



**NO, THAT CAN'T HAPPEN AGAIN:** (Inset) Mushfiqur Rahim is still haunted by the last-over madness in the 2016 World T20 that helped hosts India snatch an improbable victory. (Top) The joyful Mushfiqur probably tried to convince their batting mentor Neil McKenzie during a practice session yesterday ahead of today's first T20I in New Delhi that he would not make the same mistake if he got the chance this time around.

PHOTO: BCB/AFP FILE

## DELHI DINE

### 'Feels like fog but it's also kind of hot'

Bangladesh youngster Afif Hossain batted at the nets yesterday, preparing for the first T20I against India by facing young India quicks from an academy. The left-hander was in a jolly mood after his session and although reporters were keen on getting a serious soundbite out of him about the smog in New Delhi where the Air Quality Index (AQI) has risen to emergency levels, he just said: "It feels like fog, but it's also kind of hot here." Perhaps not a serious soundbite, but it captured the essence quite well.

Bangladesh middle-order batsman Mosaddek Hossain was not one to complain about the smog. While he was seen using a mask for protection from the thick smog, he stated that its effect on him was minimal. "We've been here for four days now. Getting used to it," he said.

### Historic Willingdon Pavilion

The Feroz Shah Kotla Ground, one of the most famous venues in India, recently changed its name to the

Arun Jaitley Stadium. But the stadium also had another name after it was established. The ground still bears the mark of its ancient past and caught the attention of the visiting crowd right away.

The Willingdon Pavilion, once a handsome colonial-era building named after and inaugurated by the viceroy and governor-general of India in 1933, stood as a mute spectator to the modernity around it. It used to be the players' pavilion in the old day but now stands in all its glory even as it is not being used.

### Grassy wicket?

Looking at the pitch at the Arun Jaitley Stadium from afar, it could be gleaned that some grass was left on the pitch, indicating that the faster bowlers might get some help early on. Whether the grass would be left on the pitch as it is could not be ascertained but Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad was hopeful the pitch would be good. "The pitch had some grass. It will be good for batting. The responsibility is on the batters to get a good score for the bowlers to defend."

### Rohit does his homework

"I am pretty sure. I do my homework," Sharma said when confusion arose during his presser about India's current T20I standings. Sharma said India were number 5 but wanted to double check as some of those present said India were number 2. Rohit did not agree and seemed confident of what he said. It turns out he does do his homework as India are ranked fifth at the moment.



# Captaincy nothing new to Riyad

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from New Delhi

"I don't think it [captaincy in a tough period] is a burden. I am not thinking in that manner. I think it's a great opportunity for me to lead the side," Bangladesh's newly-appointed T20I captain Mahmudullah Riyad said during a press conference yesterday on the eve of Bangladesh's first T20I against India in Delhi.

Thrust into the hotseat ahead of an important challenge, Mahmudullah will be expected to carry his side through to the other side relatively unscathed at the end of the grueling challenge on offer. It is only relatively unscathed because what preceded the away series has been nothing short of jaw-dropping as Test and T20I captain Shakib Al Hasan was banned for two years,



[captaining the side] before in T20Is and Tests as well when Shakib was injured," Riyad reminded. "We have to play as a team, show commitment, use our opportunities and execute our skills."

The challenge in front of him was great and he knew it. "In India it will be different conditions and with a side like India, who have been dominating at home, it will be a challenge."

Mahmudullah does have big shoes to fill and even in these rough times, he knows defeat will not be taken lightly. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shakib have spearheaded Bangladesh with their leadership skills for the past few years.

While different in the ways they get the best out of the team, both have had successful stints as captain and been exemplary leaders. Riyad talked about how his predecessors had different approaches, complimenting both, but did not shy away from stating his own plan of action.

"We have been playing together for a while," he said when asked if his predecessors' captaincy instincts rubbed off on him. "I think they are great leaders. Shakib has some amazing qualities and Mash has been a great motivator. I just need to step up my game and be a good leader."

"We are not taking any extra pressure due to

Shakib's absence. We are inspired to put on a good performance. It's an opportunity for me and the rest of the players," he added.

His presser bore similarities to Tim Paine's, who had to inspire confidence in himself and the team after high-profile bans for captain Steve Smith and vice-captain David Warner. Paine had then tried to stem the onset of chaos and Riyad was doing something similar.

Riyad had already shown good captaincy qualities in the BPL while leading Khulna Titans and his recent form in the domestic circuit along with his presser yesterday showed that there was a calm before the storm perhaps waiting from Bangladesh's side as well.

"We're very positive and have nothing to lose. We will focus on what we can gain," he said when asked if the Tigers could rise above the crisis.

## HIGHLIGHTS

On March 23, 2016, a rush of blood saw Bangladesh suffer an agonising one-run loss. With two required off three balls, Mushfiqur Rahim threw his wicket away attempting to slog before Riyad did the same. Mustafizur Rahman was run out off the last ball.

India won another enthralling contest as they side fought till the last ball to register a four-wicket win in the Nidahas Trophy final in March 2018 during the sides' last meeting.

# 'Bangladesh can beat anyone on their day'

STAR SPORT DESK

Stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma said that India would not be taking Bangladesh lightly when the two sides meet in their first of the three T20Is at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi today.

"Bangladesh are a very good team. All these years, we have seen how well they have performed, not just at home but away also whenever they have gone out. Especially against us, they have always put us under pressure. So, there's no way we look this team differently," Rohit told reporters in New Delhi yesterday.

