

BCB seeks Aussie advice for Mushy

SPORTS REPORTER



The medical team of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has sent the scans of Mushfiqur Rahim's injured finger to Australia in order to get advice from the experts of the Melbourne Orthopaedic Group. They are expecting to hear back from surgeon Greg Hoy within the next few days.

The Bangladesh Test captain may go to Australia if it is needed. It was learnt that the

Mushfiqur is still experiencing pain in his injured finger and that's why the medical team sought further advice from abroad, so that his injury does not disrupt his future career.

The BCB's medical team might also provide a recommendation to send Mushfiqur to Australia if the surgeons their advise. According to sources the recent scan's report has suggested that while there have been further improvements, 'a

few problems still exist, including pain.' The medical team is reportedly convinced that Mushfiqur will have to play with a certain amount of discomfort. But they have sought opinions from abroad and are also in favour of sending Mushfiqur to Australia so that he has no further mental pressure when he plays his next series.

Mushfiqur had injured his finger while keeping wickets on the second day of the first Test at Khulna in the Pakistan series earlier this year. Although medical reports at that time confirmed only swelling due to internal

bleeding, the Bangladesh batsman was advised not to don the gloves until his finger was fully cured. He went against the advice and stood behind the stumps for almost two days in the second Test, which was a big detriment to the healing of his finger.

Finally Mushfiqur stayed away from keeping in the one-off Test against India and the two-match Test series, as Liton Das looked impressive on duty in all those Tests. However, Mushfiqur took the gloves back for the first ODI against India, following which he also stood behind the stumps in the three-

match ODI series against the Proteas.

There have been calls from different quarters in the country that Mushfiqur, as a batting asset of Bangladesh, should avoid keeping and focus only on his batting, but the player himself dismissed that notion before the second Test against South Africa at Mirpur when he said, "I enjoy keeping more than batting and that's why I haven't thought about leaving the role at all."

Sri Lanka great Kumar Sangakkara recently revealed that he also didn't like it when the selectors stopped him from keeping before the Galle Test against India, but he said that being relieved of the gloves was 'the best thing' that had happened in his career.

Many believe that the national selectors should take the bold decision to keep Mushfiqur away from keeping, rather than saying that 'it's up to him'. Keeping his troubled finger and vulnerable shoulder in mind, they should have enough reasons to stop him.



6-STAR ASHWIN: India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (R) successfully appeals for an lbw decision against Sri Lanka's Rangana Herath on the first day of the opening Test at the Galle International Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Ashwin puts India on top

AFP, Galle



Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin grabbed six wickets as India bowled out Sri Lanka for 183 but then stumbled briefly in reply in a rousing start to the first Test on Wednesday.

Twelve wickets fell on the opening day and India were themselves reduced to 28-2 before they recovered to post 128 without further loss by stumps at the Galle International Stadium.

Opener Shikhar Dhawan was unbeaten on 53 and skipper Virat Kohli was on 45 during a third-wicket stand of 100, leaving India just 56 runs away from the lead.

Dharmika Prasad trapped Lokesh Rahul leg-before for seven

and Rohit Sharma fell in similar fashion to Angelo Mathews for nine, but Dhawan and Kohli stepped in to deny Sri Lanka further success.

Ashwin, playing a Test match on Sri Lankan soil for the first time, finished with six for 46 as the home team were bowled out in 49.4 overs after they won the toss and elected to bat.

Leg-spinner Amit Mishra, one of the three spinners in the Indian team on an unusually dry pitch, took two wickets off successive balls to hasten the end.

Mathews top-scored with 64 and Dinesh Chandimal led a charmed life to make 59, the pair sharing a valuable 79-run partnership for the sixth wicket after their team had collapsed to 60-5 before lunch.

Chandimal -- lucky to survive a

dropped catch by wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha off Ishant Sharma in the second over after lunch when he was on five -- hit nine boundaries.

Mathews brought up his half-century with a six over long-on against veteran spinner Harbhajan Singh. He also hit six fours.

Ishant struck the first blow in the morning session dominated by India when he forced Dimuth Karunaratne to fend a short ball to Ajinkya Rahane at first slip.

