

SPORT



The Export Leader

Tamim, Imrul rise in Tests

SPORTS REPORTER

A good batting performance from the Tigers has boosted a number of players in the rankings following the first Test against Pakistan in Khulna.

Tamim Iqbal, who scored his maiden double-century, gained eight places to occupy the 26th place. His partner, Imrul Kayes, who scored 150, saw his position elevate by 24 places to a career-best 67.

Despite the huge shifts from the openers, Mominul Haque remains Bangladesh's highest ranked batsman. His scores of 80 and 21 moved him to a career-high rank of 23.

In the bowling department, Taijul Islam moved to a career-high ranking of 31 after claiming figures of 6 for 163. This was Taijul's third five-wicket haul in Test cricket. Shakib Al Hasan, who didn't have the best of times in the first Test, though dropped two places to 15th.



Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim carefully inspects the wicket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on which the second Test against Pakistan will take place. Bowlers are expected to receive more help in Mirpur compared to the wicket in Khulna. PHOTO: STAR

Rubel out, Abul in

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will go into the second Test in Dhaka against Pakistan with an unexpected change as pacer Rubel Hossain has been left out of the squad due to a side-strain. The 25-year-old has been replaced with Abul Hasan.

According to a press release from the Bangladesh Cricket Board, Rubel was in pain during the fourth day of the first Test in Khulna and as a result underwent a scan on Monday in Dhaka, which confirmed the injury.

"The result confirmed a Grade 1 strain on the left side. It takes about three to four weeks to recover from such injuries. He will begin his rehab in the next couple of days," said national team physio Bayjedul Islam.

The confirmation of Rubel's injury in a way explained as to why the pacer wasn't given the ball during a number of crucial moments of the first Test.

During the last session of Day 3, for instance, many expected Rubel to get one last burst before stumps. While he was given the ball with eight overs remaining on that day, he was taken off after just two overs.

While the hero of Bangladesh in the World Cup won't be featuring in the second Test, it could be an opportunity for Abul to turn the tables on his career. The last time he played a Test was in Colombo, back in March 2013.

He went under the knife a number of times ever since and while he did feature in the Zimbabwe series last year and also played an ODI against Pakistan, he is yet to make a proper international comeback.

The 22-year-old was smacked all over the park by Pakistan in the first ODI and his bowling hasn't been consistent in the recent past. However, with Shafiqul Islam injured and Robiul Islam out of the picture due to fitness issues, Bangladesh's selection committee doesn't have much of a choice.

While the squad was announced yesterday, there wasn't much action from the hosts at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. Skipper Mushfiqur Rahim was one of the players to hit the nets.

The team's other senior players, Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal, visited the ICCDRB. On behalf of the BCB, the players provided the organisation with a bat that included the signatures of the members of the Bangladesh's World Cup squad.

At the programme, the left-hander exuded confidence with regards to the second Test. "As a team I believe that we can hold on to our performance and continue doing well in this series. That will be our target," said Shakib.



ABUL HASAN

IN A NUTSHELL

Same strategy as Khulna?

SPORTS REPORTER

When something big is achieved, dreams become only bigger. Tigers' stupendous performance in the Khulna Test thus triggered high hopes ahead of the second and final Test against Pakistan that begins at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur tomorrow.

Nothing would be better than a winning finish to this memorable home series against Pakistan. The way this Bangladesh team has so far made the impossible possible, especially after their glorious fight-back in the Khulna Test, one cannot blame someone if he or she dreams of a victory in the last game. But realistically speaking, can the Bangladesh team management chalk up

a plan with victory in mind?

For a result in the Mirpur Test, the management should make sure that the bowlers get some extra juice from the pitch in Mirpur, unlike the Khulna surface. Normally the Mirpur pitch tends to be a more sporting wicket and is likely to offer more bounce. So, if the Tigers want to go for a win, this would be the perfect occasion. However, according to sources, the Bangladesh think-tank isn't getting too excited.

