

Magnificent MUSHY

Playing his first Test in Pakistan, Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim fell just nine runs short of what would have been his fourth Test double hundred.

Mushfiqur got to his 11th Test ton on way to scoring 191 off 341 deliveries. In terms of most Test centuries by any Bangladesh cricketer, Mushfiqur remains just behind Mominul Haque who has 12.

This was also Mushfiqur's fifth Test ton away from home -- most by any Bangladesh player, surpassing Tamim Iqbal who has scored four centuries overseas.

Mushfiqur overtook Tamim as Bangladesh's leading scorer in away Tests, taking his run tally to 2381. He overtook Tamim, who has 2329 runs in 59 innings.

This was also the 37-year-old batter's 68th innings in away Tests, more than any other player in Bangladesh.



After Mushfiqur Rahim and Mehedi Hasan Miraz [bottom] helped Bangladesh dominate proceedings for the most part, the Tigers also finished the fourth day of their first Test against Pakistan on a high in Rawalpindi yesterday. Pacer Shoriful Islam removed Pakistan opener Saim Ayub to leave the hosts at 23 for one, still trailing by 94 runs.

PHOTO: AFP

Decision on Shakib expected after first Test: Faruque

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed informed the board will make a stance regarding a murder case filed against Shakib Al Hasan following the conclusion of the ongoing first Test between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"The good news is that we finished the fourth day well... I don't think we have considered taking any stance on this matter at the moment," Faruque told reporters yesterday in Mirpur after an unofficial meeting with a few board directors at BCB office.

On Thursday, a case was filed with Adabar Police Station accusing Shakib, along with former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Obaidul Quader, 156 named individuals, and 400-500 unidentified people, of involvement in the killing of garment worker Mohammad Rubel.

Amid such a situation, on Saturday, a legal notice was sent to BCB by a Supreme Court lawyer, asking the BCB to bring Shakib back to the country for a proper investigation into the murder case.

However, the newly elected BCB boss denied receiving such a notice until Saturday.

"We are yet to receive the legal notice. I can't comment on that. A case has been filed, an FIR to be specific. There will be an investigation, and then it will proceed in some direction.

"We may tell you about the legal notice [after the end of first Test] as we expect to get it by this time," Faruque said, further informing that they are working on reforming the current standing committees; including cricket operations, which became vacant after the resignation of Jalal Yunus.

Meanwhile, Faruque said that they have decided to donate Tk one crore to the Chief Adviser's relief fund and send 3,000 packets of dry food and other necessary items through the Bangladesh Army to flood-affected people.

Wickets in first hour vital: Miraz

SPORTS REPORTER

All-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz said that a fiery first hour from the Bangladesh bowlers on Day 5 of the first Test against Pakistan in Rawalpindi can create an unlikely opening for the Tigers in a contest that seemingly is heading towards a draw.

Bangladesh pacer Shoriful Islam reaped the rewards during a sizzling spell in the last hour of play when he dismissed Pakistan opener Saim Ayub (1) and had the duo of Abdullah Shafique and Shan Masood guessing as the hosts finished the day at 27 for one, still trailing by 94 runs after bundling out the Tigers for 565 earlier.

From the other end, Hasan Mahmud provided adept support with strict line and lengths which boosted confidence in the Tigers' camp to make use of the morning session which should indicate if the Test will see a result other than a draw.

"Our bowlers will have a great chance in the first hour. If we bowl well in the first hour, we will be in a good position," Miraz told reporters after the day's play.

"We have a great chance tomorrow. If we get a few wickets in the first hour, we will get a chance to win. The bowlers need to bowl in good areas. I was fielding at slips and it felt really good to see the way they bowled in the last hour."



Throughout the four days, it has been a challenge for the bowlers to stamp their authority on a Rawalpindi wicket which has maintained the tradition of being a batters' paradise. While pacers have fared better than spinners at the venue, spinners will have a role to play, largely in providing breathers to the quicks in between spells. They can also hope to make use of the turn the Day 5 pitch may provide.

Miraz attested to the visibility of cracks on the surface and will look to do the job with the ball after an impressive 77 with the bat.

"The wicket looks good right now. There are a few cracks and there is a

little bit of spin as well," Miraz said.

Earlier, Mushfiqur Rahim stood tall with the bat after the Tigers were reduced to 218 for five on Day 3. The 37-year-old starred with a 191-run knock but fell short of his fourth double century. He stitched a 114-run stand with Liton Das (56) and set a Bangladesh record with a 196-run seventh-wicket stand with Miraz to propel the Tigers to 565.

"We're really happy because we've scored 500 runs after a long time. The credit goes to him [Mushfiqur]. He kept supporting me and told me to keep going as it was an excellent wicket," Miraz said.

'Hamza will be a great addition'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera is looking forward to Leicester City's Hamza Choudhury as a 'great addition for the team' after the midfielder received his Bangladesh passport and sent a letter to the Bangladesh Football Federation expressing his desire to represent the Red and Greens.

During a press briefing on Saturday, BFF general secretary Emran Hossain Tushar informed that Hamza's parents collected his passport from the Bangladesh High Commission in London on Friday and the footballer has also sent a letter to the BFF, wishing to play for Bangladesh.

Speaking on the issue, Cabrera praised the England-born midfielder for his leadership quality as well as his technical ability.

"He (Hamza) will be a great addition for the team, not only for his quality -- what he can provide because of his quality as he is definitely a very top-level player -- but I think he can provide a lot of things off the pitch as a leader with his experience in the Premier League at the top-flight," Cabrera said of his impression about the 26-year-old footballer.

"He has also played for all the youth teams of England. So I think he'll definitely be a very good example off the pitch and he will definitely be a great addition. Hopefully he will be with us very soon," hoped the Spaniard.

Emran, meanwhile, informed that the federation has already asked for an NOC from the English FA regarding the player's availability for Bangladesh, and once it gets the NOC, the certificate will be forwarded to FIFA's players' status committee for approval.

Meanwhile, Cabrera called up 14 players for next month's two-match FIFA friendly series away to Bhutan, with the rest to be called up later.

Cabrera informed that these 14 players will be joined by the players of the Bashundhara Kings as well as a few from the U-20 team, which is currently in Nepal for the SAFF U-20 Championship. The 14 players will undergo a training camp at the Bashundhara Kings Arena on August 26 and after the others join, the final squad of 23 will be announced on August 29, a day prior to the team's departure for Bhutan.

"The priority was to play at home, but in the end it didn't happen. Going to Bhutan is a bit more challenging, mainly because of the altitude and also it's during the Bhutan Premier League, plus the fact that we'll play on an artificial turf," Cabrera said when asked about the team's original plan of securing FIFA ranking points through these two matches, which are scheduled for September 5 and 8.



Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis celebrates his century against England in the second innings of the first Test at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday, helping the visitors set a victory target of 205 for the hosts.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Leverkusen have to be more aggressive'

REUTERS, Monchengladbach

Bayer Leverkusen manager Xabi Alonso asked for more character after his side beat Borussia Mönchengladbach 3-2 in the Bundesliga season opener on Friday through yet another stoppage-time winner.

Leverkusen were awarded a penalty deep into added time and Florian Wirtz scored on a rebound to earn the visitors the three points after Gladbach's Ko Itakura fouled substitute Amine Adli.

"It was an intense first Bundesliga game for us. A lot of things happened in the second half, it was full of emotion right to the end. We did well in many phases," Alonso told a press conference.

"But we weren't always so compact today, we were also a bit passive in some phases. We have to do that better. We have to be more aggressive.

"It's difficult to explain why we always score late goals. We can't train that and I can't influence it. It's the mentality of the team."

Champions Leverkusen, who set a European record of 51 consecutive



games without loss across all competitions last season, kept their unbeaten streak intact with a number of late equalisers.

"We said at halftime that we must not let up and not think that the game is over," said former Gladbach player Granit Xhaka.

"At the end of the first half, we started not being consistent

enough in our passing game and losing easy balls. Here at home, Gladbach never die, you could see that in the (goals for) 1-2 and 2-2."

Xhaka gave Leverkusen the lead with a screamer from outside the box in the 12th minute but did not celebrate out of respect for his former club.

"I had the feeling that we made it unnecessarily difficult for ourselves," added Wirtz, who scored two goals on the night, including the decider.

"We were asleep when it came to conceding goals. We let it slip away ourselves, even though we were actually in control, although we didn't have the ball the whole time.

"I just wanted to decide the game. I know that in the end it will be a lucky win. (But) we are happy that we won and that I was able to score the follow-up shot."

Leverkusen came into the game off a German Supercup win, where they beat VfB Stuttgart 4-3 on penalties after scoring a late equaliser to snatch a 2-2 draw over 90 minutes and lift the trophy on Saturday.



Manchester United players were left distraught after Joao Pedro's 95th-minute header handed Brighton a 2-1 win on Saturday. The win saw Brighton stay perfect in the Premier League, providing a dream home league debut to their 31-year-old boss Fabian Hurzeler.

PHOTO: AFP