

‘Champion teams have to have bouncebackability’

Former Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque was part of the team when the Asia Cup was last played in the ODI format in 2018 where the Tigers reached the final. With another Asia Cup around the corner, the 31-year-old thinks the Tigers have a good opportunity to do something special this time. The cricketer from Cox’s Bazar spoke to The Daily Star’s Mazhar Uddin in an exclusive interview, sharing his views regarding which aspects the Tigers can bank on to lift their maiden continental title. The excerpts of the interview are given below:



The Daily Star (DS): You were part of the team when Bangladesh reached the final of the Asia Cup in 2018. How do you see Bangladesh’s chances this time around?

Mominul Haque (MH): We were in good shape at that time, however, unfortunately, we have been unable to become champions till now. I still remember the defeat to Pakistan in the final of 2012. I think this time is a big opportunity for us. From past experience, we know what are the hurdles we need to overcome to become champions. We have a few senior players who played in the past finals as well.

DS: Do you feel Bangladesh need to win a title as a team to move forward, and what are the barriers that are stopping us?

MH: We have been playing international cricket for over 20 years now and we have quite a few players who have played over 200 matches. So from that perspective, I feel we really need to win a title. We are a very good ODI side and our record speaks for itself.

DS: Who can be the key players for Bangladesh this time around?

MH: I don’t know whether you will agree with me or not, but both times we reached the final of the Asia Cup, we had good bowling attacks. I think our bowling unit has improved a lot and a lot will depend on them. If we score around 240-250, our bowling unit can defend that. Our pace bowlers are doing well and we also have two world-class spinners in Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

DS: When compared with teams like India or

Pakistan, what are the areas we need to overcome when it comes to tackling such big teams?

MH: Overall, we have a very settled team with good batting, spin department, and pace unit along with a world class all rounder. We have all the ammunition to become a complete team with the mixture of youth and experience. We have some fit fielders who can save runs inside the 30-yard circle. But when you want to win a tournament of Asia Cup’s stature, it is important to be tough mentally. It is important to cope up with the pressure and deliver in crunch situations.

DS: We always talk about the importance of momentum. In brief tournaments like the Asia Cup, where does Bangladesh need to start from?

MH: There are many big teams who lose the first two matches of a tournament but go on to play in the final. Champion teams are those that are able to absorb the most pressure. Momentum doesn’t matter for those who can handle pressure. If you want to become champion you may lose one game but you have to have the ability to bounce back.

DS: How important is it for all the players to know their specific roles and contribute towards the team’s victory?

MH: If you look at the history of World Cups, you will notice at least five players from champion teams have contributed in a game. Shakib [Al Hasan] bhai played really well in the last World Cup but if two or three more players had performed regularly, then we would have had a chance to win the World Cup. It has to be a collective approach from the team to get the results in big tournaments.



ASIA CUP FIXTURES

Group A		Group B	
Pakistan, India, Nepal		Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka	
GROUP STAGE	DATE	MATCH	TIME (BST) VENUE
	30 August	Pak-Nep	3:30 pm Multan, Pakistan
	31 August	Ban-Sri	3:30 pm Kandy, Sri Lanka
	2 September	Pak-Ind	3:30 pm Kandy, Sri Lanka
	3 September	Ban-Afg	3:30 pm Lahore, Pakistan
	4 September	Ind-Nep	3:30 pm Kandy, Sri Lanka
	5 September	Afg-Ind	3:30 pm Lahore, Pakistan
SUPER FOUR	6 September	A1-B2	3:30 pm Lahore, Pakistan
	9 September	B1-B2	3:30 pm Colombo, Sri Lanka
	10 September	A1-A2	3:30 pm Colombo, Sri Lanka
	12 September	A2-B1	3:30 pm Colombo, Sri Lanka
	14 September	A1-B1	3:30 pm Colombo, Sri Lanka
	15 September	A2-B2	3:30 pm Colombo, Sri Lanka
FINA	17 September	SF1-SF2	3:30 pm Colombo, Sri Lanka

ROLL OF HONOUR	YEAR	HOST	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP	FORMAT
	1984	UAE	India	Sri Lanka	ODI
	1986	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	ODI
	1988	Bangladesh	India (2)	Sri Lanka	ODI
	1991-92	India	India (3)	Sri Lanka	ODI
	1995	UAE	India (4)	Sri Lanka	ODI
	1997	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka (2)	India	ODI
	2000	Bangladesh	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	ODI
	2004	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka (3)	India	ODI
	2008	Pakistan	Sri Lanka (4)	India	ODI
	2010	Sri Lanka	India (5)	Sri Lanka	ODI
	2012	Bangladesh	Pakistan (2)	Bangladesh	ODI
	2014	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka (5)	Pakistan	ODI
	2016	Bangladesh	India (6)	Bangladesh	T20I
	2018	UAE	India (7)	Bangladesh	ODI
	2022	UAE	Sri Lanka (6)	Pakistan	T20I
	2023	Pakistan & Sri Lanka	?	?	ODI



MOST RUNS IN ASIA CUP FOR BANGLADESH (ODI, TOP THREE)

PLAYER	MAT	RUNS	AVG	SR	100	50	HS
Mushfiqur Rahim	21	699	36.78	84.52	2	2	144
Tamim Iqbal	13	519	43.25	81.34	0	6	70
Shakib Al Hasan	13	402	33.50	103.07	0	3	68

MOST WICKETS IN ASIA CUP FOR BANGLADESH (ODI, TOP THREE)

PLAYER	MAT	WKTS	AVG	ECON	BEST
Abdur Razzak	18	22	36.18	4.67	3/17
Shakib Al Hasan	13	19	32.73	4.87	4/42
Mashrafe Mortaza	19	18	48.22	5.69	2/25

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40,001 to 60,000	2,000	More than 100,000	5,000

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