

SPORT

Shakib takes over in times of change

SPORTS REPORTER

When Shakib Al Hasan decided to give the Test leg of the South Africa tour a miss in August 2017, few would have guessed that the fallout from what eventually turned out to be a grim tour would have Shakib taking the reins of the Test captaincy for his second stint.

That, however, is what happened as the seven-match annihilation in South Africa has brought about an epochal change in Bangladesh cricket as Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan yesterday named a new captain and vice-captain for the Test side, bringing an end to the Test captaincy of Mushfiqur Rahim almost one month after it came to light that coach Chandika Hathurusingha had tendered his resigned midway through the tour in mid-October.

It may not be immediately obvious given Bangladesh cricket's recent results, over the past two months Bangladesh have lost their most successful coach and decided to do away with their most successful Test captain. But it seems that this is a necessary tumult, and the coup has not been bloodless -- relationships had reportedly soured among the coach and seniors.

Despite being Bangladesh's most successful Test captain, Mushfiqur courted criticism throughout his tenure for his defensive captaincy and it reached a head on the recent tour of South Africa when he won the toss and

fielded first in the Tests, both of which were lost by handsome margins. The opinion in the board seemed to have shifted decisively against him, however, when he publicly lashed out at coach Hathurusingha and management after a poor showing on the field on the first day of the second Test in Bloemfontein.

"It's not as if there are absolute, specific grounds," Hassan said when asked about the captaincy change after the BCB meeting in Mirpur yesterday. "And even if there are, they cannot be revealed. Basically, we thought that there should be a change here; we want Mushfiqur to be batting at his best and we want him to concentrate on his

SHAKIB AL HASAN TEST CAPTAINCY STATS (PREVIOUS TENURE: JUL 2009-AUG 2011)			
Matches	Won	Lost	Drawn
9	1	8	0

MUSHFIQUR'S TEST CAPTAINCY STATS (TENURE: OCT 2011-OCT 2017)			
Matches	Won	Lost	Drawn
34	7	18	9

Mushfiqur was Bangladesh's most successful Test captain

batting. We want to free him of pressure. And we are not looking just at the immediate future; we are thinking about the next four-five years and it is a step to set things with a view to long-term plans. There will be changes in

other areas too."

Mushfiqur had increasingly looked like a tortured soul during the South Africa series, and had even complained about the team management directing him to field in the deep during the Bloemfontein Test. After the Test he complained that when the team won, the credit went to the management and when they lost, the captain got the blame. Although Mushfiqur's average in his 34 Tests in charge was six points higher than his career average of 35.16, his captaincy troubles seemed to have affected his normally bankable Test batting in South Africa too. That he hit a century after Mashrafe Bin Mortaza took over the ODI reins just underlines the point Hassan was making about Mushfiqur's batting.

After Mashrafe's resignation from the T20I captaincy in Sri Lanka in April, Bangladesh had three captains in three formats for six months, with Shakib taking over the T20I reins. Shakib's appointment as Test captain yesterday makes him skipper of two out of the three formats and Hassan did not rule out a return to the one captain for all formats formula.

"It could happen, but at the moment it is difficult to say," said Hassan. "There are two points of view on this -- having one captain for three formats and three captains for three formats; we were working towards the latter for a while but we are thinking of the pros and cons. At the moment there is no chance of that happening as Mashrafe is ODI captain and we see no need to change that."

WHAT THEY SAID

No reason for any problems

It is a big opportunity. I will try to give my best; the rest is up to the almighty. Our team is in a good state, we are playing very well at home. All of us know each other; we know each others' character. And everyone is very professional. So I don't see any reason for there to be problems. Instead, I think it will become easier for me if everyone shares their experience.

— **Shakib Al Hasan** after being appointed Test captain.



Wish them the best

Whatever happened Alhamdulillah for that. I wish Shakib and Riyad bhai all the best. I will continue to give my best as a player to my team and the nation and I will be always there for any support.

— **Mushfiqur Rahim** after being removed as Test captain.



BCB committees reshuffled

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Former Bangladesh national team captain Naimur Rahman Durjoy was appointed as chairman of the High Performance (HP) Committee by the Bangladesh Cricket Board, which announced the new standing committees after its recently-elected panel's second board meeting yesterday.

During the previous term Naimur was replaced in his Cricket Operations Committee post by fellow former captain Akram Khan, who retained his role as the head of the committee.

A total of seven changes were made among the 21 standing committees, which include the Women's, Marketing and Commercial, Dhaka Metropolis, Tournament, Grounds and Umpires committees.

One of the major changes from the previous standing committee is that Mahbubul

Anam, the outgoing HP Committee chairman, replaced Hanif Bhuiyan as the head of the Grounds committee. Bhuiyan however, was not named in any of the standing committees this time around

Sheikh Sohel was named chairman of the Marketing and Commercial committee in place of Kazi Inam, who replaced Gazi Golam Murtaza as head of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis. Meanwhile Murtaza was made chairman of the tournament committee.

Tanjil Chowdhury will lead the Age-group Tournament Committee while Shaiful Alam Chowdhury Nadel skips the Women's wing. The Umpires Committee, previously led by the late Nazmul Karim Tinku, will now be headed by Saiful Alam Swapon Chowdhury. The heads of all the other committees remained unchanged, save the Physically Challenged Committee which has yet to be assigned a chairman.

Committee	Chairman	Vice-chairman
Working Committee	Enayet Hussain Siraj	-
Cricket Operations Committee	Md Akram Khan	Khaled Mahmud Sujon
Finance Committee	Afzal-Ur-Rahman Sinha	Ismail Haider Mallick
Disciplinary Committee	AJM Nasir Uddin	Sheikh Sohel
Game Development Committee	Khaled Mahmud Sujon	Md Akram Khan
High Performance Committee	Naimur Rahman Durjoy	Khaled Mahmud Sujon
Tournament Committee	Gazi Golam Murtaza	Md Saiful Alam Swapon Chowdhury
Security Committee	Manzur Kader	Shaiful Alam Chowdhury Nadel
Ground Committee	Mahbubul Anam	Gazi Golam Murtaza
Facilities Management Committee	Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan	Tanjil Chowdhury
Age-Group Tournament Committee	Tanjil Chowdhury	Kazi Inam Ahmed
Umpires Committee	Md Saiful Alam Swapon Chowdhury	Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan
CCDM	Kazi Inam Ahmed	-
Medical Committee	Syed Asfaqu Islam (Titu)	Alamgir Khan
Tender and Purchase Committee	Advocate Anwarul Islam	Md Saiful Alam Swapon Chowdhury
Media and Communication Committee	Md Jalal Yunus	Sheikh Sohel
Audit Committee	Showkat Aziz Russell	Kazi Inam Ahmed
Women's Wing	Shaiful Alam Chowdhury Nadel	Nazib Ahmed
Logistics and Protocol Committee	Muhammed Ismail Haider Mallick	Advocate Anwarul Islam
Marketing and Commercial Committee	Sheikh Sohel	Ismail Haider Mallick
Committee for Physically Challenged Cricket	Yet to be named	Yet to be named
BPL	Chairman Afzal-Ur-Rahman Sinha	Secretary Ismail Haider Mallick
BPL Governing Council		

Coaching structure to be changed?

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Although the big news surrounding Bangladesh cricket yesterday was the reappointment of Shakib Al Hasan as Test captain, Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan hinted while talking of the captaincy that there will be other changes too. And from Hassan's words and information from sources close to the action, the changes being spoken of could well be in the coaching structure, with former South African opener and India's 2011 World Cup winning coach Gary Kirsten now well into the mix, but apparently not just as a head coach.

It was also learnt that Bangladesh's

upcoming series against Sri Lanka January, for which the national camp will start on December 27, will be played without a new coach and that BCB director and former captain Khaled Mahmud is likely to act as team director during the series.

"The surprising thing is, we got two more CVs today [Sunday]," said Hassan after the BCB meeting yesterday. "But other than that we have shortlisted the candidates, and after the meeting the list has become shorter, with two new names appearing today. Other than that, there is someone else with whom almost everything has been finalised other than his remuneration and joining date. We have to wait a bit for that."

Sources informed that the two new names could be South Africa's Neil

Mckenzie and Sri Lanka's Hashan Tillakaratne. Hassan spoke of former Tigers coach Richard Pybus, who gave his presentation last week and former West Indies cricketer Phil Simmons, who presented yesterday. Kirsten's name was also in the mix but it was learned that while the board is very eager for him not just to be a head coach but perform a bigger role directing the country's cricket, there is not a lot of chance of the South African accepting the role.

Less murky is the appointment of a new coach before the Sri Lanka series in January; Hassan said that there is no need for a head coach and that someone from within the board will likely be appointed to oversee matters.

SL end drought with India rout

AFP, Dharamsala



New captain Thisara Perera Sunday hailed Suranga Lakmal as Sri Lanka's premier fast bowler after he led the visitors to a seven-wicket win over India in the first one-day international.

