

I saw the ball, not the bowler: Jurel

AGENCIES

India batter Dhruv Jurel said he brushed aside the stature of the bowlers he was facing and had his sights strictly on the ball in resolute knocks in both innings that helped his side to a series-clinching five-wicket win over England in the fourth Test in Ranchi yesterday.

Chasing 192 for victory, India slipped to 120-5 but Gill (52) and Jurel (39) put on an unbeaten stand of 72 to achieve the target during the second session. Jurel hit the winning runs, punching the air and hugging his partner as the Indian dressing room rose to celebrate.

The win gave India an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series after they lost the first Test.

"Whatever the situation demands, I want to do that. In our first innings, I thought the more runs I score now, the fewer runs we would have to in our second innings," Jurel said after the match.

"In the first innings, our wickets were falling, and I was batting with lower-order batters, but we got partnerships with them. So they deserve some credit too.

"It felt good playing against them [James Anderson, Mark Wood] because I saw them on TV. The focus was on seeing the ball, not the bowler. Gill and I were discussing about making small tasks. To approach the chase in sets of ten runs each," he added.

Jurel led a lone battle amongst the batters in the first innings when he scored a 90-run knock to rescue India from conceding a far more significant lead than the 46-run advantage the visitors managed. Coming in at seven after India had slumped to seven down for 177 in reply to England's 353-run first-innings total, the right-handed batter batted almost 50 overs with the tail, including 76



Fortune Barishal's Kyle Mayers continued his superb form, smashing a 26-ball 50 to help his side make it to Qualifier 2 with a convincing seven-wicket win over Chattogram Challengers in the Eliminator of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League in Mirpur on Monday. [Bottom] Meanwhile, the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium saw a surge in spectators than usual as the BPL playoffs kicked off on a public holiday yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Chandika claims being misrepresented'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star on Monday that national team head coach Chandika

Hathurusingha claimed to have been "misrepresented" in an interview published on ESPNcricinfo on Sunday.

"I had a brief conversation with Hathurusingha about it [the interview with ESPNcricinfo]. He claimed that his words were misrepresented. We will sit with him for more clarity on the issue," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Hathurusingha's interview with the online cricket platform created a storm as the Sri Lankan slammed the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League, the country's prized and only franchise-based T20 tournament. He criticised how the tournament had been carried out and asserted he had "lost interest" and often switches off the TV when the games are on.



- **The series loss was Ben Stokes' first as England captain.**
- **India, on the other hand, stretched a 12-year unbeaten home record in Tests.**
- **Joe Root's 122 not out in the first innings saw him surpass Alastair Cook for scoring the most - 91 - number of fifty-plus scores in Tests for England.**

and 40-run stands with tailenders Kuldeep Yadav and Akash Deep, which helped India to 307.

"Test cricket throws different kinds of challenges, different kinds of pressures," India skipper Rohit Sharma told reporters. "But the way they [the young players] have dealt with the pressures throughout the series has been superb."

Usual frontline players such as Virat Kohli and injured KL Rahul were absent from the lineup. Spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was rested and Mohammad Shami also missed the series.

"These guys who have come in have done the job perfectly," Rohit added.

"They have taken the responsibility perfectly... you can take a lot of pride from performances like this with inexperienced players."

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal has been the standout performer with his 655 runs in four matches, including double centuries in the second and third matches.

Tamim, Barishal peak at the right time

SPORTS REPORTER

The alarm bells were ringing for Fortune Barishal early on in their campaign, after the franchise with many veteran stars could manage just one win in their first four games.

The team, however, bounced back under Tamim Iqbal's leadership and yesterday made it to the second qualifier with a comfortable seven-wicket win in the eliminator, ending Chattogram Challengers' campaign.

As the tournament has progressed, Tamim's leadership and his batting has gone from strength to strength.

Tamim's last five innings has produced three fifties and has rocketed him to the top of the BPL run-getters' list with 443 runs at an average of just over 36.

Tamim's tournament strike-rate of 125.49 has been a bit underwhelming but his scoring rate has picked up lately, having scored at a strike rate of 138.51 in his last five innings.

Barishal as a team are looking like a well-oiled machine on the field, which has led to them winning seven of their last nine games.

Tamim had an embarrassing moment on the field yesterday, dropping an easy catch of Josh Brown in the fifth over. But he didn't get bogged down by the missed opportunity and went about

his process as usual, something his side too is doing very well.

"I have set a very high standard on my fielding. That guy [Brown] could've been dangerous had he got going. After that [dropped catch] he hit two or three sixes and I felt those shots in my heart. When

doing well at the top order, Mushfiqur Rahim is providing solidity in the middle-order, Mehedi Hasan Miraz has hit a few cameos, Mahmudullah Riyad has stepped up when needed and Mohammad Saifuddin has been striking it at 185.29.



he eventually got out, I felt really relaxed," Tamim said at the post-match ceremony.

Tamim hit an unbeaten 52 off 43 balls to guide his team to victory after Kyle Mayers' blistering 50 off 26 balls set up the 136-run chase for Barishal. Mayers, who had also picked a couple of wickets, was named the player-of-the-match.

Not only Tamim, Barishal as a team have seemingly hit their strides in the last stretch of the competition.

Tamim and Mayers have been

Having two in-form fast bowling all-rounders in Mayers and Mohammad Saifuddin along with the reliable left-arm spin of Taijul Islam has strengthened their bowling department.

Barishal as a team have gotten better and better as the tournament has progressed and will be heading into the second qualifier on Wednesday full of confidence in their quest to become the first team to come out of the eliminator and win the BPL since Rangpur Riders did it in 2017.

SHORT CORNER



Modric screamer helps Real extend lead

Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric came off the bench to net a stunning strike from the edge of the box late in the second half to secure a 1-0 home win over Sevilla on Sunday and stretch their lead at the top of LaLiga to eight points.

Tigers begin preps for SL series

Bangladesh national team players began their preparation for the upcoming series against Sri Lanka under head coach Chandika Hathurusingha yesterday even as majority of the stars are busy with BPL duties. Hathurusingha held a meeting for around 15 minutes with Najmul Hossain Shanto, Zakir Hasan, Nayeem Hasan, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam and Mominul Haque among those present.

Jhuma dreams of Paris Paralympics

Jhuma Akter, a physically-challenged archer, is dreaming of qualifying for the Paris Paralympic Games as a four-member Bangladesh para-archery team is all set to take part in two international tournaments in Dubai from Feb 29 to March 7. Jhuma became paralysed in the lower part of her body five years ago after falling from a tree, injuring her spinal cord severely.

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'Cricket in Bangladesh shouldn't be Dhaka-centric'

Former Pakistan captain and popular commentator **Ramiz Raja** is currently in Dhaka, involved in his maiden commentary stint for the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). In an interview with **Mazhar Uddin** of **The Daily Star**, the 61-year-old, who was instrumental in the revival of Pakistan Super League (PSL) as the then Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief, shared his views on the state of BPL and Bangladesh cricket and how things can improve here, and more. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): When was the last time you came here in Bangladesh? How's the experience been so far?

Ramiz Raja (RR): I think it must have been four or five years back during a World Cup. My experience has been very nice as I have been welcomed nicely. This time it's different as I am doing [commentary for] the BPL. I always wanted to be here because of the fans and cricket has been special at times.

DS: Your take on BPL's standard?
RR: You see, the pitches have been very good... The talent has been pretty decent but there's always room for improvement. I think from a batters' perspective you need to find players with better temperament... It's important for them to understand the value of a start and make it count.

DS: You were instrumental behind the revival of PSL when you were the PCB chairman. How do you

think BPL can be improved?

RR: You got to continue with the effort and make it comfortable for the franchise owners also... I am not sure from a marketing perspective how much interest this league [BPL] holds for sponsorship companies... Look, the standard here will improve but you got to have a system to encourage the youngsters and it takes time. Whatever is happening here is also the reflection of your domestic cricket, and so as long as you follow a certain process here, I am sure you will get good talents.

DS: There had been plenty of talk surrounding the absence of a revenue-sharing model in BPL. Could you sum up the business model of PSL?
RR: At least 95 percent of what

the board makes from the PSL goes to PSL franchise owners. The franchisees pay us [PCB] a sizable fee for whatever the marketing they do for the teams... and whatever marketing the PCB does, 95 percent goes to the franchise owners. So, the idea is for them to at least break even every season.

DS: How do you assess Bangladesh cricket's progress?

RR: I think Bangladesh have not really produced results on the international level. They have been awesome at home, but the whole idea is to prepare for the away battles; because that is where you earn respect.

DS: Cricket in Bangladesh is mostly Dhaka-centric. What's the situation in Pakistan?
RR: No, it's not like that in Pakistan. We have provincial and regional

tournaments and cricket is spread all around. For Bangladesh it shouldn't be Dhaka-centric. In Sri Lanka it used to be Colombo-centric but they are trying to get away from that. In Pakistan you find talent from back and beyond from a place like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. About 10-15 years ago you could hardly find a cricketer there but now 90 percent of the Pakistan side are from that region, and that could have happened if it was Lahore or Karachi-centred. So you need to focus on spreading cricket throughout the country.

DS: As the PCB chief, did you try to rebuild relations with India?
RR: That's a government-level decision. But, you know, we speak the same language and culture is also similar and I always felt through cricket we can do a lot of things. Because it's a political issue one can do that much.

**Read full interview on The Daily Star website



Virgil van Dijk chest-bumps goalkeeper **Caoimhin Kelleher** as they celebrate following Liverpool's 1-0 win over Chelsea in the League Cup final at Wembley Stadium on Sunday. A 118th-minute header from skipper Van Dijk, who had a goal disallowed in the first half following a VAR check, helped the quadruple-chasing Reds clinch a record-extending 10th title in the competition and crowned Jurgen Klopp's final season in charge with their first silverware.

PHOTO: REUTERS