



Bangladesh players pose with the trophy after beating Zimbabwe by nine wickets in the second and final T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Attitude the biggest takeaway'

SPORTS REPORTER

It was for the very first time that Bangladesh managed to make a clean sweep of their opponents in all three formats in a series, completing with a thumping nine-wicket victory in the second T20I against Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The strength of this Zimbabwe team and the challenge they posed during their month-long tour may have made things easy for Bangladesh, however, Tigers' T20I captain Mahmudullah Riyad does not want the achievement to be taken lightly.

"The reason (for dominant victory) is we have managed to dominate Zimbabwe. This success should not be taken as small as there is no small or big teams in international cricket, especially in the T20s as any team can do well on a given day. The pleasing sign was that we have managed to play good cricket,"

Mahmudullah told the reporters at the official post-match press conference.

Bangladesh started the series by comprehensively beating the visitors by an innings and 106 runs in the one-off Test match and followed it up with a 3-0 whitewash in the ODI series before the 2-0 victory in the T20Is.

When asked whether the Tigers would take the result or the attitude they have showed in these victories, going forward, Mahmudullah replied that it is the attitude which would help the side in the coming days.

"I will first take the attitude and then the performance from this series for the upcoming assignments. I think the mindset and the hunger was very important. We had a group chat in Pakistan where we discussed on why things are not going in our favour as we can play much better cricket than that. Obviously, there were some lacks, so we were more focused in this series and the amount of work we have put was also more.

"So, we have to be more careful and remember

that we can play with such dominance as the results might come in our favour in the next day but at the same time, we have to keep that belief. If we come out from this, it will be tough for us to build that again. It will be important for us to remain consistent and play good cricket against big teams," Mahmudullah said.

One of the biggest takeaways from the series for Bangladesh was the form of opener Liton Das, who scored 483 runs combined in the Test, ODIs and T20Is.

According to the 25-year-old, it is the focus in the game that has been the biggest positive for him. The player-of-the-series in the T20Is informed that he would continue to take the same approach in the coming days against tougher oppositions.

"I have performed earlier as well but I lost my focus after scoring in one game. I was very focused in this series as I tried to play according to the merit of the ball and it gave me the result. It's easy to throw it away and I think my challenge begins now," said Liton.

T20s, concert deferred due to coronavirus

SPORTS REPORTER



The two T20 matches between Asia XI and World XI along with the concert to commemorate the birth centenary of Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman have been deferred due to the outbreak of coronavirus, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan confirmed yesterday.

The BCB had scheduled the concert, featuring Indian musician AR Rahman, for March 18. It would be followed by the two T20s on March 21 and 22 respectively.

Five Bangladeshi players -- Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mustafizur Rahman and Liton Das -- were set to play for Asia XI while the likes of Virat Kohli, Shikhar Dhawan, Chris Gayle and Jonny Bairstow were also expected to participate in the games.

"We have postponed those two matches for the time being. We are having a problem hosting the matches, so we have deferred it. There is no guarantee that everyone can come and play here so we have decided that both the concert and the two matches will be deferred. A lot of restrictions are coming in from different quarters. We will host it after few months when the time is appropriate," Hassan told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

However, the BCB president informed that they were still planning to organise the events on a large scale.

"We had two options. We could have organised the concert on March 18 on a small scale. But we have decided to do it properly on a large scale and that's why it has been deferred. When things improve, we will schedule it again in a big way," he added.

The coronavirus crisis had already led to the BCB taking measures to keep the crowd to a minimum during the ongoing T20I series against Zimbabwe. There



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NAZMUL HASSAN
BCB president

have already been three reported cases of coronavirus in Bangladesh and BCB had previously informed that it was following government directives in order to mitigate the threat of the virus spreading.

There are also concerns over the third phase of Bangladesh's tour to Pakistan. Bangladesh are scheduled to play a one-off ODI on April 1 and the second Test from April 5.

According to Hassan, the board will discuss the issue again.

"Let's see, we will be discussing that [visiting Pakistan]. We will go step by step and we will be sitting down for that issue as well," he said.

With 15 confirmed cases of coronavirus, Karchi -- the venue for the third ODI and second Test -- is the worst-affected city in Pakistan.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

ZIMBABWE	R/B	4s/6s		
Kamunhukamwe				
c Mushfiqur b Al-Amin	10/10	2/0		
Taylor not out	59/48	6/1		
Ervine c Soumya b Afif	29/33	3/0		
Williams st Mushfiqur b Mahedi	3/8	0/0		
Raza c Al-Amin b Saifuddin	12/10	2/0		
Mutumbami c Soumya b Al-Amin	1/2	0/0		
Mutombodzi c Naim b Mustafizur	3/7	0/0		
Madhevere c Naim b Mustafizur	0/1	0/0		
Mumba not out	1/1	0/0		
Extras: (lb-1)	1			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 20 overs)	119			
Did not bat: Mpofo, Tshuma.				
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-69, 3-76, 4-96, 5-97, 6-108, 7-113.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mustafizur	4	0	25	2
Saifuddin	4	0	30	1
Al-Amin	4	0	22	2
Mahmud	4	0	25	0
Mahedi	3	0	14	1
Afif	1	0	2	1
BANGLADESH	R/B	4s/6s		
Liton not out	60/45	8/0		
Naim c Kamunhukamwe b Mpofo	33/34	5/0		
Soumya not out	20/16	0/2		
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, w-4)	7			
Total: (For 1 wicket in 15.5 overs)	120			
Did not bat: Mushfiqur, Mahmudullah, Mahedi, Afif, Saifuddin, Mustafizur, Al-Amin, Mahmud.				
Fall of wickets: 1-77 (Mohammad Naim, 10.4 ov)				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Madhevere	3	0	20	0
Mpofo	3.5	0	27	1
Mumba	3	0	26	0
Tshuma	1	0	10	0
Williams	3	0	16	0
Raza	2	0	18	0

Result: Bangladesh won by 9 wickets and clinched 2-match series 2-0.
Player-of-the-match: Liton Das
Player-of-the-series: Liton Das.



