

Sports

Mominul's unbeaten ton powers Bangladesh to 374-4 on day one

Lakmal claims two wickets off successive deliveries

SCOREBOARD

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh: Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in Chittagong yesterday:

Bangladesh first innings

Tamim Iqbal b D. Perera	52
Imrul Kayes lbw b Sandakan	40
Mominul Haque not out	175
Mushfiqur Rahim c Dickwella b Lakmal	92
Liton Das b Lakmal	0
Mahmudullah not out	9
Extras (nb 4, w2)	6
Total (four wickets: 90 overs)	374

To bat: Mosaddek Hossain, Mehedi Hasan, Taijul Islam, Sunzamul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman

Fall of wickets: 1-72 (Tamim), 2-120 (Kayes), 3-356 (Mushfiqur), 4-356 (Liton)

Bowling: Lakmal 17-3-43-2 (nb2), Kumara 12-1-64-0 (w1), D. Perera 24-4-98-1 (nb2), Herath 20-1-100-0, Sandakan 13-1-58-1 (w1), Dhananjaya 4-0-11-0

Sri Lanka: D. Karunaratne, D. de Silva, K. Mendis, D. Chandimal, N. Dickwella, R. Silva, D. Perera, R. Herath, S. Lakmal, L. Sandakan, L. Kumara.

CHITTAGONG: Mominul Haque hit a towering century to help Bangladesh take opening day honours in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Chittagong yesterday. Mominul hit an unbeaten 175 as the hosts reached 374-4 at stumps after electing to bat first at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

The left-hander shared a 236-run third-wicket stand with former captain Mushfiqur Rahim, who fell just short of his fifth Test hundred after scoring 92 off 192 balls. Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, on nine, was batting

“We were very positive and attacking from ball one”

alongside Mominul when stumps were drawn at the start of the two-match series.

Opener Tamim Iqbal gave the hosts a strong start with his brisk 52 and said it was “a fantastic day” for Bangladesh. “We were very positive and attacking from ball one. It was nice to see.”

Suranga Lakmal struck with the second new ball to claim two wickets off successive deliveries and give Sri Lanka some respite late into the final session. Lakmal, who returned figures of 2-43, forced Mushfiqur to edge behind the stumps after he had struck 10 fours in his relatively sedate innings.

The medium-pacer bowled Liton Das for a duck with the next ball, which swung late to uproot the off-stump after the batsman had attempted to leave the delivery. But Mominul was dominant at the other end, hitting 16 fours and a six off veteran spinner Rangana Herath during his stay, which has lasted 203 balls so far.



CHITTAGONG: Bangladesh cricketer Mominul Haque reacts after scoring a century (100 runs) during the first day of the first cricket Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. — AFP

The 26-year-old posted his fifth Test century and his first in more than three years off just 96 balls, with back-to-back fours off left-arm wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan. He then hit Herath for his only six to reach 160 and bring up his 2,000 Test runs in his 47th innings.

Mominul was the fastest Bangladeshi to achieve the feat, overtaking Tamim's record of 53 innings. Sri Lankan batting coach Thilan Samaraweera was full of praise for Mominul, who is nicknamed Mini. “We should have bowled better than that. It is 40 runs too many for

our part...” he said. Mominul's masterful display at his favourite ground came after Bangladesh had lost both openers, Tamim and Imrul Kayes, in the morning session. Tamim made 52 off 53 balls, sharing a 72-run opening stand with Kayes (40), until off-spinner Dilruwan Perera bowled him with a beautiful delivery that pitched outside off-stump and spun sharply.

Tamim struck six fours, and a sweetly timed six off Perera over long-on, in his 25th Test fifty. Sandakan trapped Kayes leg-before on the stroke of lunch, ending the left-hander's 75-ball stay. — AFP

Eagles back-up Foles ready to seize chance

MINNEAPOLIS: Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles is one win away from claiming his first Super Bowl crown. Next season, he could be out of a job. The 29-year-old Texan has confounded the sceptics since stepping up to start after a serious knee injury sidelined rising star Carson Wentz in week 14 of the regular season.

