

Injury jinx hits Mahmud

SPORTS REPORTER

The list of injured cricketers in the Bangladesh camp grew longer as pacer Hasan Mahmud became the latest casualty, raising doubts about his participation in the upcoming Asia Cup in the UAE.

The young pacer hurt his ankle while fielding in training at the home of cricket in Mirpur and was immediately taken to hospital for a scan.

It was learned that it would take at least three weeks for Hasan to recover from the injury, which means the pacer is set to miss the upcoming Asia Cup starting from August 27. However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board is yet to announce a replacement.

All-rounder Sheikh Mahedi was also injured after suffering a blow to his leg during a nets session and limped back to the dressing room.

Injury has been a big concern for the Tigers in recent times. Liton Das was ruled out due to a hamstring injury while Nurul Hasan Sohan hurt himself during a tour to Zimbabwe, but the latter successfully underwent surgery and joined yesterday's training session sporting a bandage.

Bangladesh will take part in two match-scenario sessions today and tomorrow before departing for Dubai on August 23 for the Asia Cup. Under Shakib Al Hasan, the Tigers will begin that campaign against Afghanistan in Sharjah on August 30.



In discussion with two experienced campaigners Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad at Mirpur indoors on Saturday, Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo was probably pondering ways to go about in the upcoming Asia Cup. However, in the end, setting the Tigers' plans for the continental tournament might not be up to Domingo as the BCB mulls 'drastic changes' in the coaching staff.

PHOTO: BCB

“Probably, we first played the T20 format in 2006 and apart from reaching the final of the Asia Cup [in 2016 when it was played in the T20 format for the first time], we had no significant achievement in this format. From that point onward, we lagged behind in this format and there is no other option than to start from scratch. When a child starts to walk, he struggles to put together his first few steps. But things get easier gradually. Maybe we will start step by step from now on and we will be able to run in the future,”

Shakib Al Hasan
said when he faced the media for the first time since being named the T20 skipper during a commercial engagement with a company in the capital yesterday.

Shaheen Afridi out of Asia Cup, England T20Is

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's frontline fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi has been ruled out of next week's Asia Cup and the following Twenty20 international series against England with a knee injury, doctors said Saturday.

The injury to the 22-year-old is a major blow to Pakistan's chances in the six-nation Asia Cup starting in the United Arab Emirates from August 27.

Shaheen's injury has already forced him to miss the second Test in Sri Lanka last month.

The left-arm has accompanied the team to the Netherlands for a three-match one-day international series and was in rehabilitation before doctors advised him to rest for four to six weeks.

"Shaheen has been advised 4-6 weeks rest by the PCB Medical Advisory Committee and independent specialists following latest scans and reports," said a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) release.

Doctors hope the pacesman will return to competitive cricket in October with the T20 international tri-series in New Zealand, which will be followed by the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Australia 2022.

Shaheen anchored Pakistan's upset win over India in last year's Twenty20 World Cup, also played in the UAE. A PCB medical officer said he is expected to recover with rest.

"I have spoken with Shaheen and he is understandably upset with the news, but he is a brave young man who has vowed to come back strongly to serve his country and team," doctor Najeebullah Soomro is quoted as saying in the release. "Although he has made progress during his rehabilitation in Rotterdam, it is now clear he will require more time and is likely to return to competitive cricket in October."

The release added that Shaheen's replacement for the Asia Cup will be announced shortly. The Pakistan side will arrive in Dubai from Rotterdam on Monday.



BCB's philosophical paradox

SPORTS REPORTER

Three years after appointing Russell Domingo as head coach and one year since handing him a contract till 2023, the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) abrupt realisation that the South African's philosophy does "not suit the Bangladeshi brand of cricket" certainly raised a lot of questions.

One day after officially announcing Sridhar Sriram as technical consultant for the T20I and with Domingo's future hinging on an upcoming meeting with board president Nazmul Hassan Papon on August 22, team director Khaled Mahmud observed the finer points of philosophy yesterday.

"Every individual has their own philosophy and Domingo's policies may not suit our brand of cricket. To be honest, talk is cheap because we are unable to perform in T20 format," Mahmud told media yesterday.

The former Bangladesh captain and incumbent board director also hinted that the BCB were thinking of making drastic changes in the Test and ODI formats as well, which means that time may be running out for Domingo.

"What's wrong with having a different philosophy? If it works well for the country, then we must adopt it. We decided to come out of this starting with the Asia Cup, let's see how it goes. I think we can do a lot of experiments in this format



“Every individual has their own philosophy and Domingo's policies may not suit our brand of cricket. To be honest, talk is cheap because we are unable to perform in T20 format.”

Khaled Mahmud Sujon

[T20s] which we can't in ODIs," he added.

Questions still remain, such as whether the board had a philosophy for appointing Domingo as head coach in 2019. And if the BCB was unsatisfied, why did they extend his contract last year?

