

‘I always try to compete with myself’

May 26, 2020 marked the 15th anniversary of Mushfiqur Rahim’s international debut for Bangladesh. The wicketkeeper-batsman revealed his regrets, points of satisfaction, desires and much more during a long conversation with The Daily Star’s Ekush Tapader.

The Daily Star (TDS): How is Mushfiqur the cricketer faring during this crisis?
Mushfiqur Rahim (MR): Actually, for us players, it is really difficult to stay well without cricket. It is cricket that we miss the most at the end of the day. I am continuing my fitness work but it has been difficult to do skills training, which is more important. I am watching videos of the bowlers that I may face in the upcoming tournaments and that is how I am passing the time.
TDS: When all sport came to a halt, did you ever imagine that the break in action would last this long?
MR: No. Not just me, I think no one imagined that the time before resumption would be this long because this pandemic is such that it has no timeframe. In fact, still no one can say exactly when we can return to the field or when international cricket can resume. Our [Dhaka] Premier League had started and after it was halted, I thought it would resume again after two weeks.
TDS: Is there a possibility of getting rusty, having been deprived of skills training and match practice for so long?
MR: Look, our body has become used to staying on the field daily. When you play a match, you need to be on your feet for five to six hours. So, it takes some time for that to return to our system. You can do a lot of fitness work [at home] but for a bowler, bowling fitness is a totally different thing. It is the same for batsmen. We have been discussing the possibility of a 2-3-week pre-camp before resumption. It will be very challenging. We may be a lot more prone to injuries as it will be difficult for us to do things that we have been away from for such a long time.
TDS: Which areas do you think players should focus more on in order to regain form once training starts?
MR: Our focus needs to be on the health side as it is not that the virus will completely disappear when training resumes. The number of infected are increasing day by day in Bangladesh. We cannot go and do skills training individually. Players and net bowlers will come from different places. There will also be security personnel. So, we need to be careful. I hope that team management will give us a good guideline and we need to follow that. I cannot actually say what other players will be focusing on but I definitely will do skills training first.
TDS: Bangladesh batting consultant Neil McKenzie said that the players will return hungrier than ever. What is your take on this?
MR: The senior players are losing three months from their careers. I think there is no reason to not be hungry. For others like Liton [Das], Soumya [Sarkar], Shadman

[Islam], who have already played for a few years [in the national side], I think they also have reasons to return hungrier. I also feel bad for them. Especially for Liton. He just had a wonderful series [against Zimbabwe]. He had the momentum. Now he needs to gain that momentum again. So, players will be hungry but we need to maintain a process so that we can be successful most of the time and have more consistency. Hurrying to get back to form will not work. I agree with Neil. I visualise scoring hundreds, two hundreds even now when I am at home. So, I think I will feel better if I

these years -- Alhamdulillah.
Like any other ordinary man, I also feel the need for more. I am satisfied with what I have achieved in the past 6-7 years. But I did not get the start that I had wanted. I am satisfied with how I have converted since 2012. I am getting the results of my hard work now. If I can keep this consistency then maybe at the end of my career, I will be able to say that I have achieved more than I had wanted.
TDS: Your career graph has always followed an upward trajectory. So, in the next five years, where do you want to see yourself?



can get back and do it.
TDS: It has been 15 years that you have been playing international cricket. Could you share some thoughts about the joys and regrets over this period?
MR: First of all, Alhamdulillah that I have played for Bangladesh for almost 15 years. This is actually not easy. You see, there aren’t many who could play in all three formats for Bangladesh for this long. Maybe there were a few in the past but back then we did not play as many games as we do now. We usually play cricket at a stretch for 9-10 months as we have year-round tournaments like BPL, BCL and NCL besides international cricket. So, considering all this, I think to be able to maintain fitness and form and play all

MR: Considering Bangladesh’s cricket, five years is a long time (laughs). I always wonder if I will be playing in the next tournament and prepare myself that way. I always try to compete with myself and ask questions of myself. I will always try to lead Bangladesh from the front to as many victories as possible. I want to play for the next five or seven years. And all I want is to score as many runs as possible.
TDS: In these 15 years, name one incident that made you the happiest and one that hurt you the most.
MR: There are many such incidents. I have had lots of ups and downs in these 15 years. If I have to name the time when I was hurt the most it was when I was dropped from the national side, probably back in 2009.

I learned a lot then. Another incident was the Asia Cup final that we lost by two runs [against Pakistan in 2012]. It was the most important tournament as a captain for me.
And If I talk about my happy moments, then my first double-century [against Sri Lanka in 2013, also the first double-ton by a Bangladesh player] brought me immense satisfaction. I think it was a great moment for Bangladesh cricket also. We needed the belief that a Bangladeshi player can also score 200 or more in Tests. Also, defeating Australia and England in Tests, defeating Sri Lanka in our 100th Test in their own backyard was also a rare moment.
TDS: A bit surprising to see you not mentioning losing the captaincy!
MR: I do want to say that I was disappointed in the way I lost the captaincy. I think I did not get the proper respect for my honest work as a captain and also as a player. Sometimes you see that Bangladesh players do not want to take captaincy even after being offered. Why do you think that happens? Because before giving anything to the team in this regard they face a lot of pressure and go through a lot of personal loss. This is a place that deserves respect. As long as a player is in the post, he needs to be appreciated. There are very few captains who were bid farewell with respect. I think it will be better for our cricket if this aspect improves.
TDS: Who do you think can emerge as the next Big Five after the five of you [Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad, Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur]?
MR: I think every team in the world goes through this period of transition. It is hard to mention five names as I think everyone is capable. There is Liton, Soumya [Sarkar], [Mohammad] Naim. Shadman[Islam] and Mominul[Haque] are there in Tests. And if I talk about bowlers, then [Abu Jayed] Rahi and Ebadot [Hossain] are there in Tests. There are Taijul [Islam], [Mehedi Hasan] Miraz, [Mohammad] Saifuddin -- I think all of them are more skilful than me. All they need to do is to keep their consistency. And I think they will be able to achieve in 8-10 years what I have achieved in 15 years.
Also, it will also be a challenge and the responsibility of the five of us to at least leave six or seven players in that position when we leave.
TDS: You spend a lot of time in the nets. How much time do you think you will spend in the nets after training resumes?
MR: It is really tough to say. My wife jokingly says, “I guess you will spend the whole 24 hours [in the nets] the first time you go to training [after resumption].”
And I say, “Yes, I will stay there in the Mirpur Academy.” But I think we need to be smart. We will have to carry the workload given by the team management.




Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo was working on his conditioning in an individual training session, eager to get back into the swing of things as a government decision on the fate of Serie A was due to be announced Thursday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Messi welcomes ‘weird’ restart

AFP, Madrid

 Barcelona and Argentina captain Lionel Messi said he was eager to start playing again but thought La Liga games behind closed doors would feel “weird”.
The Spanish Football Federation won a legal judgement on Wednesday handing it control over league scheduling and then said it would allow La Liga to play every day when this season resumes.
“We cannot think about what we are leaving behind this year. It is better to think about the future,” Messi said. “Like going back to day-to-day training, seeing your teammates, playing your first few games. No doubt it will be strange at first, but I am looking forward to competing again!”
He said playing without fans “implies a series of challenges. The preparation at squad level is the same as for any other match, but it is true that individually you have to train and get mentally prepared to play without people because it is very weird.”
“It will be like starting over,” he said. “Technically it will be the same season, but I think all teams and players will experience it differently.”
Messi was due to lead Argentina this summer in the Copa America, where his country are joint hosts with Colombia, but the competition was postponed to June next year.
“Postponing the Copa America was a huge disappointment, but of course it was reasonable and most logical. I was really looking forward to playing in it again.”

