



Bangladesh spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz appeals vehemently as his teammates join in unison during the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa at Kingsmead in Durban on Sunday. A number of appeals were turned by the two umpires, some of which were overturned on review while a few proved to be umpire's call. Meanwhile, (bottom) Yasir Ali's catch was the highlight of Bangladesh's fielding yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Taskin, Shoriful coming back

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacers Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam will return home after the first Test against South Africa in Durban due to injuries, informed the Bangladesh Cricket Board's chief selector Minhajul Abedin on Sunday.

Taskin, despite battling a shoulder injury, bowled on the fourth day of the ongoing Test and also bagged the wickets of South Africa skipper Dean Elgar and spinner Keshav Maharaj. "Taskin and Shoriful are coming home after this Test match." "We will take a look at them when they are back. We are trying to find out how Taskin got injured. We have four fast bowlers remaining in the squad. So we are covered," he added.

Shoriful was ruled out of the first Test due to multiple injuries including an ankle niggle, as per coach Russell Domingo.

Umpires' dependency on reviews in question

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a tough day at the office for Bangladesh on the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa in Durban, but the Tigers showed their fighting instincts after a few dropped catches had dampened the mood.

At stumps, Bangladesh were on 11 for three and need another 263 to win, having bundled the hosts out for 204 in their second innings.

But the focus of yesterday remained the umpiring, with South African on-field umpires Adrian Holdstock and Marais Erasmus dominating discussion.

SCORES IN BRIEF (DAY-4)

SOUTH AFRICA
First innings- 367 all out and Second innings- 204 all out (Elger 64; Miraz 3-85, Ebadot 3-40, Taskin 2-24)

BANGLADESH
First innings- 298 all out and Second innings- 11 for 3 (Joy 4, Shadman 0, Mominul 2, Shanto 5 not out, Mushfiqur 0 not out; Maharaj 2-7, Harmer 1-4)

At least ten reviews were overturned between the teams, four of which were decided by the umpire's call. Dean Elgar's



dismissal in South Africa's second innings was only confirmed after a review. It was among eight decisions changed after review.

Unfortunately, Bangladesh were largely got the shorter end of that poor umpiring display, which started from the second over of the day bowled by Mehedi Hasan Miraz. South African skipper Elgar survived a close leg before shout after the ball hit his back leg and Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque reviewed the decision from Erasmus before it was ultimately upheld due to the umpire's call. Elgar, who rode his luck during a 64-run knock, was only given out after the Tigers took opted for a review after Erasmus had again turned down their appeals.

Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, a prominent

coach and mentor to cricketers like Shakib Al Hasan, expressed disappointment over the umpiring on social media, questioning the rule regarding umpire's calls.

"The rule was introduced to give the benefit of doubt to the batters. If the umpire thought it was close, he could give it. But the original rule is that it should be given out if the ball is going on to hit the wicket. In some ways, bowlers have been deprived because of the umpire's call. But it's still fair because that is how the game is being played," Fahim told The Daily Star.

"But when you see so many similar instances, you may feel like the umpires are trying to take that benefit away or trying to shift the advantage. It may seem like the umpire is trying to favour someone and that's what I felt today (Sunday). Eventually, we saw Mominul refrain from taking reviews because of that. If umpires depend totally on reviews, does actual umpiring ultimately exist? The umpire's decision may vary once in a while, but if it happens on a regular basis then that umpire's reputation suffers."

Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who missed out on the Test series due to personal reasons, tweeted yesterday that the time had come for the International Cricket Council to bring back neutral umpires.

"I think it's time for ICC to back to neutral umpires as the Covid-19 situation is okay in most cricket-playing countries," Shakib wrote.

Big guns cancel one another

SPORTS REPORTER

Title aspirants Abahani squandered a glorious opportunity to close the gap with leaders Bashundhara Kings after surrendering a lead to play out a thrilling 2-2 draw against the defending champions at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday.

The result means Kings maintain their six-point gap with Abahani, on third place with 19 points from equal ten matches, after second-placed Sheikh Jamal DC beat Swadhinata KS 3-1 at the Muktiyoddha Smriti Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

Meanwhile, at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj, hosts Saif Sporting Club registered an emphatic 3-0 win over Uttar Baridhara Club while Chittagong Abahani beat Muktiyoddha Sangsad 2-1 at the Shaheed Dharendra Nath Datta Stadium in Cumilla.

