



Bangladesh cricket's three stalwarts train yesterday, each with different mission in mind. Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal returns to training in Mirpur following two months of recovery from injury. The left-hander is set to feature in a T20 franchise tournament in Nepal, starting next week. Bangladesh's ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and West Indies' star spinner Sunil Narine show thumbs-up at the training session of Kolkata Knight Riders, ahead of their opening match of the second phase of the Indian Premier League against Royal Challengers Bangalore today. Mushfiqur Rahim characteristically began training earlier than everyone else even though the national cricketers are currently enjoying an extended break ahead of their camp in Oman next month for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

PHOTO: STAR/TWITTER



'I try to provide balance for my team'

Off-spinner Mahedi Hasan's emergence as the new-ball bowler for Bangladesh has turned out to be quite a revolution. The 26-year-old is set to participate in his maiden ICC World T20 where the cricketer from Khulna is expected to play a crucial role, both with bat and ball for the Tigers. Mahedi opens up about his game along with a few other topics during an interview with The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin. The excerpts of the interview are given below:



Daily Star (DS): How's the feeling of getting into Bangladesh's World Cup squad for the first time?

Mahedi Hasan (MH): Alhamdulillah. If everything goes well, I'll be playing my maiden World Cup for Bangladesh. It's a great feeling for any player, to be honest. Previously, I used to watch world cup games on TV and thought about playing in this mega event myself. It's a matter of huge pride indeed and I'm totally looking forward to making this opportunity count.

DS: You've a crucial role of bowling in the power-plays with the new ball where you often pick up early wickets as well. Is there any specific role which the team management expects from you in the upcoming World Cup?

MH: I think it's the player's duty to prepare himself in a manner that the team can utilise him for whatever role, according to the demand. Obviously, I've a run-containing role with the ball in the power-play, where the batters come hard at you. Therefore, during that period, it's important to bowl as many dot balls as possible. To be honest, I never think about wickets but prioritise on what's best for my team. For example, I'll choose a positive contribution of 20 runs from four overs instead of five wickets for 50 runs that doesn't help my team's cause.

DS: Obviously, the pitches during the home series against Australia and New Zealand favoured the bowlers and the upcoming World Cup in Oman and the UAE is expected to feature sporting tracks. How will you adjust to such surfaces?

MH: We all know the ICC events offer

sporting tracks, where there'll be big scores. But if you notice, a good ball is always a good ball regardless of the pitch and so, my focus is to bowl at the right areas consistently. I've some knowledge about the conditions at UAE from my experience of playing in the T10 league there.

DS: How much is Shakib Al Hasan's influence in the spin department?

MH: Shakib bhai leads the spin department whenever we are on the field. He's like our on-field spin bowling coach who reads the game and gives us the appropriate feedback in a flash. When he comes and tells you

exactly where to bowl by targeting a batsman's strengths and weaknesses, I think that's simply incredible.

DS: According to the head coach, you're the free-player in the side, where the team management can use your batting ability in any position based on the situation. How do you see your batting role?

MH: Look, I've always seen myself contributing as an all-rounder. I love batting and I also like to charge the bowlers. So, if the team requires something like that early in the innings, I am all up for it. At the same time, it's equally important to rotate the strike in the middle overs and use the long handle in the latter stages of an innings. I try to provide balance for my team where I can be utilised in any means possible.

DS: Who do you see as your idol?

MH: Shakib bhai [Shakib Al Hasan], whose aggressive attitude I'm really fond of. I still remember being thrilled to take a picture with him when I first saw him. When I first played alongside him in the national league, I recall looking at him the entire day. He is the best.



Abahani make hay in the eye of the storm

SPORTS REPORTER

While defending league champions Mohammedan SC and 2016 champions Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club were at loggerheads over the possession of a player -- a dispute that led to the former lodging a complaint at the police station -- four-time champions Abahani were free to complete their players' registration formalities in a calm and festive environment at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

A festive mood enveloped the stadium on the first of the five-day transfer window, which featured movement of familiar faces and new blood for the first time since the 12th Premier Hockey League was held in 2018.

Former national goalkeeper Zahid Hossain came to sign for Shadhara Bima with a big smile



on his face, eager to get back with his stick to his treasured blue turf after a long gap. However, he could count himself more fortunate than some others as he played two tournaments in Dhaka and in Rajshahi during this time.

Apart from the sporadic movement of individual players, there was a big rush among the title contenders.

Abahani formed a side that can

contest all trophies this season after roping in 18 players, including current national team players Abu Sayeed Nippon, Khorshedur Rahman, Farhad Ahmed Shitul, Rezaul Karim Babu, Rumman Sarkar, Arshad Hossain, Mahabub Hossain, Hasan Jubair Niloy and Pushkor Khisha Mimo.

"We all player are really happy that we will play the Premier Hockey League after three years

and we are also happy with our transfers," said Mimo, who returned to Abahani after two seasons away at Usha KC and Mariner Youngs Club.

"It is true that players, especially those outside service teams, have been out of action for a long time. But we are hoping to return to the turf with good practice before the start of the Club Cup.

