



India captain Virat Kohli reached another landmark on the second day of the second Test at the Eden Gardens yesterday when he brought up his 41st century as captain, equalling Australia great Ricky Ponting's record of most centuries as a captain. Kohli also tied the 141 innings Sachin Tendulkar needed to get to 27 Test centuries just a day after he had become the fastest captain to reach 5,000 Test runs. (Inset) On the other hand, the visiting captain made an unwanted record as Bangladesh's Mominul Haque became the first skipper to be dismissed for naught in both innings in a Test against India.

PHOTO: AFP

Kohli's lesson to the Tigers

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Kolkata

If you ask a batsman where their off-stump is, they will tell you. But nobody quite 'knows' where their off stump is when they play a delivery. Virat Kohli is not one of those batsmen. He really 'knows' what it is to play a delivery which is on his off stump and one that is just outside the line. He leaves freely, without confusion and when he strikes, it is graceful, flowing like the wind; picture perfect.

It's not easy to make him 'play' at a delivery. Either he is unsure or he is sure about what that delivery is going to do. There is no feeling for the ball or an attempt to reach out. There is no dabbling in unusual strokeplay, trying to play away from his body. His patience far outshines anyone playing the game today but his confidence even outweighs that exemplary facet. And his focus? Even greater.

It was a chanceless innings from the Indian maestro against Bangladesh from dusk on Day One through to late noon on Day Two before he fell to a loose delivery from Ebadat Hossain. Before that he had scored 136 runs and if Taijul Islam had not taken that scorcher of a catch, plucking it out of thin air at square-leg, Kohli would certainly have added some more.

Every delivery, he would shuffle in his own manner, his movement fast and ferocious, a still mind and then the ball arrives at his doorstep. Whatever shot he plays from there on in, his body does not move. It remains still; the initial

adjustments have paid off. The right-hand forearm guides and the left hand directs the angle, the body weight transfers and there is energy. He remains still, like a picture. That is his stance, and his most noticeable trademark as he flows through a shot.

Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo had drawn upon Kohli's abilities to point out the gulf between the two teams. However, there was no comparison. Kohli is in a class of his own. Yet, his innings was exemplary.

One cannot possibly expect that level of confidence from a Bangladesh batsman, especially against a pace attack breathing fire like India's. However, the technical adjustments had to be learned from.

Most Bangladesh batsman failed to get in line with deliveries. The pink ball moved more during the evenings. Kohli had batted under the lights, his stance water tight. Bangladesh openers Imrul Kayes and Shadman Islam shuffled, but yet failed to get in line. They were searching for the ball, footwork not adequate for Tests.

Mahmudullah Riyad, one of Bangladesh's most successful batsman yesterday at dusk before retiring hurt with a hamstring injury on 39 runs, had to change his stance to cope with the pace and the delivery outside the off stump. It was certainly a way to go but one that would render him unable to move to an in-dipper. There are small adjustments one might make, even Kohli. But Test cricket sniffs out weaknesses and there lies the gulf.

It is not ability but how to hide potential weaknesses that makes a good Test batsman. The Tigers still have a long way to go in that regard.

EMERGING TEAMS ASIA CUP

Hosts go down in Tigers' inimitable style

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Emerging team were no different to the national team in terms of intent and approach as they succumbed to a massive 77-run defeat to their Pakistani counterparts in the final of the Emerging Teams Asia Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Pakistan won a maiden title in their third final appearance at the tournament and played much better than the hosts, who fielded six national players but were nowhere near their best.

Rohail Nazir was hero with a scintillating 113-run knock that contained 13 fours and three sixes. The right-hander's 111-ball stay helped Pakistan post 301. After the exchange, Bangladesh

their innings was the way they milked runs from singles and went for the kill on bad balls only when they had settled -- an approach that was missing during Bangladesh innings. Captain Saud Shakeel chipped in with 40-ball 42 that contained one four and two sixes.

Agonisingly, Sumon was so inconsistent with his line and length later that he ultimately gave away 75 runs in 10 overs for three wickets.

Nazir was given two lifelines as Yasir Ali, who also dropped Khushdil Shah, failed to take an easy catch when the batsman on 23 and Tanvir Islam missed another chance at 78.

