

## Tigers look to India series with confidence

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Test side began their preparations for the upcoming series against India yesterday in Mirpur and pacer Shoriful Islam felt that it would be a steeper challenge than what they faced in their recent Pakistan tour.

However, Shoriful was optimistic that the Tigers would be able to use their confidence from winning the Pakistan series to take on the India challenge.

Bangladesh created history by whitewashing Pakistan in their recent two-match Test series – the Tigers' first-ever series win in the longer format over Pakistan.

"We will try to start [against India] with a win and as we are fresh off a good series [against Pakistan], everyone is confident. So, we will try to use that," Shoriful said in a video released by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

"They [India] are more experienced as a team compared to Pakistan and they are a big team. If we do well against a big side, worldwide we will be followed more and our games will be watched," Shoriful added.

Pacers played a pivotal role in beating Pakistan, and Shoriful, who missed the second Test due to injury, talked about the competition among the pacers in the Bangladesh side.

"There was a time that pacers were not playing much. But now pacers are playing and those outside the team always stay ready.

"If someone is injured and misses one or two matches, someone else steps up and plays. It doesn't appear that there is a deficiency or someone missed a game.

"After I got injured, Taskin [Ahmed] bhai did very well and it felt really good because when everyone is doing well, it's even great to watch. We have many bowlers who are coming up to the national team or will come up one day. Pace bowling is a big challenge now and everyone has to fight for places to come in. It's great for Bangladesh," Shoriful added.

From Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan to Liton Das, everyone played a role in Bangladesh's Test series triumph in Pakistan. Shoriful believes that the greater experience in the Tigers' ranks instilled a belief in them against Shan Masood and Co.

"When we went to Lahore, all our batters and pacer bowlers were discussing that we have been playing Pakistan in Tests for a while and although we are playing away from home, we had better chances of winning. It's because of the experience in our ranks compared to them. Look at the number of matches they played and how many we played and Shakib bhai was always reminding us of that."

Bangladesh face India in the first of the two-Test series on September 19 in Chennai.



Bangladesh pacers Shoriful Islam and Hasan Mahmud gear up under the supervision of BCB's pace bowling coach Tareq Aziz for the upcoming India tour as the Tigers' Test squad began their official practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Following a historic maiden Test series win over hosts Pakistan this month, expectations will be high from pacers in the India tour, beginning with the first of the two Tests from September 19 in Chennai.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Bangladesh lose to Bhutan again

SPORTS REPORTER

A stoppage-time strike from Kinga Wangchuk handed a visiting Bangladesh a 1-0 defeat to hosts Bhutan in the second and final FIFA friendly match at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu, Bhutan yesterday.

The triumph of the Dragon Boys meant the two-match series ended in a 1-1 draw as Bangladesh defeated Bhutan 1-0 in the first match on Thursday.

The men in red and green beat Bhutan 1-0 in the first match with a strike from Sheikh Morsalin despite an overall dismal performance.

Expectations were that the players will improve their performance in the second match, however, the boys seemingly played without purpose throughout the match.

Cabrera brought two changes in the playing eleven from the first

in on a poor clearance of the Bangladesh defense with substitute Kinga Wangchuk converting a volley after receiving the ball from a Dawa Tshering following a free-kick in the stoppage time.

"We knew Bhutan needed a win as they lost the first match. They came stronger and they did it," said Cabrera at the post-match conference.

"I think we

**I think we managed quite well in a sense because the second half was very tight except the goal-scoring move. They were very accurate in the set-piece. Bhutan was more accurate in the second half.**

BANGLADESH COACH JAVIER CABRERA



It was also overall Bangladesh's second defeat against Bhutan, who had earlier lost 3-1 to Bhutan in 2016, during a play-off match of the Asian Cup that threw Bangladesh out of the international arena for nearly two years.

The charges of Spanish coach Javier Cabrera went to Thimphu to play two matches against Bhutan with a view to improve their position in the FIFA rankings ahead of the draw for the upcoming Asian Cup but a victory and a defeat means they were not able to meet their expectation.

match by drafting in Shahriar Emon and Issa Faisal in place of injured Rakib Hossain and Bishwanath Ghosh.

The absence of Rakib was felt throughout the match with the forwards hardly penetrating the Bhutan backline. Cabrera sent four pair of fresh legs in the second half but they hardly had any impact on the game.

When the game was seemingly heading towards a goalless draw, Bhutan cashed

managed quite well in a sense because the second half was very tight except the goal-scoring move. They were very accurate in the set-piece. Bhutan was more accurate in the second half.

"It was also good for the team to get into such a challenging situation. You need to play games to improve and that was the main objective of the window. In next, we will try to improve a bit and get better result."

