



Opener Soumya Sarkar (L) and all-rounder Mahedi Hasan joined the last training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday knowing that the next generation must step up if Bangladesh are to come away with positives from their upcoming tour of top-ranked T20I side Pakistan.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Tamim and I must step up'

SPORTS REPORTER



Following a promising performance in the three-match T20I series in India, the Bangladesh Cricket Board kept faith in Mahmudullah Riyad to lead the Tigers in the upcoming three-match T20I series against Pakistan. Normally a calm and composed character, Mahmudullah seemed positive about his captaincy in the shortest format as the 33-year-old walked in confidently for the pre-tour press conference ahead of Bangladesh's chartered flight to Pakistan today.

As expected, security concerns once again dominated talks ahead of cricket itself and Mahmudullah tried to play according to the basics and focused mostly on the game. "Initially it was tough [deciding to tour Pakistan] as there were concerns from my family. But I spoke to them and they were finally agreed so from that point I am assured that my family won't feel stressed because Pakistan will give us top security. But I also support Mushfiqur Rahim's decision as there are always issues with family. There can't be anything more important than family for a cricketer or a normal person," Mahmudullah told reporters yesterday.

In the absence of Shakib Al Hasan, the BCB is now considering Mahmudullah the captain at least for T20Is. Although the board has been naming captains on a series-by-series basis, Mahmudullah believes it will help him to plan accordingly if he is given captaincy on a long-term basis.

Even head coach Russell Domingo said that he preferred Mahmudullah as

T20 captain so it will be important for Bangladesh if they are to prepare for the upcoming ICC World T20 later this year.

Apart from Shakib, Bangladesh will also miss the vast experience of Mushfiqur in Pakistan and Mahmudullah said that he and Tamim Iqbal would have to play crucial roles on the tour.

"I personally feel that Tamim and I will have added responsibility on this tour. Tamim's experience in the top order will be vital. He was in good touch during the



BPL. I personally would want to fulfil my responsibilities and I will try to bat till the end. There might be changes in the batting order for some players but I hope everyone will be able to cope," he said.

The all-rounder was also hopeful about the younger cricketers, saying that he was confident with his team and hoping that newcomers would will apply themselves in Pakistan.

MAHMUDULLAH'S KEYS FOR PAKISTAN TOUR

FAST BOWLING VARIETY

Although it is the first time in a while that Bangladesh will not have a left-arm spinner in the side, Mahmudullah believes that the variety in his fast bowling department is going to help the Tigers. The likes of Rubel Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Shafiqul Islam and Hasan Mahmud have all performed well in the recently concluded BPL.

THE NEXT GENERATION TO TAKE THE BATON

It seems that Bangladesh are not so far from a big transitional period with the Big Five in the final stages of their careers. According to Mahmudullah, the likes of Soumya Sarkar, Afif Hossain, Naim Sheikh and others need to create healthy competition in the team. Mahmudullah also informed that the board had already started chalking out plans for the upcoming World T20 in October this year.

BANK ON THEIR OWN STRENGTHS

Bangladesh are ranked number nine in the T20I rankings and a series against the format's top-ranked side on foreign soil will be a huge challenge. Although Pakistan lost their recent T20I series against Sri Lanka, according to Mahmudullah said it would be important for the Tigers to bank on their own strengths and not think of the opponents. Inspiration can be drawn from Bangladesh's recent performance in India, where the visiting Tigers displayed some good cricket despite losing the series 2-1.

Tigresses to face India A in final

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's team will play the Women's T20 Quadrangular Series against the India B Women's team in Patna today.

The Tigresses had secured a win over India A Women, but succumbed to a six-wicket defeat in the group phase against their opponents in today's final.

They won the do-or-die fixture against Thailand by a narrow margin after making an easy chase look difficult.

Having restricted Thailand to 120 for 3 in 20 overs, Bangladesh reached 91 for two on the back of Shamima Sultana's 37-ball 38 before they slumped to 112 for 8, losing six wickets inside 18 deliveries.

Only a gallant 13-ball 28 from Fahima Khatun in the end saw them secure a two-wicket victory and a place in the final and they will be hoping for a better performance this time around.

Hasan hatricket seals clinical win for U-19s

ICC



Bangladesh are on the cusp of earning a place in the Super League Quarterfinals of the Under-19 World Cup after a comfortable victory over Scotland at the Witrind Oval in Potchefstroom yesterday.

Left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan took a stunning hatricket as Bangladesh claimed their second win of Group C by seven wickets to move closer to the knockout stages.

Their place in the next stage would be assured if Pakistan beat Zimbabwe today -- a result which would also see Pakistan progress.

The Scots were bowled out for 89 -- with Hassan finishing with figures of four for 20 including the scalps of Kess Sajjad, Lyle Robertson and Charlie Peet in successive balls to take the Scots from 5-67 to 8-67 in the 24th over.

Bangladesh reached the target within 17 overs, although Scotland did force a fight back with a sterling bowling performance from seamer Sean Fischer-Keogh, who took three for 27. However, Mahmudul Hasan Joy's unbeaten 35 steered his side across the line.

The win leaves Bangladesh top of Group C with four points and captain Akbar Ali

was pleased with his side's clinical display in the tournament so far, having opened the event with a nine-wicket win over Zimbabwe on Saturday.

"It feels good to win back to back matches and gives us some confidence heading to our next game against Pakistan. We will try to beat them and look at getting to the next round having finished at the top

I feel very great today after getting the first hatricket of my career. My teammates were also excited.

RAKIBUL HASAN
HATRICK HERO

of the group," said Ali. **SCORES IN BRIEF**
Scotland Under-19s: 89 all out in 30.3 overs (Uzzair 2-13; Shoriful 2-13; Tanzim 2-26; Rakibul 4-20)
Bangladesh Under-19s: 91-3 in 16.4 overs (Parvez 25; Mahmudul 35 not out; Hridoy 17 not out; Sean 3-27)
Result: Bangladesh Under-19s won by seven wickets.



Hatricket hero Rakibul Hasan (R) celebrates with teammates after one of his four wickets during an ICC Under-19 World Cup group-stage match against Scotland at Potchefstroom yesterday.

PHOTO: ICC



Indian cricketers pose for a selfie prior to their departure for New Zealand yesterday. They will play a five-match T20I series from January 24 followed by a three-match ODI series.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Mathews steadies SL reply

AFP, Harare

Captain Angelo Mathews struck an unbeaten 92 as Sri Lanka posted 295 for four at the close of the third day of the first Test against Zimbabwe on Tuesday, putting his side in the driving seat at the Harare Sports Club.

Sri Lanka trail Zimbabwe's first innings total of 358 by 63 runs, but have six wickets in hand to pass that on day four and leave

their hosts likely needing to bat out their second innings to save the Test on what is a slow wicket.

Mathews has taken 253 balls on his way to what he hopes will be a 10th Test century and first in over a year.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ZIMBABWE: First innings 358
SRI LANKA: First innings 295 for 4 (Mathews 92 not out, Mendis 80, De Silva 42 not out, Karunaratne 37; Nyauchi 2-38)

Gibson to take over as Tigers' bowling coach

SPORTS REPORTER



Ottis Gibson is set to take over as the Bangladesh national team's fast bowling coach, sources revealed yesterday.

The former West Indies fast bowler will join the team in Lahore during Bangladesh's tour of Pakistan, with the Tigers slated to participate in a three-match T20I series.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Gibson have already agreed terms and it was learned that the only remaining formality was inking the deal.

Champaka Ramanayake, the High-Performance team coach, was supposed to travel with the Tigers to Pakistan but with Gibson now accompanying the team, Champaka will remain with the HP side.

Information on the length of Gibson's contract with the BCB is yet to be known. The position of fast bowling coach has been vacant since Charl Langeveldt left for the South Africa job in December last year.

Gibson worked as the head coach of West Indies from 2010 to 2014 and the Barbadian has also worked as fast bowling coach in England in the past.

The 50-year-old was in talks with the BCB for the vacant post during the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League, where he worked as head coach for the Cumilla Warriors.

South African Nantie Hayward, who had worked with Sylhet Thunder, was also in talks with the BCB for the job.



SHORT CORNER

Dhawan out of NZ T20I series

India opener Shikhar Dhawan has been ruled out of the five-match T20I series against New Zealand due to the shoulder injury he suffered during the third ODI against Australia.

Sanju Samson can be a possible replacement for Dhawan along with Prithvi Shaw. Suryakumar Yadav can also be an option for the selectors.

The T20I series begins on January 24, and will be followed by a series of three ODIs from February 5.

Squad: Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant, Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur. -- AGENCIES

De Kock named SA ODI captain

Quinton de Kock was on Tuesday named as South Africa's one-day international captain as part of a long term transition plan.

His first assignment will be to lead the team in a three-match series against World Cup champions England, starting in Cape Town on February 4.

Squad: Quinton de Kock (captain), Temba Bavuma, Bjorn Fortuin, Beuran Hendricks, Reeza Hendricks, Sisanda Magala, Janneman Malan, David Miller, Andile Phehlukwayo, Lungi

Ngidi, Tabraiz Shamsi, Lutho Sipamla, Jon-Jon Smuts, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne. --AFP

Rabada surprised by ban

South Africa paceman Kagiso Rabada says he was surprised to be sanctioned for his exuberant celebration of Joe Root's dismissal in the third Test against England but knows he cannot keep letting his team mates, and himself, down.

Rabada was handed a one-match ban by the International Cricket Council, ruling him out of the last match of the four-Test series, which



starts in Johannesburg on Friday.

His absence is a serious blow to South Africa's hopes of levelling the series after a heavy defeat in the third test at Port Elizabeth on Monday left them trailing 2-1.

"It was something I didn't expect," Rabada said on Tuesday.

"Whether it was the right thing to ban me or the wrong thing, the reality is that I'm banned." -- REUTERS