

# BCB red-faced over Mushtaq

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) landed itself in another sticky situation after Mushtaq Ahmed, the national team's spin bowling coach in the recent ICC T20 World Cup, joined England Under19s just days after board president Nazmul Hassan Papon said they were working on extending his contract.

'We are ready to extend our contract with Mushtaq. That decision has been made,' the BCB president had said after a board meeting on June 2.

The former Pakistan leg-spinner was appointed by the BCB last April and his contract was set to run till the T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies.

Under his tutelage, Rishad Hossain, Bangladesh's only leg-spinner in the World Cup, ended the tournament as the joint third-highest wicket-taker alongside Afghan skipper Rashid Khan with 14 scalps each.

Mushtaq received a lot of plaudits for helping Rishad's stellar showing and the expectation was that the BCB would try to rope him for a long-term contract.

But now as Mushtaq has already signed a



deal with England U19s, which BCB officials claim they already knew about, there is no certainty about when or if Mushtaq can join the Tigers' coaching panel.

'I can't say how long it's [England U19 contract] for. I don't know if he will be available for the Pakistan series,' BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Before we communicated with Mushtaq [regarding appointment], he had prior engagements till December which included the England U19 job. So, we said that we will have him till the World Cup and then we will sit and sort it out.

"That discussion [on extension] is still ongoing. If he lets us know how many days he can be available for us till December in

combination with his prior engagements, we will lock him down for those days. After December 2024, we will have a long-term agreement with Mushtaq," the BCB CEO explained.

Why the BCB boss would talk about extending Mushtaq's contract in a press conference after knowing the coach already had prior engagements till December is hard to comprehend.

One BCB director, on condition of anonymity, revealed that the board directors in general believe that "extending Mushtaq's contract should be a priority".

However, in what form Mushtaq will be able to work with the Tigers this year, given his other engagements, is a puzzle at the moment.

BCB still wants a long-term contract with him after 2024, but there may be other engagements such as franchise opportunities that Mushtaq may find more lucrative. Quality of work environment would also be important.

For now, BCB claims they are still in talks with Mushtaq but whether they will be able to secure his services, is a question that is still hanging in the air.

# France aim to silence critics against depleted Spain



» France forward Kylian Mbappe has scored just one goal from 20 shots at Euro 2024.

» Spain are the only team to win all five matches at this edition but no side has ever won six times in a single European Championship tournament, or six Euros games in a row.

» De la Fuente's Spain are the most in-form side, having won 15 of their 19 matches since the start of 2023. In that period, Spain's 79% win rate is the best of any European nation.

» Lamine Yamal has created 14 chances for his Spain teammates at this competition, the most by a Spaniard at a major tournament since Xavi at Euro 2012 (25).

» Yamal has also registered three assists so far, with no Spanish player ever registering more at a single European Championship tournament.

» France are yet to score from open play, with two own goals and one penalty from Mbappe.

» France are the only team on record since 1980 to have more than 50 non-penalty shots at a Euros and fail to find the net with any of them.

REUTERS, Munich

Goal-shy France will be looking to silence the critics when they take on Spain in their Euro 2024 semifinal clash on Tuesday in Munich, while their opponents hope to keep their impressive campaign going even without key players.

With Kylian Mbappe leading their talented squad, France were well among the favourites when they arrived in Germany.

But they have come under fire from fans and pundits alike for a string of unimpressive performances and have reached the last four without scoring a

single goal in open play.

On Friday, they only edged past Portugal on penalties, with Mbappe substituted after another match where he spent more time fiddling with his mask than setting up his teammates.

Mbappe's form after sustaining a broken nose in France's opener and that of Antoine Griezmann remain big question marks ahead of the clash with Spain, who overcame a raucous Stuttgart Arena crowd to beat the hosts with a goal in the final minutes of extra time.

"We are semifinalists. Questions about the level of Antoine and Kylian? We have to realise that that's enough to be in the

semifinals. So I don't see why we would nitpick," midfielder Youssouf Fofana told a press conference on Sunday.

However, it remains to be seen if it is enough to get past a highly aggressive Spain, who are in imperious form with five straight wins so far at Euro 2024 but who will be missing several key players in Munich.

Midfielder Pedri is out of the tournament after sustaining a knee injury in a nasty clash with Germany midfielder Toni Kroos on Saturday.

Spain's 2-1 win in a nerve-racking encounter in the quarters against Germany ended with 16 bookings

including a yellow card for centre-back Robin Le Normand and a red for fullback Dani Carvajal, meaning both are suspended for Tuesday's game.

