

SPORT



Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Mithun's (L) dismissal, bowled because he was too late in his defence, exemplified how unprepared the Tigers were to face the challenge of playing India's fast bowlers. (Inset) India's Ishant Sharma was the most successful of the fast men, his five for 22 helping to skittle Bangladesh out for a paltry 106 on the first day of the second Test at Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Quick demise of slow Tigers

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Kolkata



Having won the toss, Bangladesh elected to bat first in the historic pink ball Test against India at the Eden Gardens yesterday. There was yet another batting collapse from the Bangladesh team as they were bundled out for 106 in 30.3 overs and the pink ball had nothing to do with it.

With the afternoon start, there was only slight early movement but most of the time the ball only moved exaggeratedly after it passed the batsman. India's Cheteshwar Pujara recently talked about playing close to the body and getting behind the line of the delivery while batting against the pink ball. Tigers were often late in their shots with both Mohammad Mithun and Mushfiqur Rahim getting inside edges that crashed onto their stumps. National selector Habibul Bashar reached the conclusion that the batsmen were moving too slowly against the India fast bowlers.

"I think they were beaten by pace. I think our batsmen were often moving quite slowly against raw pace on this kind of wicket," Bashar surmised after the top four batsmen fell within the first 12 overs.

Technique has been a problem for Bangladesh in the longest version of the game where batsmen have to persevere on tracks that

offer some help to the bowlers. "You can see the way our four batsmen got out. It simply showed that they just could not react as per requirement. It is an area of concern.

"Surely it is technical and we need to work out this aspect of the game," he said.

Batting debacles have become pretty regular in Bangladesh's Test cricket and against the quality Indian pace attack, that trend continued yesterday after they had lost the first Test inside three days. The Tigers chose to bat first on a good wicket and they did not even make it to dusk, when the pink ball is supposed to move around more, as was evidenced when Bangladesh's bowlers got generous movement throughout the evening session. India had however persevered to 174 for three, a 68-run first-innings lead that is already looking formidable.

"I don't think pink ball is the major concern and what I personally feel is that batsmen should not have big problem seeing the ball. Batting first was not a problem because if you are unable to bat, then that would be the case with the second innings also," Bashar added.

The team lost the first Test by an innings and against the test set by the India fast bowlers, the batsmen were perhaps lacking in confidence, according to Bashar. The top-order were playing away from the body and there was tentativeness whenever the pacers bowled in the cordon of

uncertainty on and around off stump.

"I think they are lacking in confidence and probably that is the reason they are making the same mistakes," he said.

Former wicketkeeper-batsman Khaled Masud, who along with Bashar was an invitee to the occasion of India's first pink-ball Test as members of Bangladesh's first Test team, said: "It's not good, I think they could have done better.

"The wicket is not otherworldly. When you play Tests, you need to cope with movement. You have to be ready whether it's a spinning track or a seaming one. You have to be ready for both."

Asked if it was a lack of mental strength, he insisted a lack of preparation was the cause. "It's a lack of preparation. I think the things you need preparation for in Tests is lacking."

Bangladesh were once again undone by the pace trio of Mohammad Shami, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma with the latter running through the lower middle-order and tail-enders to bag five wickets.

"You need preparation to execute. The opposition has three quality pacers. You have fast bowlers in other teams who provide loose balls but they [India trio] are well formed and are express. When you face them you need the best preparation," Masud concluded.

Failure also in planning

SPORTS REPORTER FROM KOLKATA



Bangladesh went into the second Test match at Eden Gardens with 14 members, choosing not to replace batsmen Mosaddek Hossain -- who had gone back home following the T20I series that ended on November 10 -- or Saif Hassan, who was ruled out due to injury two days before the Test.

The team management had ample opportunity to replace at least Mosaddek given that they needed an improved performance in the second Test after falling inside three days at Indore. It was a simple case of management, but one that was ignored.

The team suffered -- the repercussions all too evident yesterday when the Indian seamers began to take control of the match. First Liton Das, batting on 24, had to go off the field after being struck on the head by Mohammad Shami. Nayeem Hasan would suffer the same fate shortly afterwards.

