

Indian bowlers put the team in the driver's seat

Bangladesh's decision to bat first backfires; Shami, Ishant, Umesh and Ashwin do the damage

AMOL KARHADKAR
INDORE

Mohammed Shami was stunning with his trademark seam position. Ishant Sharma was inspiring up front. Umesh Yadav was unstoppable with his fierce pace. And R. Ashwin was exceptional, as always.

No wonder then that Bangladesh's brave decision to bat first on a hard deck boomeranged as India took firm control of the opening day of the first Test.

With the pace triumvirate and the lead off-spinner in prime form, Ravindra Jadeja's accurate left-arm spin was hardly required as India bundled Bangladesh out for 150 in a little over two sessions at the Holkar Stadium.

Rohit goes early

Despite losing Rohit Sharma early, Mayank Agarwal and Cheteshwar Pujara's unbroken 72-run partnership steadied the ship as India reached 86 for one at stumps.

With more faith in its batting order than an inexperienced bowling unit, Bangladesh chose to bat after Virat Kohli lost a rare toss. But with Ishant and Umesh on the ball right from the word go, the left-handed openers Shadman Islam and Imrul Kayes struggled to put bat on the ball.



Deceived: Mahmudullah's attempted heave off R. Ashwin proved fatal. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

A breakthrough was inevitable all through the opening spell and the relentless pressure from the pace duo finally paid off with Kayes offering Ajinkya Rahane a regulation catch in the cordon off Umesh.

Six balls later, Ishant snared Shadman, with a fuller one that took the edge to wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha. Mohammad Mithun looked shaky right through

his short stint before being trapped in front by Shami.

Useful partnership

It was followed by Bangladesh's only positive session of the day, with captain Mominul Haque and the experienced Mushfiqur Rahim coming up with a 68-run partnership. Both had their share of luck, with Mushfiqur seeing catches being dropped in the cordon, but

the duo did give a glimpse of their skills.

The tiny Mushfiqur, immediately after surviving a second chance in the slips, danced down the wicket to send Ashwin into the sight-screen and followed it up with a delightful square cut off the next ball.

However, Ashwin finally broke the partnership when Mominul shouldered arms to a delivery that held its line.

STAT SPHERE



1 For the first time, four Test-playing nations competed in two different formats in the same country. While India took on Bangladesh in the first Test at Indore, Afghanistan met West Indies in the first T20I at Lucknow

1 Ashwin became the joint-fastest to 250 Test wickets at home alongside Muttiah Muralitharan. He

achieved the feat in 42 matches. Anil Kumble is the second-fastest (43 Tests)

15 Number of 5-fors taken by the entire Bangladesh playing 11. Ashwin alone has 27 five-wicket hauls

22.83

Ashwin's bowling average in Tests at home (after the Bangladesh innings). His average away from home is 31.39 (108 wickets in 27 Tests)

19 Number of times India has restricted opponents to sub-200 totals in the last two years in 46 Test innings. South Africa is second with 14 in 34 innings and West Indies third with 10 in 29 innings

254 Wickets taken by the entire Bangladesh playing 11 (including Rohit's dismissal on Day 1) in Tests. Ashwin has 359 scalps, with 251 of them at home

Shami then bowled a fiery spell to rattle the Bangladesh lower order.

He used the crease well to jag one back in to Mushfiqur and knock down his stumps

and then trapped Mehidy Hasan with a fuller one the next ball to leave Bangladesh reeling at 140 for seven at tea and Shami's wait for a hat-trick was prolonged, though he

SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH – 1ST INNINGS
Shadman Islam c Saha b Ishant 6 (24b, 1x4), Imrul Kayes c Rahane b Umesh 6 (18b, 1x4), Mominul Haque b Ashwin 37 (80b, 6x4), Mohammad Mithun lbw b Shami 13 (36b, 1x4), Mushfiqur Rahim b Shami 43 (105b, 4x4, 1x6), Mahmudullah b Ashwin 10 (30b, 1x4), Liton Das c Kohli b Ishant 21 (31b, 4x4), Mehidy Hasan lbw b Shami 0 (1b), Tajjul Islam run out 1 (7b), Abu Jayed (not out) 7 (14b), Ebadat Hossain b Umesh 2 (5b); Extras (lb-3, w-1); 4; Total (in 58.3 overs): 150.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-12 (Kayes, 5.6 overs), 2-12 (Shadman, 6.6), 3-31 (Mithun, 17.6), 4-99 (Mominul, 37.1), 5-115 (Mahmudullah, 45.1), 6-140 (Mushfiqur, 53.5), 7-140 (Mehidy, 53.6), 8-140 (Liton, 54.1), 9-148 (Tajjul, 56.4).

