

SPORT

'I want to achieve even more'

He is the first international superstar of Bangladesh cricket, and his current status as the top-ranked all-rounder in all three formats of the game means that he has not only lived up to that billing, but has outstripped expectations. **Shakib Al Hasan** has been the flag bearer for the Tigers all across the world in his role of a sought-after commodity in T20 franchise leagues. The 30-year-old has set a new high-water mark that youngsters can aspire to, knowing that they can achieve anything through talent and hard work. In an exclusive interview with *The Daily Star's* Mazhar Uddin before departing for a stint in the Caribbean Premier League, the star all-rounder opens up about where he wants to see himself after finishing his career, how he has matured after facing a six-month ban in 2014 and a few other topics. The following are some excerpts of the conversation:

TDS: How does it feel like being a Bangladeshi international cricketer?
SAH: Obviously it would have been good if they were better than now. Maybe if we started facing the kind of competition we face now a bit earlier the performance graph would have been better. But I am happy with whatever I have achieved so far in my career and my aim is to achieve more than what I have achieved till now.

TDS: What do you want to accomplish by the time your career ends?
SAH: Actually, I never set such targets. Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow but as long I am playing my aim is to improve each day and perform better.

TDS: What are the things a young cricketer should follow to become successful in international cricket?
SAH: Actually it's difficult to say as the definition of success depends on each individual, so it's the duty of each individual to find out how to achieve that success. It's difficult to know exactly where he wants that success and those who choose that correctly become successful in life.

TDS: What are the changes between the Shakib playing age-level cricket and the



"Obviously there is still a lot of work to be done. The success is becoming more visible but I think this should continue. We just can't stop here; we will have to keep improving."

Shakib of today?
SAH: I don't think there was any change, either technically or mentally. The mindset is the same as it was before but yes, whenever I face an obstacle it's something you now know how to overcome. Apart from that I don't think there is any change.

TDS: You seem like an unflappable character. Does anything cause you to panic?
SAH: Nowadays, after playing for so many years I don't get into any panicked situation; instead, I know how to handle those situations and remain calm. It has actually come only because of playing cricket for so long time.

TDS: What are the responsibilities of being Shakib both on and off the field?
SAH: Obviously everyone has responsibilities and I think now there is more responsibility off the field than on it. You have to motivate the young players and help them learn how to handle difficult situations so that they have an idea of what they are going to face and prepare accordingly. On the field my main responsibility is to perform.

TDS: Do you think your career stats could

have been even better than they are now?
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The Bangladesh cricket team arrived in Chittagong yesterday for preparations ahead of the home series against Australia. With Australia's pay dispute over, the visitors are expected to come to Bangladesh on August 18 for a two-Test series.

Tigers go extra mile to tackle Lyon

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers' preparations intensified after the pay dispute between the Australian players and the board was finally resolved as the Bangladesh preliminary squad training camp shifted to Chittagong ahead of the home series against Australia yesterday.

Head coach Chandika Hathurusingha has already chalked out his plan ahead of the Australia series, the second Test of which is scheduled to take place in Chittagong's Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium from September 4 after the first Test in Mirpur starting from August 27.

Keeping in mind the probable threat from Aussie off-spinner Nathan Lyon, who was devastating against India in the Test series earlier in March this year, the selectors have included two

young off-spinners in Sanjit Saha and under-19 spinner Naeem Hasan in the training camp.

It is understood that the home side is likely to prepare slow and low pitches in the upcoming series against Australia similar to the surfaces in the England series last year, when Bangladeshi bowlers cashed in on home conditions and managed to level the Test series 1-1.

Sanjit, who was part of the Bangladesh under-19 World Cup team last year, has been impressive with his off-spin while another fresh face in the form of Naeem is in the current under-19 squad.

According to sources the inclusion of these two off-spinners in the preliminary squad, which will also take part in a three-day practice game from August 8, will help the batsman to get in the mindset of facing Lyon.

Youngster Naeem, who received his maiden call-up to the national camp, said that he is excited to share a dressing room with the likes of

Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim and added that it will help him in the upcoming under-19 assignment as well.

"It's a great opportunity for me and I am very excited to share the same dressing room with the likes of Tamim bhai and Mushfiq bhai. I think it will also help me when I return to my under-19 camp in the coming days and hopefully I can learn a lot from here," said Naeem to the media in Mirpur before departing for Chittagong.

Meanwhile, Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who are in the Caribbean to take part in the CPL will not be available for the training camp in Chittagong along with Mosaddek Hossain, who is suffering from an eye problem, and will join the camp later. The cricketers will start their skill training from today. On the other hand ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who is not part of the training camp in Chittagong, keeping the longer version in mind, will work individually in Mirpur for the next few days.

India leave SL reeling

AFP, Colombo

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin claimed two early wickets to put India on top of the second Test after the visitors posted 622 for 9 declared against Sri Lanka in Colombo on Friday.

Ashwin got rid of openers Uthup Tharanga for nought and Dimuth Karunaratne for 25 to leave the hosts reeling at 50 for two at stumps on the second day.

Ashwin became the fourth fastest cricketer to get 2000 runs and 200 wickets in the longest format of the game.

Kusal Mendis on 16 and skipper Dinesh Chandimal on eight were batting at close of play with the hosts still trailing by 572 runs in their first innings at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground.

"Chandi and Kusal batted really well in the last few overs. We have to play positively," Karunaratne, who praised Ashwin's variations as a spinner, told reporters.

"Last time when we played in Galle Chandi got 160-odd scoring a lot of runs off the sweep and reverse sweep. I think that will be key."

Earlier six Indian batsmen scored 50 or more -- including centuries by Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane -- as the tourists posted their biggest total in Sri Lanka.

BCB's talent hunt begins in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

An age-group cricketers' talent hunt begins today at the Shahid Miraz-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj as part of Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) initiative to find grassroots cricketers and groom them for the national level.

Convener of the cricket sub-committee of Manikganj District Sports Association (DSA) Golam Sarwar Sanu informed that more than 400 players from 14 to 18 years of age from seven upazilas of the district will take part in the programme, after which, 35 players will be selected from each age group while 5 others will be wait-listed.

BCB coach Zakir Hasan and chief coach of Manikganj DSA Paresh Malakar are working to select the players. The selection program will run till Saturday afternoon, it has been learnt.



Jamaican sprint king Usain Bolt had a tough time in the 100m heats, but he powered through to finish 0.05 seconds ahead of second-placed James Dasaolu of Britain in the IAAF World Championships in London yesterday.

Bolt made to work

AFP, London

Jamaican sprint star Usain Bolt overcame a "very bad" start to successfully kick off the defence of his world 100m title on Friday, but American arch-rival Justin Gatlin was jeered by the British public.

Bolt, seeking a 12th world title in his swansong season, found himself fifth halfway into the blue riband event before putting on the afterburners to win his heat in 10.07 seconds.

"I stumbled a bit coming out of blocks, I'm not fond of these blocks," he told the BBC. "I have to get this together. It's shaky because when I did the warm up it (the blocks) pushed back. It's not what I am used to."

Bolt v Gatlin at the 2012 Olympics at the same London stadium had been billed as 'good against evil', given the American's

doping-tainted past, and so it again proved.

Gatlin, the last man to beat Bolt over 100m -- by a hundredth of a second in Rome in 2013 -- was met with loud booing and jeering when shown on the big screen before his heat and after he streaked through in a winning time of 10.05sec in his heat.

"It's not the panto season," the stadium announcer pleaded to the packed-out 60,000 seater London Stadium.

Bolt will be joined by Jamaican teammates Julian Forte, the sole sprinter to go under 10sec with 9.99, and Yohan Blake, who capitalised on Bolt's sole hiccup at global events since winning at the Beijing Olympics -- a false start -- to be crowned 2011 world champion in Daegu.

The 35-year-old Gatlin, who served a four-year ban reduced from eight for doping from 2006-10, will be joined in Saturday's semi-finals by compatriots Christian Coleman, who has this season's fastest time of 9.82sec, and Christopher Belcher.

Rabada gives SA the edge

AFP, Manchester

Kagiso Rabada took the prize wicket of Ben Stokes as South Africa held England to 260 for six on Friday's first day of the fourth Test at Old Trafford.

All-rounder Stokes, fresh from a hundred in England's 239-run victory in the third Test at The Oval, was leading a revival with the bat.

But fast bowler Rabada struck with the new ball in the penultimate over of the day when a full-length delivery, which surprised Stokes, smashed into the base of the stumps and bowled the left-handed batsman for 58. Rabada yelled in joy.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First Innings 260 for 6 (Cook 46, Root 52, Stokes; Morkel 1-58-1; Rabada 2-52, Olivier 2-72)
SOUTH AFRICA: Elgar, Kuhn, Amla, de Kock, du Plessis (capt), Bavuma, de Bruyn, Maharaj, Rabada, Morkel, Olivier.