

From back foot to seizing opportunity

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh turned a nightmare start to the third day into one that could weave a new dream in their second Test against Pakistan yesterday, and Liton Das and Mehedi Hasan Miraz were the architects of a comeback story for the ages.

The pace duo of Mir Hamza and Khurram Shahzad had breathed life into the hosts' chances of squaring the series -- with the opening day's play getting washed out -- as Bangladesh's top order crumbled in quick succession. The visitors were 26 for six, in reply to Pakistan's 274, and the new ball had kept talking.

In that situation, the innings could have folded in a few overs. Liton, who scored a magnificent 138 -- his fourth Test century -- demonstrated the shrewdness of his game during two immense partnerships: first with Miraz, crucially avoiding follow-on (125 runs) during a massive 165-run stand, and then with an unlikely Hasan Mahmud.

Heavily criticised for his approach this year, particularly for his dismissal



After scoring a watchful 51-ball 13 not out, Bangladesh pacer Hasan Mahmud also took two quick wickets to reduce Pakistan to nine for two in their second innings on Day 3 of the second Test in Rawalpindi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

while dancing down the track in his first delivery against Sri Lanka recently, Liton saw the situation as an opportunity.

"Obviously, I was a bit nervous at

that time. I never thought I would have to bat before drinks. When Miraz and I batted, we discussed that they had the momentum, so we needed to take our time. It was an opportunity

for me and Miraz as well, and I took it positively," Liton said at the post-day press conference.

For Liton, the mark of a big player is in seizing such opportunities when the team is at a disadvantage.

"I knew that we were on the back foot, but there was an opportunity, and if you are a big player, you have to cash in," he added.

But the key for Liton was controlling Pakistan's momentum. Liton was content to play second fiddle for a while and did so through an injury after being hit on the hands and cramps induced by the Rawalpindi temperatures.

Crucially, the partnership with Hasan lasted about two hours, adding 69 valuable runs after Miraz had departed, and the two wickets from Hasan at the end of the day made it the day.



'Exciting' Rishad on Shakib's BBL route

STAR SPORTS DESK



Rishad Hossain is set to become only the second Bangladesh player after Shakib Al Hasan to feature in the Big Bash League (BBL), as the leg-spinner has been signed by the Hobart Hurricanes for the upcoming season.

Rishad, who rose to prominence with his outstanding performance in

this year's T20 World Cup, taking 14 wickets, was one of 10 Bangladesh cricketers -- nine men and one woman --who entered the draft, which took place yesterday.

Following in the footsteps of Shakib -- who played for Adelaide Strikers in 2014 and Melbourne Renegades the following year -- the 22-year-old will ply his trade for a team who are yet to win the BBL title, despite reaching the final twice.

The Hurricanes announced the signing on their official social media channels, stating, "A Bangladeshi Tiger has joined the Hurricanes! Welcome to Rishad Hossain, an exciting young leg spinner who will take BBL14 by storm!"

The 14th edition of the Australian franchise T20 tournament is scheduled to run from 15 December this year to 27 January next year.

Rishad has played 24 T20Is and several Bangladesh Premier League matches, having featured for the Comilla Victorians last season. Earlier this year, he was signed by the Toronto Nationals for the Global T20 Canada, but visa complications due to the unrest in the country during July-August prevented him from participating in Toronto's winning campaign.

NCL to begin on October 15

SPORTS REPORTER

The 26th edition of the National Cricket League (NCL) is set to begin on October 15, the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) tournament committee confirmed on Sunday.

BCB's tournament committee sat down with cricket operations and selectors last year in May to provide a better scheduling, and despite many changes in the board recently, NCL plans are progressing as per initial target.

"Yes, NCL is to begin from October 15. Although divisional sports associations are disbanded, the teams are coordinating with members of the to-be-formed ad-hoc committees," a BCB official said.

The Youth and Sports Ministry dissolved all executive committees of divisional, district, and upazila sports associations as well as divisional, district, and upazila women's sports associations on August 21.

"The teams will be formed by national selectors. Our deadline for announcing the 30-member team from the divisions is September 5. It will be followed by fitness tests on September 6 before skill camps start. The training camp will begin on September 12 and go on till October 2 before the teams check in to the team hotels on October 13," the BCB official added.

This time the tournament will take place in single league format, meaning each team will play each other once -- unlike the previous two-tier system. Dhaka Division are the defending champions, having secured their seventh NCL title last season.

'Miraz on course to becoming COMPLETE ALL-ROUNDER'

ABDULLA H AL MEHDI

The hard work Mehedi Hasan Miraz had put in during the last few months to improve his all-round abilities has really come to the fore in Bangladesh's ongoing Test series against Pakistan.

When the white-ball team was busy in the ICC T20 World Cup

plans. He has played 45 Tests and is just going to get better. He is on course to becoming a complete all-rounder."

Compared to his bowling, Miraz's batting talents are often downplayed. But yesterday, with Bangladesh teetering on the brink on 26-6, the 26-year-old showed his class.

His record 165-run seventh-wicket stand with Liton Das got Bangladesh into the game again after a dismal start.