Liton, an established batsman, had to be replaced by Mehedi Hasan Miraz as the concussion substitute due to the unavailability of a like-for-like replacement. Off-spinner Nayeem was replaced by left-arm spinner Taijul Islam. It had nothing to do with the batting debacle but it revealed much about muddled management.

Coach Russell Domingo lamented the injuries after the day's play. "It's a very unusual situation, particularly for the two batters. Going forward in the second innings, there is not much we

can do."

Something that the management could have done was to replace one batsman with another according to the need of the hour. Young Saif was in Bangladesh's plans, but a finger injury suffered in Indore spoiled a potential debut.

"We would have preferred Saif in this role [as Liton's concussion substitute] but the stitch he put in two or three days ago hasn't healed," Domingo said. "We had two spare batsmen at the start of the tour. There was no discussion to bring in another batter."

But why was there no discussion? Even if the relatively new concussion substitution rule was not considered, a freak injury could have happened to another batsman on the eve of the match. Plenty of BCB high-ups had travelled to Kolkata for the historic Test but no one asked for a replacement to shore up a squad that had basically shrunk to 14 members. They are now left with off-spinner Mehedi having to play as a batsman and not able to bowl, because Liton was in the team as a batsman.

A few days before the India tour, the BCB had plucked eight players out of ongoing National Cricket League (NCL) matches to take part in the national team's pre-tour camp, but did not see it fit to replace two injured players ahead of an important international match.

When going into a Test against the best team in the world, the think tank has shown that it is not just the team but the management too that is below the expected level.



Bangladesh batsmen Liton Das (L) and Nayeem Hasan were both hit on the helmet by Mohammed Shami bouncers during the second Test against India in Kolkata yesterday. Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Taijul Islam then came on as Bangladesh's first ever concussion substitutes.

PHOTO: AFP

EMERGING TEAMS ASIA CUP

Bangladesh, Pakistan face off in final today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh and Pakistan will each look to clinch their maiden ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup title when the sides face off in the final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

Both Bangladesh and Pakistan remained unbeaten throughout the tournament and have been clinical in all departments of the game.

Bangladesh reached the semifinals as group champions after defeating Hong Kong, Nepal and India in their Group-B encounters. The hosts then went on to beat Afghanistan comfortably by seven wickets in a semifinal fixture.

For Bangladesh, this is their maiden final appearance in the tournament and so, Najmul Hossain Shanto and his troops will look to cash in on the opportunity on their home turf.

Skipper Najmul has been leading the side from the front and is also the top run-getter of the tournament so far with 234 runs, featuring three fifties, from four matches. Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar has also been in good touch as the left-hander is third on the run-getters list with 229 runs while pacer Sumon Khan leads the most wicket-takers chart with eleven scalps.

According to Najmul though, the home side will take on any undue pressure to win the final and will treat it just like any other game but he added that should they manage to clinch the title, it would be a huge boost for the senior team as well.

"It's a very big opportunity for us and if we can get a good result it will be a huge boost for our senior team as well. Pakistan is a good side but I think we are keener to think about our game than thinking about our opponent," Najmul told reporters yesterday.

Pakistan also had a smooth run to the final, winning all their group matches against Afghanistan, Oman and Sri Lanka before going on to beat arch-rivals India in a trilling three-run win in the semifinals.



Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (R) and his Pakistani counterpart Rohail Nazir pose with the trophy ahead of today's ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup final in Mirpur.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

This will be the third final appearance for Pakistan in the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup. They were unable to clinch the title back in the 2013 and 2017 editions therefore, Rohail Nazir's side will be desperate to lift the trophy this time around.

Pakistan opener Haider Ali is the highest run-getter for his side with 192 runs, including a hundred, while pacer Moahmmad Hasnain is the second highest wicket-taker with ten scalps. The fast bowler has already impressed with his sheer pace throughout the tournament.

"Obviously, Bangladesh are a very tough team to beat on their home soil. We look forward to playing some good cricket in the final as we have done our homework," Pakistan skipper Rohail told reporters.

Kolkata sees pink

SPORTS REPORTER from Kolkata



The day began in much splendour as the crowd began to roll in at the Eden Gardens for both India and Bangladesh's first-ever pink ball Test. Newly-appointed BCCI president Sourav Ganguly made a myriad of arrangements to usher in the pink revolution at Kolkata.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was invited by Ganguly and her Indian counterpart to watch the historic Test match, was received by the BCCI chief along with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief Nazmul Hassan at the stadium before the game. The Bangladesh Prime Minister and West Bengal Chief Minister were then escorted to the ground before both teams lined up and the captains introduced their players to the Prime Minister and Chief Minister.