The notion is that it would be unwise to underestimate the variety and strength of the Pakistan bowling attack. On the other hand, Bangladesh's batting has been showing a lot of maturity and the team management can keep its confidence in the batsmen.

However, the policy of using eight batsmen in the side is one that isn't

helping the hosts by any means. Though Shakib Al Hasan claimed before the Khulna Test that Bangladesh has a better bowling attack than their opponents, their bowling performance at Khulna hardly reflected his words and most importantly the question remains whether this attack has got the ability to take 20 wickets to win a Test match.

And that's why Bangladesh want to bank on their batting performance rather than thinking of providing any extra advantage for the bowlers. Bangladesh want to prove that they are a difficult side to beat in both Tests and ODIs at home. While it's a draw that they are hoping for, they definitely won't shy away from grabbing a chance to win, especially when Pakistan are under huge pres-

Good news for Pakistan

DAWN, Karachi

England has slipped one place to fourth in the ICC Test rankings following their five wickets defeat in the Barbados Test.

Following Sunday's result, Alastair Cook's men have dropped behind Pakistan on fourth position, while West Indies, after gaining three points, have reduced gap with seventh-placed India.

Pakistan, who face Bangladesh in the second and final Test in Mirpur from Wednesday, must win to retain their latest Test ranking.

Conversely, a Bangladesh win would see Pakistan drop behind England and New Zealand in fifth position, while if the Test is drawn, then Pakistan will be equal with New Zealand, but will be above the Blacks Caps by a fraction of a point.

The annual Test team rankings update will be carried out after the Mirpur Test.

Rank	Team	Tests	Points	Rating
1	South Africa	31	3839	124
2	Australia	40	4718	118
3	Pakistan	30	3090	103
4	England	43	4367	102
5	New Zealand	37	3660	99
6	Sri Lanka	34	3258	96
7	India	34	3228	95
8	West Indies	34	2688	79
9	Bangladesh	21	676	32
10	Zimbabwe	13	228	18

Dav expects 'great fight'

ANI, Karachi

Zimbabwe coach Dav Whatmore believes his team will put up a great fight when they tour Pakistan for a short series this month.

Zimbabwe would be the first international team to tour Pakistan after the tragic incident of 2009 when the Sri Lankan team was attacked by terrorists.

The former Pakistan coach said that it was great on the part of Zimbabwe Cricket and players to be ready to play in Pakistan. Whatmore insisted that this tour would be viewed with keen interest all over the world, not just only for cricketing results.

Whatmore was confident that the tour would go on smoothly and competitive cricket would be played by both the teams.

Zimbabwe will square off against Pakistan in two T20, beginning from May 22 before taking them on a three-match ODI series.

Vonn, Woods part company

AGENCIES, Los Angeles

Skier Lindsey Vonn and golfer Tiger Woods have broken up.

"After nearly three years together, Tiger and I have mutually decided to end our relationship," Vonn, 30, wrote in a Facebook post on Sunday.

"I will always cherish the memories that we've created together. Unfortunately, we both lead incredibly hectic lives that force us to spend a majority of our time apart.

"I will always admire and respect Tiger. He and his beautiful family will always hold a special place in my heart."

Woods, 39, echoed a similar message on his website, adding, "She has been amazing with Sam and Charlie and my entire family."



India arrive on June 7

SPORTS REPORTER

India cricket team will arrive in Dhaka on the 7th of next month to play one Test and three day-night ODIs against the Tigers.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the tour itinerary yesterday. Test cricket is set for a return to Fatullah Cricket Stadium after nine years as the one-off Test will take place here from June 10 to 14. The venue had earlier staged one Test match between Bangladesh and Australia in April 2006.

The last time Bangladesh played a Test series against India was in 2010. In June last year they played an ODI series against them.

