



# 'I take my hat off to the pacers'

South African fast bowling legend Allan Donald has been heavily credited for his role in Bangladesh's pace revolution during his tenure as the team's pace bowling coach from March 2022 to November 2023. The 57-year-old, who resigned after the ICC World Cup in India, is still a big supporter of the Tigers and keeps in touch with the Bangladesh pacers. On Monday, Donald spoke with The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan over the phone from Johannesburg, where he expressed immense pleasure at seeing his former pupils doing so well in Pakistan. Here are the excerpts:

**The Daily Star (DS):** The Bangladesh pace unit underwent a massive transformation during your tenure. After seeing them take all 10 wickets in a Test innings for the first time, how do you see their progress as a unit?

**Allan Donald (AD):** One of my biggest challenges was to get the fear factor out of the dressing room. What I mean by fear factor is that guys are a little bit fearful of making mistakes. I always knew that every single one of these guys had unbelievable talent, natural talent and great wrists. But for me, the biggest challenge was always going to be to work with them mentally, make them understand what a pack mentality means and how to combat the fear. For me, it was about constantly reminding our group of the process. I think slowly, within a year, we started to get the rewards. I think the biggest thing was for them to trust me, that I'm always with them and not to worry about making mistakes. I think once the acceptance happened, they trusted me. I never talked about mistakes and always gave positive reinforcement. I was giving the guys roles within the group. I made them feel wanted and watching them now in the cricketing scene is a great satisfaction for me.

I met Nahid Rana a couple of years ago in Chattogram where he was part of a young group that came to play against Sri Lanka. I was really excited about watching him. I'm glad he has now got a role. Seeing Hasan Mahmud doing so well, a five-fer today [yesterday], and Nahid with a four-fer, it's so, so amazing to see how these guys have stood up now and running with the process. I think that's the most amazing thing.

**DS:** Bangladesh now regularly picks more pacers in home and away Tests.

How do you see the change?

**AD:** I think it's all about mindset. Test cricket is brutal and you have a pack of bowlers who have the collective mindset of hunting hard and exerting pressure on every single ball. I still speak to them regularly in their WhatsApp group. We had a good time in the WhatsApp group last night [Sunday]. The belief of this group is now at a stage that I have never seen before. It's just so satisfying to see them run with the process and this is the reward against the very strong Pakistan side. Pakistan is the hardest place in the world to go bowl. But to do that back-to-back in a venue like Rawalpindi, which can be so flat and tough to bowl, I take my hat off to that group.

**DS:** Hasan Mahmud was a regular in the white-ball setup before transitioning into the Test side, was that intentional?

**AD:** I remember Russell Domingo's words to me before I met Hasan Mahmud. He said you will be impressed by a young man called Hasan Mahmud. He can play all formats. He even said that he thinks Hasan's Bangladesh's most skillful bowler. He rated him like this back then and I agreed. I asked Hasan, do you want to play Test cricket, and he said yes. For me, the message was always that he's going to prove that he can play all formats. I am so, so pleased that he is in the Test side. It was intentional and it was always planned. I expected that at some point you were going to see them perform like they have in the

two-match Test series in Pakistan. It's hard on Khaled Ahmed, who is a regular in Tests. But the bowling group is so strong that you can go and pick three different people on different surfaces.

**DS:** With so many matches coming up, how crucial will it be to manage the workload of the pacers?

**AD:** You want to be in a position when you can rotate and you can give guys two Test matches off. I think that's what Australia do so well. Because they have such a conveyor belt of quicks, they can rotate and rest other guys. Workload management is absolutely crucial so you can have three guys fresh for the next series. I think Bangladesh don't have much time before their next series in India.

**DS:** Where do you see the Bangladesh pace attack in the next five years?

**AD:** I just want them to keep growing. This would be the biggest achievement in the history of Bangladesh cricket from the pace bowling point of view. You just can take this confidence now and keep building. The learnings and confidence out of that are just superb. I think they should search for more young crops and the pool of young fast bowlers in Bangladesh must continue to get bigger. The more this group grows, the more learnings will be passed on to the youngsters. I think they need to make the pool bigger and find youngsters.

Hasan Mahmud's five-wicket haul was his first in Tests and the first-ever by a Bangladesh pacer against Pakistan.

Hasan's 5-43 is the fourth-best figures by a Bangladesh pacer in Tests.

