



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## A revamped side for Pak T20Is?

SPORTS REPORTER



From the looks of it, the Bangladesh national team may well be in for a revamp for the upcoming series against Pakistan under newly-appointed team director Khaled Mahmud. The BCB director, who has served many roles for the national side, appears to be the one overseeing the inclusion of a few new faces in order to reshape the side after a disastrous World Cup campaign.

The Tigers would have to do without the services of ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, out with a hamstring injury, and Mohammad Saifuddin, who was ruled out midway through World Cup through a back injury.

Signs are, however, that a few

other key members of the World Cup squad will be excluded for the Pakistan T20s slated to begin from November 19, with Liton Das not participating in the practice sessions and Soumya Sarkar currently engaged in the National Cricket League (NCL).

A few new faces such as Towhid Hridoy, Parvez Hossain Emon and seniors like Yasir Ali and Kamrul Islam Rabbi had begun training in Mirpur since the World Cup exit. However, veteran Mushfiqur Rahim was seen going through net batting on his own amid rumours that he will not play in the upcoming T20 series against Pakistan. Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, who along with Mushfiqur was one of the four players to have returned to the country later than the rest of the squad, was seen in discussion with the squad.

Coach Russell Domingo, too,

was present but his involvement in team discussion or lack thereof, gives indications of the rift that has appeared between the players and management. The confusion in forming a new-look Bangladesh, however, was apparent.

Pakistan, who lost in the semifinal of the T20 Cup World Cup against Australia recently, had already announced their T20 World Cup squad during the World Cup. On the other hand, Bangladesh, who crashed out of the Super 12 stage, are yet to name the squad for the Pakistan T20Is despite there being suggestions that the squad will be announced yesterday. Meanwhile, Pakistan have also announced their Test squad yesterday.

Mahmud, who would oversee selection, will have a few tough choices to make keeping in line with revamping not just the side

but the overall activities of the side. To make his job a bit easier, a closed-door practice match between two teams composed of the players called to the national side's training was held in Mirpur yesterday, with no entry for journalists.

The limelight will once again be on the pitches on offer at Mirpur after it paved the way for series wins at home against Australia and New Zealand but did not provide adequate preparation for the World Cup. Pacer Taskin Ahmed was hoping for sporting wickets this time around.

"In white-ball cricket, there is rarely opportunities to bowl on bowling-friendly surfaces and most wickets for this format are sporting wickets. Hoping for sporting wickets at Mirpur but whatever the conditions, as a bowler, you have to adjust," Taskin said yesterday.

## Rizwan eyes greater heights in Mirpur

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan mentioned yesterday that his team is well aware of the Mirpur conditions.

"We've seen in the recent past that the conditions favour the spinners," said Rizwan, who has recovered well from a chest infection and is all set to begin training ahead of the three-match T20I series, which begins from November 19, against hosts Bangladesh.

All the matches in the T20I series will be underway from 2pm, with fans returning to the gallery in Bangladesh for the first time since March 2020.

Rizwan made a miraculous recovery last week after two days in hospital to materialise a scintillating performance as he top-scored with 67 in the ICC T20 World Cup semifinal against Australia.

He ended with an impressive 281 runs tally, the third-highest in the mega event, despite missing out on the final after Pakistan bowed out to the eventual winners with a five-wicket loss.

And in the process, Rizwan became the

first batter to score over a thousand runs in a calendar year in T20Is and has the chance to raise his tally further against the Tigers in Mirpur.

"I'm happy that I have scored the most runs in the calendar year. But I'm more delighted that I was able to secure this record for my country," Rizwan said.

Despite the early struggle in his T20I career, he blossomed this year after having shown promise in 2020 by scoring his maiden fifty against New Zealand in December.

Meanwhile, Pakistan announced the squad for two-match Test series against Bangladesh, the first of which will take place at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on November 26.

**Pakistan Test Squad:** Babar Azam (captain), Mohammad Rizwan (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Abid Ali, Azhar Ali, Bilal Asif, Faheem Ashraf, Fawad Alam, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Nauman Ali, Sajid Khan, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Zahid Mahmood.



## Aussies' nerves of steel indebted to golf and music



AFF, Dubai



Australia skipper Aaron Finch on Sunday said his team bonding over golf and music during a difficult bubble life remained key to lifting their first ever Twenty20 World Cup title.

Australia thrashed New Zealand by eight wickets in Dubai after Mitchell Marsh hit an unbeaten 77 to steer the team home in 18.5 overs.

Not many had given Australia and New Zealand a chance ahead of the tournament but Finch's team moved into the semi-finals with a better run-rate than South Africa.

The Aussies then got past favourites Pakistan to set up a rematch of the 2015 50-over final between the trans-Tasman neighbours which had also witnessed a big win for the Australians.

"It's unbelievable. It's been brilliant. It honestly

### ICC T20 WORLD CUP TEAM

David Warner (Australia, 289 runs at 48.16, Jos Buttler (England, 269 runs, five dismissals), Babar Azam (Captain, Pakistan, 303 runs), Charith Asalanka (Sri Lanka, 231 runs), Markram (South Africa, 162 runs), Moeen Ali (England, 92 runs, seven wickets), Wanindu Hasaranga (Sri Lanka, 16 wickets), Adam Zampa (Australia, 13 wickets), Josh Hazlewood (Australia, 11 wickets), Trent Boult (New Zealand, 13 wickets), Anrich Nortje (South Africa, nine wickets). 12th player: Shaheen Afridi (Pakistan, seven wickets).

has," Finch said after the title triumph that adds to their five ODI World Cup trophies.

"It's had ups and downs along the way, don't get me wrong. It's never smooth sailing. When you're in bubbles and things like that, it's always difficult. Guys get along very well.