ITINERARY		
Date	Match	Venue
June 10-14	Only Test	Fatullah
June 18	1st ODI	Mirpur
June 21	2nd ODI	Mirpur
June 24	3rd ODI	Mirpur

Academy gets new director

SPORTS REPORTER

With one eye on the 2019 Cricket World Cup, the BCB has named a new director for its academy. Former English cricketer Paul Terry arrived in Dhaka yesterday. The board is also in talks with Allister de Winter and Stuart Law for the roles of bowling and batting coaches of the Academy. De Winter served as the chief mentor for Australia's pacers while Law had previously coached the Tigers

Who to cover for Mushy?

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim kept wickets for 35 overs in the first Test against Pakistan before leaving the field with extreme pain after dropping a catch in a bizarre fashion off pacer Mohammad Shahid.

Mushfiqur, who had also dropped another catch off Shakib Al Hasan earlier, injured his right hand's ring finger on the second day of the Test in Khulna.

Interestingly, when the Bangladesh captain left the field, there was a bit of confusion in the middle with regards to Mushfiqur's substitute. There was not a single player with a history of keeping wickets even in domestic games. Or, may be there was one with some credential but that player wished not to be exposed.

We all know Tigers opener Imrul Kayes volunteered to keep the wicket for an amazing 120 overs before making a request to Mahmudullah Riyad to take over for the remaining 14 odd overs of a long Pakistan first innings that lasted 186.4 overs, spanning over two days.

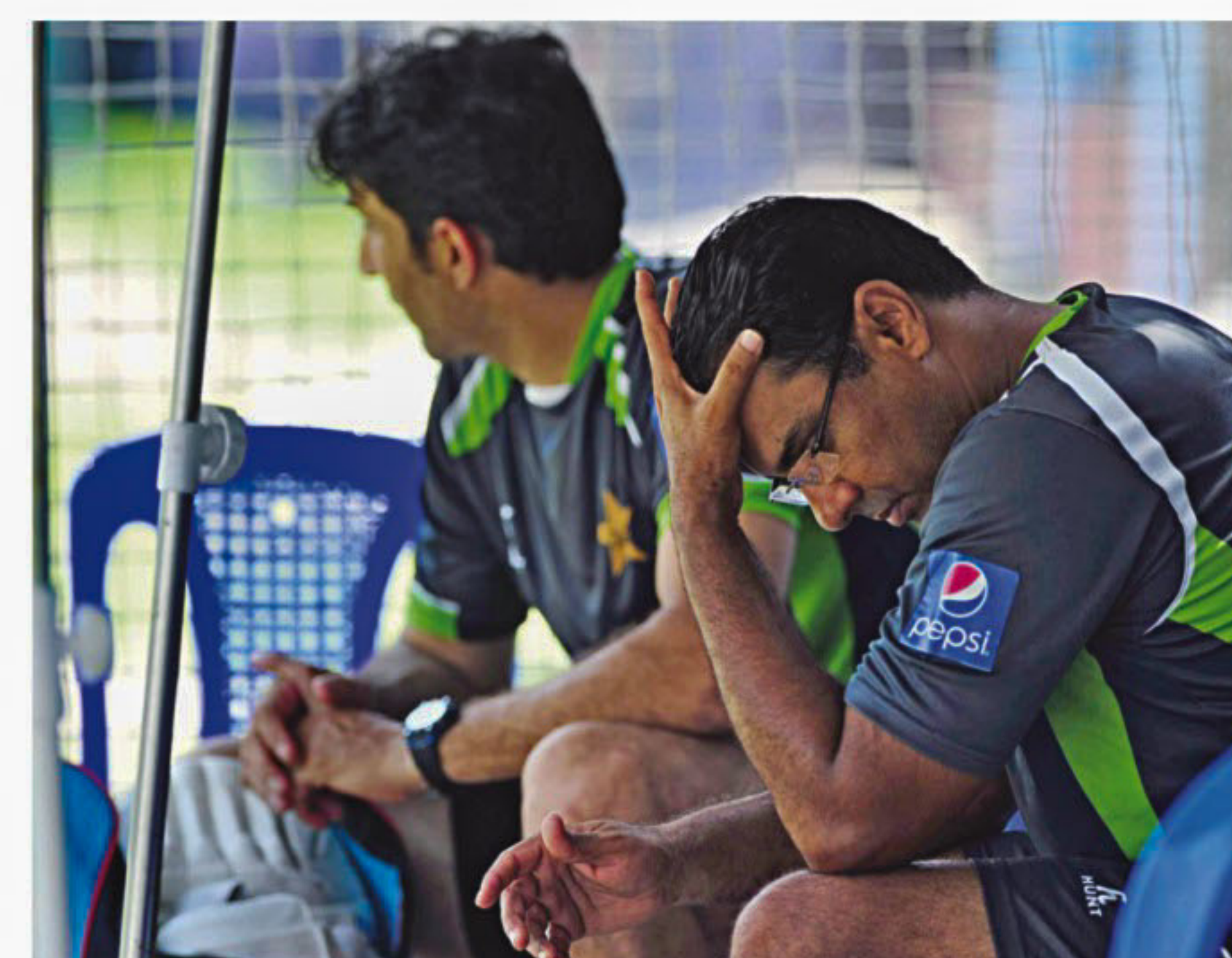
Luckily, there was no edge for Imrul to take and for Mahmudullah, it was a phase he will laughingly remember: a stumping, not with his gloves but with his left thigh pad.

