



Young opener Munim Shahriar, who showcased his big-hitting ability in the recently concluded Bangladesh Premier League, smacks one down the ground during Bangladesh's practice session in Mirpur yesterday. Munim is expected to make his international debut today when Bangladesh take on Afghanistan in the first of two T20Is at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Mash joins Ruggani

SPORTS REPORTER

The highlight of the first day of the two-day players' transfers of the Dhaka Premier League occurred when former Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza signed for Legends of Ruggani yesterday.

At the eleventh hour last night, reports emanated that Prime Doleshwar would not be taking part in the prestigious tournament in this edition, which will see a return to its usual fifty-over format.

A total of 39 cricketers took part in the players' transfer yesterday.

However, Mashrafe, who featured for Sheikh Jamal DC the previous season, has been suffering from back pain since the Bangladesh Premier League, where he played for Minister Dhaka.

The 38 year old is expected to undergo treatment ahead of the DPL. "I have always done well in one-day format. I understand the game so it's easier for me," Mashrafe told the media yesterday.

"I have a slight issue with back pain and will go for treatment. I got injured during the BPL but I hope there won't be any problems once I complete my treatment."

Other star cricketers also confirmed where they would play.

Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan will again feature for Mohammedan while Mushfiqur Rahim will play for Abahani. Mahmudullah Riyad will represent Gazi Group and Tamim Iqbal was retained by Prime Bank Cricket Club.



## Will positive approach be reflected at the top?

### HIGHLIGHTS

\*\*Bangladesh lost four out of six T20Is against Afghanistan.

\*\*Bangladesh won the last T20I against Afghanistan by four wickets in Chattogram in 2019.

\*\*With 138 runs in six matches, Bangladesh T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad is the highest run-getter among the players of the two sides when facing each other in T20Is.

\*\*Afghanistan leg spinner Rashid Khan has the most number of wickets (12) in five T20Is against Bangladesh.



"Are you concerned regarding my place? Alhamdulillah, I am not in doubt. I think I am on the right track. Probably I need to hit some good balls and will be back on the right track. Maybe I didn't deliver in the ODIs but I will try to meet the expectations the team has from me."

BANGLADESH T20I CAPTAIN MAHMUDULLAH RIYAD.

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The T20 World Cup in UAE last year demonstrated that whatever the Bangladesh think-tank had planned going into the mega-event did not bear fruit or lacked in execution, culminating in the debacle.

Coming into the T20I series against Afghanistan, Bangladesh's focus turns to a lack of runs in the Powerplay. The batting unit as a whole must have showing aggression at the top of their list of priorities. There will also be focus on their choice of openers for the first T20I today as that could go a long way to delivering a message regarding the approach the team management needs in the format.

There was quite a bit of grass on the wicket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, which should

provide something to pacers. Asked about his expectations of the wicket, skipper Mahmudullah Riyad seemed certain it would provide something for both batters and bowlers.

"I think it will be a good wicket and sporting wicket. The grass will help the bowlers and the batters as well. I think if you can spend some time at the crease, batters can have a good time here," Mahmudullah dictated. However, time spent at the crease will have to be paid for with runs, especially if Bangladesh are to make hay with a long batting line-up.

Afghanistan not only have world-class spinners, but also batters adept at playing their shots from very early on in the innings. An ODI mindset will not suffice. Bangladesh's average score in the Powerplay at the World Cup was 32.12 and, barring the games against Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, they lost at least two wickets in the Powerplay. The scores did not improve in

the series that followed against Pakistan at home as the Tigers lost 3-0.

Mahmudullah was looking to get out of that Powerplay rut.

"Hopefully, we will be able to get out of it. With our team combination, we're good enough to make 40 to 45 runs in Powerplay. If we can do it, we're on the right track. We're discussing these things and working things out. Hopefully we will find a way," Riyad said, knowing the need for a new avenue.

One such option may well be on the way in the form of Munim Shahriar, selected on the basis of Powerplay displays in the recently-concluded BPL. He smashed the deliveries in the nets yesterday. "Munim has a good chance tomorrow but I can't say exactly because I saw the wicket today," Riyad said.

On the other end of the spectrum is Mohammad Naim. Despite being the top-scorer in T20Is last year, his position has come into question due to a lack of aggression and middling strike-rate.

"If you don't bat with intent in T20 cricket, you find yourself in a shell. Once you are in that shell, it's hard to get out. Whoever bats, whether at top-order or middle-order, has to remember the importance of batting with intent based on one's strength," Mahmudullah said of their approach. But in the choice between Munim and Naim, they will go a long way to sending a message about their modus operandi in T20Is going forward.



## Australia on journey of discovery in Pakistan

REUTERS

Australia are on a journey of discovery as they tour Pakistan for the first time in a quarter of a century and will hope to emerge with a first away Test series win in six years.

Pat Cummins's side have not played a Test offshore since the outbreak of COVID-19 and many of the players are visiting the

South Asian nation for the first time.

Thirty-four-year-old spinner Nathan Lyon, one of the squad's most senior players, was 10 when the last Australian side toured in 1998 and won a three-match series 1-0.

"I'll say it's a totally different challenge to what we're used to at home," Lyon told reporters on Wednesday, two days before the first of three Tests gets underway in Rawalpindi.

"We haven't played an away Test since 2019 so it's going to be a big challenge for us but it's a young, exciting Australian Test squad that we have here at the moment."

"My mindset is every game we go into, we will look to win, not draw or lose. My mindset is to win 3-0 in Pakistan," Lyon added.

Though dominating Pakistan on home soil, Australia have not beaten them away since the 2002-03 series played in Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.



## Women's Cricket World Cup afoot amid Covid caution

AFP, Wellington

The Women's Cricket World Cup begins in New Zealand on Friday, with organisers keen to capitalise on growing interest in the women's game after overcoming a string of pandemic-related hurdles.

The eight-nation tournament was originally scheduled for early 2021 but had to be postponed until March this year after coronavirus-related travel restrictions made it impossible to get the teams into New Zealand.

Even now, overseas players have been required to undergo 10 days of isolation and must abide by strict "bubble" health protocols.

Crowds are also restricted as the host nation attempts to contain an outbreak of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, meaning spectators must congregate in "pods" of 100 dotted around venues.

While the spectre of positive tests among players hangs over the event, tournament chief executive Andrea Nelson said plans were in pace to cope with most contingencies. "We've had to deal with challenges the



Despite Fargana Hoque's 71, Bangladesh suffered a seven-run defeat against Pakistan in their last warm-up in Lincoln yesterday ahead of Women's Cricket World Cup.

PHOTO: AFP

whole way through on this event, and we've overcome them all so far, so I have no doubt we'll continue to do so," she said.

The 2017 tournament in England, won by the host nation, was viewed by 180 million worldwide but Nelson said the potential for women's cricket was even bigger, pointing to 2020 T20 Women's World Cup in Australia.

"We've got such a massive and growing audience for cricket -- the T20 Women's World Cup final was viewed by 1.1 billion people around the world, which dwarfs the men's Rugby World Cup by comparison," she said.

It will be the tournament's 12th edition, with six-time winners Australia entering as favourites followed by reigning champions England who have lifted the trophy four times.

New Zealand are the only other side to have won, when they last hosted the tournament in 2000, while India were beaten finalists in 2005 and 2017.

Pakistan, South Africa, the West Indies and Bangladesh round out the field, with the latter making their tournament debut.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Tender ID & Package No.	Name of goods	Publication date	Last selling and closing date & time
668497 RJSC.G-2020_21- PKG-05	Supply for System and Application Software;	03.03.2022; 10.00am;	20.03.2022; 01:00pm & 20.03.2022; 05:00pm

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