



With their World Cup campaign in England wrapped up, the Bangladesh team returned to Dhaka yesterday. (Clockwise) Although captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza put on a brave face, his pained expression spoke volumes. Meanwhile misfiring opener Tamim Iqbal seemed less than interested with the media. Pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who was one of the few standout performers for the team, can be seen ushering his luggage.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Uncertainty over Tigers' coaching staff

SPORTS REPORTER

If you consider how Bangladesh opened their ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 campaign with a win against South Africa, the Tigers suffered a rather disappointing end in the quadrennial mega event as they finished eighth in the ten-team tournament.

Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was a cut above the rest of the team when it came to consistency, leaving a lot of 'ifs and buts' to be answered following the tournament.

Meanwhile, there have been talks over the future of Bangladesh head coach Steve

Rhodes, whose contract with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is set to last till the 2020 World T20. However, there is a portion of the BCB that are looking for a replacement for the Englishman.

It would be a difficult task for the BCB to find an alternative soon though and it was learnt that the board is willing to continue with Rhodes till the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka later this month.

In addition, other members of the coaching staff such as fielding consultant Ryan Cook will have his contract expire after the World Cup while bowling coach Courtney

Walsh's four-year contract, which was signed in 2016, will also end after the World Cup. Interestingly, there have been talks that the West Indian legend may not renew his contract with the BCB.

It was also learnt that some vested quarters of the BCB are displeased with Bangladesh's bowling performances and that they are looking for a change in the post for the bowling coach.

According to the chairman of the BCB's cricket operations committee Akram Khan, they are set to decide over the future of the Tigers coaching staff in the upcoming board

meeting.

"There will be a board meeting to take place by July 20 to 22 and we are going to discuss about the issue of the coach's contract in that meeting. Before that I can't make a comment on this topic at the moment," Akram told the media.

There were also talks over the future of the Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as there were speculations over whether the inspirational captain is going to retire from cricket following the World Cup.

According to sources though, the BCB is willing to provide the opportunity for

Mashrafe to retire from cricket in any of the home series later this year. It was also informed that Mashrafe is willing to retire from cricket at home.

The Tigers are scheduled to tour Sri Lanka later this month and although Mashrafe is yet to decide his future, it is assumed that the Sri Lanka tour is going to be the last ever tour for the 35-year-old.

Lastly, it was also informed that a few of the players are set to take rest during the upcoming Sri Lanka tour with Shakib being one of those players who had already asked for a break from the Sri Lanka tour.

We're feeling as sorry as the nation: Sarfaraz

DAWN.COM

Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed, who returned early morning on Sunday from the United Kingdom after participating in the 2019 ICC World Cup, held a press conference in Karachi.

Pakistan failed to qualify for the semifinals on net run-rate difference with New Zealand after both the teams earned 11 points each from nine league matches.

The skipper said that the team had realised the issue of run-rate after its first match of the World Cup tournament — in which West Indies dismissed Pakistan for a disappointing 105 — and later tried to win matches with good margins but the pitches were not favourable.

"We are feeling as sorry as the nation [after exit from World Cup]. No one goes there to lose," he said, acknowledging that the performance of the national team was not exemplary in the first five matches of the World Cup.

"After the first match, we gained momentum but unfortunately we could not play against Sri Lanka because of rain and in the two next matches — against Australia and India — our performance was not good."

"The next seven days after the defeat to India were very tough for the team. After the match, we took a two-day break and then I called a meeting with all 15 players, without the management. I discussed everything I had observed during the first five matches, all that we were doing wrong, and all the players responded well and

gave their feedback.

"The team then performed very well in the remaining four matches. All players, juniors as well as seniors, played their part and I am happy with them as a captain," said Sarfaraz, also praising the coach and the management for tackling the players after the defeat to India.

"As far as Shoaib [Malik] is concerned, unfortunately, he was not a part of the final match because we tried to go with a winning combination. He was given a farewell by the team and our best wishes are with him.

"Now, we will take a break for the next 20 days and then make a new return."

When asked about his demeanour during the first five matches and whether he was under pressure from anyone, Sarfaraz said there was no such pressure from either Coach Mickey Arthur or chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq.