Bangladesh will be missing two of their stalwarts -- all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and opener Tamim Iqbal on their first ever multi-format tour against India in their own backyard. However, Rohit was aware of the fact and said Bangladesh were still a side that had the ability to beat any team on their day.

"I understand there are two key players missing [Shakib and Tamim], but they still have the quality in their squad which can upset any team on that particular day. I wouldn't say 'upset' but I would say 'beat'.



ROHIT SHARMA

They are very mature cricketers now as all these players have played for a long time," Rohit added.

Rohit, who will be leading the Indian side in absence of regular captain Virat Kohli -- who has been rested for the T20I series -- said that he would be looking to carry the team forward from where Virat had left it.

"My job as a captain is very simple - I just want to take the team forward from where Virat has left the team. What I have done with the limited opportunities that I have got is to maintain what Virat has done. I am just trying to carry that forward," Rohit concluded.

HEAD TO HEAD								
BANGLADESH				V	INDIA			
M	W	L	NR		M	W	L	NR
8	0	8	0		8	8	0	0

Last meeting in T20Is: Colombo, March 18, 2018, India won by 4 wickets.

one of those suspended, after failing to report corrupt approaches from a bookie.

Mahmudullah, an experienced campaigner, handled things well during a presser where the main topic of interest was the effect that Shakib's absence would have on the team.

He reminded those present -- both with body language and words -- that even in this tough period, he was not a novice who was caught unaware by the emergency situation. "I've done it



SHAHIN ALOM ... 7 for 62

# U-19s start strong in 2nd youth Test

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team right-arm pacer Shahin Aloom ran riot on the opening day of the second and final youth Test against their Sri Lankan counterparts at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

The 18-year old returned magnificent figures of seven for 62 in 17.3 overs as Bangladesh bundled out the visitors for 184 in 54.3 overs. Bangladesh scored 71 for the loss of two wickets before stumps.

Electing to field, despite a 105-ball 73 from opener Wickramasinghe and another 68-ball 47 from Kavishka Lakshan, Sri Lanka could not manage to cross the 200-run mark. Shahin had single-handedly dismantled the Sri Lankan middle order, returning three of the batsmen for the cheap scores of 8, 2 and 0.

After the exchange, opener Prantik Nawrose and Alvi Hoque remained unbeaten for 28 and eight respectively as Bangladesh ended the day on a high.

# Razzak gets 600th on opening day

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak reached yet another milestone, becoming the first Bangladeshi to scalp 600 first-class wickets during the first day of the fourth-round National Cricket League game against Rangpur at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The 37-year-old, who started the Tier-1 game six wickets shy of the milestone, got the feat on the first day after bagging seven wickets for Khulna and bundling Rangpur out for 224 in their first innings after leg-spinner Rishad



## MOST FIRST-CLASS WICKETS BY A BANGLADESHI

Abdur Razzak	600
Enamul Haque Jr	477
Mohammad Sharif	393
Mosharraf Hossain	392
Saqlain Sajib	361

Hossain top-scored with 42.

The veteran rattled through the Rangpur middle-order and registered his 39th five-wicket haul before eventually having Rangpur's number nine batsman Robiul Haque bowled to create

history in Bangladesh's domestic circuit.

Razzak ended up with figures of seven for 69 from his 24.1 overs. In reply, Khulna ended the day on 24 for two, trailing by two hundred runs.

The experienced spinner is the runaway leader on the charts for most wickets, with Enamul Haque Jr, another left-arter, in second place with 477 first-class wickets.

In the other Tier-1 game at Cox's Bazar, Rajshahi were bundled out for a small total of 230 runs in their first innings after a collective bowling approach from Dhaka Division.

Pacer Sumon Khan and off-spinner Shuvagata Hom bagged three each while leg-spinner Jubair Hossain and seamer Salauddin Sakil took two wickets each. Rajshahi's Najmul Hossain Shanto and Muktar Ali scored fifties, but could not stitch together any significant partnerships.

In Tier 2, pacer Ebadot Hossain picked up his second five-wicket haul to put Sylhet in the driving seat against Barisal, who folded for 162 in their first innings.

The tall right-arm seamer ended with figures of five for 36 from 16 overs while left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed took three

wickets. Nuruzzaman's 40 was the top score for Barisal. Sylhet replied well and ended the day on 82 for one.

In the other Tier 2 game, Bangladesh Test opener Shadman Islam struck an unbeaten hundred to leave Dhaka Metropolis eyeing a big first-innings total after they ended the day on 357 for four against Chittagong.

The left-hander, who registered his eighth first-class ton, was unbeaten for a 257-ball 162 which featured 21 fours and two sixes. Shadman and Al Amin added 162 for the fourth wicket before the latter was dismissed for 83.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>RANGPUR V KHULNA</b> RANGPUR: First innings 224 all out (Rishad 42, Nasir 40; Razzak 7-69) KHULNA: First innings 24 for 2 (Anamul 14 not out; Robiul 2-9)
<b>RAJSHAH V DHAKA DIVISION</b> RAJSHAH: First innings 230 all out (Najmul 56, Muktar 56 not out; Sumon 3-43, Shuvagata 3-57)
<b>BARISAL V SYLHET</b> BARISAL: First innings 162 all out (Nuruzzaman 40; Ebadot 5-36) SYLHET: First innings 82 for 1 (Imtiaz 48, Shanaj 32 not out)
<b>DHAKA METROPOLIS V CHITTAGONG</b> DHAKA: First innings 357 for 4 (Shadman 162 not out, Al Amin 83; Hasam 2-65)