

Sohan 'up for the challenge'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batter Nurul Hasan Sohan said that he is up for the challenge of leading the side in T20Is in the upcoming tour of Zimbabwe later this month.

"Obviously, it is a challenge for me, but I am up for it," Sohan told The Daily Star yesterday after being named the captain for the three-match T20I series against Zimbabwe, slated to begin on July 30 in Harare.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a young T20I side for the Zimbabwe tour, resting the likes of usual T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim.

"I am confident that if we can play as a unit then we can perform a lot better. My aim will be to make the team stick together as a family and play as a unit. I led teams in the domestic circuit but leading the national team is obviously different. But I am confident that if everyone contributes from their end then my job will become much easier," Sohan reiterated.

"As a player, I have a specific role and as I will be leading the side, I will try to balance that," Sohan added.



SPORTS REPORTER

Following a host of discussions about revamping the T20I side following the Tigers' poor performances in the shortest format of the game, national selectors opted for two fresh faces, including pacer Hasan Mahmud and uncapped opener Parvez Hossain Emon in the 14 member squad for the upcoming three-match T20I series in Zimbabwe.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) higher-ups, including cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus and team director Khaled Mahmud and the three selectors, sat for a meeting at a city hotel yesterday after which they announced wicketkeeper-batter Nurul Hasan Sohan as captain for T20I series against Zimbabwe.

The Tigers' performance in the shortest format under regular T20I skipper Mahmudullah has remained disappointing, with the latest series against the West Indies ending in a 3-0 whitewash, prompting selectors to look towards the future and form a young T20I side.

Selectors also decided to rest senior players in the form of skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim for the T20Is.

"We can't say that we are experimenting with the team since we are not doing well in the T20 format. So the idea is to try a few new players and see how they perform. We have seen how Bangladesh play with Mahmudullah, Shakib and Mushfiqur. So the intention behind including new faces is to allow them to play freely," Mahmud told the media yesterday.

Emon burst onto the scene during the Bangabandhu T20 Cup in 2020 when he became the youngest Bangladeshi to score a hundred in the T20 format, registering the feat for Fortune Barishal off just 42 balls. The left-handed opener was included in the T20I side last year for the third and final T20I against Pakistan but did not make his debut.

Young pacer Mahmud, who made his T20I debut in 2020 but has been dealing



T20I SQUAD

Munim Shahriar, Anamul Haque Bijoy, Liton Das, Afif Hossain, Nurul Hasan Sohan (captain), Mehedi Hasan, Nasum Ahmed, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Mosaddek Hossain, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Parvez Hossain Emon.

ODI SQUAD

Tamim Iqbal (captain), Liton Das, Anamul Haque Bijoy, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Afif Hossain, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Nasum Ahmed, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mosaddek Hossain, Tajul Islam.

with injuries since, also made a comeback to the T20I and ODI side. According to chief selector Minajul Abedin Nannu, the youngster has been in good touch recently and selectors were willing to observe him keeping the upcoming Asia Cup and World Cup in mind.

"We know we are not being able to perform in the T20 format. But, with an eye on the Asia Cup and T20 World Cup, we are trying to see a few new players in the Zimbabwe series. So we decided to rest some senior players," Minajul said.

"Emon is a young player and has been nursed in the High Performance side. So far, we have got positive feedback about him. He even scored a century just a couple of days back and I think he is in very good

shape."

Unlike Shakib Al Hasan, who had already asked for a break from the Zimbabwe tour, other seniors like Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur will feature in the three-match ODI series in Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, wicketkeeper-batter Anamul Haque was also retained for both the T20I and ODI sides for the upcoming tour. There was also speculation about Najmul Hossain's place given his poor form in the West Indies, but the left-hander also made it to the limited-overs teams in Zimbabwe.

Bangladesh are schedule to travel to Zimbabwe on July 26. They will begin their African safari with the first of the three T20Is on July 30 in Harare.



New Liverpool signing Darwin Nunez scored four goals as Liverpool thrashed 5-0 RB Leipzig in a friendly on Thursday. The Reds brought striker Nunez to Anfield from Benfica last month for a transfer fee which could rise to a club-record 100 million euros. The Uruguayan, who scored 34 goals last season, had been criticised by some supporters after failing to score in Liverpool's first pre-season games against Manchester United and Crystal Palace.