## A triumph for Australia and organisers



REUTERS, DUBAI

As fireworks lit up the Dubai sky after Sunday's Twenty20 World Cup final and shimmering confetti rained on the jubilant Australian team, the organisers heaved a huge sigh of relief at the safe and glitzy culmination of the showpiece event.

It was not until June that the Indian cricket board (BCCI) threw up their hand conceding it was not possible to host the 16-team tournament in the coronavirus-battered country.

The tournament found a new home in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) while Oman was allotted some preliminary round matches, even though the BCCI retained its host status. After an action-packed month, Aaron Finch's Australia, written off after a horrendous build-up, emerged with their maiden 20-overs world title in their arms.

The tournament meandered initially until pre-tournament favourites India sent shockwaves with their premature exit in what was Virat Kohli's swansong as the team's 20-overs leader.

The competition sprang to life in the semi-finals when New Zealand stunned reigning 50-overs world champions England and Australia humbled Pakistan, the tournament's only unbeaten team until then.

England opener Jos Buttler and Sri Lanka all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga set alight the tournament with their individual brilliance even if their team could not last the distance.

And few can match the bravery of Pakistan stumper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan, who spent two nights in intensive care with a chest infection and returned to top-score for his team in their semi-final loss to Australia.

India's Kohli also won hearts for his bold stance against religious discrimination. His South Africa counterpart Tenda Bavuma also defined true leadership with his graceful handling of a crisis. Kane Williamson also led by example but New Zealand still finished runners-up. The only blot on an otherwise successful tournament was the conditions, especially in Dubai, which favoured the chasing teams and the toss had a major impact on the outcome.

The chasing team won every night game in Dubai and Finch admitted he had been lucky to win six out of seven tosses.

## Successful day for Mariners, Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club edged past Dhaka Abahani through a single-goal win in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Fazle Hossain Rabbi struck in the 52nd minute to separate both sides and give Club Cup champions Mariners a six-point cushion in the 12-team table with 33 points from 11 outings. Archrivals Abahani and Dhaka Mohammedan SC, both levelled on 27 points from 10 matches, face each other in the final game of the first phase tomorrow.

The day's first match saw Mohammedan beat Ajax SC 6-0 following their 5-2 loss to former champions Mariners in the previous match.

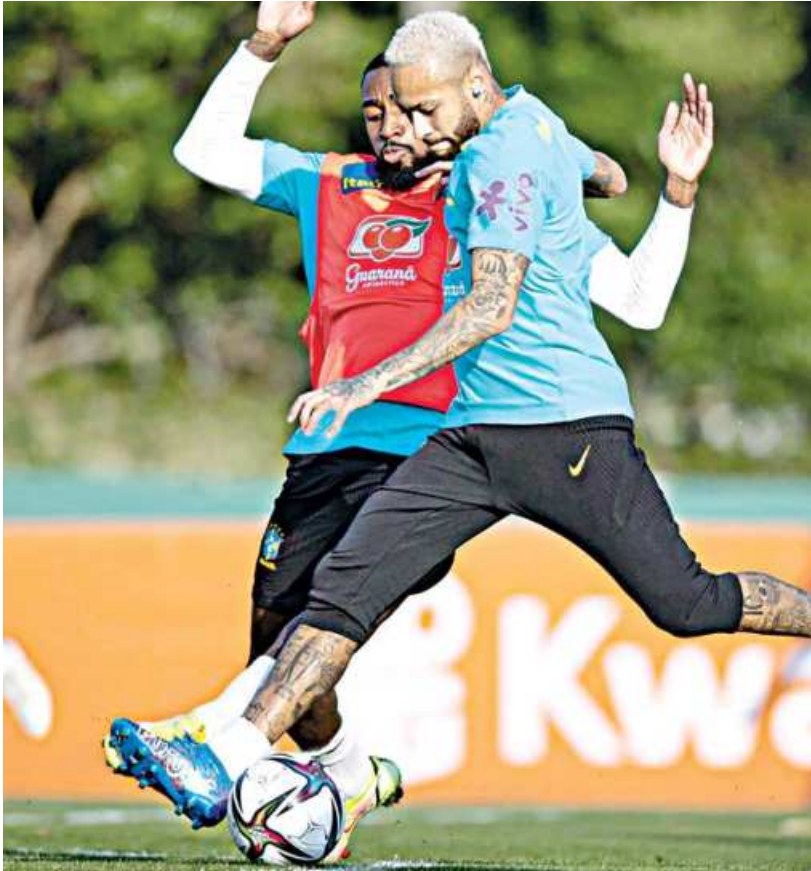
## Tigresses whitewash Zimbabwe

SPORTS REPORTER

A five-wicket haul from Nahida Akter helped Bangladesh women's national cricket team cruise to a comfortable seven-wicket victory with 190 balls to spare as they whitewashed Zimbabwe in the three-match ODI series in Bulawayo yesterday.

Zimbabwe skipper Mary-Anne Musonda elected to bat first before Bangladesh's deadly bowling attack restricted the hosts to 72 runs in 27.2 overs.

In reply, Tigresses chased down the humble target in 18.2 overs while riding on opener Murshida Khatun's unbeaten 39, laced with five boundaries.



**Lionel Messi's Argentina host arch-rivals Brazil in the FIFA World Cup 2022 qualifier match at the Estadio San Juan del Bicentenario on Wednesday, 5.30am (Bangladesh Standard Time). Argentina are currently on a 26-match unbeaten streak and will seal a direct spot if they defeat Brazil and two of Uruguay, Chile and Colombia fail to register a victory in their respective matches on Wednesday. Brazil have already booked their place for Qatar. In 112 head-to-head encounters, Brazil hold the advantage as they have won 46 games, lost 41 and drawn 25.**

PHOTO: TWITTER