



The two choices for stand-in captain -- Mushfigur Rahim (L) and Mahmudullah Riyad -share a laugh during training in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Riyad to lead in Tests

SPORTS REPORTER





Mahmudullah Riyad will lead the Tigers in the two-match Test series against Zimbabwe from

November 3 in Sylhet in the absence of the injured Shakib Al Hasan, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

"There were two options -- Mushfigur [Rahim] and [Mahmudullah] Riyad. Mushfiqur wouldn't have been a bad choice. They (the cricket operations committee) came to me with Mushfigur's name but what I told them was: 'If you make Mushfiq captain, then you have to keep him as captain'," Hasan said.

"'You will hand Mushfigur captaincy for the Zimbabwe series and then if Shakib comes

back for the West Indies series and says that he will play then what would happen? Will I tell Mushfiqur to give up captaincy again? That would have been an insult [to Mushfigur] and I did not want to let that happen," Hassan explained as his reasoning for picking Riyad.

"Tell me to give Mushfigur captaincy and I will say that in the board meeting. That is a different issue and if I am convinced then will agree. But you will bring him and then relieve him of that duty... that can't be done with Mushfigur," he continued.

Hassan also said that the hardest decision in his tenure as BCB president was to remove Mushfigur from captaincy in 2014.

"It was one of the hardest decisions in my life [to remove Mushfigur from captaincy], the second was Shakib's punishment. There was nothing harder than this as he [Mushfigur] was the most successful captain," Hassan informed



Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (R) talks with team physic Thihan Chandramohan about his injury at the players' dressing room of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

'Shakib in WC is top priority'

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan has been under fire recently because of the perception that it was the BCB boss who forced star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan to play in the Asia Cup. There has been doubt recently about Shakib's availability for the 2019 World Cup in England next summer, with Shakib saying that the infection in his finger has to subside and then it would require six further months to have a surgery. However, upon returning from having treatment in Melbourne, Shakib said that the pain was gone and that he would be able to start playing after a month. In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star's Bishwajit Roy and Sakeb Subhan yesterday, the BCB boss said that Shakib playing the World Cup in England next summer was the top priority and that all cricket leading up to that -- including the Indian Premier League, the Bangladesh Premier League and the New Zealand tour -- were unimportant in comparison. The following are excerpts from the interview at his Gulshan residence:

The Daily Star (TDS): What did you want to say about your role in the Shakib fiasco?

Nazmul Hassan (NH): Shakib told me after getting hurt that he wanted to go to Bangkok for treatment, and he went to Bangkok. Before the Nidahas Trophy [in March] I asked him what the state of his hand was. He said that there was no pain, so I said then you should play. He said that he was afraid. I asked him to go to Bangkok and show a doctor, and he went, but after that there was no feedback. So I assumed that he was not going with the team, probably because the doctor said that he couldn't play. Then, during the Nidahas Trophy the Prime Minister [Sheikh Hasina] called me, asking where I was and asking to talk to the players. I wasn't in Sri Lanka. She told me to immediately get on a plane, and insisted upon it when I said that I had not planned to go. Once Apa tells you to do something you cannot say no. She also asked me to buy a ticket for Shakib. After we landed he told me that he wanted to go to Australia for more treatment, saying that he may be able to play. But then again there was no feedback. Then with two days to go till the match against Sri Lanka, I heard in the morning that he had submitted his passport in the Indian High Commission, for the IPL. I said to take the passport back, because as he was not playing the Nidahas Trophy, he couldn't play the IPL. Shakib called and said that he can play. I said that he should come to the Nidahas Trophy if the doctor has cleared him. He replied that he would come if we reach the final, to which I said that if we lose the next game then there won't be a final to play, so he doesn't need to come. He came the next day.

After that incident [his finger being infected during the Asia Cup and having to leave the tournament midway], I caught hold of them [BCB media team] and asked where talk of



His [Shakib's] decision-making wasn't... for example, he told me that he would talk to the doctor and decide about playing but then he took the physio's word and played. He told me he would go to America from Dubai, but then came back to Dhaka. But in my mind it is clear, we never forced him to play.

the operation had come from. [BCB chief physician | Debashish [Chowdhury] told me that he did not know. Because no doctor has said that, and rather said that there was no use doing surgery and that he would have to go on like this. His cricket would not be impacted. If nothing else worked, then he would have the operation as a last resort.

The World Cup is the most important tournament, and the next is Asia Cup. Bilateral series and other tournaments come after that. Then the franchisees like CPL, IPL and BPL. BPL is most important because it is our tournament. But compared to the World Cup, BPL and IPL are unimportant. Not even the New Zealand tour. My desire is that he becomes fully fit and then goes to play the World Cup and after he came back we will all sit to talk about it. After I said that, he said the very next day that he was okay, and that he would actually want to play against West Indies [at home]. Before that he said that there would not be a

surgery for six months to one year. Six months means right before the World Cup -- there won't be a surgery right before the World Cup, that I can tell you. Now if he wants to play before that, I won't stop him if the doctors and physio agree. If the infection goes down and surgery is required, he can have surgery by January and start playing in the Ireland tri-series in April to prepare for the World Cup. I will react if he wants to have the surgery right before the World Cup.

