

Roach eyes 300 wickets

AFP, Gros Islet

When Kemar Roach marks out his run in the second Test against Bangladesh, which starts at the Daren Sammy Stadium on Friday, he will do so knowing that he is just one wicket short of joining a very select group of West Indian bowlers.

The 33-year-old Barbadian pace bowler goes into the Test with 249 wickets to his name, the same as a legend of the 1970s and 80s, Michael Holding.

One more scalp and Roach will become just the sixth West Indies bowler to join the '250 Club', following Courtney Walsh (519 wickets), Curtly Ambrose (405), Malcolm Marshall (376), Lance Gibbs (309) and Joel Garner (259).



After returning match figures of seven for 74 to fire West Indies to a seven-wicket win in the first Test in Antigua, Roach admitted he was targeting 300 Test wickets.

"I am always one for stats," he told the press after the match.

"I love my stats. I always look at my stats. Every night. Even if I'm not playing, I still look at my stats so it's good to be among the greats.

"It's good to be up there with all the fantastic people in West Indies cricket."

Roach and his teammates will take immense confidence from their victory in the first Test which followed a 1-0 series win at home against England in March.

Another win would not just secure the series but lift the West Indies above Pakistan to sixth in the World Test Championship.

In Antigua, Roach had good back-up from Jayden Seales, who took three for 33 in the first innings, and Alzarri Joseph who picked up three wickets in each innings.



Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan (R), batting at the nets in St. Lucia, will have to take the bulk of responsibility in the second Test, which starts today, if Bangladesh are to take a share of the two-match Test series against Kraigg Brathwaite's West Indies.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Tigers wary of batting debacle ahead of St. Lucia Test

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh head into the second Test in Saint Lucia 1-0 down in the two-Test series after losing the first Test at Antigua by seven wickets. The Tigers will be hoping to avoid their 100th defeat in the Test format at the Darren Sammy National Cricket Stadium, having lost 99 of the 133 Tests they have played so far. The match will get underway from 8:00PM BST and will be broadcast by T Sports.

The second Test will ask tough questions of Bangladesh's batting department, which has collapsed regularly this year. Recurring top-order failures have seen the Tigers lose in South Africa and then at home to Sri Lanka.

The batters also suffered greatly on the first day of the Antigua Test against the likes of Kemar Roach, Alzarri Joseph and Kyle Mayers as they were bundled out for just 103. Another top-order collapse in the second innings then saw them take just an 84-run lead. Despite the bowlers doing well, the Tigers' batters will have to find the right answers to avoid another embarrassment in the second Test.

The Tigers' team management opted to include in-form batter Anamul Haque in the squad for the second Test, with Mominul Haque and Najmul Hossain Shanto both out of form. Either may give way to Anamul in the playing eleven.

Anamul, who had initially made it into the white-ball squads following his

impressive run-scoring in the Dhaka Premier League, was aware of the trend of batting collapses in red-ball cricket.

"I am thinking that if I get a chance, I will try to give my best. I want to help by putting up a good score. It is very important that we prevent the fall of early wickets while keeping the score board ticking. That is very important for me," he remarked to reporters ahead of the first Test.



Anamul's DPL form was astonishing, but in the longer-version surroundings of the National Cricket League, he managed just one big score of 84, averaging 23.25 over six matches. The challenge of adaptability will be significant, but Anamul believes that it is time to show his commitment to Test cricket.

"It's true that I was called up for white-ball formats and was practicing with the white ball. But to be honest, I have said this before, I love Test cricket a lot and

I am very passionate about it. If I get an opportunity, I will certainly try to grab it," Anamul said.

"I am very happy that all the senior and junior players welcomed me. Although results are not going our way, I feel we can go a long way and do good things," he added.

Meanwhile, the hosts named an unchanged squad for the second Test with West Indies lead selector Desmond Haynes saying they were aware of the challenge posed by Bangladesh's bowlers.

"Great credit to our bowlers who worked really hard in the first Test match," he said. "We can't take Bangladesh lightly, they also bowled really well and were quite disciplined. I know we will try our utmost to win the second match."

Roach also spoke to local media and said his recovery was going well while also giving the Tigers a heads up on what awaits them in Saint Lucia.

"It's one of the best wickets in the Caribbean. It offers a lot for fast bowlers. I didn't have a look at the wicket yet so I don't know what to expect. Hopefully today at practice we get a look at the wicket and we plan going forward. Usually it's one of the better wickets for fast bowlers in the Caribbean," he said.

Another pace-friendly wicket would mean that Bangladesh will be desperate from someone in the top-order to score the big runs.

Saif SC edge 7-goal thriller

SPORTS REPORTER

Saif Sporting Club climbed up the ladder in the points table after beating Chittagong Abahani 4-3 in an enthralling Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

Saif SC toppled Sheikh Jamal DC to move to the third position by virtue of better goal difference despite having an equal 30 points from 16 matches. Chittagong Abahani, on the other hand, remained fifth on the table with 26 points from 16 games.

Saif broke the deadlock in the 43rd minute through an Emeka Ogbugh strike.

The second half saw more goalmouth action as six more goals were scored with Saif SC having the last laugh.

Omid Popalzay and Candy Augustine struck two goals in space of eight minutes to give Abahani a 2-1 lead before Faisal Ahmed Fahim scored a brace in the 72nd and 74th minutes respectively to give Saif SC a 3-2 lead.

The port city outfit once again bounced back to level the margin with a penalty from Peter Thankgod in the 86th minute but Emery Bayisenge converted from the spot in stoppage time to give Saif SC their fifth consecutive win.

In the day's other match, Multijoddha Sangsad secured valuable points after beating Swadhinata KS 1-0 in Rajshahi.



England on top

AFP, Leeds

England's Stuart Broad was closing in on 550 Test wickets after striking in the first over of the match and then removing New Zealand captain Kane Williamson on the opening day of the series finale at Headingley on Thursday.

New Zealand, already 2-0 down in a three-match series, were 123 for five at tea after winning the toss under blue skies and on a seemingly good pitch for batting in Leeds.

England, without James Anderson because of an ankle injury, saw Broad remove Tom Latham for a sixth-ball duck after he edged a delivery straight to Joe Root at first slip.

New Zealand were none for one at that stage, but Will Young and Williamson, back in action, repaired some of the early damage.

Jack Leach then struck with his first ball, turning and straightened a delivery past Young's bat to have the opener lbw for 20.

Broad then captured the key wicket of Williamson, whose fluent 31 had included five fours, when the star batsman edged a fine leg-cutter to wicketkeeper Ben Foakes as the seamer took his 548th Test wicket.



Bangladesh women hit Malaysia for six

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's football team delivered the biggest surprise in its history as they handed a massive 6-0 defeat to Malaysia in the first of two FIFA-sanctioned international friendlies at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Defender Akhi Khatun struck a brace while Sabina Khatun, Sirat Jahan Swapna, Monica Chakma and Krishna Rani netted one goal apiece as the women took part in their first international match in nine months.

Bangladesh are far behind Malaysia in the FIFA Rankings, where the former are 145th and the latter 85th, but on the field, it appeared completely the opposite.

The manner of Bangladesh's domination saw some questioned whether Malaysia had sent their first team for the match, with the visitors mustering only two shot on target. Golam Rabbani Choton's charges were irresistible throughout the 90 minutes and, on another day, may have even ended the game 10-0.

Bangladesh got off to a sparkling start as Swapna raced into the box from the right in the first minute before squaring the ball to Sanjida

Akhtar, who squandered the opportunity with a feeble shot.

Swapna would time and again expose the defence with darting runs and Bangladesh got their breakthrough in the ninth minute as a corner from Maria Manda floated over the Malaysian goalkeeper and fell to Akhi on the goalline, who simply had to get any kind of touch.

Sanjida wasted two more opportunities afterwards before she and Swapna switched flanks and, from the right, Sanjida fed Sabina for the second goal in the 26th minute.

With Malaysia appearing helpless, Bangladesh continued to create a plethora of chances before widening the margin on the half-hour mark as Akhi tapped in a cross from Sabina after a short-corner routine.

Bangladesh went into the break with a 4-0 lead after Sabina squared the ball to Swapna when the duo was one-on-one with the goalkeeper.

After resumption, Bangladesh continued to press and the sixth goal came in the 67th minute from Monica Chakma, who struck from inside the box, before Krishna Rani completed the route with a header from a Ritu Parna Chakma cross in the 74th minute.



Bangladesh women's team players celebrate one of their six goals against Malaysia in a FIFA friendly at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur on Thursday. (L) Through this match, Joya Chakma became the first Bangladeshi female referee to officiate an international match.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED