



TWO DECADES, a faded cap, a lasting legacy

EKUSH TAPADER

The colour faded long ago. Even the Bangladesh Cricket Board logo has turned blurry. Holding that discoloured Test cap against the handle of his bat, Mushfiqur Rahim posted a photo on social media with the caption reading: "Companion through every rise and fall..."

On Tuesday, Bangladesh's most experienced cricketer is set to take the field for his 99th Test in Sylhet against Ireland. If all goes well, on November 19 in Mirpur, he will become the first Bangladeshi ever to play 100 Tests -- a historic milestone.

On May 26, 2005, at cricket's Mecca, Lord's, Mushfiqur received his Test cap from then-captain Habibul Bashar. Since then, that same cap has been his companion through every high and low. He has preserved it with great care for two decades, wearing it in every single Test he has played.

He has traveled the world playing Tests -- sometimes dazzling with the bat, sometimes sinking into failure. Naturally, over 20 years of dust and grind, the cap's colour has faded. But with that fading, its historical value has

only deepened.

Cherishing one's first Test cap is, of course, nothing new. In fact, it has become an integral part of Test cricket's tradition. For players who hold Test cricket close to their hearts, that cap is a deeply emotional symbol.

Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara once said about his own faded cap, "You can buy a new one, but you can't buy the history of the old."

India's Rahul Dravid used to say, "Every stain, every drop of sweat on this cap is a memory of my struggle." It's easy to imagine that Mushfiqur feels the same.

When he received his Test cap in 2005, he had just stepped out of adolescence -- boyish innocence still etched on his face. Back then, perhaps no one thought that this young lad would one day play 100 Tests for his country.

At that time, even the idea that any Bangladeshi could play 100 Tests felt unrealistic. And even today, it remains uncertain who might follow in Mushfiqur's footsteps. Maybe Mominul Haque, who has played 73 Tests so far, has a chance -- but he still has a long way to go.

That's why Mushfiqur's Test cap



already holds immense historical value in Bangladesh cricket. The story of Bangladesh's Test journey itself seems written within the folds of that cap.

No one values their Test cap more than Australian cricketers. Their iconic headgear is known as the Baggy Green. The legendary Steve Waugh wore his Baggy Green in all 168 Tests of his career. He once said, "This cap doesn't just belong to me -- it carries the legacy of all who came before me."

Another Australian captain, Ricky Ponting, once lost his beloved Baggy Green -- and it left him devastated. During the 2003 World Cup in South Africa, his Baggy Green was lost during luggage transfer at an airport. A heartbroken Ponting said, "It was the most treasured thing in my career. Losing it felt like losing a part of my soul."

Mushfiqur understands that emotion -- his devotion to Test cricket proves it. Even as some Bangladeshi cricketers in this T20-dominated era fail to grasp the essence of the longest format despite their lip service, Mushfiqur's cap can serve as a powerful reminder.

It stands as an inspiration -- that if one truly wishes, they too can dedicate themselves, day after day, year after year, to the highest form of cricket. After all, nothing elevates a cricketer's stature quite like success in a Test match. That's why even after winning his first IPL title, Virat Kohli said, "This is one of the greatest moments of my career, but it's still five steps below Test cricket. That's how much I love and value Test cricket."



Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and Ireland skipper Andrew Balbirnie posed with the Dutch-Bangla Bank Bangladesh-Ireland Test series trophy in front of the iconic Ali Amzad Clock, near Keane Bridge in Sylhet, yesterday. The first of the two-match series begins tomorrow at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, followed by the second Test in Mirpur from November 19. Recently reinstated as Test captain, Shanto will lead Bangladesh through the 2025-2027 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle. Bangladesh, still searching for their first win in this cycle after a loss and a draw against Sri Lanka, currently sit seventh with four points. The upcoming Tests against Ireland, however, are not part of the WTC.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

TIB calls for gender-sensitive safeguarding policy

STAR SPORTS DESK

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has called for urgent action over sexual harassment allegations in the national women's cricket team, issuing a press release on Sunday.

Former women's captain Jahanara Alam accused a former selector and team manager, Monjurul Islam, prompting the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to form a three-member investigation committee.

While welcoming the committee, TIB urged the inclusion of at least two independent experts with experience in investigating harassment to ensure impartiality and professionalism.

The organisation also criticised the BCB's lack of a formal safeguarding policy, which violates ICC guidelines and High Court directives. TIB called on the BCB to immediately establish an independent, gender-sensitive complaints and redress committee and adopt ICC-compliant safeguarding measures, warning that continued inaction risks undermining both women's cricket and the sport's integrity in Bangladesh.