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He [Shakib] is still young. His

TDS: If it turns out that Shakib's infection had worsened under the physio's [Thihan Chandramohan's] care during the Asia Cup and it was due to his negligence, will action be taken?

NH: I have ask for all the doctors' report and I will get them tomorrow [Wednesday], and if I see in any of the reports from any doctor that there was mention of the operation, I will not let them [medical staff] go. I also asked the physio to submit his report immediately.

TDS: There is also a perception of you being too involved in every aspect of Bangladesh cricket. Does that mean the committees and subcommittees are not fully capable of doing their jobs?

NH: I don't know why they can't quite do it. But I cannot sit back and see the bad results. When I see day after day that the team are losing three early wickets; I cannot sit back. Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza] asked for Imrul [Kayes] midway through the Asia Cup, and I said okay, might as well bring in Soumya [Sarkar] too. I do not know what Mashrafe will say now, but all the decisions were taken after consulting him and according to his wishes.

I have to be involved. [Former coach Chandika] Hathurusingha was the only one I knew who planned the minutest details. He used to decide on what balls to use, what type of pitches. He did not trust anyone, not even the selectors. Even if the groundsman told him about a pitch he would not take his word until he actually inspected the pitch himself. We have not yet gotten someone who has such detailed plans. His biggest problem, however, was communicating with players.

Another example is when Mustafizur had surgery in London [in August 2016]. I called him the day before the surgery to ask if he was scared. He said 'no I am not, but Uncle, could you tell the doctors that I am very afraid of needles?' The very next day I flew to London to be by his side. The players want me to be involved. Mashrafe once asked the Prime Minister to tell me to go on tours.

hits BD

SPORTS REPORTER

The ICC Cricket World Cup Trophy will arrive in Bangladesh today for a four-day tour which is a part of its journey around the globe. Fans in Dhaka, Sylhet and Chattogram will have the chance to see the trophy in their respective cities before it is taken elsewhere on 21 October.

After a photo session with under privileged children and members of the national team at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, the trophy will be on display at the centre court of the Jamuna Future Park. It will be taken to the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium and the MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram.

The next World Cup will take place in England and Wales from May 30 to July 14 in 2019. Bangladesh is the trophy's sixth stopover.

Liton's revival en route?

SPORTS REPORTER



Even before his international debut three years ago, wicketkeeper-

batsman Liton Das was considered as the next big thing. However, the 24year-old was unable to reach those expectations even though he was granted enough opportunities to do so, and was eventually left out of the national team.

Perhaps it was a much needed reality check for the talented cricketer who, despite having all the requisite attributes of a top batsman, was unable to lift his game in the international stage.

However, when he was provided with yet another opportunity and the license to play freely from the team management, Liton made no mistake this time around. After getting a few few promising starts during the Tigers' tour of West Indies, the stylish righthander eventually broke his shackles and registered his maiden ODI ton against India in the Asia Cup final in



I won't say that I have gained full confidence but it's true that I am more pressure free than before. I have got some self belief and when you do well, you get a good feeling from inside. I am still not a big player but I will try to perform consistently.

Bangladesh opener Liton Das

the United Arab Emirates last month.

Being shy in nature, Liton had hardly expressed himself in front of the media before but following that century, he seems to be more confident both on and off the field.

"I won't say that I have gained the full confidence but you can say that I am pressure free and also got some self belief in me. Whenever someone does well, it gives a good feeling from inside," Liton told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. An example of his new found confi-

dence is reflected in his batting as Liton

went on to smash the fastest first class double hundred by a Bangladeshi batsman in the second round of the

ongoing National Cricket League. Liton, however, rates his maiden ODI hundred higher than the double ton and assured that it came as a huge relief for him following a disappoint-

ing start to his career. "I would keep the international century ahead as you all know I have been on the back foot for a long time and it was important for me to perform. At the same time, it was also my maiden international hundred so it's a huge thing for me," he added.



Zimbabwe players come out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on their arrival yesterday for the upcoming ODI and Test series against Bangladesh.

Under-19s start well

SPORTS REPORTER

The visiting Bangladesh under-19 team started off well on the opening day of their first four-day match against the Sri Lanka under-19 team at the NCC ground in Colombo yesterday.

Electing to bat, Bangladesh ended the day's play on 209 for three in 58 overs with skipper Towhid Hridoy remaining unbeaten on 54 while Shamim Hossain scored 43 not out.

All of Bangladesh's batsmen got starts. The opening stand of Prantik Nawroz and Tanzid Hasan added 54 runs before the latter was dismissed on 45. Prantik was dismissed on 42 while Mahmudul Hasan departed on 19 before Hridoy and Shamim added an unbeaten 70-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

Chamindu Wijesinghe, Ashen Daniel, and Sandun Mendis took a wicket each for Sri Lanka.

Taskin gets his rhythm

SPORTS REPORTER



Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed finally got his rhythm for Dhaka Metropolis on the second day of

their third round match in the National Cricket League against Chattogram yesterday.

Taskin picked up three wickets for 46 runs from his 13.3 overs, leaving Chattogram to struggle on 187 for 6 at stumps in their Tier-2 fixture at the

Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura. Tasamul Haque remained unbeaten on 81 but Chattogram

SAJEDUL... 6 for 81 Mominul Haque's 34 was the second highest

score for the side. Earlier, Dhaka resumed the day on 266 for 6 doned without a ball being bowled due to a wet

post 287 all-out. Overnight batsman Zabid Hossain, who resumed on 79, was dismissed on 90 runs. In the Tier-1 match at the Sheikh Abu Naser

Stadium, Rangpur ended the day on 200 for four with six wickets in hand against Khulna.

> Rangpur opener Jahid Javed top scored while Khulna pacer Al Amin Hossain bagged three wickets.

Khulna, resuming the day on 272 for seven, were all-out on 304 as Rangpur's left-arm seamer Sajedul Islam bagged six wickets and regis-

tered his fifth five-wicket haul. Meanwhile, the Barishal versus Rajshahi tie Barishal Divisional

kept losing wickets at regular intervals. Skipper Stadium and the Dhaka versus Sylhet encounter at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium Academy Ground were both abanand lost their last four wickets for just 21 runs to outfield for the second consecutive day.

HIGHLIGHTS

 Left-arm seamer Sajedul Islam made his Test debut ten years back but he somehow lost his way in the middle. However, the thirty year old pacer continued to find himself in the domestic circuit as he bagged his fifth five-wicket haul for Rangpur against Khulna on the second day. Sajedul ended up with figures of six for 81 from his 22.1 overs, which will surely boost his morale for the coming days.

After recovering from a back injury, Taskin Ahmed picked up three wickets for Dhaka Metropolis. However, the pacer had to leave the field at one point after suffering a cramp. The good news is though that the 23-year-old eventually returned to the field and looked fit.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA V RANGPUR KHULNA: First innings 304 (Anamul 56, Soumya 76, Ziaur 53; Sajedul 6-81, Sanjit 2-80) RANGPUR: First innings 200 for

out; Al Amin 3-37)

4 (Jahid 64, Sohrawardi 47 not

DHAKA METRO V CHATTOGRAM **DHAKA METRO:** First innings 287 (Zabid 90, Shamsur 51 rtd; Nayeem 3-74, Mehedi 2-31) **CHATTOGRAM:** First innings 187 for 6 (Tasamul 81 not out, Mominul 34; Taskin 3-46)

AFP, Abu Dhabi



Debutant opener Fakhar Zaman and skipper Sarfraz Ahmed missed hundreds by six runs

each but still revived Pakistan on the first day of the second and final Test in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. Fakhar and Sarfraz scored 94 each and

helped Pakistan recover from 57 for 5 to a total of 282 after winning the toss and electing to bat on a slow turning pitch at Sheikh Zayed Stadium.

Before the close Pakistan grabbed two wickets, including that of Usman Khawaja for three, as Australia finished on 20-2, with Aaron Finch on 13 and nightwatchman Peter Siddle dismissed off the last ball of the

day for four. Australia trail Pakistan by 262 runs with

eight wickets intact. Fast bowler Mohammad Abbas had

Fakhar, Sarfraz rescue Pak

SCORES IN BRIEF

Sarfraz 94, Yasir 28; Starc 2-37, Lyon 4-78, Labuschagne 3-45)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 20 for 2 (Finch 13 not out; Abbas 2-9)

Pakistani to the milestone of 50 wickets with Wagar Younis, Mohammad Asif and Shabbir Ahmed. The record is held by teammate Yasir Shah who completed 50 wickets in nine matches. Sarfraz was frustrated to miss his fourth

Abbas became joint second-fastest

Khawaja -- who scored a fighting 141 to lead

Australia's fightback for a draw in the first

Test in Dubai last week -- caught behind for

his 50th Test wicket in 10 Tests.

"Yes, it's disappointing to miss a hundred but I am happy the way we revived the innings and then got two wickets, including

Test hundred but happy with the fightback.

that of Khawaja, so for me it is an even position," said Sarfraz. PAKISTAN: First innings 282 (Fakhar 94,