The toss took place and under the bright sun, Bangladesh skipper Mominul Haque won the toss and elected to bat on what was a sporting track with something in it for the seamers.

While a paratrooper show, which had been planned to hand over the ceremonial pink balls to the captains of both sides, was scrapped due to safety issues, it did not put a damper on the atmosphere with a colourful and vocal crowd churning it up.

The Indian army band played the national anthem of both sides before it was time for the tolling of the ceremonial bell by Prime Minister Hasina to officially begin the pink ball match between the two countries.

The Prime Minister and Chief Minister left after the end of the first session, where Bangladesh had lost six top-order batsmen.

At supper, Star Sports organized a show with Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh. Rahul Dravid was originally supposed to be a part of the show but could not make it in time.

At Tea, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Kapil Dev, Dilip Vengsarkar, Mithali Raj -- former captains of the India side -- were escorted round the ground in golf carts for a lap of honour. Bangladesh had been bundled out for a meagre 106 in just

30.3 overs by then.

India would then accumulate 176 runs for the loss of three wickets by the end of the third session. At the end of the day's play, a cultural show orchestrated to the musical performance of Runa Laila was performed.

There were felicitations from Prime Minister Hasina and the Chief Minister for players of both sides and also for the former players of Bangladesh and India that participated in Bangladesh's inaugural Test in 2000.

BCCI president Ganguly, BCB president Nazmul Hasan, former India skipper Sachin Tendulkar, chief minister Mamata and Prime Minister Hasina then delivered speeches in the felicitation programme.

While the atmosphere was a vibrant one for the spectators, the Bangladesh team were bundled out for just 106 runs with the Indian pace battery running rampant. It was a brilliant atmosphere for fans with the pink ball fest a lively one but there was not much to rejoice in for the Tigers on a day that belonged to India.



(Clockwise from L) India captain Virat Kohli introduced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to his team before the second Test against the Tigers began in Kolkata yesterday. Around 60,000 fans were in competitive mood as they watched the first day-night Test in the subcontinent unfold.

PHOTO: AFP

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BANGLADESH: First innings		R/B	4s/6s
Shadman c Saha b Yadav	29/52	5/0	
Imrul lbw b I Sharma	4/15	0/0	
Mominul c R Sharma b Yadav	0/7	0/0	
Mithun b Yadav	0/2	0/0	
Mushfiqur b Shami	0/4	0/0	
Mahmudullah c Saha			
b I Sharma	6/21	1/0	
Liton retired hurt	24/27	5/0	
Nayeem b I Sharma	19/28	4/0	
Ebadat b I Sharma	1/7	0/0	
Mehedi c Pujara b I Sharma	8/13	2/0	
Al-Amin not out	1/4	0/0	
Jayed c Pujara b Shami	0/3	0/0	
Extras: (b-8, lb-3)	14		
Total: (All out in 30.3 overs)	106		

Fall of wickets: 1-15, 2-17, 3-17, 4-26, 5-38, 6-60, 6-73*, 7-82, 8-98, 9-105.	
Bowler	O M R W
I Sharma	12 4 22 5
Yadav	7 2 29 3
Shami	10.3 2 36 2
Jadeja	1 0 5 0
INDIA: First innings	
Agarwal c sub (Mehedi)	
b Al-Amin	14/21 3/0
R Sharma lbw b Ebadat	21/35 2/1
Pujara c Shadman b Ebadat	55/105 8/0
Kohli not out	59/93 8/0
Rahane not out	23/22 3/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-1)	2
Total: (For 3 wks in 46 overs)	174
Yet to bat: Jadeja, Saha, Ashwin, I Sharma, Yadav.	
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-43, 3-137.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Al-Amin	14	3	49	1
Jayed	12	3	40	0
Ebadat	12	1	61	2

Toss: Bangladesh
Umpires: Marais Erasmus (RSA), Rod Tucker (AUS)
TV Umpire: Joel Wilson (WIS)
Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)