

Time of the essence as BCB defers captaincy call

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) convened an emergency board meeting yesterday to discuss the ODI captaincy. Although the assumption was that the captain was going to be announced on the day, eventually BCB decided to defer the decision.

It was decided in the meeting that BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon has been given the responsibility to hold talks with potential candidates over the captaincy role.

Shakib Al Hasan, already the Test and T20I captain of Bangladesh, is still in pole position to be selected for the role. According to BCB sources, however, the board are concerned over the fact that giving captaincy of all three formats to Shakib may turn out to be a bit of a burden for the player, especially with the Asia Cup and World Cup looming.

"We have options, it isn't like we don't have options but we want to know what the board directors are thinking," a BCB source said on conditions of anonymity.

BCB cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus came to address the media following the meeting and talked about probable candidates.

"As you know, Shakib is there, Liton [Das] too, and we have the promising Miraz [Mehedi Hasan]. We will hold talks with them," Jalal told the media.

It could not be ascertained whether talks have gone on with Shakib. It is, however, irregular that no major decision was taken following an emergency board meeting. Even yesterday, BCB officials had suggested that they would reach a decision on Tuesday.

The cut-off date for the Asia Cup squad is August 12 and the board would have to announce the captain and the squad by then. BCB wants to learn where Shakib stands in terms of captaining the ODI side and the duration he would take over the reins for.

A few of the BCB directors remained unsure of Shakib's preference. The all-rounder has various kinds of obligations that keeps him busy. Shakib has commercial obligations while franchise cricket still has an allure for the all-rounder. Logistically, captaining the side in three formats is a difficulty given his family resides in the USA.

The BCB wants to appoint a captain for the Asia Cup, the New Zealand home ODI series and the ODI World Cup in India. They want to know what Shakib's preference is before moving forward with the captaincy choice.

The board directors during the meeting voiced their opinions regarding who they find suitable for the job. Given Shakib's experience, Shakib was the preferred option for the majority.

The concern is whether Shakib sees himself captaining in all three formats following the World Cup since BCB prefers a more long-term solution. However, time is of the essence as the deadline for announcing the World Cup squad is September 5.

Split captaincy for white-ball and red-ball formats is also in the discussion, according to sources. If Shakib prefers taking over the white-ball format hot seats, the Test captaincy could see change.

"Since we have the Asia Cup coming up, we want to announce the Asia Cup captain first. Along with that, the other two formats are there and we want to think about them and then give responsibility," Jalal added.

Whether or not Shakib now sees himself as the captain, the BCB's preference would be towards him. If Shakib, at the age of 37, does not see himself captaining the side behind the World Cup, the board would have to hold discussion.

For now, though, the ball may very well be in Shakib's court as BCB talks with potential candidates. It is a matter of frustration for even board members that the captaincy matter before major events is yet to be settled.



Bangladesh national women's football team members stand behind Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other dignitaries following the distribution of Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Padak-2023 at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday. The football team and four distinguished women received the award for their outstanding contributions to their respective fields.

PHOTO: PMO

Tigers dreaming of 'special outcome'

SPORTS REPORTER

A festive atmosphere pervaded at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday as the current and former national cricketers enjoyed moments with the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 trophy, on its second day of the three-day tour in Bangladesh.

Excitement was in abundance from the youngsters. Shamim Hossain, for instance, could not resist himself from kissing the World Cup trophy before the photoshoot.

Veterans Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad were seen posing for pictures with the World Cup trophy, showing that experienced campaigners were not far behind in terms of having enthusiasm.

Earlier, an animated Mushfiqur carried the trophy to stadium premises. Behind his huge smile, the experienced cricketer may have masked his long-held desire to lift the World Cup for Bangladesh.

Mushfiqur will be featuring in his fifth ODI World Cup, in what could most likely be his final appearance at the marquee event. The same goes for Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal and Riyad.

The 36-year-old, dreaming of something special in the upcoming World Cup, highlighted that Bangladesh's vast experience could prove to be a vital factor this time around.

"Obviously, experience is a big factor but, no matter how good you are in pen and paper, you have to play better cricket on the given day. Most importantly, I am lucky to have played in the last four World Cups and if I get the opportunity, I will try to make it even more special, in terms of result compared to the previous four occasions," Mushfiqur said.

"We have the strength and we have the belief, but everything will depend on how well we can start. I think it's very important to have a good start."

"Since we are an experienced side in ODIs and we have been playing consistent cricket in the past four-five years, obviously we can hope to get a very good and special outcome this time around."



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

The fascination towards the World Cup trophy remains similar from one generation to the next, according to another former Bangladesh captain and current selector Habibul Bashar Sumon.

Bangladesh were a mere participant in their maiden World Cup appearance in 1999. An optimistic Bashar now wants to get closer to the trophy this time around.

"We played the '99 World Cup and, truth be told, I got very excited watching the trophy. Feels like the World Cup started today (yesterday). In 2019 we were in a good position and went there with a good side," said Bashar.

