

SPORT



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Although the announcement of Bangladesh's new head coach took precedence yesterday, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had his share of the limelight. Mashrafe attended a meeting with the BCB and asked for two months' time to decide his future.

Mash seeks two months to decide on retirement

SPORTS REPORTER

Ever since Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza said he would think about retirement after the World Cup, there have been whispers about when that day would come.

After the Tigers' World Cup campaign ended, those discussions gathered even more steam. According to sources, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) even wanted to host one-off ODI against Zimbabwe at home in September to give the inspirational cricketer a proper send-off.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan wanted to have a discussion with Mashrafe and arrange a grand farewell for the Tigers' most successful skipper and Mashrafe arrived at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday to be part of that meeting ahead of the announcement of the new head coach.

Hassan later revealed that the 35-year-old asked for two more months to think about his decision.

It was learned that Mashrafe was emotional during the meeting and, according to a

source close to the board, was also annoyed that he was not informed about the one-off game arranged for his farewell, only finding out about it through the media.

"We asked him about arranging the one-day game against Zimbabwe and wanted to know his thoughts. He thinks it's too early because we still have a lot of time before the next ODI series, which is around March next year. It is better for him if he gets two months' time to think about it and make a decision. He wanted two months and it was also fine with us because we don't have any ODIs any time soon," Hassan told reporters yesterday.

There may be a few other reasons for Mashrafe postponing his retirement, but the BCB boss said he would prefer the player make the decision.

"It is not only board's responsibility. It should come from the player too. Suppose a player doesn't want to retire and thinks: 'If they want to drop me, let them do that'. Then what will you do? Our job is to inform and we want to do it properly to bid a good farewell. If the player can take the decision, he can. Otherwise the board will take the decision," Nazmul concluded.

Can Domingo buck the trend?

SPORTS REPORTER



All speculation regarding the head coach position of the national cricket team were put to rest when Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan announced the appointment of former South Africa coach Russell Domingo to the post during a press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

Former New Zealand coach Mike Hesson was linked with the Tigers and was one of the top names on the BCB's shortlist while Mickey Arthur, the former Pakistan coach, was also in consideration. However, Domingo topped those high-profile names, among others, as he was the best fit for the Tigers according to the criteria set out by the BCB.

Among the different criteria, Hassan pointed to availability as the prime criterion and that played a crucial part behind appointing Domingo.

"There were certain criteria that we thought were most important while choosing the head coach and if we go one by one then the first criterion would be 'availability'. There were many who wanted the role but they are not available at the moment and cannot join the team now. So, availability played a great role while appointing the head coach," Hassan told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

"Another thing that we considered was who would be able to join the team on a full-time basis. Taking these into consideration -- who would be able to join us now and on a full-time basis -- we were left with two names. From them,

we selected Russell Domingo," the BCB president explained.

Bangladesh will be looking to develop promising youngsters that are coming through the pipeline with the aim of rotating the team from time to time. With Domingo being selected mainly on the basis of his availability, the appointment could pan out well as the South African can work more with youngsters and groom them.

However, coaches' tenures ending prematurely has been a common theme for Bangladesh cricket for a while.

Chandika Hathurusingha, under whom Bangladesh had the most success -- reaching the quarterfinals of the 2015 World Cup and recording ODI series wins against Pakistan, India and South Africa and historic Test wins against England and Australia

-- left the job with almost two years remaining on his contract. The 50-year old submitted his resignation to BCB on November 9, 2017 after a disappointing tour of South Africa.

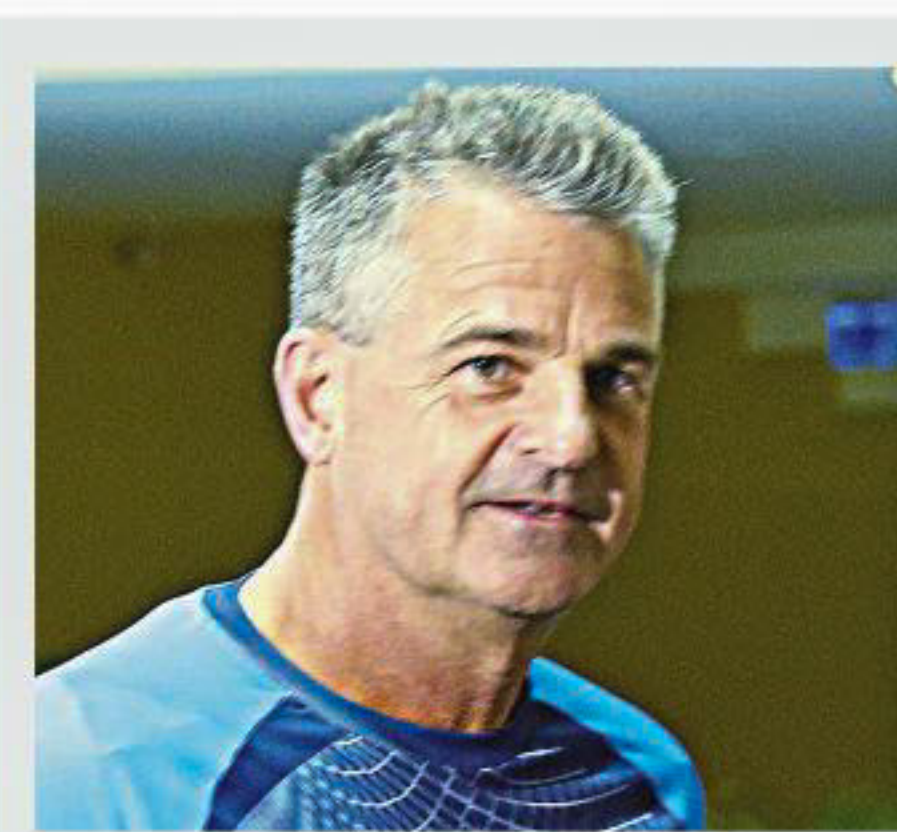
His successor and the last man to hold the post, Steve Rhodes, who was initially appointed till the T20 World Cup in 2020, also failed to complete his tenure. The BCB parted ways with him last month in an attempt to revamp the backroom staff following the World Cup in England.

After more than a month of seeing the head coach position vacant, the BCB appointed Domingo on a two-year contract. The 44-year old South African is set to arrive in Dhaka on August 21 to take charge but it remains to be seen whether he can fulfil what is expected of him or if he will follow the path of his predecessors.



CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the appointment of Chandika Hathurusingha as head coach of the Bangladesh national team on May 19, 2014. The board had initially signed a two-year deal with the Sri Lankan which began on July 1, 2014. Hathurusingha was handed a three-year extension of his contract in mid-2016, however, the 50-year-old submitted a resignation letter to the BCB on November 9, 2017 with about two years to go on his contract.



STEVE RHODES

Englishman Steve Rhodes was appointed as head coach of the Bangladesh national team on June 7, 2018. Rhodes's contract was supposed to see him at the Tigers' helm until after the T20 World Cup in 2020. However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board announced on July 7, 2019 -- almost immediately after Tigers' abysmal World Cup campaign ended -- that they had cut ties with the 55-year-old.



RUSSELL DOMINGO

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officially announced the appointment of Russell Domingo as the Bangladesh national team's head coach yesterday. The 44-year-old South African has agreed to a two-year term with the BCB and is expected to arrive in Dhaka on 21 August to take charge of the Tigers.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Bangladesh cricketers Mohammad Mithun (L) and Rubel Hossain are pictured during running drills. The two are among the 35 players who were called up for a conditioning camp ahead of the one-off Test against Afghanistan.

Fresh faces in 35-man list

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has called up 35 cricketers for a conditioning camp ahead of the one-off Test against Afghanistan and the following T20I tri-nation series featuring Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan. Interestingly, Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was also included in the 35-member list even though there are no ODI matches scheduled for the upcoming series.

"You know Mashrafe was advised to stay away from cricketing activities for 21 days due to a hamstring injury for which he had missed the Sri Lanka tour. He [Mashrafe] is under the national payroll, so we have to look into his fitness. We included Mashrafe as a part of his rehabilitation programme," said chief selector Minhajul Abedin yesterday.

Mohammad Saifuddin was the only notable omission from the list but it was expected as the all-rounder has been complaining of back pain. The BCB are also considering the possibility of sending the all-rounder abroad to have a better examination of the back issue which has plagued the player for the past nine years. "Saifuddin may be included later if his rehabilitation starts," informed Minhajul. "We called up some fresh faces from

the High Performance programme as we are going to play a T20I series and there is also a young leg-spinner [Aminul Islam]," he added.

The camp is set to begin on August 19 and players who were called up are expected to report to the national team strength and conditioning coach Mario Villavarayen. Villavarayen will conduct the conditioning camp for four to five days before the Bangladesh's new head coach Russell Domingo takes the reigns later this week.

Afghanistan will arrive in Dhaka on August 30. The one-off Test will take place at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram from September 5 while the tri-nation series will start on September 13.

PLAYERS IN CONDITIONING CAMP

Imrul Kayes, Soumya Sarkar, Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mahmudullah Riyad, Liton Das, Mohammad Mithun, Shadman Islam, Jahirul Islam, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Momtazul Haque, Sabbir Rahman, Mosaddek Hossain, Shafiqul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Ariful Haque, Farhad Reza, Abu Jayed, Abu Haider, Taijul Islam, Yasir Ali, Nazmul Hossain, Saif Hasan, Afif Hossain, Nayeem Hasan, Nayeem Shaik, Shahidul Islam, Shafiqul Islam, Yasir Arafat, Mehidy Hasan, Aminul Islam and Ebadot Hossain.

Lara, Sarwan to help WI

ICC

Former West Indies batsmen Brian Lara and Ramnaresh Sarwan have been enlisted by the management to work with the team's current lot ahead of the two-Test series against India, Cricket West Indies announced on Saturday.

West Indies have shown some promising signs in recent times. In their most recent Test series, they triumphed 2-1 over a highly-ranked England side on home soil, but barring captain Jason Holder and wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich, none of their batsmen was able to score consistently. In a quest to maximise the returns from top-order batsmen like John Campbell, Roston Chase, Shimron Hetmyer and Shai Hope, the management have called upon Lara and Sarwan, whose Test careers yielded a total of 17,795 runs, for guidance.

The duo will work with the West Indies batsmen in the pre-series camp in Antigua as they prepare for their foray into the ICC World Test Championship.

'We can crack top 4'

After all the speculation about who the Tigers' new head coach would be since Steve Rhodes departed in July this year, Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan yesterday announced former South Africa head coach Russell Domingo's appointment. Domingo has been given charge for the next two years with the aim of reforming the team for the 2023 World Cup. According to the BCB president, it was Domingo's interest to work with the Tigers on a full-time basis and his availability that were the biggest plus points. The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin, along with a reporter from another national daily, contacted Domingo, who is currently in South Africa and expected to join the Tigers from August 21, over phone to ask him about his views and future plan in an exclusive interview. The excerpts from that interview are given below:

TDS: Bangladesh are at a point of revival, having finished lowly in World Cup before losing a series in Sri Lanka. Do you see it as a challenge to start with?

Russell Domingo (RD): World Cups are so closely-contested but Bangladesh certainly played better than their position in the log shows. The Sri Lanka tour was always going to be tough coming off the World Cup so I wouldn't read too much into that.

TDS: How much have you seen of Bangladesh's growth since 2015, the year which saw Bangladesh begin their rise. You had toured the country with the South African team back then.

RD: Bangladesh are no longer an easy game for the top teams. I've experienced it as coach of South Africa. Formidable at home, still trying to learn to compete away from home. And that is a massive point for us going forward.

TDS: What interested you in taking the Bangladesh job?

RD: Bangladesh definitely seem to be the

team that has developed and grown the most over the past 5 years. The possibilities are endless with this team and, combined with the passion shown by their supporters, Bangladesh can only continue to go from strength to strength.

TDS: What are your ambitions with Bangladesh?

RD: I really feel that we can make our way into the top four [in the rankings] of international cricket... learning to win away from home whilst developing some new players that can take the team forward in the next 5 years.

TDS: Having taken the role just now, what is your aim in the immediate home series against Afghanistan and Zimbabwe?

RD: The immediate series will be important to find out more about players, understand the culture and find ways to tweak the team to improve performances level small bits at a time. Focus on one tour at a time, with an eye on developing the style of play for future assignments.

TIMELINE OF COACHES

- Mohinder Amarnath** (India) (1990-1994)
- Gordon Greenidge** (West Indies) (1996-1999)
- Eddie Barlow** (South Africa) (1999-2001)
- Trevor Chappell** (Australia) (2001-2002)
- Mohsin Kamal-Ali Zia** (Pakistan) (2002-2003)
- Dav Whatmore** (Australia) (2003-2007)
- Jamie Siddons** (Australia) (2007-2011)
- Stuart Law** (Australia) (2011-2012)
- Richard Pybus** (South Africa) (2012)
- Shane Jurgensen** (Australia) (2013-2014)
- Chandika Hathurusingha** (Sri Lanka) (2014-2017)
- Steve Rhodes** (England) (2018-2019)



The Bangladesh HP team geared up for the three-match one-day series against their Sri Lankan counterparts with some drills at the BCB Academy yesterday. The first game will be held today. PHOTO: BCB