Real Madrid defender Nacho will play centre-back alongside Aymeric Laporte and 38-year-old full-back Jesus Navas, who will share the right-hand channel with 16-year-old winger Lamine Yamal, one of the players of the Euros so far harassing opponents' defences together with Nico Williams, 21.

All in all the team is a blend of deep experience and raw talent that has been thriving under the calm guidance of coach Luis de la Fuente.

# Anderson 'proud' of longevity as Test exit looms

AFP, London

James Anderson said Monday he was "most proud" of his endurance as a Test bowler as he prepares for his farewell match with England after a career spanning two decades.

The paceman, 42 at the end of this month, will bow out from international cricket after playing in the first match of the series between England and the West Indies at Lord's starting on Wednesday.

It will be his 188th match in the format -- he has already taken 700 Test wickets.

No fast bowler has taken more wickets and only India batting hero Sachin Tendulkar has played more matches in the five-day game.

"Playing my 188th Test at just short of 42 years old, makes me the most proud and I'm still pushing myself to be the best I possibly can," Anderson told a news

conference at Lord's.

"Even though I've got one game left, I've still tried to train as hard as I can."

England, looking ahead to the 2025/26 Ashes against Australia, effectively called time on a Test career that Anderson started against Zimbabwe at Lord's 21 years ago.

"I feel like I'm still bowling as well as I ever have," he said. "But I knew it had to end at some point, whether it's now or in a year or two."

"I can't complain. I don't have any regrets, I've played hundreds of games for England, played with people who are much more talented than me but didn't get the opportunity because of injury."

Asked about his emotions, he said: "I feel pretty normal these last couple of days."

Anderson said he had yet to decide whether this week's match would represent his farewell to first-class cricket or if he would play on for county side Lancashire.



# 'Managing swing key in Pakistan'

Before taking the role of High Performance (HP) head coach in May 2023, former Bermuda batter David Hemp worked as the head coach of the Pakistan national women's team between 2020 and 2022. Earlier this year, the 53-year-old was officially assigned to the Bangladesh men's national cricket team as their batting coach. Since then, he has worked with the Tigers in several bilateral and global tournaments, including the recently concluded T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies. Bangladesh's next international engagement will be in Pakistan, where they will play two Tests, both part of the ICC Test Championship. Given Hemp's previous experience working in that part of the world, Bangladesh will have high expectations for his insights on the playing conditions there. On Monday, Hemp talked to The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan over the phone from Australia on several aspects, including the team's preparation and chances for the series. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Bangladesh haven't played too many Tests in Pakistan over the years. How do you see the team's overall chances in this series?

David Hemp (DH): I think Pakistan are a strong side... and will be backing themselves to put up a good performance on home soil. It's not going to be an easy series in terms of conditions and surfaces. But traditionally, what we have seen over the last couple of years is that there have been good batting surfaces. It's conventional swing to start with and then reverse swing plays an important part in the game. But until we get there and see the conditions, because they might decide to leave grass on the wicket or it might be so much grass that the wicket might be suppressive [for batters], we aren't going to know about it.

DS: Pitches in Pakistan aren't like typical sub-continental ones, regularly assisting the pacers while some produce a lot of runs. What will be the biggest challenges for our batters in these types of surfaces?

DH: The key plan is managing conventional swing and then the reverse swing, and how we can assist the players to understand what they might come up against. If you look at the teams that had gone to Pakistan in the last couple of years, it's about occupying the crease for most of the time... so that you can bowl properly and set fields

too. The matches had generally gone into the last day because they were very good for batting. For [taking] wickets, you have to work really hard but if you do get the ball swinging and reverse swinging, you have a really good chance to knock people over.

DS: Our HP team will be heading to Australia for two four-dayers while our A team will go to Pakistan prior to the Test series. Do you think our Test players should prepare with these matches too?

DH: I'm not sure what the selectors are going to do with the individuals... whether they can send them. As you have said, there are a couple of tours... so there's an opportunity to look at some players there, so that they can get used to the conditions.

DS: Bangladesh had a good start in this cycle of ICC Test Championship, beating New Zealand in their first game but derailed since. How do you see the team's position in terms of performance in this format?

DH: I think the New Zealand win was a very good one. Apart from Glenn Phillips' innings in Dhaka, I think we would have won that game as well. And in terms of the Sri Lanka series in March, it was for us to bat long but... we failed to bat over 50 overs in three innings. You obviously have to bat longer than that and it's something we all should be focused on.



Defending champions Argentina's Lionel Messi, Giovanni Lo Celso, and Rodrigo de Paul were seen in an upbeat mood during training ahead of their Copa America semifinal fixture against Canada, which is scheduled to take place at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey tomorrow.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK