

Q Pacer Hasan Mahmud became the first Bangladeshi pacer to take a five-wicket haul in India on day two of the Chennai Test yesterday. He also became only the second Bangladeshi pacer after pacer Robiul Islam to take successive five-wicket hauls in Tests.

Q A total of 17 wickets fell on the second day of the Chennai Test yesterday -- the highest number of wickets recorded on a day at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. There were three instances when 15 wickets fell in a single day, the previous record in Chepauk.

Q All 10 Indian wickets that Bangladesh took in the first innings in Chennai were through catches -- the first instance of such an occurrence for Bangladesh across formats.

Q Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah became the only sixth pacer from his country to take 400 international wickets yesterday. Bumrah needed three wickets to achieve the milestone and he finished with 4-50 to join Kapil Dev, Zaheer Khan, Javagal Srinath, Mohammed Shami, and Ishant Sharma in the elite list.

Q The 199-run stand between Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja is the highest seventh-wicket partnership in Bangladesh vs India Tests, eclipsing the 121-run stand between Saurav Ganguly and Sunil Joshi during Bangladesh's maiden Test in Dhaka in 2000.



India pacer Mohammed Siraj celebrates after having Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto caught at slip as the Tigers suffered yet another batting meltdown on Day 2 of their first Test in Chennai yesterday. [Bottom] It was, however, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah who did the most damage as he scalped four wickets to become the third-quickest Indian seamer, after Mohammed Shami and Kapil Dev, and 10th Indian bowler overall to 400 international wickets.

I have always said that it's definitely not because the opposition is Bangladesh. There is nothing personal. As a cricketer, the pride is in the performance and in the fact that you want to win. You play the game for that.

India off spinner RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN when asked if facing Bangladesh bring out the best in him



## Record-smashing Head fires up Test opener debate

REUTERS

With another century opening for Australia, Travis Head is looking more and more likely to open the batting in the home Test series against India.

Head blasted a match-winning, unbeaten 154 from 129 balls at Trent Bridge as world champions Australia stormed to a seven-wicket win over England in the first ODI on Thursday.

It was the highest score by an Australian in a bilateral ODI match in England, coming just over a week after he clobbered the English with a 19-ball half-century in the T20 opener.

It also came two weeks after Head set a powerplay record with the bat on the way to a 25-ball 80 in a T20 win over lowly Scotland.

Head's development into an all-format dominator is timely for Australia given the retirement of opener David Warner, the last man to hold that role for the country.

Warner's exit from international cricket left a huge vacuum in the Test side that Steve Smith, for all his brilliance batting at number four, was unable to fill as an opener.

Smith scored an unbeaten 91 against West Indies but it was his only half century in eight innings.

Head has batted in the middle order for most of his 49 tests and has provided good value since



he returned to the side in late 2021 after being dropped for nearly a year.

However, he slotted in as opener during last year's tour of India when Warner was injured.

He made a good fist of it in a losing cause, scoring an unbeaten 49 in Indore and 90 in Ahmedabad.

Australia coach Andrew McDonald has all but confirmed the top six batters who swept New Zealand 2-0 in the last tour will keep their places for the five-Test home series against India.

However, the order may be tweaked, with plenty of calls for Smith to drop back to his proven number four slot.

Incumbent opener Usman Khawaja has little doubt who should join him at the top.

"I feel like Travis Head might be best suited," he told Australian pay TV channel Fox Cricket last week.

"He's obviously been very successful opening the batting in one day cricket and, breaking it down, I'd probably lean towards him. The confidence transfers over."

Head, however, declined to offer a shot when asked for his thoughts on the matter.

"Keep the chatter, it makes it interesting," Head told reporters at Trent Bridge.

"I'm not going to dive into that. I'll just let that play out."

## Poor technique at the centre of batting meltdown

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chennai

Batting failures arrive relatively consistently for Bangladesh in Tests. From Rawalpindi to Chennai, the Tigers' familiar batting cracks were once again exploited by the opposition; this time by a high quality Indian bowling side on Day 2 of the first Test yesterday.

While in Rawalpindi against Pakistan earlier this month there was a rearguard resistance by the Bangladesh batters, this time at the Chidambaram Stadium, the task to get out of trouble was too large and considerably steeper.

None of the Bangladesh batters could apply themselves in their first innings against the new ball and an



unfamiliarity of batting against the SG ball -- which has a more prominent seam compared to the rest -- doubled up on the weakness in technique and a lack of patience shown as the Tigers slumped to five for 40 in just 13 overs.

It was Khurram Shahzad in Rawalpindi who found those cracks, and in Chennai, the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, and Akash Deep terrorised the top order and ran through them.