In the next over, Kaushal Silva top-edged fast bowler Varun Aaron and Dhawan made amends for a dropped catch earlier in the innings by holding the skier at first slip.

Kumar Sangakkara, playing the first of his last two Tests before retiring from international cricket, walked in at 15-2 to the bursting of

firecrackers and warm applause from some 1,500 home fans.

But the left-hander, the leading run-scorer in Tests among those still playing, faced just 12 deliveries before falling in the first over after the drinks break for five.

Sangakkara punched the third ball from Ashwin straight to silly-point fielder Rahul, who gleefully held on to the sharp chance.

Lahiru Thirimanne (13) appeared in fine touch while striking two boundaries before he became Ashwin's second victim, caught in the slips by Rahane to leave Sri Lanka tottering on 54-4.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 183 (Mathews 64, Chandimal 59, Herath 23; Ashwin 6-46, Mishra 2-20)

INDIA: First innings 128 for 2 (Dhawan 53 not out, Kohli 45 not

HOCKEY CRISIS

Meeting fails to find solution

SPORTS REPORTER

A section of Dhaka's hockey club officials, who hold positions in the executive committee of Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF), hinted that they might step from their respective posts in the BHF committee after a meeting regarding the crisis in holding the premier division, first division and second division hockey leagues failed to break the stalemate.

Most of the club representatives, except for Abahani, attended the view exchange meeting to express their desire to see hockey leagues start soon. They indirectly gave opinion about reforming the existing committee in a bid to bringing back the four rebel clubs -- Mohammedan, Mariner Youngs, Wari Club and Dhaka Wanderers Club -- to the premier division.

"We have exchanged our views regarding the crisis and we will convey the outcome of the meeting to the concerned authorities and the hockey federation. We are even prepared to make big sacrifices on our part," said Abdur Rashid Shikdar, general secretary of Usha KC and also a vice president of the BHF, who was the initiator of the meeting.

Haddin returns home early

AFP, London

Australia wicketkeeper Brad Haddin is returning home early from the Ashes tour of England for family reasons, a team spokeswoman said Tuesday.

The cricket.com.au website said Haddin, 37, had left London on Tuesday as the rest of the squad arrived in Northampton on Tuesday for a first-class fixture that starts in the Midlands town on Friday.

A Cricket Australia spokesperson confirmed Haddin's exit, asking the media respect the privacy of Haddin and his family.

Bangladesh face India today

Afghans send Maldives packing

SPORTS REPORTER



Hosts Bangladesh are optimistic about produce another good result against holders India when the two sides meet in the final Group A match of the SAFF U-16 Championship at the Sylhet District Stadium today.

Both India and Bangladesh have already confirmed their semifinal berths by beating Sri Lanka, and today's result will decide who finishes top of the group.

India, with a (+5) goal difference are ahead of Bangladesh, who have a (+4) goal difference; hence Bangladesh will need an outright victory to emerge group champions which will pit them against the Group B runners-up in the semifinals.

Bangladesh coach Syed Golam Jilani claimed that he has worked with his forwards on how to be more precise on finishing chances after the strikers wasted a number of scoring chances in their 4-0 win against Sri Lanka.

India coach Bithan Singh, however, wants his side to concentrate on their own game rather than think about the opposition.

"We have respect for the opponents but we want to play our own game as everything is going in the right direction," said Bithan.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan and Nepal booked their semifinals berth from Group B, sending Maldives out, after the former beat the islanders by 4-2 goals yesterday.

Abdul Naser Amini struck a brace while Shayeque Hakeme and Sher Ahmad Hamed netted one goal each for

More than just a series

SPORTS REPORTER



That the Test series against Australia in October has the potential to be a ground-breaking one for Bangladesh in the longer format is quite obvious.

The Tigers have been in good touch this year and while their Test results haven't been as magnificent as the ODIs, they managed to break boundaries and surprise many during the South Africa series.

While the series is still more than a month away, the discussions have already begun. Steven Smith, who is expected to succeed Michael Clarke as Test captain, has already described the upcoming tour as a difficult one.

Bangladesh's senior players, Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad, spoke with plenty of poise at recent press conferences, indicating that the young Bangladesh outfit was ready for the battle.

However, amongst all the players in the team, one feels that the upcoming series will be the most important for Mominul Haque.