Lakmal returned career-best ODI figures of 4 for 13 to help dismiss India for just 112, with Sri Lanka achieving the target in 20.4 overs and taking a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The visitors lost two early wickets in their chase before opening batsman Upul Tharanga made a 46-ball 49 to help his team end a 12-match losing streak.

"First of all we have to give 200 percent credit to our bowlers. They were disciplined, and bowled the right length and the right areas," Perera said.

"This is an unplayable wicket. We didn't expect that. We expected 250-260, but after that Suranga and Angelo (Mathews) bowled very well.

"At the moment, (Lakmal) is our first fast bowler. He's done very well in the Test series as well," Perera said of Lakmal, who took eight wickets in the three Tests against India. Tharanga, who lost his limited-overs captaincy

to Perera ahead of the series, was denied his fifty by Hardik Pandya who had the left-handed batsman caught at first slip.

Angelo Mathews, 25 not out, and Niroshan Dickwella, on 26, then steered their team home for a win savoured by the visitors after losing the Test series 1-0 last week.

"I have to mention that Upul gave a good start and he's one of our best openers," Perera said of Tharanga, who had opted out of his team's Twenty20 match in Lahore and was subsequently removed as captain last month.

Pace spearhead Lakmal set up victory for the islanders after Perera won the toss and elected to bowl first at the picturesque ground overlooking the Himalayas.

The lanky paceman rattled the Indian batting during his extended spell of 10 overs as India collapsed to 29-7 before Mahendra Singh Dhoni fought back with a gritty 65 to take the total past 100.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: 112 all out in 38.2 overs (Dhoni 65, Yadav 19; Lakmal 4-13, Pradeep 2-37)
SRI LANKA: 114 for 3 in 20.4 overs (Tharanga 49, Mathews 25 not out, Dickwella 26 not out; Bumrah 1-32)
Result: Sri Lanka won by seven wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Suranga Lakmal



Rain forces Rangpur Riders' batsmen Brendon McCullum (L) and Johnson Charles off the field during the second qualifier of the BPL against Comilla Victorians at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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To be continued

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There were chaotic scenes in the second qualifier game between Rangpur Riders and Comilla Victorians last night, after rain had earlier forced a stop to the game in the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla national stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Rangpur were batting on 55 for one in seven overs when the rain caused a stoppage at 6:35pm and according to the match officials the match will continue from the same position from 6:00 pm today.

After a lot of drama between the BPL governing council officials, Bangladesh Cricket Board officials and the captains of both teams on the field during the break, the match officials decided to extend the cut-off time by two hours to 11.15 pm and removed the covers from the pitch. According to the BPL playing conditions, in the case of rain interrupting and causing a match to be abandoned, the team placed higher in the points table would go through to the final. If

the rules were followed, Comilla would have gone through yesterday.

Victorians captain Tamim, along with team officials, were seen engaged in a huge argument after the cut-off time was extended for two hours.

According to the Victorians captain the pitch was not ready for the match and he was not willing to play in such a situation yesterday, but the BPL officials were keen to continue the match. Eventually there was an announcement at the ground at 10:10pm that the match would continue from where it stopped.

Earlier, Rangpur got off to a flying start after being asked to bat despite losing the centurion of the previous game Chris Gayle when he went for a slog to off-spinner Mahedi Hasan but only managed to get a top edge and was caught out for three.

However, fellow opener Johnson Charles took charge and smashed four sixes and four fours. He was unbeaten on a 26-ball 46 alongside Brendon McCullum at the other end on four.

'Was Tamim the vice captain?'

SPORTS REPORTER

Among the many changes that the Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan detailed after the BCB meeting in Mirpur yesterday, that one of them was not much remarked upon just shows the pligh of the cricket vice-captain.

Mahmudullah Riyad was named the new vice-captain, replacing Tamim Iqbal in the role, and will deputise for Shakib Al Hasan in the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka. The elegant right-hander will probably not want to celebrate much when he hears that the BCB boss had to say about the vice-captaincy situation.

"Was Tamim [the vice-captain]?" Hassan asked one of his colleagues during the press conference yesterday when reminded that he had just named a new vice-captain. "Was he? He is the T20 vice-captain, and he will remain the T20 vice-captain."

The BCB boss was not aware of the identity of his Test vice-captain, and that will not imbue Mahmudullah with confidence in his new senior role. Neither will it help Tamim, whose T20 vice-captaincy was made to sound like a consolation prize by his president, handle the loss of the Test deputy role any better. But according to the BCB boss, it really is not a big loss.



Suranga Lakmal's four for 13 ripped through the Indian batting order before Sri Lanka cruised to the victory target with seven wickets in hand in the first ODI in Dharamsala yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP