

# SPORT

## Ex-captains with Mushfiqur

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim's criticism of the board's policy of appointing captains on a series-wise basis received support from former Bangladesh captains, who said that the decision could have a negative effect on Bangladesh's cricket.

Mushfiqur, who was appointed the captain of the team till the end of this year on Thursday, had said that it would be 'very challenging to uphold the captaincy-role on a series to series basis for any cricketer' and that it would affect his planning for the future.

Supporting his claim, former captain Faruk Ahmed told The Daily Star that the decision exposed the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) 'confused approach' regarding the issue.

"I completely agree with what Mushfiqur said. At the moment I think the board is confused. A captain needs to have control over the team, but if the players see the possibility of a captain changing after every series then he won't get that respect. That's not the right sign," said Faruk.

Despite the extension in captaincy the fact that Mushfiqur wasn't given the reigns till the T20 World Cup in 2014 or the ODI World Cup in 2015 surprised many. With coach Shane Jurgensen's contract extended till 2015, many felt that a longer deal for the 24-year-old could have helped the team plan for the two events.

"This is a backward step taken by the board. If he has enough time then he can get involved in the planning with the selection committee. I remember when I was chief

selector in 2003 we, along with the captain, had envisioned the likes of Shakib, Tamim and Mushfiqur playing in 2007. That does not mean that we are always right but one needs to plan for the future," he added.

Reiterating Faruk's views, another former captain Roquibul Hasan stated that short-term captaincy could lead to 'a number of problematic situations'.

"A captain calls the shots, starting from the playing eleven to even the post-match interviews. He may not get a 100 per cent support from his team because they know that he is only there for six months," said Roquibul. "Conversely if he is there for at least two years he can strategise his plans accordingly and develop a good spirit in the team," he added.

There were talks about how Mushfiqur's rash decision of resigning from captaincy in Zimbabwe could have possibly influenced the board's decision. However, according to Faruk the board should have taken a stronger action, if that was indeed the case.

"The fact remains that Mushfiqur is a human being, and it wasn't a mature decision for him to resign. But if you don't see Mushfiqur as a captain, you remove him and make some one else the captain for at least two years. You have to go either way."

Responding to Mushfiqur's statement, BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said, "We have come to know it through the media, if what he said has been correctly reflected by the media then it can be described as an immature act. The captain should have discussed the issue with the board before speaking to the media since we have our strategies planned out."



World No. 1 Novak Djokovic of Serbia returns a shot against Argentina's Juan Martin Del Potro during their Wimbledon semifinal yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Djokovic into final

REUTERS, London



Novak Djokovic withstood a ferocious onslaught from Juan Martin Del Potro to subdue the Argentine 7-5 4-6 7-6(2) 6-7(6) 6-3 in a titanic Wimbledon semi-final on Friday.

The top seed needed all his skill and fighting spirit to tame the eighth-seeded Del Potro who made light of his knee injury to keep the world number one on court for four hours 43 minutes, the longest semi-final ever seen at Wimbledon.

The previous semi-final record of four hours, one minute was set in 1989 when Boris Becker beat Ivan Lendl in five sets.

The new mark is six minutes shy of the longest Wimbledon final, Rafa Nadal's four hour, 48 minute victory over Roger Federer in 2008.

"It was one of the best matches I've been a part of, one of the most exciting. It was so close," said a hugely relieved Djokovic.

"I could not separate us, apart from when I was 2-1 up and a break up, and I dropped serve. That's why he's a grand slam champion. He came up with some top shots...credit to him."

Djokovic broke in the 12th game of the first set to win it 7-5 but former U.S. Open winner Del Potro took the Serbian's serve midway through the second set and levelled the match on a baking Centre Court.

Del Potro saved three set points at 5-6 in the third but Djokovic stepped up his level to romp through the tiebreak 7-2.

The top seed struck again with a break in the seventh game of the fourth set but Del Potro broke straight back and saved two match points in an incredible tiebreak before taking it 8-6.

Djokovic broke again to lead 5-3 in the deciding set and he recovered from 0-30 down to seal victory with a searing backhand down the line.

Djokovic will play second seed Andy Murray or Jerzy Janowicz, seeded 24th, in the final on Sunday when he will bid for his second Wimbledon title and seventh grand slam crown.

## Bangladesh eleventh

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Bangladesh finished 11th in the Mixed Team Rapid Chess event of the 4th Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games in Incheon, South Korea yesterday.

Bangladesh earned 5 points from five matches with two wins, one draw and two losses.

The 3rd, 4th and 5th round matches of the Mixed Team Rapid chess were held on Friday.

China clinched the gold medal of the team event while Indian Independent Athletes took the silver and Vietnam got the bronze.

## Umpires hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Ataul Haque Mallick Smrity team and Fakhru Alam Mahmud Smrity team reached the semifinals of the Walton LED TV Umpires five-a-side hockey tournament beating their respective opponents at the Maulna Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Ataul Haque Mallick Smrity team beat Nazim Uddin Mollah Smrity team by 11-10 goals in sudden death while Fakhru Alam Mahmud Smrity team defeated Sheikh Nurul Islam Smrity team by 5-3 goals.

## FIBA U-16 C'SHIP

## BD fail to qualify

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh failed to qualify for the 3rd U-16 FIBA Asian Basketball Championship after finishing second behind India in the qualifiers which concluded at the Dhanmondi Indoor Basketball Gymnasium yesterday. Bangladesh lost against eventual champions and favourites India in the deciding match by 59-103 points, after trailing the first half by 13-58 points. Mehedee and Zamils scored 16 and 12 points respectively for Bangladesh while Singh was the highest scorer for India, caging 22 points.

Champions India will participate in the tournament proper which will take place in Iran in September.

## De Kruif wants physical improvement

SPORTS REPORTER



Fitness of the national booters has always been a concern for the team's foreign coaches and it is no exception with Lodewijk De Kruif, as the new Dutch coach emphasised on fitness and mental set-up of the players during his first training session yesterday.

After arriving in the morning, De Kruif ran his first session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the afternoon, where he said he has 90 per cent idea about his players now, having guided them in the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers in March.

The physical trainer and assistant coach had earlier taken bleep (endurance) tests of the players in the morning where the young ones proved superior. Left-back Nahidul Islam became first followed by stopper Nasir Uddin Chowdhury and Danish-born midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan in third.

"I am very happy that the physical

trainer (Muhammet) Yamali is here and he has already started working with Rene Koster. Our players faced a lot of physical problems in Nepal (during the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers).

"What we think is, first of all, that the players' body and mind must be ready to play at the top level. That's why I am happy that Rene and the physical trainer are with the squad now and they gave directions to the players about what we expect from them," said the 43-year-old coach.

De Kruif also added that from now on he would work on the technical and tactical aspects of the players as Yamali was looking after the physical side.

During the training, De Kruif emphasised on shooting, which he termed as the most important aspect of attack and dictated players like winger Mobarak Hossain, striker Taklish Ahmed and defender Arup Kumar Baddya during shooting practice.

"The most important aspect of attack is shooting and set-pieces. We

won't say this is our negative or weak side, but I want to communicate in a very positive way and we have a lot of work ahead and we have to work hard," said the Dutch coach.

De Kruif informed that he would curtail the 34-member preliminary squad to 23 members, with a reserve list, sometime in the next week and travel to Thailand with the 23-member squad. The team will have a short-term camp there and play two practice matches before coming back home to continue with the camp for the SAFF Championship, which is scheduled to be held in Nepal from September 1 to 11.

The Dutch coach is not thinking about the opponents of the SAFF Championship, but said he would do so once the fixtures of the regional football extravaganza is completed in the latter part of this month.

"In Nepal, the condition was tough due to the altitude and this time we will go there earlier to adapt to the conditions," said De Kruif.

## 'Venues on track'

## BCB responds to BCCI statement

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) responded to the Indian Cricket Board's (BCCI) statement that the latter would be ready to co-host the ICC World T20 in case Bangladesh were not prepared by saying that such a scenario would not arise and that the venues would be ready in time.

"While we appreciate the statement, we believe that we can get the venues ready in time as that is our main aim right now. We have been given time till August and we are confident of getting the work done," said BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury.

He further reiterated that the country had alternate venues that could replace the stadiums in Sylhet and Cox's Bazar in case they were not ready in time.

"As mentioned before, we have alternate venues for Sylhet and Cox's Bazar. There's Fatullah and BKSP which have world class facilities and meet the international standards. The problem regarding the accommodation has also been resolved as the renovation of Ruposhi Bangla has been postponed and the hotel will be available to us," said Chowdhury.

Speaking to the Indian media yesterday, BCCI interim chief Jagmohan Dalmiya said, "Two of the four venues — in Cox's Bazar and Sylhet — in Bangladesh are doubtful. In case they are not able to get them ready in time, we are ready to host the matches. If their problem does not end then we can host a few matches for them and help them out. You have to understand that we aren't trying to take away any matches from Bangladesh. Rather we want to help Bangladesh," said Dalmiya, who represented India at the ICC annual meeting in London last month.

## Kashmiri Rasool included

AFP, New Delhi

Parvez Rasool on Friday became the first Kashmiri cricketer to be selected for India after he was named for a limited-overs series against Zimbabwe later this month.

The 24-year-old off-spinner and a useful lower order batsman was picked in a new-look 15-man squad for five one-day internationals in Zimbabwe from July 24 to August 3.

Rasool, who hails from Bij Behara town in Indian Kashmir's Anantnag district, rose to fame in February when he grabbed 7-45 against the touring Australians in a warm-up match.

**SQUAD:** Virat Kohli (capt), Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma, Dinesh Karthik, Cheteshwar Pujara, Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu, Ajinkya Rahane, Ravindra Jadeja, Amit Mishra, Parvez Rasool, Mohammad Shami, Vinay Kumar, Jaydev Unadkat, Mohit Sharma.



Ludowijk de Kruif, national football team's Dutch head coach, instructs winger Mobarak Hossain during a practice session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Vettori won't quit

AFP, Wellington



Injury-plagued New Zealand spinner Daniel Vettori announced Friday he will be sidelined for at least six months but refused to call time on an international career stretching back 16 years.

Vettori said he had informed New Zealand Cricket he could not accept a Black Caps' contract for the upcoming season as he knew much of the year would be spent in rehabilitation after an ankle operation.

"I feel that with my present injury situation it would be wrong for me to take a retainer contract," he said.

"Given the time I'll need to spend out of the game with my recovery and the level of uncertainty about when I may play again, it doesn't feel right that I take up a retainer contract this year."

The 34-year-old said it would be at least six months before he knew whether he could make a return to full fitness and he would make a decision on his future then.

"I will now focus on my rehabilitation in the coming months, with the overall goal of making a return to the cricket field during the summer months -- hopefully it goes well," he said.

The left-armer is New Zealand's second-highest Test wicket taker with 360 scalps in 112 matches and has also contributed 4,516 runs to bolster the Black Caps' often fragile batting.

He has set himself the career goal of becoming only the second Test player after India's Kapil Dev to take 400 wickets and score 4,000 runs.

However, recent injuries have frustrated his ambition, keeping him out of Test cricket for the past 12 months. He returned to limited overs action in last month's Champions Trophy in England, playing in all three group matches before the Black Caps bowed out.