



Bangladesh Test skipper Mominul Haque raises his bat after scoring his 10th century while spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz celebrates the wicket of Shayne Moseley during the fourth day of the first Test against West Indies at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

# Mominul-Ctg love affair continues

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

Mominul Haque's romance with the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram continued as Bangladesh's Test captain recorded his seventh Test century at the venue yesterday. It seems that whenever Mominul crosses 50 in Chattogram, he converts it into a hundred. And his comfort after settling is captured by statistics. The left-handed batsman has only once failed to convert a 50 into a century at the venue, during a 224-run loss to Afghanistan in 2019. There was some pressure on the skipper in Shakib Al Hasan's absence after it became clear that he would be unlikely to bat before Bangladesh resumed the fourth day on 47 for three with the intention of posting a big target. Mominul absorbed the pressure after the Tigers suffered three

HIGHLIGHTS	
➤ Mominul Haque struck his 10th Test ton and now has the most number of hundreds in Tests for Bangladesh. It took him 76 innings to reach the feat, surpassing Tamim Iqbal's nine hundred in 117 innings. Mushfiqur Rahim has seven, Mohammad Ashraful hit six and Shakib Al Hasan scored five Test hundreds.	for Mushfiqur to achieve the landmark.
➤ He is also the fastest to reach 3000 Test runs for Bangladesh alongside Tamim Iqbal. Both the left headers took 76 innings to reach the milestone. It took 85 innings for Shakib and 95 innings	
➤ The Tigers Test skipper continued his fine run at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram as the left-hander smashed his seventh hundred in this venue.	
➤ Mominul now sits at number four in the list of scoring seven hundreds in a particular venue alongside Michael Clarke, Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene. Jayawardene leads the chart with eleven hundred that he scored at the SSC ground in Colombo.	

early blows, remaining calm after resuming the day on 31. The left-hander started off with a gorgeous onside drive to pacer Shanon Gabriel and followed it up with another boundary in the next over

to Kemar Roach. He reached his fifty off just 84 balls and, although Mushfiqur Rahim fell at the other end, Mominul kept his composure and added 133 runs with Liton Das for

the fifth wicket before the latter departed after scoring 69. The 29-year-old capably negotiated the short-ball strategy from the West Indies pacers before laying into the visiting spinners. Mominul reached the milestone with a single off Rahkeem Cornwall towards the offside after facing 173 balls, making it the slowest of his centuries. He eventually departed for a 182-ball 115 when he was caught at the boundary line going for a big shot against Gabriel. There was a dilemma about whether the Cox's Bazar native would take part in the ongoing two-match Test series after he injured his right thumb during the Bangabandhu T20 Cup and underwent surgery. But Mominul not just recovered, he also played a valuable knock to put Bangladesh on the verge of winning the first Test against the West Indies under his leadership.

## Domingo laments lack of Tests

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

A decision about Shakib Al Hasan's availability for the second and final Test against the West Indies will be taken within the coming days after the star all-rounder suffered a thigh injury on the second day of the ongoing first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram. Shakib recovered in time for the Test series after suffering a groin injury in the third and final ODI against the same opponents prior to the Test series and even scored a half-century on his return in the first innings. And although he did not seem a hundred per cent fit before the start of the first Test, Shakib had more bad luck as he incurred a fresh injury while trying to stop the ball off his own bowling. "He has a bit of strain in his thigh. He has been having treatment for the past day or two. The decision over his availability for the next Test will be made in the next couple of days. Nothing is confirmed yet. We are still giving him a little time to see how he gets on," Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo told the media yesterday. There was discussion about putting more emphasis on Test cricket, especially away from home, after Domingo filled the Tigers' vacancy in 2019, but the South African expressed disappointment at Bangladesh not being able to play enough Tests compared to other teams around the world. "We really want to focus on Test cricket. We want to improve. We know our

performance hasn't been good away from home. In saying that, the team needs to play more Tests. I look at some teams that have played 16-17 Tests in the World Test Championship, and I think we have played three. So, it is very difficult to get some form, consistency, and style of play when you are playing three or four Tests per year. It is a double-edged sword because the more we play, the better we will become. Hopefully, our performances can improve," he said. Expectations of the pacers were high and all the buzz was about giving seamers enough exposure, with the selectors even including five pacers in the 18-member Test squad for the West Indies series. But it came as a surprise to many after Bangladesh opted to field just one seamer in the form of left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman for the first Test. "I am always one to try to get fast bowlers into the side but it's very difficult on a wicket like this. That's the challenge. If we look at the West Indies bowling attack, they've got two very experienced fast bowlers in Kemar Roach and Shannon Gabriel. But they got maybe three wickets for 230 runs in this Test. This wicket is very tough for fast bowling. There's no pace and not much bounce. We have to consider those facts when we are playing in Bangladesh," Domingo said. The 46-year-old also praised skipper Mominul Haque, who scored his seventh Test hundred in Chattogram. It was also his tenth overall, the most by any Bangladesh batsman.



Injured all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, head coach Russell Domingo and opener Tamim Iqbal are all ears as fast-bowling coach Ottis Gibson makes a point during the fourth day of the first Test between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Three Indian nationals nabbed from ZACS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram Police yesterday detained three Indian citizens from the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium during the fourth day of the first Test between Bangladesh and West Indies. Police said those three were nabbed from inside the stadium after a national security agency tipped police of their suspicious behaviour. The three Indian nationals -- Sunil Kumar, 35, Chaitanya Sharma, 33 and Sunny Sangu, 30, -- were taken into police custody for interrogation, Hasan Imam, Officer-in-Charge of Pahartali Police Station, told The Daily Star. "They are Indian citizens and police detained them from inside the stadium following the information of a security agency and later took them into police custody for interrogation," said the OC. "Following the Covid-19 situation no visitors were allowed inside the stadium during the match but the trio managed to enter after obtaining special tickets from someone. Police were now looking into the source of the tickets and how they got those," said Hasan Imam. The police official also said, "During primary interrogation the trio said that they were on a business trip but police are verifying whether they are involved in gambling."

## ROOT'S DOUBLE TONS IN 100 TESTS

England captain Joe Root became the first batsman to score a double century in his 100th Test in the opening match against India yesterday. Here are Root's five 200-plus scores since he made his debut in India in 2012.

200 not out against Sri Lanka at Lord's, June 2014.
254 against Pakistan at Old Trafford in Manchester, July 2016.
226 against New Zealand in Hamilton, November 2019.
228 against Sri Lanka in Galle, January 2021.
218 against India in Chennai, February 2021.



## 'Root makes us all feel pretty rubbish'

AGENCIES

Joe Root is England's best player of spin bowling and has an answer for anything thrown at him, all-rounder Ben Stokes said in a tribute to his captain after he smashed his fifth double century on Saturday. Root's 218 in the opening Test against India was his second double ton in three tests, illustrating the red-hot form of a batsman who forms cricket's "Big Four" with India counterpart Virat Kohli, Australian's Steve Smith and New Zealand captain Kane Williamson. During his nine-hour vigil, Root provided a spin masterclass for all touring batsmen who often struggle against the turning ball in India's spin-friendly wickets as England amassed 555-8 on a flat wicket at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. "He makes us all feel pretty rubbish with how easy he makes batting look," Stokes, who contributed a breezy 82 and dominated his 124-run stand with the captain, told reporters.

## Sheikh Jamal ride on Gambian trio

SPORTS REPORTER



Three Gambian recruits got on the scoresheet as Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club maintained their perfect record with an impressive 4-2 win against Sheikh Russel KC in the Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Pa Omar Jobe, the league's top-scorer now with seven goals, scored twice while his compatriots Sulayman Sillah and Solomon King Kanform scored one apiece as the three-time champions continued their impressive run with five wins out of five, helping the team to second position on the table with 15 points. The Dhanmondi giants are only three points behind defending champions Bashundhara Kings, the only other team with a perfect record with six wins out of six. Sheikh Russel, on the other hand, dropped to fourth position with 13 points from six matches following their first defeat of the campaign.

Sheikh Jamal threatened to take the lead early with the two tall forwards -- Sillah and Omar Jobe -- proving a handful for the defence line of the one-time champions. They were denied by the woodwork twice, with Valijonov Otabek and Nurul Absar rattling the crossbar while Ashraful Islam Rana kept out a couple of shots from the two forwards. The national team keeper, however, helped Sheikh Jamal get the lead on 38 minutes after he failed to hold on to a harmless attempt from Sillah, who dispossessed defender Didarul Islam on the edge of the box before his shot at goal. Omar Jobe doubled the lead on the stroke of half-time with a powerful attempt following a long-ball from Otabek. Omar Jobe made it 3-0 before the hour-mark from a rebound but a slightly contentious goal 10 minutes later gave Sheikh Russel a glimmer of hope. Obi Monroe's glancing header on a corner from Bakhtiyar Duishobekov barely crossed the goalline, but the

referee awarded the goal. However, Solomon King restored Sheikh Jamal's three-goal advantage on 74 minutes with a spot-kick to all but seal the fate of the match. Duishobekov scored from the spot on 82 minutes to make the scoreline a little more respectable for Sheikh Russel, who were missing their coach Saiful Bari Titu at the dugout for the second match in succession due to illness. Meanwhile, Federation Cup runners-up Saif Sporting Club earned a hard-fought 3-2 win over bottom-of-the-table Arambagh KS in the other match of the day at the Shaheed Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj. Kenneth Ikechukwu scored twice while Sazzad Hossain scored the other as Paul Put's men fought back from a goal down to register their third win of the campaign, taking the side to fifth position on the table with 10 points from six games. Omar Faruk and Christopher Chizoba scored the two goals for Arambagh, who remained without a point after five matches.

## Championship League starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Championship League, the second-tier club competition of the country, gets underway today when NoFeL Sporting Club take on Uttara Football Club at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur. The only match of the day will kick off at 3:00pm. The match will mark the beginning of the eighth edition of the league after a one-year gap due to the pandemic. Uttara FC are one of the two new clubs at this level, with Fortis FC being the other.

## Linde keeps SA hopes alive

REUTERS

South Africa left-arm spinner George Linde took three wickets to reduce Pakistan to 129 for six at the close of the third day, but the home side have a lead of 200 in a finely balanced second and final test in Rawalpindi. South Africa's batting woes on the sub-continent are well-documented and they will not want to chase anything over 250 batting last on a wearing wicket, but have given themselves a chance to level the series with two full days remaining. Mohammad Rizwan (28 not out) and Hasan Ali (0 not out) will hope to take the game away from the tourists on day four.

## Nadal eases injury fears as Australian Open starts tomorrow

AGENCIES



Following a tumultuous few weeks, which included mandatory isolation periods, positive COVID tests, exhibition controversies, and an interruption in warm-up events, the 2021 Australian Open is finally set to kick off on Monday. World number two Rafa Nadal eased fears that a back injury might prevent him from playing in next week's Australian Open with a full-blooded training session on Saturday.



The 20-times Grand Slam champion took to the John Cain Arena court in the late afternoon and appeared unhampered as he hammered balls across the net with trademark ferocity. Nadal pulled out of Spain's ATP Cup tie against Australia on Tuesday with a lower back problem and said later in the week he was still far away from the level required to play at the year's first Grand Slam. The 34-year-old played no part in his country's ATP Cup campaign, which ended in a 2-0 semi-final defeat at the hands of Italy on Saturday.