PHOTO: TWITTER

'ODI cricket dying a slow death'

AGENCIES

Australian batter Usman Khawaja reckons that ODI cricket is "dying" while he believes that Test cricket still has a very "strong presence".

He said that ODI is third-ranked among all the formats, adding that it is going through a "slow death".

"I feel like that's (ODI) probably the third-ranked out of all of them," Khawaja was quoted saying by ESPN Cricinfo. "I think personally one-day cricket is dying a slow death, there's still the World Cup, which I think is really fun and it's enjoyable to watch, but other than that, even myself personally, I'm probably not into one-day cricket as much either."

"The majority of people I talk to still love Test cricket," said the 35-year-old. "It's my favourite format. Think Test cricket still has a very strong presence so don't really see that going anywhere. Think both [Tests, T20] can be quite easily balanced, but then you ask yourself the question does one-day cricket give."

The way things stand right now, next year's Ryder Cup is just going to be a nonsense. The whole sorry saga is a real mess and the only way it's going to be settled is through the courts.

Retired golfer Tony Jacklin



Djokovic completes 'Big Four' dream team

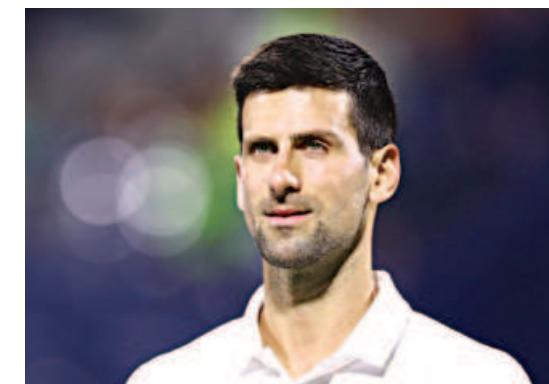
AFP, London

Novak Djokovic confirmed Friday that he will join Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer and Andy Murray in a dream Team Europe line up at the Laver Cup that reunites the former "Big Four".

Bjorn Borg's European team will take on John McEnroe's Team World in the fifth edition of the event at London's O2 Arena from September 23 to 25.

Seven-time Wimbledon champion Djokovic will be appearing at the Laver Cup for the first time since 2018, when it was held in Chicago.

"It's the only competition where you can play in a team environment with guys that you're normally competing against and to be joining Rafa, Roger and Andy -- three of my biggest all-time rivals -- it's going to be a truly unique moment in the history of our sport," said the 21-



time Grand Slam champion.

The four players have dominated men's tennis for nearly two decades, capturing 66 of the past 76 Grand Slams and winning every Wimbledon title since 2003.

Two roster spots have yet to be announced to complete the six player Team Europe line up, while McEnroe's Team World so far consists of Canada's Felix Auger Aliassime, US player Taylor Fritz and Argentina's Diego Schwartzman.

India's sports bodies risk int'l suspension

REUTERS, Mumbai

India's Olympic body faces another ban over governance-related issues if it fails to hold elections in the "coming weeks", the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) elections were due last December but have been held up by a court case seeking to change its constitution in line with rules stipulated by the national sports code.

In a letter sent to the IOA's executive council, the IOC and Olympic Council of Asia said they were following developments "with great concern".

The letter said that if the IOA failed to organise the elections in the coming weeks the IOC would have other option but to consider protective measures, "including a suspension".

A suspension would cut off IOA funding, block Indian officials from attending Olympic meetings and leave the country's athletes unable to compete under the India flag at the Olympics.

The All India Football Federation is also facing an international ban from FIFA setting it a deadline to complete changes to its constitution and hold elections by Sept. 15. India's hosting rights of the men's hockey World Cup in January is also under cloud with the FIH deciding to send a delegation to assess the current situation.

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Sadio Mane was crowned African Player of the Year in Rabat on Thursday for the second time. The Senegal forward, who first won the honour in 2019, was handed the award at the CAF Awards in Rabat. A delighted Mane said: "I am really honoured and highly delighted to receive this award again. Thanks to my coaches, my club and national team colleagues and those friends who stood by me during difficult times."

PHOTO: REUTERS