Foles produced an electrifying performance in the NFC Championship game on January 21, putting the best defense in the league to the sword as the Eagles routed the Minnesota Vikings 38-7.

Yet even if Foles inspires the Eagles to an upset win against the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl on Sunday, he is expected to return to a back-up role next season when Wentz returns to full fitness. Foles is philosophical about what his future may hold, insisting that for now, all he is thinking about is this weekend's shot at glory.

“I'm grateful to be here, to be part of this organization,” Foles told reporters on Tuesday.

“I can't wait to play the game. After the game, that's where you have time to sort of reflect on the year, and that's what we'll do.

“I'll spend time with my family and use that family time. The future will take care of itself. I'm grateful to have signed a two-year deal with the Philadelphia Eagles and be here.

“And I'm excited to watch Carson get healthy and get back on his feet and hopefully being part of him getting back to where he was.”

Unfulfilled promise?

Foles' career had looked set to be one of unfulfilled promise until this season's run to the Super Bowl. In his second year in the NFL in 2013, he went 8-2 as a starter, but injuries hampered his development and he was traded to the St Louis Rams in 2015.

He was released by the Rams in 2016, heading to the Kansas City Chiefs. After being released by the Chiefs in March, he joined the Eagles as Wentz's back-up. When Wentz suffered his injury in December, Foles was thrust into the starting spot. “Anytime you step in for a guy who's injured it's tough,” Foles said. “You never want to see anyone get injured. And I worked with Carson every day.

“And we're people-it is a game but we're people, and we care for one another. To step into the huddle and go out there it takes time.”

The scale of the task facing the Eagles quarterback when he lines up against five-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady is highlighted by their age difference. When Brady was winning his first Super Bowl in 2002, Foles had only just turned 13. Foles however says he can't remember watching Brady in a Super Bowl. “Honestly I didn't watch a lot of football growing up,” he said. “My dad always wanted me to and always wondered why I didn't. “But I was always out there in the yard playing the game. I would come in

and out and watch bits of the Super Bowl but I always just loved playing the game in the yard. If I did see them I don't remember.” — AFP

Nepal's 'Shane Warne' keen to soak up IPL experience

KATHMANDU: Nepal leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane says his breakthrough Indian Premier League deal will give him the chance to play alongside the cricketing elite and promote the sport back at home.

Lamichhane, 17, became an overnight hero after becoming Nepal's first cricketer to enter the lucrative IPL, with Delhi Daredevils picking him in a mega auction Sunday. His name was splashed across front pages of national newspapers and thousands took to social media to express their excitement. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba tweeted, “Not just me, but the entire nation is proud of you.”

Lamichhane, who has been likened to spin legend Shane Warne, made the meteoric rise to the IPL just two years after being selected for Nepal's national team. “If you get the chance to play in the IPL, lots of players will be there who are very experienced guys and I think I will learn a lot,” Lamichhane, the son of a railway worker, told AFP in Dubai.

Lamichhane's Delhi teammates will include Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell and pacemen Trent Boult (New Zealand) and Kagiso Rabada (South Africa), among others. The teenager is expected to make Nepal more of a force in international cricket. They are the only South Asian nation not to have Test,

Latif's appeal against spot-fixing ban rejected

KARACHI: Former Pakistan opener Khalid Latif yesterday lost an appeal against a five-year ban for spot-fixing but had his one million rupee (\$10,000) fine waived, the country's cricket body said.

Adjudicator Justice Faqir Khokhar upheld the ban, saying there was “overwhelming” evidence against Latif, but waived the fine as his career was almost over, Pakistan Cricket Board lawyer Taffazul Rizvi told reporters in Lahore.

Latif, who had shown tremendous early promise as a cricketer but failed to make an impact at international level, played five one-day internationals and 13 T20Is, the last of which was against the West Indies in Abu Dhabi in September 2016.

