

Hasan and Co maintain keen focus on length

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At the end of the opening day of the first Test against the West Indies, Bangladesh were probably left wondering whether they were able to fully capitalise on the conditions in Antigua even as their three pacers in Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud and Shoriful Islam did not leave many stones unturned in their venture for wickets.

Despite the best of efforts, Taskin was the only successful pacer on Day 1, pocketing a couple of wickets in the morning session while Hasan and Shoriful had nothing to show for in the wickets' column.

West Indies reached 250 for five at close of Day 1, owing to Mikyle Louis and Alick Athanaze's contributions of 97 and 90 respectively. The hosts

had the upperhand heading into the second day with the visitors needing a few early inroads to swing the balance and thankfully for them, Hasan did exactly that.

After bowling 16 unsuccessful overs in the previous day, Hasan struck twice in his first two overs on Day 2, removing overnight batter Joshua Da Silva (14) and Alzarri Joseph (four), to reduce the hosts to 261-7.

With his first wicket, a ball that came in sharply and crashed into Da Silva's pads to trap him lbw, Hasan became the most successful Bangladeshi pacer in a calendar year in Tests with 24 scalps in eight matches. The right-arm pacer surpassed Shahadat Hossain, who had taken 23 wickets in 2008.

Hasan and his opening ball partner of the day Taskin pretty



much started from where they had left off the previous day, zeroing in on the good length.

According to statistics from the broadcasters, on Day 1, 69 percent of the deliveries from the three seamers had landed between 6-8 metre length,

better known as the good-length area.

Taskin, having tested the openers with good-length deliveries, produced the first wicket on Day 1, pushing in an in-dipper at four-metre length and skipper Kraigg Brathwaite was caught on his crease, given out leg-before.

Taskin then bagged the second with another full-length delivery to remove Keacy Carty for naught to leave West Indies at 25 for 2.

From that point on, West Indies' batters grinded through two sessions and once Louis and Athanaze got the measure of the conditions, the runs started to flow as the third session produced 134 runs.

But with the ball zipping around, Louis in particular having opened the batting,

was seen fishing outside his off stump well into his nineties, looking increasingly nervous.

Skipper for the match Mehedi Hasan Miraz had dropped Louis on 90 off Taijul Islam but made up for his error by sending back the right-hander in the 75th over, breaking a 140-run fourth wicket stand.

Just when West Indies appeared to be completely seizing the day, Louis fell trying to clear the ropes against Miraz and Athanaze, who had started his innings with some ill-advised slogs and was almost caught by Taskin Ahmed, soon gave away his wicket to Taijul.

Just like opening day, Bangladesh pacers started well on Day 2, but if the bowlers fail to take wickets later in the day, the hosts would wrest back the control of the game again.

Saudi makes cricket foray with IPL auction

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia hosts this year's Indian Premier League player auction in a partnership between a money-spinning cricket tournament expanding its global reach and a kingdom using sports to improve its image.

The two-day auction beginning Sunday in Jeddah is the first cricketing event of this stature to be hosted in Saudi Arabia, a country with an under-served fanbase for the sport among millions of South Asian migrant workers.

Saudi cricket federation chairman Prince Saud bin Mishal said that staging the auction reflected the kingdom's "commitment to developing the sport and showcasing its position as a global destination for sporting events".

Cricket already has a fanbase in the kingdom among expatriate workers.

Non-Saudi nationals account for more than 13 million of Saudi Arabia's 32.2 million people, over 40 percent of whom hail from cricket-mad India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, according to the 2022 census.

A total of 574 players are up for grabs this year with Indian wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant, England veteran James Anderson and New Zealand all-rounder Rachin Ravindra among the top names in contention.

Australian pacer Mitchell Starc smashed auction records last time when he signed with Kolkata Knight Riders for \$2.98 million.

Dates for next year's IPL have not been released but seasons usually run from March to May.



Jaiswal lights up Perth, leaving Australia 'well behind'

AFP, PERTH

Yashasvi Jaiswal hit a composed unbeaten 90 and KL Rahul a stylish 62 yesterday as India built an ominous 218-run lead over Australia to take a stranglehold on the opening Test in Perth.

A determined and gritty effort by both men against a world-class attack put the visitors in the driving seat as they look to draw first blood in the five-match series.

Jaiswal faced 193 balls while Rahul fended off 153 to steer India to 172 without loss at the close on day two.

Rana grabbed 3-48.

Young gun Jaiswal, just 22 and in his 15th Test, failed to score in his first knock and began tentatively before a boundary off Mitchell Starc settled him.

Left-hander Jaiswal brought off his ninth Test half-century off 123 balls, slapping Nathan Lyon for a single.

He had a let-off on 52 when attempting a drive off Starc, with the ball flying to Usman Khawaja at second slip, but he failed to take a difficult chance.

The elegant Rahul also had a scare, surviving a run-out on 42.

He regrouped to reach his



Jaiswal and Rahul became only the fourth Indian opening pair to score half-centuries in the same Test innings in Australia. Jaiswal smashed two sixes in the second innings to take his tally to 34 for the year, breaking Brendon McCullum's record set in 2014. Australia's first-innings total of 104 runs is their third-lowest total at home since 2000.