Federations mull restart after govt decision to reopen

ANISUR RAHMAN

After a two-month shutdown enforced to contain the spread of coronavirus, the government announced on Wednesday that the country will reopen on May 31 to keep the economy rolling. Major national sports federations want to follow the instructions to open their respective offices but also want to observe the situation before resuming sporting activities.
The federations have kept sporting activity suspended since the youth and sports ministry on March 16 instructed all sports to be halted for an indefinite period. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) suspended its Dhaka Premier League and Bangladesh Premier League respectively, and other federations also kept their activities suspended for nearly twoand a half months.
“We are now thinking of carrying out activities on a limited scale but we haven’t yet decided when to restart. We will work on a priority basis, such as the Dhaka Premier League, FTP and some official tasks. However, the authority concerned will take the decision to resume the league and about international commitments,” said BCB chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury.
BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said: “We will now open the office on May 31 but we will ensure reduced attendance of employees after a few days because we don’t have big tasks after the cancellation of the Bangladesh Premier League.
“Afterwards, we will start the process of the BFF elections, which was suspended due to the pandemic and shutdown. BFF executive committee will take a decision regarding this. We are also thinking of resuming the Women’s Football League, National Football

Championship and School tournament in suitable circumstances,” said Shohag.
Echoing Shohag’s sentiment regarding reopening their office, Bangladesh Hockey Federation acting general secretary Mohammad Yousuf said: “To resume sports activities, we will observe the situation and wait for the instructions from the National Sports Council and youth and sports ministry. We however want to sit with the clubs to discuss about the Dhaka Premier Hockey League as we sent them letters before the shutdown was enforced. FIH [International Hockey Federation] also wanted to know about the international tournaments scheduled to take place in Bangladesh. We will discuss all matters and follow the government guidelines at the board meeting before taking any decision.”
Bangladesh Archery Federation general secretary Kazi Razib Ahmed Uddin Chapal said: “We are now working out how to restart activities. We have to accept the decision of the government for but the athletes are like our children and we have to look after their health. If the athletes’ parents, organisations and sponsors give us their nod, then we will start the training of the national team in a small scale. We will observe the situation till June 15 before holding the executive committee meeting.”
Bangladesh Volleyball Federation general secretary Ashikur Rahman Miku said: “We first want to observe the situation. If there is nominal opportunity to restart games, we will start it by maintaining health guidelines.”
Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinoor said they wanted to start training camps and that they are thinking of resumption of play by organising tournaments in late June or early July.




Young footballers in Germany returned to business almost two weeks after the top-flight Bundesliga resumed. Members of the youth football department of Kickers Horlofftal are seen here in Reichelsheim on Wednesday in their first training session since the lockdown.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CA sets dates for India, Afghan Tests

AGENCIES

 Australia will begin their Test summer later this year with an inaugural Test against Afghanistan in Perth while Gabba will host the opening match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India.
The Afghanistan Test will take place from 21 to 25 November and will be a day/night affair. The first of the four Tests against India begins on 3 December in Brisbane. The second Test (11-15 December) will be a day/night affair at the Adelaide Oval, while the third (26-30 December) and fourth (3-7 January) Tests will be played at the MCG and SCG, respectively.
In January this year, India captain Virat Kohli had said that he was looking forward to defend the Border-Gavaskar Trophy irrespective of the venue.



Date: May 29th, 2020

Public Notice

Stichting Bangladesh Accord Foundation

On behalf of Our distinguished Client, Stichting Bangladesh Accord Foundation, having its address at Prins Hendrikkade 25, 1012 TM Amsterdam the Netherlands and Bangladesh Liaison Office (Accord Bangladesh) at AJ Heights Building (12th floor), Cha- 72/1/D, Pragati Sharni, North Badda, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh, notice is hereby given to all agencies of Government and all those organizations, entities, authorities, persons having any kind of interests with Stichting Bangladesh Accord Foundation that Our Client will close the operation of its Bangladesh liaison office and all their accounting records from May 31st, 2020. In order to complete all the required formalities within the stipulated date, the office closure application and all other required documents are processed to be submitted to the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) for permission to close the Liaison/Representative office.

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