But the whole episode without a decent replacement for injured Mushfiqur was not an inspiring scenario for the Tigers despite the fact that the team spirit worked well for them in a match where Tamim Iqbal and Imrul produced a historic 312-run opening stand in the second innings to win a draw from the jaws of defeat.

When Mushfiqur was injured last time in a Test match at Chittagong against Sri Lanka in 2014, Shamsur Rahman, a part-time-keeper, stood behind the wicket. But in Khulna there was not even a back-up plan in case of an injury to Mushfiqur.

Litton Das, a member of the 14-man Test squad, was in Khulna with the team but it's not a classic case of 1986 when England fielded a record four wicketkeepers at Lord's against New Zealand including Bob Taylor, who briefly came out of retirement to keep wickets following the consent of the opposition skipper.

Wicket-keeping is a specialised job, and what happened in Khulna is certainly not desirable. Besides, it's also not wise not to think beyond Mushfiqur, who is the one of the best batsman of the country. But when it comes to keeping he leaves a lot to be desired. With the Tigers going through a purple patch, we may still live with that. But this is certainly not professional thinking for a very professional team.



'WON'T ANYTHING GO OUR WAY?' Pakistan coach Waqar Younis, who has his hand on his head during training in Mirpur yesterday, will hope that the strategy set by him and skipper Misbahul Haq (L) changes their fortune this week. PHOTO: STAR

'I miss Ajmal'

SPORTS REPORTER

Of all the bowlers in the Pakistan line-up it has been Yasir Shah who has seemed to be the most threatening amongst the lot. There were some brilliant spells bowled by the aggressive Wahab Riaz as well, however Shah's flighted turners had to be played with extreme caution.

The one way Bangladesh's batsmen eliminated the Shah factor was by going down the track and attacking him. He was smacked for four sixes, two of which were consecutive, and came off the bat of Tamim Iqbal.

Having scalped three wickets in the first innings, the leg-spinner hopes the visitors can turn the game around in the second Test and bring about a shift of momentum.

One of the factors which Shah believes is affecting Pakistan's bowling in a negative

way is the absence of Saeed Ajmal. Together with the off-spinner, the pair has spent good times agonising opponents.

"I miss Ajmal at the other end because bowling with him releases pressure on his partner. He is an experienced guy and whenever you are bowling badly he can come up with his advice," Shah told reporters yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

This is Ajmal's first international series after he redid his action and he clearly isn't enjoying it. He was hammered in the first two ODIs and as a result was dropped in the first Test.

Furthermore, Shah described the Khulna pitch as 'very slow', which he thought was one of the reasons why the visitors couldn't execute their plans.

"We made mistakes and we did not expect this kind of comeback from the Bangladesh players. At the same time Bangladesh did well to react differently to different situations. We have to come up