INDIA BOWLING
Ishant 12-6-20-2, Umesh 14.3-3-47-2, Shami 13-5-27-3, Ashwin 16-1-43-2, Jadeja 3-0-10-0.

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS
Mayank Agarwal (batting) 37 (81b, 6x4), Rohit Sharma c Liton b Jayed 6 (14b, 2x4), Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 43 (67b, 7x4); Total (for one wkct. in 26 overs): 86.

FALL OF WICKET
1-14 (Rohit, 7.2 overs).

BANGLADESH BOWLING
Ebadat 11-2-32-0, Jayed 8-0-21-1, Tajjul 7-0-33-0.
Toss: Bangladesh.

Ashwin echoes Kohli's views on Test venues

Off-spinner reveals that the players are 'wary and excited' about day-night game

AMOL KARHADKAR
INDORE

A day after Virat Kohli reiterated his preference for restricting Test cricket in India to five centres, R. Ashwin echoed his captain's sentiment.

"Every other nation has a certain pattern of playing Test cricket. They do know how the venue behaves, how the pitch behaves, how the games pan out. That's perennially how Test cricket works in most parts of the world," Ashwin said.

"Even in India, it was no exception. But, of late, with a lot of cricketers coming from different parts of the country, the sport has grown and gone to every nook and corner which is a great sign. Hence we are playing Tests in various venues.



Told you, skip! Mohammed Shami is delighted after nailing Mushfiqur Rahim. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

"The understanding of a particular venue and keeping it that way will help the players. Whether or not that's the right thing to do is

something that the decision-makers will have take."

About the day-night Test, Ashwin admitted that the Indian players, due to lack of

game-time with the pink ball, were "wary and excited" about their maiden Test under lights.

"The pink ball Test is a welcome sign. As a Test-playing country, it was necessary for us to play a day-night Test. The office-going crowd which couldn't catch the action can now do so," said Ashwin.

A challenge

"Obviously, it's a challenge to play with the pink ball. Hopefully, the Test match will be a historic moment and be the start of many more to come.

"I haven't even bowled a single ball with the pink ball. Obviously I just saw it. Sometimes I don't understand if its orange or pink, still coming to terms with that."

The pitch wasn't unplayable: Mominul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
INDORE

Mominul Haque was in the line of fire on Thursday, on and off the field. Despite a forgettable debut as Test captain, he tried his best to put on a brave front during the post-match media interaction.

He owned up to the decision to bat first on a peppy Holkar Stadium pitch against the odds, then took the blame for being dismissed at an inopportune time and even urged the Bangladeshi media contingent to "not ask too many negative questions".

Credits India's attack
In the midst of all this, he gave credit to India's unrelenting bowling attack, that proved to be too good for the visitors.

"The wicket wasn't un-



Doing his bit: Mominul Haque, leading Bangladesh for the first time, did the repair job in the company of Mushfiqur Rahim. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

playable at all or else Mushfiq and I wouldn't have scored the runs. The problem is that when we are playing the World's No. 1 Test team, we have to be mentally more stronger," Mominul said.

When pressed about electing to bat that surprised even the Indian camp, Mominul said: "If we had started well, the question wouldn't have been asked in the first place... Whether we win or lose, I take the blame.

"Mushfiq and I had a good partnership. Liton also got into the rhythm. I think I should take the blame for getting out at the wrong time. If I would have stayed on, it could have been different."

QUICK SINGLES

Lanka to tour Pakistan for Tests

LAHORE
Test cricket will return to Pakistan after more than a decade with Sri Lanka on Thursday agreeing to a two-match series in December, which will be a part of the traditional format's ongoing World championship. The upcoming series' first Test will be played in Rawalpindi from December 11-15, while the second Test will be held in Karachi from December 19-23. PTI



Rahane moves to Capitals

NEW DELHI
Rajasthan Royals on Thursday traded its most-capped player Ajinkya Rahane to Delhi Capitals in exchange for leg-spinner Mayank Markande and bowling all-rounder Rahul Tewatia.

Rahane, who captained Royals in 24 of his 100 IPL games between 2011 and 2019, is also their top run-getter with 2810 runs at an average of 34.26 and strike rate of 122.65. The arrival of Rahane means an addition to the Indian stars in the Capitals squad which already has Shikhar Dhawan, Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer. Meanwhile, Dhawal Kulkarni returned to Mumbai Indians with whom he spent the first six seasons before turning out for Rajasthan Royals, Gujarat Lions and Royals again.

BCCI ethics officer dismisses David's Col case

NEW DELHI
BCCI ethics officer D.K. Jain on Thursday dismissed the conflict of interest complaint against Rahul Dravid, saying it was "bereft of any merit." "I have rejected the complaint. Rahul Dravid doesn't have conflict of interest," said Jain. Jain had conducted a second round of hearing on Tuesday when Dravid was represented by his lawyer.