Bangladesh pacer Al-Amin Hossain celebrates one of his wickets during the second and final T20I against Zimbabwe in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Australia tour set for June

SPORTS REPORTER



Australia will visit Bangladesh in June this year to play two Tests against the Tigers in Chattogram and Dhaka. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday released the itinerary for the tour without confirming the Australia cricket team's arrival date.

Australia will kick off their campaign with a four-day warm-up match before playing the first Test in Chattogram, but the date and venue for the practice game are yet to be confirmed.

The series will take place after Bangladesh return from England, where they are scheduled to play four T20Is against Ireland after three ODIs against the same opposition in Belfast across the month of May.

This will be Australia's third visit of Bangladesh. They last played a Test series in Bangladesh in August-September 2017, when a two-match series ended in a stalemate after Tigers had pulled off a famous 20-run victory against a Steve Smith-led side. Shakib Al Hasan's magnificent all-round

FIXTURES		
Date	Schedule	Venue
TBC	Four-day warm-up match	TBC
June 11-15	First Test	ZACS, Chattogram
June 19-23	Second Test	SBNCS, Dhaka

show helped Bangladesh to win the first Test in Mirpur but the home side succumbed to Nathan Lyon's spin web in Chattogram and suffered a seven-wicket defeat in the second Test.

During the first trip in April 2006, Ricky Ponting led from the front with an unbeaten 118 in the second innings as Australia survived a scare in the first Test in Fatullah to win by three wickets. They had ultimately won 2-0 after an emphatic innings and 80-run victory in the second Test in Chattogram.

This time, Australia are going to play a series in June, which is one of the wettest months in Bangladesh, with the BCB having last hosted one

Test in the month in 2015, a rainy draw against India in Fatullah. Considering the 120 Test Championship points at stake -- 60 points for a win per Test match -- the wet conditions can put Bangladesh and Australia's ability to earn maximum points at risk.

Although it will be a third visit for Australia, Bangladesh have not played a Test in Australia since 2003 after Australia decided against hosting Bangladesh in 2018 due to financial reasons.

Australia are also expected to visit Bangladesh again next year to play a three-match T20 series in the lead-in to the T20 World Cup in India.

Fist-bumps over handshakes for Eng players

AGENCIES

England will not shake hands or stop for selfies on their Sri Lanka tour in order to contain the coronavirus threat. England have decided to limit overall public engagement for their players and management on the tour in order to avoid possible infection and spreading of the COVID-19.

"Following the world health agency's advice, and in order to protect the players and, in turn, the integrity and continuation of the Sri Lanka Test tour, the team has put in place several precautions, an ECB release said on Wednesday.

England players will be preferring fist-bumps over handshakes with their teammates or the opposition through the course of this tour.

DPL to move to Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER



The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) is set to shift the first three rounds of the upcoming Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League to from Cox's Bazar and Chattogram to Dhaka due to concerns over the outbreak of coronavirus.

CCDM chairman Kazi Inam had earlier announced that the first three rounds of the country's prestigious fifty-over domestic competition would be played in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

Although there were concerns that the DPL may be postponed, CCDM member secretary Ali Hossain confirmed that the league would start at the scheduled time after a meeting that took place yesterday.

"We have decided to shift the Dhaka league matches from Chattogram and Cox's Bazar to Dhaka but there are The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur will host the opening match of the league while there will be two others venues in the form of BKSP and Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah stadium as the two other venues for the league," Ali Hossain told media yesterday.

The club-based competition is scheduled to start from March 15, with Abahani to take on Partex in the opening fixture.

The BCB's decision to shift the league came as a consequence of their desire to put less pressure on grounds in the capital.

The players' transfer of the DPL took place on March 3, 4 and 5 after the CCDM decided to return to the traditional players' transfer system and abolish their players-by-choice system this season.

India ready for fresh start

First ODI against South Africa today

AGENCIES, Dharamsala



Hardik Pandya's eagerly-awaited international comeback adds a lot of context to India's three-match ODI campaign against South Africa starting Thursday where the hosts would be aiming to put the New Zealand tour behind them.

Amid the ever-rising danger of coronavirus and threat of rain once again playing spoilsport, Pandya's all-round flamboyance will keep skipper Virat Kohli in a good headspace as he would be desperately trying to forget the 0-3 mauling in the last series in New Zealand.

The presence of Pandya along with a fit-again senior opener Shikhar Dhawan (shoulder dislocation) and seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar (sports hernia surgery) makes India favourite.

South Africa, on the other hand, are coming into the tour brimming with confidence after whitewashing Australia in the three-ODI series.

Faf du Plessis and Rassie van der Dussen,



India players run during training yesterday ahead of today's first ODI against South Africa in Dharamsala.

PHOTO: AFP

who were rested for the ODIs against Australia, are part of South Africa's touring party.

Proteas captain Quinton de Kock has welcomed the return of his predecessor.

"Faf plays big role for us from a leadership point of view. He's here to help out a lot of the younger guys in the team," De Kock told a news conference on the eve of the match.