Bangladesh players rally behind accused teammate Shakib Al Hasan

AFP- Bangladesh players have rallied round teammate Shakib Al Hasan, the ousted lawmaker who faces a case of alleged murder connected to unrest that toppled the government earlier this month.
Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said his team's maiden Test win against Pakistan on Sunday, in which all-rounder Shakib took three second-innings wickets, was a tribute to the hundreds killed during protests that forced former premier Sheikh Hasina from power.

Bangladesh endured weeks of student-led protests that resulted in Hasina fleeing to India by helicopter on August 5, ending 15 years of autocratic rule.

Shakib, 37, who lost his job as a lawmaker for Hasina's Awami League party when parliament was dissolved, is "a big asset of our country," said Shanto in a post on Facebook late Monday.

"He's been raising the name of Bangladesh in the world for 17 long years," Shanto said.

Rafiqul Islam, the father of one of the hundreds killed during the civil unrest, filed a murder case against Shakib and 155 others in Dhaka on Thursday.

Hasina's government was accused of widespread abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killing of political opponents.

Hasina, former ministers and other ex-lawmakers are among those also accused.

Shakib has not spoken publicly about the case, but his

teammates said they were offering him support.

“Such a case against Shakib bhai (brother) is unexpected,” Shanto added.

“In the new Bangladesh, we all want to see something new. I hope all the darkness will pass off and new light will come.”

Veteran batsman Mushfiqur Rahim said on Facebook: “I have said it many times before, and I will say it again, I am proud to play alongside a champion like Shakib.

“As a teammate and a brother, I will be there during his tough times, and I do not support the false allegations made against him because I know he would never engage in inhumane actions.”

Bangladesh achieved their first victory over Pakistan in 14 Tests with a thumping 10-wicket win on Sunday after both teams struggled in hot conditions on a flat Rawalpindi pitch.

The second and final Test will also be played in Rawalpindi from Friday.

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