The 46-year-old former India captain had earlier explained his case in a personal hearing held in Mumbai on September 26. PTI



West Indies wins first T20I against Afghanistan

LONDON
West Indies beat Afghanistan by 30 runs in the first T20 International here on Thursday. Put in to bat, West Indies rode on Evin Lewis' attacking 68 (41b, 4x4, 6x6) to post 164 for five in 20 overs. The Asian side was rocked early on its chase and never got going against the Kieron Pollard-led side.

The scores: West Indies 164/5 in 20 overs (Lewis 68, Pollard 32 n.o., Naib 2/24) bt Afghanistan 134/9 in 20 overs (Najibullah 27, Asghar 25, Williams 3/17, Walsh 2/34, Pollard 2/17).

Toss: Afghanistan. **Player-of-the match:** Pollard.

Injury-time goal saves India



Rescue act: Substitute Seiminlen Doungel provided India with a lifeline, outjumping his markers to head one into the far post. ■ AIF

WC QUALIFIERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUSHANBE (TAJIKISTAN)
India escaped with a 1-1 draw after an injury-time goal saved it the blushes against lower-ranked Afghanistan in their FIFA World Cup Qualifier match here on Thursday.

The result meant 106-ranked India remained winless in its qualifying campaign so far.

When the visitor seemed headed for its second defeat, substitute Seiminlen Doungel (90+3) provided India with a lifeline, outjumping his markers to head one into the far post.

Afghanistan had taken the lead through Zelfagar Nazary's strike (45+1), putting India on the backfoot. India remained at the fourth position in Group E with three points from four matches, while Afghanistan

continued to be third with four points.

Starting the away game, being played in extremely cold conditions at the Central Republican Stadium, on a bright note, India conceded a goal in the first half injury-time (45+1).

Afghanistan lead came after a fine move saw David Najem play a square ball to Zelfagar Nazary at the centre of the box, and the mid-fielder's attempt breached the Indian defence before finding the back of the net.

It wasn't really a home match for Afghanistan either, but wins here against Cambodia and Bangladesh, followed by draws with Tajikistan and Jordan had given it some much-needed confidence ahead of the clash against Igor Stimac's India.

And the 149-ranked Afghanistan carried that confidence into the game on a chilly evening when the tem-

perature dropped to nine degree Celsius.

India looked to take on the opposition but it could not create any clear chances, and the couple of half chances in the opening minutes failed to test the Afghan custodian.

There was a change straight-away for India after the break as Stimac substituted Mandar with Farukh Choudhary.

The visitor showed urgency and looked desperate for an equaliser. It had a chance in the 58th minute but skipper Sunil Chhetri's header off a cross from right back Pritam Kotal was saved by Azizi. At the other end, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu made a diving save.

While he will be disappointed that the match ended in a stalemate, Stimac's decision to bring in Doungel in place of Kotal paid dividends.

Tsitsipas seals last-four spot

Thrashes defending champion Zverev in straight sets

ATP FINALS

REUTERS
LONDON

Debutant Stefanos Tsitsipas crushed defending champion Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-2 on Wednesday to book his place in the last four of the ATP Finals with a match to spare.

The 21-year-old, the first Greek player to qualify for the elite eight-man season-enders, backed up his opening win over Daniil Medvedev with a virtuoso performance at the O2 Arena.

His straight-set victory secured a top-two place in the group and left Zverev, World No.1 Rafael Nadal and Medvedev scrapping to join him in Saturday's semifinals.

Hit with the crowd
Tsitsipas' swashbuckling all-court game, with a booming serve, aggressive groundstrokes, deft volleys and silky movement have made him an instant crowd favourite.

All those weapons were on display against Zverev in what was the youngest, in terms of combined age, match at the ATP Finals since Andy Murray played Juan Martin del Potro in 2009.

Zverev defeated 19-times Grand Slam champion Nadal in his opening match on Monday, having beaten Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic back-to-back to win last year's title, but he had no answer to the all-court

game of Tsitsipas.

The Greek broke in the eighth game when Zverev opted to serve and volley on a second serve but made a mess of a low volley and from that point on it was one-way traffic. Zverev's level tailed off alarmingly in

the second set and Tsitsipas wrapped things up with an ace.

The results:
Group Bjorn Borg: Matteo Berrettini bt Dominic Thiem 7-6 (3), 6-3.
Group Andre Agassi: Stefanos Tsitsipas bt Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-2.



Classy display: Stefanos Tsitsipas put on a sparkling show to get the better of Alexander Zverev. ■ GETTY IMAGES