JAHANARA ALLEGATIONS BCB promises 'zero tolerance' regardless of ranks

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam said there would be "zero tolerance" regarding any individual, whether team management staff or director, if allegations made by former women's team captain Jahanara Alam are found to be true.

A board official yesterday informed this newspaper that the board had decided to put a few officials on OSD (Officer on Special Duty) following Jahanara's allegations.

"The board made a decision on those who have been alleged against," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said.

Yesterday, in another interview with a woman cricketer, allegations were raised against BCB director Nazmul Abedeen Fahim. Given that Jahanara's letter dates back to 2021, questions are now surfacing over whether the BCB CEO failed to take any action following her complaints of harassment.

If regular staff are being placed on OSD, some argue that the BCB should also consider putting directors or the CEO on OSD to ensure the investigation remains impartial.

Asked to clarify the board's stance, Bulbul told reporters following the Bangladesh Cricket Conference at a city hotel yesterday: "Zero tolerance."

BCB director and chairman of facilities Shahnian Tanim elaborated on reporters' questions about whether the board is creating grounds for discrimination by putting staff on OSD while directors or high-level staff are not.

"Whether it is an employee or a director, there is an investigation committee responsible for decisions," said Shahnian.

"Since the investigation committee has been declared, we are dependent on their decisions. Independently, as cricket board president or directors, we are not entitled to make any decisions."

"If they say that four employees need to be put on OSD, then that will be done. At the same time, regarding a director, the decision belongs to the committee. When they investigate, the committee will examine everyone; they will not exclude a director. As Bulbul bhai said on zero

tolerance, whether president, director or employee, the board's stance is zero tolerance," he clarified.

There have been calls to form an independent committee to investigate Jahanara's allegations. BCB officials yesterday stated that if the committee uncovers other issues while investigating harassment claims, it will provide recommendations to the board.

Questions of conflict of interest have arisen, however, as BCB director Rubaba Dowla has been named a member of the three-member committee.

"She is our only female director, and in forming the committee, we wanted someone who could collect information from the board. Since this concerns matters from 2021-22, we thought the issue had been closed during that period," Bulbul said.

As new developments emerge, the committee will have their work cut out to provide a report while ensuring there is no interference from any quarters of the BCB.



Cuba joins squad, Hamza coming today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings' young midfielder Cuba Mitchell has earned his maiden call-up to the Bangladesh national football team, after head coach Javier Cabrera added him to the squad at the last moment for the upcoming home matches against Nepal and India.

Hamza Choudhury, meanwhile, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on Monday afternoon, while Shamit Shome is expected the following night.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) confirmed Cuba's inclusion through a Facebook post on Sunday. Alongside him, Fortis FC winger Murshed Ali has also been drafted into the squad.

The national team's preparation camp began on 30 October, with an initial 27-man preliminary squad announced last Wednesday. Cuba and Murshed were later called up after Mohammad Ibrahim and Rahmat Mia were ruled out following injuries sustained during a practice match against Fortis FC.

Explaining his decision to call up the two youngsters, Cabrera told the media: "We are well aware of Cuba's talent. He hasn't been called up earlier mainly because he didn't get much playing time for Bashundhara. As you know, both Ibrahim and Rahmat were injured during the last practice match, we decided this was the right time to bring in some promising players we've been monitoring for a while."

Cabrera, however, said he would not rush the former Sunderland FC youth team player's

development: "We need to progress gradually, just as we did with Fahamedul (Islam) and Zayan (Ahmed). Cuba doesn't have much time to prepare -- only four training sessions before the Nepal match and a total of seven before the India game. Still, we're confident he'll improve while working with us. Everyone wants him to perform well, and hopefully, he'll get the opportunity to play."



Bangladesh will face Nepal in a warm-up match on November 13, before taking on India in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers on November 18 at the National Stadium in Dhaka.

Regarding the arrival of the two overseas-based midfielders, team manager Amer Khan said: "Hamza will arrive at 12:00 pm tomorrow (Monday), and Shamit will arrive the following night at around midnight, which means he'll reach Dhaka on 12 November."



PHOTO: REUTERS

ALL-TIME ASSISTS (CLUB AND COUNTRY)

Fréderic Puskas	404
Lionel Messi	400*
Pele	369

MESSI'S CAREER ASSISTS BREAKDOWN

Team	Assists
Barcelona	269
Argentina	60
Inter Miami	37
PSG	34

LIONEL MESSI VS CRISTIANO RONALDO:

Messi	Ronaldo
1133	1296
894	953
400	259

Lionel Messi celebrates scoring one of his two goals in Inter Miami's 4-0 win over Nashville SC in the MLS Cup playoffs on Saturday, guiding the club to the Eastern Conference semifinals. The night also saw the 38-year-old Argentine become only the second player in history to reach 400 career assists for club and country.