"We don't want to just play well, we want to do something very good. We want to get closer to the trophy. We have played well in World Cups before but the results didn't always come. This time we want results."

"Everything is in a good state but the kind of form the team is in at the World Cup is very important. The last one year we have been in tremendous form and if we can carry that to the World Cup, we can expect something good," Bashar added.

Mushfiqur, Bashar and many deem the upcoming World Cup as Bangladesh's best chance to make it a special one. With ever-growing expectations this time around, can the Tigers dare to dream big?

Hockey team in tough Asian Games group

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh hockey will be up for the challenge to defend its sixth position in the Hangzhou Asian Games after being drawn in a tough group alongside three superior rivals.

Bangladesh have been pitted against India, Pakistan, Japan, Uzbekistan and Singapore in Pool A, while Pool B features South Korea, Malaysia, China, Oman, Thailand and Indonesia.

During the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia, Bangladesh finished sixth, equaling their previous best feat from 1978. They lost against South Korea in the fifth-place deciding match following third-place finish in Pool B where Pakistan and Malaysia emerged champions and runners-up to advance to the semifinals.

This time around, Bangladesh will face an uphill task against India, Pakistan and Japan if they want to finish among top three in Pool A. If Bangladesh fail to do so, they will have to play in classification match for the seventh eighth positions, subject to finishing fourth in the six-team pool.

Bangladesh will start their campaign against Japan on September 24, a day after the opening ceremony of the multidiscipline event in Hangzhou, China.

Pool A: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Japan, Uzbekistan, Singapore

Pool B: South Korea, Malaysia, China, Oman, Thailand, Indonesia

All my love and respect to you. I am sorry for what happened. Also, for our England fans and my team-mates, playing with and for you is my greatest honour and I promise to learn from my experience.

England's Lauren James to Nigeria's Michelle Alozie



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All the awards are special to me because every award has its own significance.

Sabina Khatoon, Bangladesh captain

"This award means a lot to me for being able to receive it in the presence of many [esteemed] people."

Maria Manda, Bangladesh vice-captain

AFC U-23 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS Mintu picks 37 players for training

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday disclosed a 37-member preliminary squad for AFC U-23 Asian Cup Qualifiers, with head coach Julfiker Mahmud Mintu focusing on physical and mental preparation to fight it out against superior rivals in the campaign.

Bangladesh have been pitted against Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines in Group H, with 11 group winners and four best runners-up teams slated to advance to the finals of the competition.

"It is a big challenge for me to make the players ready physically and mentally as I can't get seven to eight players from the national team due to different engagements including that of the national team as well as of Abahani and Bashundhara Kings," said Mintu, who previously worked as an assistant coach of the national team.

In the five previous additions, Bangladesh lost 14 out of 16 matches, only managing to beat Sri Lanka 2-0 in the 2020 edition and playing out a goalless draw against India in the 2016 edition. They suffered heavy defeats against opponents such as Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tajikistan, Palestine, Syria and Yemen in the past.

"Thailand and Malaysia are strong opponents who have been together for one and a half years. They play high-pressing football, so, we have to find out how to play against them, resisting their high-pressing football," said Mintu.

After discussing with national team's head coach Javier Cabrera, Mintu picked 10 players from the Asian Games contingent in his squad, which will begin its residential camp at BKSP today.



সাতেইনেবিলিটি রেটিং এর শির্ষে যমুনা ব্যাংক

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃক সাতেইনেবিলিটি রেটিং ২০২২ এর সেরাদের তালিকায় যমুনা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড। সম্মিলিত পথচালায় এই অর্জন আমাদের অনুপ্রাপ্তি করে সামনে এগিয়ে যাবার।

JAMUNA BANK



QUARTERFINAL FIXTURES

August 11: Spain v Netherlands (In Wellington), Japan v Sweden (In Auckland)

August 12: Australia v France (In Brisbane), England v Colombia (In Sydney)

A second-half goal by Catalina Usme fired Colombia to a 1-0 win over Jamaica on Tuesday and carried the South Americans to their first Women's World Cup quarterfinal. [Inset] France's Kenza Dali celebrates with Kadidiatou Diani after scoring her team's second goal during a 4-0 victory over Morocco to reach quarterfinal.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India 'trying everything' to end 12-year wait

AGENCIES

India ODI captain Rohit Sharma reflected on World Cup memories and looks optimistically ahead to a home campaign beginning in October.

On hand during the Barbados leg of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 Trophy Tour, posing with the prize on offer come 19 November, Rohit said, "I have never seen this trophy from this close."

While India may not have advanced past the semi-final stage in the last two ICC Men's



Cricket World Cups, Rohit believes his side can emulate the 2011 success of his compatriots.

"When we won in 2011, I was not a part of the squad, but it is beautiful and has so many memories behind it. I remember watching it from home, every single match," said the 36-year-old, who admits having considered not watching the campaign at all after the disappointment of missing out on squad selection.

"We are trying everything we can from our perspective to make sure we are ready for that World Cup."