It was learned that some board members were unhappy with Domingo's inability to provide a long-term plan despite being asked for one repeatedly. According to sources, the board had asked for a plan till April next year with the new Future Tour Programme in mind,

but the 47-year-old has not yet provided any feedback.

"As the BCB president said, we are going to sit with Domingo and the members of the coaching panel on August 22 and will find out about all their roles," BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus told The Daily Star yesterday.

There are rumours that Domingo may not continue as Bangladesh's head coach after the upcoming home series against India in November this year and it was also learned that he may not be part of the Tigers' Asia Cup campaign in the UAE later this month.

Meanwhile, Jamie Siddons -- who was appointed as the batting coach in February -- is also under the scanner after dismal batting performances across the formats since he assumed the role.

Despite that, it was learned that the Australian is also interested to become the head coach of the Tigers in the T20 format as the board aims to make wholesale changes in order to instill a fearless attitude into the team in the shortest format of the game.

But amid all the chopping and changing and the BCB beating their drums about ending all the problems plaguing Bangladesh cricket overnight, the question remains whether it is only the philosophy of the coaches that is to blame. The board must also know what their philosophy actually is.

Nortje relishes generating fiery pace

REUTERS, London

South African speedster Anrich Nortje said he relished bowling at speeds rarely seen in English conditions, after he was timed at 148 kph in his team's crushing innings defeat of England in their first Test at Lord's on Friday.

Nortje ripped through the heart of the home batting, taking three wickets in 10 balls at one point, as England slumped to 149 all out in their second innings to lose the Test inside three days.

Nortje's average speed in the over where he dismissed the dangerous Jonny Bairstow was 148 kph, making it the quickest over England have had to face at home in the last decade of test cricket, according to the analytics website CricViz.

"It's exciting, something I've wanted to do since I was a kid," Nortje told a news conference.

"It's hard work, you have to get yourself up. Sometimes you think you've bowled the right ball and it just goes to the boundary and then you have your captain saying 'It's a good ball, keep going, keep going'. That helped me at stages as well. But yeah, it's a nice feeling."

Nortje, 28, admitted he does sneak a look at the board display for the speed gun, measuring the pace of bowlers' deliveries, to see what pace he is generating.

"I do, I do, but it's not a focus to be trying to go quicker or slow or whatever. But it is nice to see when the rhythm is there.

"Sometimes it feels like it's a lot slower and the speed gun says something different, and then sometimes it feels fast, then this speed guns says it's slow. But when I'm on the field, I just try and execute as much as possible."



Kane's landmark goal fires Spurs to the summit

AFP, London

Harry Kane set a Premier League record for the most goals with a single club as the Tottenham striker sealed a 1-0 win against Wolves on Saturday.

Kane's 185th top-flight goal for Tottenham took him above Argentina striker Sergio Aguero's total of 184 during his time at Manchester City.

It was also Kane's 250th goal in all competitions for Tottenham, moving him 16 goals behind Jimmy Greaves as he bids to become the north London club's all-time leading scorer.

The 29-year-old's landmark moment came in the second half at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium as he headed home from close-range.

Kane had scored his first goal of the season in last weekend's 2-2 draw at Chelsea when his stoppage-time header drew him level with Aguero.

Although they were well below their best, unbeaten Tottenham sit top of the table after winning two of their first three matches.

Their stay at the top might be short-lived depending on other results over the weekend, but there is no doubting the feelgood factor around the club at present.



PHOTO: AFP

India clinch series against Zimbabwe

AFP, Harare

Wicketkeeper Sanju Samson struck an unbeaten 43 to guide India to a five-wicket victory on Saturday and a series win after the second of three one-day internationals in Harare.

Zimbabwe made a modest 161 after losing the toss and India recovered from losing skipper KL Rahul leg before for one to reach 167-5 with 146 balls remaining.

The result relegates the third match on Monday to a dead rubber, but Zimbabwe will be encouraged after putting up a much better show than two days ago, when they suffered a 10-wicket hiding.

Batting at number six, Samson faced 39 deliveries over 51 minutes and smashed four sixes and three fours.

Opener Shikhar Dhawan and fellow top-order batsman Shubman Gill contributed 33 runs each as India recovered from 5-1 to eventually finish comfortable winners.

Vice-captain Dhawan struck four fours in a brisk innings while the more cautious Gill notched six fours.

Luke Jongwe was the most successful Zimbabwe bowler, taking the wickets of Gill and Ishan Kishan for the loss of 33 runs in four overs.

The unbeaten 43 and three catches earned Samson the player of the match award and the wicketkeeper said he enjoyed his time in front of the stumps.

"I took three catches but I missed a stumping -- as wicketkeepers we are used to being told about things we did not do well," he said.

"I really enjoy wicketkeeping and contributing to this win. In this match the fast bowlers picked the length much quicker and I really enjoyed that.