He became the seventh Bangladesh pacer to complete a fifer away from home after Manjurul Islam, Robiul Islam, Shahadat Hossain, Rubel Hossain, Ebadot Hossain, and Khaled Ahmed.

Bangladesh pacers have taken five-wicket hauls on 11 occasions overall in Tests. Hasan's five-fer is the eighth time that a pacer has taken five wickets overseas. The last time a pacer achieved the feat at home was when Shahadat Hossain picked up five against India in 2010.

Hasan's fifer, Nahid Rana's four-wicket haul and Taskin Ahmed's solitary scalp meant that Bangladesh pacers accounted for 10 wickets for the very first time in their history in a single innings of a Test.

The lowest total that Pakistan have ever defended in a Test at home is 198 against England in Multan in 2005.



# NO COMPROMISE en route to becoming speed demon

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Nahid Rana took giant strides yesterday in showcasing he is the 'X-factor' in that Bangladesh pace battery. His raw pace hurt Pakistan, but in the manner in which he dismantled the hosts showed there was a matured head on his shoulders.

He clocked 152kmph yesterday in Rawalpindi but it was the sheer confidence with which he set up batters titled the Test match in Bangladesh's favour.

Shan Masood was looking good but in Nahid's very first over, he was late to a slash through point twice, and the second time it happened, the Pakistan skipper was caught behind. Babar Azam was too late to his defensive shot and the result was similar. Mohammad Rizwan was beaten by a gem of a delivery that just whizzed over the stumps, the delivery too good to take a nick and in that very same over, he produced another gem to remove Saud Shakeel. Three wickets in three successive overs, Nahid competed for a fifer with Hasan Mahmud and ended one short with a haul of four for 44 in 11 overs.

A few weeks ago, the 21-year-old speedster had been training alone at Mirpur's Academy Ground before the Pakistan Tests when this reporter queried on what he had been working on. 'Reverse-swing' came the reply, with his customary smile. By the end of the session, he was getting it to tail in quite a bit. Before leaving, Rana informed he had bowled eight overs on that hot day but the smile said he was happy with the effort.

The fire to improve had to be there and his coach in Dhaka Premier League (Shinepukur) and Bangladesh Premier League (Khulna), Talha Jubair, feels the fire is what keeps Nahid ticking.

"Yes, he has that drive. I have seen him from pretty early and if he did not have that, he would not arrive at where he is now," Talha told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Whatever I told him, he took care of those aspects word for word," Talha said.

A former pace star himself, Talha had been watching Nahid since the days and says Nahid had bowling big no balls at the which eventually led to making the U-19 World squad. Talha talked with local coach Alamgir Kabir Chapainawabganj to fix "I sent videos to Alamgir work on his run-up and

that he only worked on run-up. His smooth action will allow him to bowl at more pace in future but it is his accuracy that will make the difference," Talha noted.

There had been criticisms of his expensive spells in his debut series against Sri Lanka Tests and also the first Test in Rawalpindi. However, coaches identified that pace should not be compromised on, instead length was something that was focused on and in Rawalpindi, Pakistan batters' struggled because of length.

"He is still young. If you tell him to keep runs in check rather than bowl at pace, he will not be Rana anymore. You have to let him bowl at pace. You can't tell him not to bowl fast but rather get accurate at pace. I worked with him in BPL too and told him not to compromise on pace, rather talked about his lengths. He gets extra bounce, so his lengths need to be fuller and I talked about that," he said.



## SHORT CORNER

### Bangladesh women to begin SAFF title defence against Pakistan

Defending champions Bangladesh will take on Pakistan in their opening match of the SAFF Women's Championship in Nepal on October 20 and then square off against South Asian powerhouse India in their final group match three days later. These three teams make up Group A while Group B features hosts Nepal as well as Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.



### 'Great moment' for Mbappe as he scores first La Liga goals

Kylian Mbappe answered his critics in style as he netted his first La Liga goals to give Real Madrid a 2-0 win over Real Betis at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday which sends them second in the table. Since scoring in the UEFA Super Cup against Atalanta, new signing Mbappe had failed to find the back of the net in Madrid's opening three games in La Liga, prompting criticism in the Spanish press.



### Competitiveness and sporting wickets highlight Women's NCL

Although the political unrest in the country led to some issues arising before the start of the tournament, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) can now heave a sigh of relief after successfully holding the Women's NCL at two venues in Rajshahi: Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium and Bangla Trac Cricket Academy. BCB will also be satisfied to see the tournament go down to the wire.

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