At Sylhet, the home side Abahani expectedly dominated the beginning to create two clear chances before Costa Rican forward Daniel Colindres gave the Sky Blues a deserving lead in the 20th minute with a left-footed drive after Monir Hossain whipped a cross from the right flank.



Seven minutes later, Kings suffered a huge blow as midfielder Sohel Rana was shown the red card for slapping Abahani's midfielder Emon Mahmud. With a man advantage, Abahani strengthened their foothold in the game, however, Kings goal-keeper Anisur Rahman Zico denied Colindres and Brazilian Dorielton Gomes towards the end of first half.

And at the stroke of half time, Rakibul Hasan destroyed Abahani's momentum after being sent off in stoppage time as the winger lost his temper and hit Rimon Hossain.

After interval, a determined Kings made the game almost one-sided but Rimon and substitute Eleta Kingsly narrowly missed converting two chances, much relief for Abahani goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel, in the beginning of second half. With Abahani looking dead and buried in face Kings' barrage of attacks, Eleta was once again denied by keeper Sohel on the hour-mark but Eleta found his shot home following a deflection in the 64th minute.

Kings kept pressing through the left flank to get the lead and five minutes later, Robson Da Silva's clever shot from outside the box, assisted by Masuk Mia, put the away side in the driving seat.

Abahani, shocked by two quick goals, brought on Nabib Newaj Jibon and Jewel Rana and it paid dividends immediately. Brazilian Dorielton Gomes brilliantly levelled the margin in the 84th minute after Jibon and Jewel nicely combined.

With scores tied at 2-2, Kings refused to settle for a draw as Eleta and substitute Suman Reza came close to hitting the winner. In the end though, Kings looked happy to keep their gap with Abahani intact.

Tail-enders make the difference in thrillers

SPORTS REPORTER

Ripon Mondol was the star of the show for Shinepukur Cricket Club as they clinched a nail-biting Dhaka Premier League (DPL) match against Rugganj Tigers with one wicket and two balls to spare at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Ripon started with the ball, picking up three wickets for 30 runs while Alauddin Babu, Hasan Murad and Sikandar Raza bagged two each. Losing wickets throughout the innings, Fazole Mahmud's 52 saw Rugganj Tigers reach a fighting score of 172 before being bowled out.

After the exchange, Shinepukur fell under the spell of spinners Nasum Ahmed and Aparajith Baba and slumped to 37 for five. Nasum picked up both openers Avishek Mitra and Anisul Islam for naught in the very first over before scalping Mahidul Islam in his next over.

A 55-run sixth-wicket stand between Raza and Rahutul Ferdous revived their chase and when Raza fell for 48 after Aparajith accounted for Ferdous, over 60 runs were required.

Babu struck a useful 22 but left number 10 and 11 batters Ripon and Murad with the task of getting 30 more

runs. Incredibly, Ripon played out 65 deliveries in a 28-run knock while Murad's unbeaten 13 saw the duo knock off the runs as Shinepukur won by one wicket.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi picked up a commanding nine-wicket victory over Gazi Group at BKSP ground 3 to go second in the standings.

Mrittunjoy Chowdhury and Ziaur Rahman picked up three wickets each to bundle Gazi Group out for 157 before Sheikh Jamal openers Shykat Ali (77 not out) and Saif Hassan (54) saw Sheikh Jamal coast to victory.

In the other match at BKSP ground 4, City Club picked up their first win in the tournament in another close encounter.

Amite Hasan's 85 and Salman Hossain's run-a-ball 66 saw Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity reach 241 for seven.

City were moving along nicely with Zakirul Ahmed's 72 before Ashik Ul Alam's 74 got them closer but from the 43rd over onwards, they lost five wickets and added just 34 runs to slump to 240 for nine.

However, number 11 Shahriar Alam stepped up to the mark, hitting hit a six off the penultimate delivery of the innings to seize victory.



Napoli forward Lorenzo Insigne jumps for joy as his teammates follow him following his successful spot-kick against Atalanta in their Serie A fixture in Bergamo on Sunday. Napoli won the match 3-1.

PHOTO: REUTERS