Pacer Taskin Ahmed was left to discuss the latest batting woes after stumps yesterday and he surmised that they have to put up a better effort with the bat.

"They [India] are all world-class and

were more consistent with their lines and lengths. There are plenty of variations in the Indian attack and while they bowled well, we made some mistakes as well," Taskin told reporters.

"With the new ball, the SG ball, there are a few challenges, especially in the first 10-12 overs. We lost too many wickets in the first 10 and that cost us our game in the batting department," he added.

The conditions were bowling friendly, as evidenced by the 17 wickets (seven India wickets and 10 Bangladesh wickets) that fell on the day -- the highest number of wickets to ever fall in a single day at the venue -- but there was a real difficulty to

judge lengths.

While Bangladesh openers tried to put up resistance against the new ball in Pakistan, Shadman Islam and Zakir Hasan found it difficult facing the Indian pacers.

Shadman had to walk back after shouldering his arms to a Bumrah delivery that held its line. Bumrah had riddled the left-handed batter with a series of outswingers from around the wicket and in anticipation of the same delivery, he misjudged one that cost him his wicket.

In fact, an all-left-handed top order -- four out of the top five in Bangladesh's batting lineup -- found it difficult against India's right-arm pacers who used that very angle around the wicket.

Zakir and Mominul Haque departed in back-to-back deliveries off Akash before Siraj got the better of Najmul Hossain Shanto a few balls later.

With no batters coming to the press conference, it was Taskin who had to answer.

"Batters and the batting coach are supposed to be concerned and maybe they are also working on it," Taskin said.

Despite the top-order meltdown, perhaps the most disappointing was the soft dismissals of Liton Das and Shakib Al Hasan. Liton threw his wicket away with a needless slog sweep while Shakib uncharacteristically paid the price for an untimely reverse sweep.

## Flick takes positives despite Barca's defeat to Monaco

REUTERS

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said he is not worried about his side's performance despite the 2-1 defeat to Monaco in their Champions League opener on Thursday.

Monaco made the most of their man advantage after Barcelona defender Eric Garcia was sent off only 11 minutes in, before goals from Maghnes Aklouche and George Ilenikhena secured the triumph over the Catalans.

Flick, who has led Barcelona to a five-match winning run in LaLiga, remained positive after his first defeat in charge.

"With [Garcia's] red card the game changed totally but I can see the positives. We tried to defend as a team and attack as a team. We had chances but they deserved to win," Flick told reporters.

"I have told the team to lift their heads up because they are disappointed, but we have to focus on Sunday [LaLiga match at Villarreal], which is our next game. It's the time to recover, hopefully players will be back with a lot of energy."

"We have players that gave more than 100 percent, every player tried to give their best. I'm really proud of this team but we have to accept how we lost today."

Barcelona relived bitter memories of last season when they crashed out of the Champions League quarterfinals losing 4-1 to Paris St Germain after defender



Ronald Araujo was shown a red card.

Flick denied that the Catalans struggle in Europe's top club competition and said he is optimistic about their chances in the tournament they last won in 2015.

"Today you see this situation with a red card after 11 minutes, it changed our match plan, we have to accept it, this happens," the former Bayern Munich manager said.

"But we are strong enough to play a

good Champions League, we have seven matches ahead and I think we will win many matches."

Barcelona next host Young Boys in their second league-phase fixture.

'Raya's save was best I've seen in my career'

Meanwhile, elsewhere, Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta hailed his goalkeeper David Raya after the Spaniard's miraculous double save earned his side a 0-0 draw away to Atalanta in the Champions League on Thursday.

If not for Raya saving Mateo Retegui's 51st-minute penalty and then somehow springing across his goal to claw out the same player's headed rebound effort, Arsenal could have begun their group games with a damaging defeat.

"I witnessed two of the best saves I've ever seen in my career from David in that moment," Arteta said.

"If you can't win, you have to take the point. We started well, then we lost control and were very inconsistent."

Atalanta manager Gian Piero Gasperini was equally in awe. "He's a cat. The first save is good but the rebound is unbelievable," he said.

Raya was modest about his effort, saying he had been lucky and also paid tribute to Arsenal's goalkeeping coach Inaki Cana who he consulted while VAR checked the penalty decision.



Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne plays a shot during his 83-run knock on Day 3 of their first Test against New Zealand at Galle yesterday. Thanks to a 147-run second-wicket stand between Karunaratne and Dinesh Chandimal, who scored 61, Sri Lanka assumed control of the match as they finished the third day on 237 for four, leading by 202 runs. The match will resume tomorrow following today's rest day, allocated due to the presidential election in Sri Lanka.

PHOTO: AFP