A lot would depend on Soumya and captain Nazmul in chase of the massive target but the former, who is still an emerging player although he had played the tournament in 2013, tried to slog Sameen Gul but could only reach the safe

Hassan shocked by decision to bat

SPORTS REPORTER from Kolkata



There was no let off for Bangladesh either on the field or in terms of the team's management as a flurry of bewildering decisions at management level and bouncers from India pacers rattled the team.

The second Test, a pink-ball affair, had threatened to end inside two days with Bangladesh barely making it to stumps on Day Two due to Mushfiqur Rahim's battling innings. But the Tigers were not left without scratches.

Liton Das and Nayeem Hasan had to be replaced by concussion substitutes Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Taijul Islam and on the second day, there were further worries about getting in an extra batsman before the third day after both Mohammad Mithun and

Mushfiqur Rahim received blows to the helmet. With Saif Hassan already ruled out, Mustafizur Rahman was the only one left as concussion substitute.

Having had ample time to decide on a replacement for Mosaddek Hossain -- who has not returned to India due to personal issues and also injury -- but not taking any action, the board had yesterday decided to fly in in batsman Nazmul Hossain Shanto.

It was getting to the point of chaos. For a time being, it was not certain whether he was coming. The team management later decided not to send in the batsman.

"There were two more games going on today [Saturday]. The Emerging Cup final took place today [Saturday]. We did have backups but we didn't expect unfortunate injuries like this," BCB President Nazmul Hassan said.

To make matters worse,

I was really surprised by the decision to bat first. The coach and the captain both said they would field first when I talked to them the day before. I received a shock when they decided to bat after winning the toss.

NAZMUL HASSAN
BCB PRESIDENT

Taijul Islam's wicket. Bangladesh, trailing by 89 runs, were on the brink of defeat and reeling from injuries.

Hassan was flummoxed by Bangladesh's decision to bat first -- a decision that had raised questions. According to him, both captain Mominul Haque and coach Steve Rhodes had wanted to field first.

"I was really surprised by the decision to bat first. The coach and the captain both said they would field first when I talked to them the day before. I received a shock when they decided to bat after winning the toss. I don't know if that was because of a lack of confidence," he said about the batting disaster.

With three more days to go and the team staring at inevitable defeat, pacer Al Amin said that they would like to make India bat again. "We, the tailenders along with Mushfiqur bhai will try to make India bat in the second innings," he said. A difficult task given the circumstances.



The Pakistan team pose with their maiden Emerging Teams Asia Cup trophy after beating Bangladesh by 77 runs in the tournament final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

failed to show any character in chase of the stiff target and were bundled out for 224 runs in 43.3 overs.

It would have provided a bit of consolation for the country's cricket-crazed fans had the likes of Soumya Sarkar and Nazmul Hossain proved scooped a maiden title in the tournament following the national side's sordid showing in India.

But an ordinary bowling effort after a good start in the morning and sloppy fielding were followed by the wrong batting approach which made it seem like the batsmen had no idea about footwork.

Having won the toss, the home side decided to bowl first and pacer Sumon Khan made early inroads into the Pakistan top-order by removing both openers to reduce the visitors to 41 for two.

However, Nazir and Imran Rafiq, who scored 62 off 88 balls with four boundaries and two sixes, showed character in building a partnership after the early hiccups.

They added 117 runs for the third wicket and the most important part of

hands of Haider Ali in the slips for 15.

On the other hand, Nazmul, who was playing in his third Emerging Cup, swept Khushdil Shah straight to Umer Khan at short fine leg. Young opener Mohammad Naim, who made headlines for his good T20I knock in India, tried to pull Mohammad Hasnain without any foot movement and brought his 16-run knock to an immature end. After the top-order collapse it was just a formality for the visitors to finish the job.

After the match the realisation from Bangladesh captain Nazmul was: "It was a chaseable target. We should have been more careful in our approach."

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 301 for six overs (Rohail 113, Imran 62, Saud 42; Hasan 2-52, Sumon 3-75, Mahedi 1-39)

BANGLADESH: 224 all out in 43.3 overs (Naim 16, Soumya 15, Nazmul 46, Yasir 22, Afif 49, Mahedi 42; Hasnain 3-32, Khushdil 2-39, Saif 2-27)

Result: Pakistan won by 77 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Rohail Nazir.
Player-of-the-series: Soumya Sarkar

SABAH MASTERS Siddikur surges to second

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman stayed three strokes behind Phachara Khongwatmai of Thailand midway through the third round of the Sabah Masters, which was halted due to inclement weather yesterday.

Siddikur was eight-under-par after 10 holes, just three strokes behind Khongwatmai, who played eight holes on the day, before lightning and a torrential downpour prematurely put an end to the day's proceedings.

Siddikur had fired three birdies on the trot to move to joint second position, but inclement weather at the Sutura Harbour Golf and Country Club meant most of the players will have to finish their third round early on Sunday.

Meanwhile, South Korean Joohyung Kim is close behind in second position at seven under par.

All 69 players who made the halfway cut have yet to complete the third round.

The weather on Sunday, however, will determine if there will be a Monday finish for the first edition of the 300,000-dollar event or if the fourth round will be cancelled and the tournament results will be based on the 54-hole scores.

Australia smell victory

AFP, Brisbane



Australia look certain to take a 1-0 lead in their series against Pakistan after dominating with both bat and ball on day three of the first Test in Brisbane on Saturday.

Big centuries to Marnus Labuschagne (185) and David Warner (154) helped Australia to a first innings total of 580 in reply to Pakistan's 240.

At stumps Pakistan were in big trouble on 64 for three, still needing 276 runs to make Australia bat again.

Shan Masood was not out 27 and Babar Azam was 20 at the close.

Pakistan bowling coach Waqar Younis

said later that with such an inexperienced attack at their disposal, it was only natural that there would be tough times.

"Naseem (Shah) is only 16 remember and even Shaheen (Afridi) is only 19, so of course they are going to learn a lot from this tour," he said.

"We've got to give them time and hope they learn, and in a year or so they'll be a force."

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 240

AUSTRALIA: First innings 580 (Warner 154, Burns 97, Labuschagne 185, Wade 60; Shah 4-205, Sohail 2-75)

PAKISTAN: Second innings 64 for 3 (Masood 27 not out, Azam 20 not out; Starc 2-25)



Australia batsman Marnus Labuschagne (C) pumps his fist in celebration after reaching a hundred on the third day of the first Test against Pakistan at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



BD-IND SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: First Innings 106 all out in 30.3 overs

INDIA: First Innings R/B 45/65

Agarwal c sub (Mehedi) 14/21 3/0

b Al-Amin 14/21 3/0

Sharma lbw b Ebadat Hossain 21/35 2/1

Pujara c Shadman b Ebadat 55/105 8/0

Kohli c sub (Taijul) b Ebadat 136/194 8/0

Rahane c Ebadat b Taijul 51/69 7/0

Jadeja b Jayed 12/41 0/0

Saha not out 17/41 2/0

Ashwin lbw b Al-Amin 9/21 2/0

Yadav c Shadman b Jayed 0/3 0/0

Sharma lbw b Al-Amin 0/3 0/0

Shami not out 10/5 1/1

Extras: (b-12, lb-2, w-8) 22

Total: (For nine wks dead in 89.4 overs) 347

Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-43, 3-137, 4-236,

5-289, 6-308, 7-329, 8-330, 9-331.

Bowler O M R W

Al-Amin 22.4 3 85 3

Jayed 21 6 77 2

Ebadat 21 3 91 3

Taijul 25 2 80 1

BANGLADESH: Second Innings R/B 45/65

Shadman lbw b Sharma 0/5 0/0

Imrul c Kohli b Sharma 5/15 0/0

Mominul c Saha b Sharma 0/6 0/0

Mithun c Shami b Yadav 6/12 0/0

Mushfiqur not out 59/70 10/0

Mahmudullah retired hurt 39/41 7/0

Mehedi c Kohli b Sharma 15/22 2/1

Taijul c Rahane b Yadav 11/24 1/0

Extras: (b-8, lb-4, w-5) 17

Total: (For 6 wks in 32.3 overs) 152

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-2, 3-9, 4-13, 4-82, 5-133, 6-152.

Bowler O M R W

Sharma 9 1 39 4

Yadav 10.3 0 40 2

Shami 8 0 42 0

Ashwin 5 0 19 0