In the first Test, it was his mammoth 196-run stand with Mushfiqur Rahim for the seventh wicket that helped Bangladesh attain a 100-plus lead.

The fact that Miraz's name

but the patience was always there," Soheli said on Miraz's knock.

Unfortunately, Miraz's innings came to an end on 78 but the way he absorbed the pressure, allowed Liton to settle in and hit a world-class hundred.

Just a day before, Miraz



Liton Das and Mehedi Hasan Miraz's 165-run seventh-wicket partnership is the highest stand in Test history after a team lost six wickets below 50 runs in an innings. The Bangladesh duo surpassed the 115-run seventh-wicket stand between Pakistan's Abdur Razzak and Kamran Akmal in a Test against India in 2006 in Karachi.

Miraz's 124-ball 78 is the highest-ever by a number 8 batter in Tests after coming in to bat with a team losing six wickets below 30 runs. Bangladesh had lost six for 26 in their first innings against Pakistan on Day 3 of their second Test in Rawalpindi yesterday.

Liton, who scored a 228-ball 138, became the first batter to have scored three centuries as a number 6 or 7 batter after coming in to bat with the team's score below 50 runs.

This was also Liton's first Test century in 18 innings. His last century came against Sri Lanka in 2022 in Mirpur.

Liton is also the first Bangladeshi batter to have scored two Test centuries against Pakistan. His first came in 2021 in Chattogram -- also his career's first Test ton.

in the West Indies and the USA, Miraz was sweating it out in the Bangladesh Tigers' programme under his mentor and coach Soheli Islam.

Asked what was the key to Miraz's consistent performances against Pakistan, Soheli told The Daily Star, "He is reading the situation well and he is combining technical aspects with tactical

Pakistan pacers were getting the new ball to talk, but Miraz thwarted them with a measured counterattack.

A cut through backward point off Mir Hamza showed his immaculate form even under pressure. His innings was built on the foundation of patience and sweet timing, as was showcased by a cover drive off Hamza later on.

comes up in three of the 10 highest seventh wicket stands in Tests for Bangladesh shows that forming big partnerships lower down the order is nothing new for the all-rounder.

"He is showing a higher level of maturity. You feel that he can play a long innings. Playing well is one thing, but he is taking up responsibility in tough situations. His range of shots have increased

had been the hero with the ball with a filer and was key along with Shakib Al Hasan in dismantling Pakistan in the second innings of the first Test.

The Tigers will now hope that Miraz will work his magic on a fourth day pitch and help swing the delicately poised match in Bangladesh's favour.

Chelsea held by Palace

REUTERS, London

A second-half equaliser by Eberechi Eze gave Crystal Palace their first point of the Premier League season as they secured a 1-1 draw away to Chelsea yesterday, bouncing back from a poor start.

The home side broke the deadlock in the 25th minute after Palace defender Marc Guéhi made an ill-advised raid forward and lost the ball. Winger Noni Madueke surged down the right before picking out Cole Palmer, and his deft pass found Nicolas Jackson who scored with ease from close range.

After slumping to successive defeats in their opening games of the season against West Ham United and Brentford and starting badly at Stamford Bridge, the Eagles finally achieved lift-off after the break as Eze equalised in the 53rd minute.



Newcastle United's striker Alexander Isak secured a 2-1 win against Tottenham Hotspur with a simple tap-in as they weathered a second-half storm from the visitors to secure the points in an entertaining Premier League clash at St James' Park on Sunday.

PHOTO: NEWCASTLE UNITED

'A big opportunity to qualify for Hockey Junior WC'

SPORTS REPORTER

Keeping sights on the Men's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup 2025, Bangladesh U-21 national hockey team yesterday started gearing up for the upcoming Men's Junior Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in Muscat, Oman from November 11-19 at BKSP.

Bangladesh, champions of Men's Junior AHF Cup, along with four other qualifiers -- China, Oman, Chinese Taipei, and Thailand -- will feature in the 10th edition of Junior Asia Cup alongside the top five teams including India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan, and Korea. The top six teams from the Junior Asia Cup will qualify for the FIH Hockey Junior World Cup.

Bangladesh, who finished sixth in the previous edition of the Junior Asia Cup in 2023, will be fancying their chances of sealing a spot in the 24-team Junior World Cup for the first time after they had defeated high-ranked China and Oman to become champions in the

Junior AHF Cup tournament held in Singapore in June.

Some 44 players including four national players -- Amirul Islam, Rokibul Hasan, Nuruzzaman, and Hozaila Hossain -- reported yesterday to newly-appointed coach Moududur Rahman Shuvo, who took over from Mohammad Ashiquezaman. The players will start their two-and-a-half month training at BKSP from today.

"As the players including 15 current students of BKSP reported today [Sunday], we will start the training tomorrow [Monday], mainly focusing on fitness training as players except the BKSP students have been out of action since the completion of Junior AHF Cup," Shuvo told The Daily Star. "We will also emphasise on tactical training as

Bangladesh have a big opportunity to qualify for the Junior World Cup."

Shuvo also informed they will gradually trim the squad down to 30 members on the basis of fitness and performance.

