

# SPORT



NEW ERA BEGINS HERE



The Pakistan players must be sick of the sight, but Tamim Iqbal and his bat seem to be inseparable this series and the left-hander will hope to again hold on to his bat for a long time today as the second Test begins in Mirpur.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'We can win this battle'

SPORTS REPORTER

Having churned out positive results throughout the Pakistan tour, Bangladesh Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim wants to end it right. And so, when the second and final Test gets underway at Mirpur today, Mushfiqur wants his players to give it their all.

However, maintaining that clean sheet will be a challenging task and Mushfiqur is well aware of that. The wicket in Mirpur will tend to be more supportive to the bowlers and as a result, it is expected to be a stiffer Test for the Bangladeshi batsmen.

"We have played well in every match of the series. And now we are down to the final game. Hopefully we can work hard for these last five days and finish on a good note. If we can do that then it can be a good encouragement for the upcoming series as well," said Mushfiqur at the pre-Test press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The skipper was referring to their next assignment against India who arrive here on June 7 to play a Test match and three one-day internationals.

With Rubel Hossain out, Bangladesh will be fielding a slightly weaker pace attack in the second Test with Shahadat Hossain expected to fill in. However, the skipper believes that the hosts have the ability to take 20 wickets in the second Test.

"Even though the wicket in Khulna was good for batting, our bowlers worked really hard. We have always had results in Mirpur. It's a good wicket for both batsmen and bowlers. Spinners get plenty of help. I think our bowlers can take 20 wickets here," reckoned Mushfiqur.

One of the crucial points of the first Test was Mushfiqur's injury. He hurt his hand while keeping and had to be replaced by Imrul Kayes. While the left-handed opener barely had any experience behind the stumps, he sweated it out for around 120 overs in Khulna.

As a result, questions have been raised as to whether the skipper can continue his job behind the stumps in the second Test. Mushfiqur sounded determined with regards to wearing the keeping gloves. "I kept wickets today [Tuesday] during training and it felt good. I will further see how it feels during warm-up on Wednesday. Test cricket is not that easy. I will have to be ready for five days.

"If I am fit, I will keep," said Mushfiqur.

Describing the series as one of the best in Bangladesh's cricketing history, Mushfiqur was confident of finishing on a high. "I don't think we had such results before this. They had three different teams for three formats... it wasn't any less of a challenge for us.

"Hopefully we can win this battle and take the series," the confident skipper said.

## IN A NUTSHELL

### Srini kidnaps own son!

TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi

Former BCCI president Narayanaswami Srinivasan is engulfed in another controversy with his gay son Ashwin accusing his father of forcing him to marry and 'have progeny to carry on the lineage'.

Ashwin has told a Mumbai newspaper that he and his partner, Avi Mukherjee, who had been whisked away to Chennai (after Ashwin spoke of his brother-in-law Gurusath Meiyappan having connections with bookies) are being held captive in Chennai's tony First Avenue neighbourhood of Boat Club near his father's residence.

"I want my father to give me my share of the family property and let me live my life like I want with my partner Avi," he told the newspaper and added, "We're being held captive against our will and tortured by my father who wants me to break up with Avi, get married and have children to further the family line."

### Musician Bravo

AGENCIES, Chennai

Chennai Super Kings cricketer Dwayne Bravo says he likes to unwind by composing music when he's not on the field. The West Indian cricketer is also in awe with Indian music and has launched his latest single "Chalo Chalo", which he terms 'an achievement in that sphere'.



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"When I'm not playing cricket, I'm known as DJ Bravo. I enjoy doing music. I've always been interested to do something in Indian music. 'Chalo Chalo' [his seventh single] is an achievement in that sphere," Bravo said.

On Sunday, Bravo sang and danced to the single, which also features Indian origin Trinidad singer Nisha B.

Dressed in a golden sherwani, Bravo launched the single in the presence of Chennai Super Kings teammates and some friends from Royal Challengers Bangalore.

### Raja for fearless approach

ANI, Karachi

In the wake of Pakistan's alarming slump in the ODI rankings, cricketer turned commentator Rameez Raja has stressed that the country's cricket structure needs a major overhaul in order to be highly competitive in the international cricket.

Pakistan dropped to ninth position in the rankings after suffering a 3-0 whitewash at the hands of Bangladesh in the recent ODI series.

Raja insisted that Pakistan players, coaches and management require a change in strategy where they follow a fearless approach towards the game, adding that they also need to be aggressive in the selection matters.

## 'We have a new plan for Tamim'

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite going through a rough last few weeks, the visitors are confident that they can get a positive result in the second and final Test which begins in Mirpur today.

Pakistan skipper Misbahul Haq, for one, expects the pitch in Dhaka to play a lot better than the one in Khulna. He also emphasised on the need for his side to cope up with the ongoing pressure.

"The Dhaka pitch is different from Khulna. It is good for batting, but at the same time it has something to offer to the bowlers as well and I am hopeful that we will have a result here.

"It doesn't matter whatever the situation is, we have to cope with it. We don't have to worry about what is happening and about the recent results but the focus should be on playing our best cricket," Misbah told reporters at the pre-match press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

Misbah and company might have had a rough last few sessions in Khulna last week, but there's no doubt that his bowlers gave it their all. Pacer Wahab Riaz and leg-spinner Yasir Shah have been the most threatening so far. Wahab has been on the dot with his variations while Yasir's flighted deliveries have troubled the batsmen.

One would feel that Pakistan's bowling attack will have a better chance to dominate

in Mirpur.

However, having lost all the contests in the series thus far, Misbah's confidence wasn't exactly booming.

"Both sides are equal at the moment; one can't name favourites. It's a game of



MISBAHUL HAQ

cricket and anything can happen, especially with the way Bangladesh have been playing in the last two months. They have got real confidence now," said Misbah, adding that they were going to put in place a new strategy for Tamim Iqbal in the second Test.

### INTER-CON CUP Associates' Test route

PTI, Dubai

The dream of Associate nations to play Test cricket in all likelihood will turn into a reality as the emerging nations compete against each other in the ICC Inter-Continental Cup 2015-17 that is scheduled to start with encounter between Namibia and Hong Kong over May 10-13.

According to a press release issued by the ICC, the four-day first-class fixtures will feature countries like Afghanistan, Hong Kong, Ireland, Netherlands, Namibia, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Scotland and the United Arab Emirates.

The side that wins the round-robin league will play the bottom-ranked Test team on the Reliance ICC Test Team Rankings in the ICC Test Challenge in 2018.

## Toss between Shuvagata & Jubair today

SPORTS REPORTER

If nothing drastic happens before the start of today's Test at Mirpur, skipper Mushfiqur Rahim will be standing behind the stumps, leaving the side vulnerable to a similar mishap that took place in the first Test, which saw them depend on a part-time keeper for a long period.

There were questions regarding the issue ever since Mushfiqur injured a finger in the Khulna Test and he was compelled to leave the field. The side lacked a proper replacement for Mushfiqur and were forced to depend on Imrul Kayes, a player who rarely keeps wickets, for more than a day.

As a result, ahead of the second Test, there were talks about including Litton Kumar Das in the side as a backup keeper. However, according to sources from the team management Litton is unlikely to make his debut in Mirpur today as Mushfiqur was keen on retaking the position after the brief hiatus.

Also expected to be excluded from the side is pacer Abul Hasan. Abul, who was selected in place of the injured Rubel Hossain, isn't likely to make his comeback in the second Test in Mirpur. In all likelihood, Shahadat Hossain will replace Rubel, while Mohammad Shahid is expected to keep his place.

Mushfiqur, in a press conference, had emphasised on the need of an extra bowler in the side and that could mean that leg-spinner Jubair Hossain might get the go ahead of Shuvagata Hom. The final decision with regards to Jubair or Shuvagata will be taken today morning.

## Trott ends Eng career

AFP, London

England batsman Jonathan Trott announced his retirement from international cricket on Monday.



Trott struggled for runs on his return to Tests during England's 1-1 drawn series with the West Indies in the Caribbean that concluded Sunday, managing just 72 runs in six innings including three ducks.

"This was a tough decision to make but I don't feel my game is at the level you need to be at to play for England," said Trott. "I was honoured to be given the opportunity to come back and play international cricket again and I'm disappointed it didn't work out."

The 34-year-old added: "I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped me and given me the chance to represent England and to thank supporters for all their backing over the years.

"I also want to wish the lads all the very best for an incredibly exciting summer."

The West Indies series saw Trott recalled by England for the first time since his exit from the 2013/14 Ashes following the first Test in Brisbane with what team officials later said was "situational anxiety".

## Nadal given 'doctorate'

IANs, Madrid

Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal, ranked fourth in the world, was given an honorary doctoral degree by the European University of Madrid in a ceremony attended by hundreds of students.

In Nadal's speech before receiving the degree on Monday, he underlined "values and family" as "fundamental elements" to understanding his career and his life, reports Efe.

"Nothing that I am today could have been without the pillars that support me and made me grow and develop not only as a professional or athlete but as a person," added Nadal.



Imrul Kayes (L) will once again stand in very close vicinity of Bangladesh captain and wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim in the second Test against Pakistan at Mirpur. But Kayes will probably be the last person to appreciate yet another injury to his captain like the first Test in Khulna.

PHOTO: STAR