"Apart from the players' quote [five players from service teams], Abahani roped in a good number of players who are capable of delivering results. I think Abahani formed a champion caliber team and we will fight to regain the title we last won in 2014," added Mimo, who believes Abahani are the best team on paper.

Abahani advisory coach Mahabub Harun added that they had communicated with players from India, Pakistan and Malaysia but their registration would depend on the Covid-19 situation.

Lingard, De Gea conjure late heroics

REUTERS, LONDON



Jesse Lingard scored a stunning late goal and David de Gea saved a stoppage-time penalty as Manchester United beat West Ham United 2-1 in a dramatic Premier League match on Sunday.

Substitute Lingard hit a thumping shot into the top corner in the 89th minute against his former club but West Ham were awarded a penalty moments later for a handball by defender Luke Shaw.

Mark Noble stepped up to take the penalty immediately after coming off the bench but De Gea guessed correctly and dived to turn his spot-kick away.

West Ham had gone ahead on the half-hour mark with a deflected strike from Said Benrahma but the visitors responded five minutes later,

Cristiano Ronaldo heading a Bruno Fernandes cross at Lukasz Fabianski and following up to tap the ball into the net.

It was Ronaldo's fourth goal in three games after netting twice on his second debut for the club against Newcastle United and once in the 2-1 Champions League defeat at Young Boys on Tuesday.

The Portuguese had a chance in the second half before Lingard's strike when he was again played in by Portugal team mate Fernandes but Fabianski thwarted the attempt with his legs.

Ronaldo was also denied a penalty following a challenge from Vladimir Coufal.

Manchester United are second in the Premier League standings with 13 points from five games while West Ham have eight after suffering their first defeat of the season.



After overturning a 1-0 deficit against West Ham United at the London Stadium, courtesy of a 35th-minute strike from Cristiano Ronaldo and Jesse Lingard's 89th-minute strike, Manchester United still needed goalkeeper David de Gea's stoppage time heroics to keep out a penalty and ensure three points.

PHOTO: TWITTER/AFP



Jordan too strong for women

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh started their AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers on a miserable note, suffering a massive 5-0 defeat to Jordan at the Bunyodkor Stadium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan yesterday.

Determined to fight against Jordan, who are 74 places ahead of Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings, the women battled hard for 35 minutes before forward Shahnaz Jebreen broke the deadlock.

Despite conceding, Bangladesh launched attacks and even had attempts on goal once before Bina Zaid Bitar doubled the lead in the 45th minute.

Jordan overwhelmed Bangladesh in the second half, justifying their 63rd-place FIFA ranking. Forward Maysa Ziad Jbarah made it 3-0 in the 62nd minute before firing her second five minutes later. She then completed her hat-trick, wrapping up a massive victory in the 77th minute.

Broad backs England's Ashes trip

AFP, LONDON

England pace bowler Stuart Broad insists he will go on the Ashes tour of Australia this winter despite concerns over coronavirus restrictions.

Broad, 35, is "working tirelessly" to be included in the travelling party for the Australia series, which starts in December. "If you ask me if I would be happy to get on a plane to Australia in November, I would say yes."

Jimmy Greaves, England's most lethal striker, passes away

AFP, London

Injury denied him a role in England's greatest triumph, but Jimmy Greaves, who died on Sunday aged 81, will be remembered as one of the most prolific strikers in English football history.

With 366 goals in 528 top-flight appearances for Chelsea, AC Milan, Tottenham and West Ham, he scored more goals in Europe's five major championships than any other player until Cristiano Ronaldo finally surpassed his total in 2017.

Greaves also found the net 44 times for England and while a gashed leg stopped him playing in the 1966 World Cup final win over West Germany, his breath-taking strike rate ensured his legacy remained secure.

Only Bobby Charlton, Gary Lineker and record holder Wayne Rooney have scored more England



goals than Greaves. "I had a goal drought once," Greaves used to quip during after-dinner speeches. "Worst 15 minutes of my career." A short, quick and remarkably sure-footed player, Greaves struck

the ball unerringly with both feet and was renowned for the deliberateness of his finishing, often rounding the goalkeeper to score.

"When he got the ball in the penalty box, the world stopped," remembered Greaves' former West Ham team-mate Harry Redknapp.

"It was like somebody had hit pause on the television screen. The action around him carried on, but Jim appeared to be operating in another dimension; slower, calmer, making his mind up oblivious to the surrounding frenzy."

His 266 goals in 379 games for Tottenham make him the club's all-time leading scorer and he also scored 132 times in 169 games for Chelsea. Fifty years after his retirement from the professional game, his goal-scoring feats still rank alongside the best of the sport's modern stars.



Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman ponders his next move against Swarnavo Choudhury as Grandmaster Enamul Hossain Razib looks on during the first round of the Joytu Sheikh Hasina International Grandmasters Chess Tournament at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday. A total of 60 chess players including 12 GMs and 16 IMs from 10 nations are taking part in the tournament.

PHOTO: STAR