the cricket gods did not smile on him right away. Cheteshwar Pujara, batting on 43, tried to cut one away but Rahi got that bit of extra bounce and produced the edge at the start of the morning session. Mehedi Miraz tried to get set at slip, but his reaction time was not adequate and he

could only get his hands to the ball from a bad stature before it raced away for four. It was another case of slip catching letting Rahi down after Imrul Kayes had dropped Mayank Agarwal, then on 32, on the first day.

However, not to be thwarted, he kept bowling in the right areas and, most importantly, trying to get something out of the wicket with good seam position.

Mehedi had gone off after the ball did some damage to his fingers, but Rahi once again got Pujara to drive and induced another nick. This time substitute fielder Saif Hassan, on for Mehedi, completed a slip catch to give Rahi his second scalp of the game.

It was time from Virat Kohli to take over proceedings but he was unable to counter an inswinger, his head slightly falling over as Rahi trapped him in front. The umpire said not out but captain Mominul Haque wanted to review and Bangladesh got their man.

It was indeed a Herculean task for the Tigers against a strong batting unit and soon it became clear that having only two pacers was an error in judgement.

Ebadot had bowled a steady line during his first five-over spell, with Rahi at the other end, but the former could not extract much from the pitch.

At one point after the two dismissals in the

morning, Bangladesh bowled with four slip fielders. The pressure was there and a few balls beat the bat of even the most formidable batsman.

However, with only two pacers and both bowling in tandem, their spell had to come to an end and Mominul banked on Taijul Islam and Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

It was at that point that Agarwal and Ajinkya Rahane started to milk the bowling, picking up singles and boundaries with ease.

Mehedi did get the umpire to raise his finger after trapping Agarwal in front of the stumps but the batsman reviewed and overturned the decision.

The pitch was starting to become easier to bat on as lunch was called. Even with a pacer bowling at one end with a spinner, the pressure simply was not there anymore with India batsmen both using their feet to spinners and taking them for runs.

India had shifted gears with Bangladesh unable to capitalise after two wickets in the morning and the decision to find safety with an additional batsman instead of a pacer was looking more ridiculous by the minute after a first innings score of 150. It was simply too easy against Taijul and Mehedi for a large part of the partnership between Rahane and Agarwal.

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## Agarwal makes Tigers pay

SPORTS REPORTER



After getting a life on 32 when Imrul Kayes dropped a simple chance at slip on Thursday, Indian opener Mayank Agarwal made sure Bangladesh paid a huge price as the 28-year-old continued his terrific form and smashed his second double hundred in only his eighth Test to help the hosts take control of the first Test after the second day in Indore yesterday.

The right-hander was eventually dismissed for 243 off 330 balls, a superb innings studded with 28 fours and eight sixes, off the bowling of Mehedi Hasan Miraz. The visitors will hope that their batsman can take lessons from Agarwal on how to capitalise on the opposition's errors, something that Bangladesh were unable to do in the first innings.

After the day's play, Agarwal was asked whether he felt any gratitude towards Imrul for dropping a simple catch and the cricketer gave a confident

reply: "That's not in my control [getting a life] but I was thinking that if I have got a chance, I have got to make them pay. When you get a let-off, you make sure that you make them pay."

Agarwal, who scored his maiden double hundred against South Africa at home in October after making an impressive Test debut in Australia in December last year, talked about the inspiration from skipper Virat Kohli. The Indian captain gestured him to go for a double ton from the dressing room as the opener brought up his 150.

When Agarwal crossed 200, Kohli's inspiration continued as he showed three fingers, asking the opener to go for a triple century. Agarwal was disappointed for not being able to achieve that rare feat.

"I could have played longer. But the ball [to which he got out] was in the slot. The captain was backing you and he wanted the best for me, more than what he wants from himself. That is a big thing," Agarwal added.



After being egged on to score a double by skipper Virat Kohli from the dressing room, Mayank Agarwal signalled that he had done the deed upon reaching his second Test double hundred, only to see Kohli (inset) signal back that he should go on to make it a triple. PHOTO: AFP/TWITTER

**BD-IND SCOREBOARD**

**BANGLADESH:** First innings 150  
**INDIA:** First innings (overnight 86 for 1)

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Agarwal c Jayed b Mehedi	243/330	28/8		
R Sharma c Liton b Jayed	6/14	1/0		
Pujara c sub (Saif) b Jayed	54/72	9/0		
Kohli lbw b Jayed	0/2	0/0		
Rahane c Taijul b Jayed	86/172	9/0		
Jadeja not out	60/76	6/2		
Saha b Ebadat	12/11	2/0		
Yadav not out	25/10	1/3		
Extras (lb-1, nb-3, w-3)	7			
Total: (For 6 wickets in 114 overs)	493			
Yet to bat: Ashwin, I Sharma, Shami.				
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-105, 3-119, 4-309, 5-432, 6-454.				

**Arthur likely to be next SL head coach**

AGENCIES, Colombo

Mickey Arthur is likely to become Sri Lanka's next head coach, despite Chandika Hathurusingha not having been officially been fired yet.

Arthur has not signed a contract with SLC so far, but board officials have expressed confidence that Arthur will take up the role before Sri Lanka's forthcoming Test tour of Pakistan, which begins on December 11.

## SHORT CORNER

**Iran clinch kabaddi title**

Iran emerged as unbeaten champions of the Junior World Kabaddi Championship yesterday after Bangladesh lost to the eventual champions in a semifinal encounter on Thursday at Kish Island, Iran.

Iran, who handed Bangladesh an emphatic 52-20 defeat in the second semifinal, thrashed Kenya 42-22 in the final to clinch the title of the tournament's inaugural edition. --SPORTS REPORTER

**Windies break T20 losing streak**

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard was a relieved man after his side hammered Afghanistan to end their longest losing streak in Twenty20 internationals.

Opener Evin Lewis hit 68 off 41 balls and Pollard made an unbeaten 32 of 21 balls and took two key wickets to claim player of the match honours as West Indies won the game by 30 runs.

West Indies, who had lost their seven previous T20s this year, made 164-5 from their 20 overs and then restricted Afghanistan to 134-9.

"It's always good to contribute but it's always better to contribute in the winning cause," Pollard said. --AFP

## Khulna favourites in three-horse title race

SPORTS REPORTER



After all the fifth-round games ended in a draw, the sixth and final round of the National Cricket League will reach the climax of the competition, with the champions of the first-class competition to be crowned after the round of games that start across four venues today.

Khulna Division have been top of the table in Tier 1 from the start and are frontrunners for the title, but both Rajshahi and Dhaka Division have a chance to jump to the top and clinch the league.

Rangpur also have a chance, albeit mostly on paper, to become champions. They are bottom of the table and will be more concerned with avoiding relegation to Tier 2, in which

Sylhet currently have the lead.

Sylhet will be eyeing promotion to Tier 1 but Dhaka Metropolis, Chittagong and Barisal all have the chance to go top.

The fourth team from Tier 1 will be demoted to Tier 2 from the next season while the top team from Tier 2 will be promoted to Tier 1.

Khulna will host Dhaka at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium while Rangpur will face Rajshahi on their home turf. In Tier 2, Barisal will host Dhaka Metropolis and Chittagong will lock horns with Sylhet in Bogura.

With two wins and three draws from five games, Khulna have 29.96 points while Dhaka are second with 24.1 points after one win and four draws. Rajshahi are third with 17.11 points and Rangpur are bottom with 11.72 points.

Tier 2 leaders Sylhet have two wins, as many defeats and a draw in five games to give them 26.55 points but second-place Dhaka Metropolis not far behind with 21.91 points. Chittagong and Barisal are third and fourth with 19.42 and 17.62 points respectively.

Although his team Rangpur have not done well, Nasir Hossain has been instrumental with the bat and is currently the top-run getter in the league with 438, which include a hundred and three fifties.

Dhaka Division's Taibur Rahman is second position with 412 runs and Anamul Haque is third three with 377 runs, including two hundreds.

With the ball, Khulna's experienced left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, who became the first Bangladeshi to scalp 600 first-class wickets, is the leading wicket-taker with 31 scalps.

## Hyderabad release Shakib

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA from New Delhi

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who was suspended by the ICC for not reporting corrupt approaches from a bookie, has been released by Sunrisers Hyderabad ahead of next month's players' auction for the Indian Premier League.

Shakib's name figures in the list of players released yesterday by the IPL organisers.

Shakib was one of five players released by the Sunrisers, the others being Yousof Pathan, Martin Guptill, Deepak Huda and Ricky Bhui.

Shakib's ban means he will be out of all cricket until well after the timing of the IPL next year.