After making a miserly 150 on a lively pitch in their first innings, the pressure was again on. But their response proved admirable.

They took a 46-run advantage into the second innings after dismissing the hosts for a meagre 104 at lunch.

Dynamic skipper Jasprit Bumrah blitzed 5-30 and Harshit

16th half-century in his 54th Test, taking one more ball than Jaiswal, and with those landmarks reached they began playing more freely.

"We're clearly well behind the game at this point. But that's not to say that tomorrow [today] can't change very quickly. Test cricket ebbs and flows," said Australia coach Andrew McDonald.

Sumon shines with seven, Naim smashes ton

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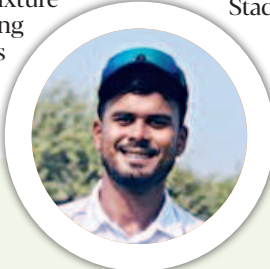
Dhaka Division pacer Sumon Khan delivered a seven-wicket haul in a sixth-round National Cricket League (NCL) fixture in Bogura yesterday, ripping through Rajshahi Division's batting line-up to register the lowest-ever total in the competition's history.

An astonishing 21 wickets fell on the opening day, with Sumon dismantling the top four batters before cleaning up the tail with a hat-trick – making him the 17th bowler to achieve the milestone in the country's first-class cricket, which has seen 20 such instances.

Sumon's exploits resulted in figures of 7.5-2-18-7, as Rajshahi were skittled out for just 42 in 20.5 overs, surpassing Barishal Division's previous low of 46 against Khulna Division last year.

In reply, Dhaka were restricted to 182 despite an 85-run stand by openers Jishan Alam and Rony Talukdar. At stumps, Rajshahi were 18 for one.

Meanwhile, in Cox's Bazar, Mohammad



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Naim's unbeaten 153 powered Dhaka Metro to a dominant 276 for two against Rangpur, who used 10 bowlers across 82 overs at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium Academy Ground.

Naim's knock featured 16 boundaries and a six as he forged a 198-run partnership for the second wicket with wicketkeeper-batter Tahjibul Islam (73).

At the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium (SICS), Barishal Division posted 258 for seven in 79 overs against Sylhet, courtesy of a solid 78 off 199 balls by opener Abdul Majid. Sylhet's pacer Rejaur Rahman Raja claimed three wickets.

Elsewhere, in Sylhet, off-spinner Nayeem Hasan starred with a five-for for Chattogram in their encounter against Khulna Division, who were bowled out for 204 in 74 overs, courtesy of opener Amit Majumder's

75 off 199 balls.

In reply, Chattogram openers saw through nine overs, scoring 31 at the SICS Academy Ground.



Bangladesh's all-format captain Najmul Hossain Shanto gives some tips to Young Tigers during an official photo session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, ahead of the ACC U-19 Men's Asia Cup 2024 in the UAE. The team will depart for the tournament today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



BCB hopes NCL T20 will continue

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The logo unveiling ceremony of the NCL T20 2024 tournament took place amidst much glitter at a hotel in the capital yesterday, with BCB president Faruque Ahmed hoping that the tournament will continue every season along with the red-ball format.

During the programme, it was also announced that the eight-team tournament, set to begin on December 11 and conclude on December 24, has gained 'List A' status from the International Cricket Council.

"In first-class cricket, the national league is the backbone of our cricket. So from this year onwards, we will be putting effort to hold the T20 tournament alongside the National Cricket League," Faruque said during the event.

The need for a separate T20 tournament alongside the BPL had been felt by the country's cricketers and organisers in recent times, and last year the selectors and cricket operations had sat together to chalk out the scheduling for the newest local T20 tournament.

Since the tournament is only for local players, unlike the BPL, Faruque hoped that it will create more opportunities for local stars to showcase their talent.

Jamal relieved to win fifth PGTI crown

SPORTS REPORTER

Jamal Hossain Mollah clinched his fifth PGTI title at the Digboi Golf Links in Assam yesterday with a one-stroke victory in the IndianOil SERVO Masters.

The 39-year-old

golfer from Kurmitola Golf Club totalled 12-under 276 (68-65-72-71) for the week to scoop a paycheck of 12,75,000 rupees and jump 22 spots to 17th in the TATA Steel PGTI Ranking.

There was a four-way tie for second place at 11-under 277 between Noida's Gaurav Pratap Singh, Delhi golfers Kapil Kumar and Sachin Baisoya and Pune's Divyansh Dubey.

Jamal, the first amateur to win on the PGTI back in 2009, said, "I made a good comeback once again after a poor start. After a couple of bad shots on the 10th, I recovered really well to salvage a bogey there because it could've been worse. My poor putting form continued today but my tee shots, approaches and chipping saved the day for me.

"Towards the end, I just thought that I have to give it my all and things fell in place perfectly for me. I used all my experience to get out of a tough spot on the 18th and see it home with a three-foot par conversion," added Jamal, whose last PGTI victory was in 2020.