The scandal surfaced during the second edition of the Pakistan Super League in February last year when Latif was playing for Islamabad United. Latif, 32, was charged with orchestrating a deal with a bookie that would see his fellow opener Sharjeel Khan deliberately playing two dot balls — deliveries off which no run is scored-in the opening match against Peshawar Zalmi in Dubai.

Spot-fixing involves determining the outcome of a specific part of a match rather than the overall result,

one-day or T20 status, barring the isolated kingdom of Bhutan.

Lamichhane credits Nepal's senior players with popularising the sport among young people in a football-mad country. “The senior guys have done something for the new guys who are coming right now into the teams, and their contributions have made our country a cricket-crazy nation,” he said.

Lamichhane's talent was first noticed by former Nepal national cricket coach Pubudu Dassanayake, who spotted him at a training camp in 2015. The spin-bowling sensation then attracted the attention of Australian great Michael Clarke, when he played alongside the former captain in a Hong Kong Twenty20 Blitz tournament in 2016.

Clarke invited Lamichhane to train at his cricket academy in Sydney, an experience the teenager described as unforgettable. “Playing with a player like Michael Clarke is such as a big thing. It was amazing and sharing a dressing room with him and getting experience from him, it was something like a dream come true,” he said.

'NEW HEIGHTS'

Lamichhane is currently in Dubai training with Nepal's national team ahead of the World Cricket League Division Two tournament in Namibia next month. Nepal must finish in the top two to take part in the World Cup qualifiers in Zimbabwe in March. It has never qualified for the World Cup.

The sport's development has been hampered by the country's turbulent recent history, including a 1996-2006 civil war, and endemic corruption. The Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) was struck off by the sport's global governing body in 2016 for political interference.

Lamichhane's base price contract of \$31,499 may be



Sandeep Lamichhane

small fry in the cash-rich IPL, which shelled out a total of \$70 million for 169 players during the two-day auction. But back home, many hope his success will revive the country's scandal-tainted domestic cricket.

The controversy had hampered Nepali cricket and young talented players were losing out, said CAN's Chumbi Lama. “(Lamichhane) is a young talented cricketer and an impressive leg spinner,” Lama said. “If he gets good guidance his future is very bright. He will lead Nepali cricket to new heights.” — AFP



Khalid Latif

and is therefore harder to detect than match-fixing. Sharjeel was also banned for five years-two and a half years suspended and his appeal was rejected last November.

Paceman Mohammad Irfan and spinner Mohammad Nawaz were banned for one year and two months respectively for not reporting fixing offers. Another former opener Nasir Jamshed-alleged to have played a role as coordinator in the PSL fixing deal-was banned for one year for not cooperating with the inquiry.

The decision against another international player, Shahzaib Hasan, was reserved and will be announced on Saturday. Pakistani cricket has long been tainted by allegations of spot-fixing. The most infamous incident came on the 2010 tour of England, when then-captain Salman Butt and bowlers Mohammad Amir and Mohammad Asif were all given prison sentences for conspiring to bowl deliberate no-balls in the fourth Test at Lord's. — AFP

ICC probes UAE league after silly dismissals go viral

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) is investigating a private Twenty20 league in the United Arab Emirates, the sport's global governing body has said, after footage of some farcical dismissals went viral on social media.

A match in the Ajman All Stars League, which is not sanctioned by the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB), saw several batsmen appear to throw their wickets in bizarre fashion, by running themselves out or getting stumped without trying to return to the crease, even when the wicketkeeper fumbled.

“There is currently an ICC Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) investigation underway in relation to the Ajman All Stars League held recently in Ajman, UAE,” ACU general manager Alex Marshall said in a statement.

“The ICC Anti-Corruption Unit works to uphold integrity in cricket and in keeping with that role, we are talking to players and officials and will not make any further comment at this time.” The Ajman Cricket Council (ACC) has suspended all matches at the Ajman Oval.

“... we found the Ajman Oval breaching the code more than once and hence we have suspended their affiliation,” ACC secretary general Shaji Ul Mulk told ESPNcricinfo. “We have a zero tolerance policy towards corruption and are cooperating with the ICC in their ongoing investigation.” — Reuters