



Starc far from ‘TOO SLOW’

Australia’s left-arm wrecking ball Mitchell Starc won the Adelaide round of his duel against India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal in the day-night second Test on Friday. Jaiswal smashed 161 in India’s comprehensive win in the series opener in Perth and was caught on stump mic telling Starc he was bowling “too slow”. However, Starc was far from being too slow as his onslaught saw Australia bundle India out for 180 before the hosts made 86-1 at close, with Nathan McSweeney not out 38 from 97 balls and Marnus Labuschagne on 20 off 67 deliveries.

- Mitchell Starc had India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal lbw in the very first ball yesterday, becoming only the second bowler to take a wicket with the first ball of three Test matches. West Indies’ Pedro Collins had also done this, at Dhaka in 2003-04, and at Gros Islet and Kingston in 2004 -- with Bangladesh’s Hannan Sarkar the victim on each occasion.
- The Australian quick had struck with the first ball twice before -- against Sri Lanka at Galle in 2016 and against England at Brisbane in 2021-22, dismissing Dimuth Karunaratne and Rory Burns. In fact, the Burns wicket was the last incident of a wicket falling off the first ball of a Test.
- Starc claimed career-best figures of 6-48 -- his 15th five-wicket haul in Tests. It was also Starc’s

maiden five-wicket haul against India in Tests, after 51 wickets in his first 19 matches against them.

- Starc is also the leading wicket-taker in day-night Tests, with 72 scalps to his name. The second-best in this regard is his Australia teammate Nathan Lyon, who took 43 wickets in as many matches as Starc (13).
- It was also Starc’s fourth fiver in day-night Test matches. No other bowler has taken more than two.
- Meanwhile, India’s Jasprit Bumrah got the only wicket for India on the day when he dismissed Australia opener Usman Khawaja (13 off 35). That wicket saw Bumrah become only the third India fast bowler to get 50 wickets in a calendar year in Tests after Kapil Dev (74 in 1979 and 75 in 1983) and Zaheer Khan (51 in 2002).

Tigresses look to bounce back against Ireland

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women’s cricket team will be eyeing to bounce back in the ongoing three-match WT20I series when they take on Ireland in the second match at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium today.

The hosts are currently trailing the series 1-0, having lost the high-scoring opener by 12 runs at the same venue on Thursday.

Bangladesh looked to have things under control in chase of a massive 170-run target in that game. Dilara Akter and Sobhana Mostary stitched together a 103-run opening stand -- the highest for Bangladesh in the format -- but the Tigresses lost impetus once Mostary departed in the 12th over.



“We scored 100 runs within 10-11 overs. It was a big score for an opening partnership. Still, we were hopeful,” pacer Jahanara Alam recounted how Bangladesh were in a favourable position in a video message yesterday.

The Tigresses, however, saw a dip in the scoring rate in the latter part of the innings and lost way, needing 18 runs off the final two overs -- a task that proved too much for Nigar Sultana Joty’s side.

“We lost the contest for some faults. Four of our batters were on song so we are very hopeful about our next matches,” Jahanara hoped to not make the same mistakes in today’s game, mentioning that she believed they could still win the series.

Meanwhile, Ireland will be looking to clinch their first-ever series against Bangladesh in this format.

Both the teams previously played in only one bilateral WT20I series in 2018 where Bangladesh won by a 2-1 margin in Dublin.

An anomaly that can make Tigers hopeful

SPORTS REPORTER

If given a choice between playing an ODI at home or away, the Bangladesh cricket team, like most other teams in the world, would almost always prefer playing as the hosts.

But in international cricket, schedules are not shuffled around just to accommodate the preferences of a team. However, it probably bodes well for the Tigers that they will be taking on the West Indies in the Caribbean islands in their forthcoming three-match series, beginning with the first ODI in St Kitts on Sunday.

Playing away from home in a format where they have lost their mojo in recent times, with defeats in four of their last five ODI series, seems like a disadvantage. However, statistically speaking, the Tigers are actually better off taking on the West Indies in the Caribbean than in home conditions.

Bangladesh have the reputation of being a better side at home than abroad and stats show that this assumption is not without merit as their win percentage in home ODIs -- 45.22 percent -- is much better than their success rate as a touring team -- 26.03 percent.

However, there is always at least one exception to any rule and for the Tigers, playing ODIs against the West Indies seems to be just that as they are the only opponents against whom Bangladesh have a better win percentage while touring than as hosts.

Bangladesh have so far played 20 ODIs at home against the Caribbean side, winning nine, losing 10 with one match ending as a no result.

But in the West Indies, Bangladesh have a 50-50 record against the hosts in one-dayers, with eight wins against eight losses in 16 encounters.

- West Indies are the only Test-playing nation against whom Bangladesh have a better win percentage while touring (50 percent) than as a host (45 percent) in ODIs. Bangladesh also have a better success rate against Afghanistan in abroad (66 percent) than at home (50 percent) in the 50-over format, but they are yet to play a match in Afghan soil.
- Bangladesh have won the last four ODIs they have played in the Caribbean.
- The Tigers have played three ODIs at the Warner Park in St Kitts, venue for the first ODI of the forthcoming series, winning two and losing one.

One may be prompted to write this off as three of those wins came against a second-string West Indies team back in 2009. However, one also has to consider the Tigers’ recent ODI record in the Caribbean islands, as they have come out victorious in their last four 50-over games over there.

Bangladesh had clean swept the West Indies in three-match ODI series in Guyana in 2022 and also won the third ODI of the 2018 series at the Warner Park, the venue where the first ODI of the upcoming series will take place.

Now, the difference in Bangladesh’s home and away record against the West Indies may seem minuscule, but at a time when everything is seemingly going wrong for the side in what used to be their most favoured format, any and every positive, however minuscule, is worth taking note of.

‘Vinicius to be ready for Real’s next CL game’

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said star forward Vinicius Junior will be back from injury quicker than expected to face Atalanta in the Champions League on Tuesday.

The Brazilian winger suffered a hamstring injury in November which was expected to keep him out until the Intercontinental Cup final on December 18.

However Vinicius was able to train on Friday and Ancelotti said he would return next week, missing Saturday’s La Liga visit to face Girona.

“Vini has recovered from his injury very well, he will not be ready for tomorrow but he will be for the next Champions League game,” Ancelotti told a news conference Friday.

Vinicius’ return bolsters a Madrid side which has suffered three defeats in their opening five European matches, sitting 24th in the Champions League group table.

The coach said defender David Alaba, who also trained with the team, was finding fitness after a long-term knee injury and could return in January.

Ancelotti also said he accepted resting misfiring Kylian Mbappe might also help him at some point.

Footballer Shakib Al Hasan grabs the spotlight

SPORTS REPORTER

Even though captain Souleymane Diabate scored the decisive goal to power Mohammedan to a 1-0 win over holders Bashundhara Kings in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter in Cumilla yesterday, it was substitute goalkeeper Shakib Al Hasan who stole the show with a valiant display.

Shakib came on to the pitch in the 25th minute of the game after first-choice goalkeeper Sujan Hossain was given marching order following a foul on Kings forward Rakib Hossain just outside the box. The 20-year-old goalkeeper then turned himself into a wall under the Mohammedan bar, denying numerous efforts from the Kings forwards.

Shakib, who has been with Mohammedan for five seasons now, frustrated Bashundhara Kings by foiling efforts from Mohammad Sohel Rana in the 45th minute, Jonathan Fernandes in the 55th minute, Jared Khasa in the 83rd minute and Miguel Ferriera in the 90th minute.

Mohammedan could have widened the margin but Kings goalkeeper Mehedi Hasan Srabon also made a couple of good saves including a spot-kick from Diabate.

“No doubt, everyone has contributed in this important victory as all players gave their best in a bid to win the match following a defeat against them in the Challenge Cup. However, goalkeeper

Shakib played really well coming from the bench and making some brilliant saves. He is our second-choice goalkeeper and has good potential if he can carry on this performance,” Mohammedan coach Alfaz Ahmed told The Daily Star over phone on way back to Dhaka after the match.

“Shakib, who was picked from BKSP through a trial, was our real hero in our 1-0 win over Kings in a league match last season. I think he performed better in that match compared to this one,” said Alfaz, adding that Shakib has been improving under goalkeeping coach Syed Hasan Kanon.

“Before entering the pitch, coach Kanon bhai told me that a goalkeeper could turn a match by keeping his cool and performing well. I tried to implement the instructions of my coach,” Shakib told The Daily Star over phone.

Shakib, who only played for BKSP in 2nd Division Football League, has so far played nine league matches since 2021-22 season as a substitute goalkeeper but is now looking forward to cementing his place in the starting eleven of Mohammedan and get a call from the national team after being part of Bangladesh U-23 team in 2023.

When asked about his name being identical to a celebrity cricketer, how the goalkeeper informed: “My original name was Mohammad Shakib Hossain, but my school teacher changed it to Shakib Al Hasan during the registration for PSC exams. Since then I’m known as Shakib Al Hasan.”



Following on from his match-winning 171 in the first Test at Hagley Oval, Harry Brook smashed a century to help England score 280 in their first innings on the opening day of their second Test against hosts New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Friday. England were on top by the end of the day, reducing the Black Caps to 86-5 at stumps.

PHOTO: AFP

Mourinho hits back at Guardiola

REUTERS

Jose Mourinho said the Premier League trophies he won at Chelsea were achieved fairly, responding to Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola’s comments that he had six English top-flight titles while the Portuguese coach only had three.

Guardiola, whose team lost 2-0 at Liverpool on Sunday, held up six fingers to home fans to indicate the number of league titles he won in response to chants of “you’re getting sacked in the morning.”

Mourinho, while managing Manchester United, had similarly held up three fingers to opposing fans during an underwhelming league campaign, before being sacked in December 2018 after a loss to Liverpool.

Guardiola was asked at a press

conference whether he could face a fate similar to Mourinho.

“I hope not in my case... he won three, I won six... but we are the same like that,” Guardiola answered.

In his response to the Spaniard, Mourinho alluded to City’s charges over alleged violations of the Premier League’s financial rules ranging from 2009 to 2018, which the club has always denied.

“Guardiola said something about me... he won six trophies and I won three, but I won fairly and cleanly,” Turkish outlet Hurriyet quoted Mourinho as saying on Friday, ahead of his team Fenerbahce’s clash with Besiktas.

“If I lost, I want to congratulate my opponent because he was better than me. I don’t want to win by dealing with 150 court cases.”