Oddly enough, the left-hander seems to be at a complex crossroads at the moment and a reason behind that

could be the fact that Bangladesh don't get to play too many Tests.

He stole hearts with his consistency in the longer format, but couldn't produce the same results in the ODIs. Some say that he wasn't given enough time, while others believe that the batsman should stick to the longer game.



MOMINUL HAQUE

Whatever the case may be, it seems the long breaks at the highest level has affected Mominul's Test run. With very few Tests in a year, it's difficult for players like Mominul or even Imrul Kayes to outshine others.

The fact that they aren't first-choice ODI players in a team that's booming exactly in that format could confuse

them in terms of their batting approach. In a bid to provide that extra effort, batsmen are at times in danger of moving away from their natural style of play.

And that's why the Australia series is all the more important for a player like Mominul. It's a series that's going to garner plenty of attention; it's a series where a special innings could change a player's fate. And the best part of it all is that the rains, unlike the last two months, will be away.

It's the perfect stage for the left-hander to remind everyone how dangerous a batsman he can be. And it's no surprise that he is looking forward to it.

"There are times when one or two innings don't go your way. This can happen even if you feel that everything is alright with your batting. But I am trying hard. I am moving ahead with certain targets in mind," said Mominul yesterday. The player has cut short his break and has returned to Mirpur to sweat it out.

"When you want to play well or you want to achieve something, you have to address the smallest of issues that you have and you have to face the problems, there is no other way.

"And when you can do that, that's when everyone will praise you once again. I am looking forward to the

Smith named ODI captain

AP, Melbourne

Steven Smith has been confirmed as Australia's captain, replacing Michael Clarke in the one-day squad named to play England and Ireland from later this month.

Three players in the 15-man squad named Wednesday are set to make their ODI debuts: all-rounder Marcus Stoinis, former Test spinner Ashton Agar and batsman Joe Burns join the one-day lineup for the first time.

Burns is expected to replace injured opener Aaron Finch, while Agar is included at the expense of Nathan Lyon.

Mitchell Johnson and Josh Hazlewood are being rested after the Test series, and James Faulkner is serving a four-match suspension from international cricket after a drink-driving offence.

Matthew Wade retains the wicketkeeping spot inherited from Brad Haddin, while George Bailey rejoins the middle order after relinquish-



Coach Syed Golam Jilani (L) watches on as his charges train at the Sylhet BFF Academy yesterday ahead of today's SAFF U-16 Championship fixture against India.

PHOTO: BFF

AFC Cup Play-Off Qualifiers Sk Jamal face Casa Benfica today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Premier League champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club will be hoping for a winning start to their AFC Cup campaign when they take on Macau league champions Casa Benfica in the first play-off qualifiers fixture in Kyrgyzstan today.

The match is scheduled to start at 6:00pm (Bangladesh time) at the Dolen Omurzakov Stadium in Bishkek.

Having lost against FC Alga Bishkek 0-2 in the opening match, Casa Benfica, the two-time Macau league champions, will need a win to stay in the hunt while Sheikh Jamal will also be looking to make their debut in this competition with a win ahead of the match against Alga Bishkek, who are believed to the favourites in this three-team group.

The Sheikh Jamal team, which has been in terrific form having bagged the premier league title with two games in hand, went to Bishkek

five days prior to the start of the tournament in order to acclimatise with conditions.

"We know we have to put our best performance for a good start. Besides, we not only represent Sheikh Jamal, we also represent Bangladesh," captain Mamunul Islam told reporters in Bishkek.

Coaching staff and players of Sheikh Jamal watched the match between FC Alga Bishkek and Casa Benfica and also collected footage other games of the two sides.

Coach Joseph Afusi was supposed to decide his strategy last night after analysing the video footages, but he was nevertheless determined to go for full points.

In absence of Haitian striker Wedson Anselme, Toklish Ahmed is likely to pair up with Emeka Darlington upfront while Mamunul, Jamal Bhuiyan, Landing Darboe and Sohel Rana are expected to line up in midfield. Yeamin Munna, Yeasin Khan, Nasir Chowdhury and Mohammad Linkon should get the nod in defence, with Shahedul Alam Sohel likely to don the goalkeeping gloves.