He added that he was not giving up his captaincy but clarified that the final decision would be taken by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

When asked if he had a say in the team selection, he said: "The team was constituted by consensus."

Sarfaraz, who led the team to victory against India and won the Champions Trophy in 2017, has faced harsh criticism for Pakistan's miserable run at the start of the World Cup and particularly the match against India. He, however, received a warm welcome at the Karachi airport upon return.

World Cup is 'England's to lose', says Lyon

AFP, Manchester

Australia off-spinner Nathan Lyon has tried to ramp up the pressure on England by insisting "it's their World Cup to lose" ahead of a hugely anticipated semi-final clash between the arch rivals on Thursday.

Reigning champions Australia were denied top spot in the group stage after a dramatic 10-run defeat by South Africa at Old Trafford on Saturday.

That result means they will face Ashes foes England in Birmingham for the right to play in the final at Lord's on July 14.

Australia beat England by 64 runs in a group match and finished above Eoin Morgan's men in the table.

But off-spinner Lyon, who controversially said he wanted to end the Test careers of some England players ahead of Australia's 4-0 home Ashes win of 2017/18, insisted the burden of expectation was on the tournament hosts, even though England have never won the World Cup.

"They're full of world-class players and they've been the number one team for a couple of years now," Lyon said after Saturday's match.

"They should be going into this World Cup as favourites, it's all on them. It's their World Cup to lose if you ask me.

"We've got nothing to lose, we've only got stuff to gain. That's the exciting thing about it."

Mitchell Starc took two for 59 against the Proteas to move him to 26 wickets as he equalled compatriot Glenn McGrath's record for most scalps at a single World Cup.

The left-arm fast bowler aggravated a right ankle injury by landing awkwardly in a foot hole but Starc was optimistic he would be fit to face England.

"I had a bit of ice on it but it's pretty good. Let's see how it pulls up (on Sunday) morning but I'm feeling pretty confident with it all and have



been throughout the tournament so far," he said...

'BLUEPRINT FOR ENGLAND' Australia beat England by 64 runs at Lord's earlier in the World Cup, with Starc taking four for 43.

Starc said the manner of that victory has given Australia a template for Thursday, even though England opener Jason Roy, who missed that match with a hamstring injury, is now fit and in the runs again.

"The blueprint the last time we played England was to take early wickets," he said.

"They'll get Jason Roy back for the

fixture, so we're going to have a few days now to discuss if we need to change anything but I think the way we played England last time was a great blueprint moving forward."

Starc unsettled Morgan at Lord's with his use of the short ball, prompting the England captain to try to hook his way out of trouble only to be caught in the deep.

Former England captain Kevin Pietersen even suggested Morgan was scared of facing Starc but the bowler himself was less certain.

"I don't know, is he? You'll have to ask him," Starc said.

India in top shape, says Bumrah

AFP, Leeds

Jasprit Bumrah says India have a "good headache" with every player in top form going into Tuesday's World Cup semifinal against New Zealand.

Pace bowler Bumrah claimed three wickets in India's win over Sri Lanka on Saturday at Headingley, with Virat Kohli's side taking top spot in the final group table.

Australia's loss to South Africa on Saturday means India face New Zealand in the first semi-final in Manchester, while Aaron Finch's side take on hosts England in Birmingham on Thursday.

Opening batsman Rohit Sharma scored his record fifth century in a single World Cup on Saturday and lead the tournament's batting charts with 647 runs.

Kohli has hit five half-centuries to play a key part in his team's seven victories in nine group games and Bumrah believes the skipper has a wealth of quality options to pick from when he names his line-up for the semi-final.

"Everybody's had a good run here. It's been a good campaign for us," Bumrah said after becoming the second fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets on Saturday.

"Everybody has chipped in with wickets and with the bat. There's a healthy competition.

It's a good headache to have when everyone's performing and everyone's in good nick and that's something you love to have going into a crucial game like next week's semifinal.



Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed faced media after the side returned home from their World Cup campaign in England yesterday, where they narrowly missed out on a semifinal spot on net run-rate.

PHOTO: AFP