### SHORT CORNER

#### Moeen Ali retires from international cricket



England all-rounder Moeen Ali has retired from international cricket, saying "the time is right" to move on. Moeen played all three formats for England after making his international debut in 2014. A stylish left-handed batter, Moeen scored five Test and three ODI centuries. He also took 204 Test wickets, along with 111 in ODIs and 51 in T20 cricket for England.

#### 'Afghanistan can beat anyone'

Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi said Sunday his side have the potential to challenge the world's top teams, but will need more exposure in Test cricket. "It's tough, but if we play to our strength, we can beat any team," said Shahidi, mentioning that playing without key player Rahsid Khan would be tough when they host New Zealand in a one-off Test starting Monday at their adopted home ground in India, near New Delhi.

#### District cricketers put forward 17-point demand

Cricketers from various districts put forward a 17-point demand, including financial assurances and opportunity to play more games, to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Sunday. BCB director Nazmul Abedin Fahim assured them that the board will try to meet their demands as per its capabilities.

\*Read full stories on The Daily Star's website

## Mixed emotions as chess teams leave for Budapest today

SPORTS REPORTER

While FIDE Master Tahsin Tajwar Zia will be grief-stricken for not being able to have his father, GM Ziaur Rahman, with him like the last edition but it will be a joyous occasion for two sisters – WFM Wadifa Ahmed and WCM Walijah Ahmed – to represent Bangladesh in the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary.

Tahsin will represent Bangladesh in open section along with GM Niaz Murshed, GM Enamul Hossain Razib, IM Fahad Rahman and FM Manon Reza Neer while Wadifa and Walijah are set to play in women's section along with WIM Rani Hamid, WFM Noshin Anjum and GM Nushrat Jahan Alo.

Both teams will leave for Hungary today, with the competition set to get underway on Wednesday.

Elder sister Wadifa had got two opportunities to participate in Chess Olympiad but could not do so due to the coronavirus outbreak in 2020 and due to her exams in 2022.

"There was uncertainty this time too due to the recent situation in the country but finally I am leaving with my younger sister to play the Chess Olympiad which is a matter of joy for us," Wadifa told reporters after the official briefing at Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Tahsin, meanwhile, is feeling the absence of his father. "I still can't believe that my father is no more. My father wanted me to qualify for the national team this time too, so that I can play the Chess Olympiad and I am going to play but my father is absent," Tahsin said at the very hall where his father breathed his last on a chess board on July 5.

## Wirtz, Musiala dazzle as new German era begins

AFP, Duesseldorf

Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala turned on the style, laying on goals for each other, as a new-look Germany beat Hungary 5-0 in Duesseldorf on Saturday.

The young forwards showed the future is bright for the football-mad nation after the retirements of 2014 World Cup winners Manuel Neuer, Toni Kroos, and Thomas Mueller, along with captain Ilkay Gundogan.

After 27 minutes, Wirtz found Musiala who squared for Niclas Füllkrug to open the scoring.

Wirtz's long pass allowed Musiala to double Germany's lead in the second half, with the Bayern Munich forward returning the favour with an assist shortly after.

Aleks Pavlovic scored with 13 minutes remaining – his first goal in Germany colours – before Kai Havertz won and converted a penalty with nine minutes remaining.

With Wirtz and Musiala both 21 and Havertz 25, the convincing win suggests Germany has the talent to overcome this summer's departures, two years out from the 2026 World Cup.



"It's fun to play with Flo (Wirtz)" Musiala told ZDF, adding "we need to keep building our chemistry, using every game."

"It's a lot of fun," Fuellkrug told ZDF. "I really enjoyed watching when Flo and Jamal got into it in the second half – they're pretty hard to stop when they're like that."

"We're really lucky to have them in the team – it's a gift. It'll be fun for every German fan watching in the next few years."

New captain Joshua Kimmich said, "to start so dominantly and with such gravity – I'm just proud of the team."

Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann, who on Friday doubled down on his publicly stated desire to win the next World Cup, praised the atmosphere in the camp.

"The chemistry is incredible and has been like that for three or four months – and we'll need that if we want to fulfil our dreams."

Nagelsmann praised Wirtz and Musiala, saying "when both are up for it and they step on the gas, it's going to be tough."

"When they're on the pitch and they connect with each other, it's nice to watch."

Germany travel to face the Netherlands in Amsterdam on Tuesday, while Hungary host Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka claimed the trophy in New York at last after years of close calls, as she outplayed American sixth seed Jessica Pegula 7-5, 7-5 in the US Open women's final to add the New York title to her back-to-back Australian Open victories on Saturday. Sabalenka made it to the US Open final last year and reached the semifinals twice.

PHOTO: REUTERS