

Mahmudullah's CAREER AT A GLANCE

Bangladesh veteran Mahmudullah Riyad called time on an 18-year international career through a Facebook post yesterday. The 39-year-old, who scored 11,047 runs in international cricket, had retired from Tests in 2021 and called time on his T20I career last year in October. Here we present the highlights of his career:

Mahmudullah scored 5689 runs from 239 matches at an average of 36.46 and a strike-rate of 77.64 in ODIs. He has four centuries and 32 fifties to his name; with the ball, he has 82 wickets at an economy-rate of 5.21 in the format.

He is the fourth-highest run-getter in the format for the Tigers, after Tamim Iqbal (8357), Mushfiqur Rahim (7795), and Shakib Al Hasan (7570), and also played the fourth-most ODIs for the country.

The 39-year-old has a best score of 128 not out in ODIs which was against New Zealand in the 2015 ODI World Cup. The knock was his second ton in the campaign after he scored a 103 (against England in Bangladesh's previous match) which was the first century by a Bangladesh player in a major ICC event.

The right-handed batter has four centuries in major ICC events (3 in World Cups and 1 in 2017 Champions Trophy) – the most by a Bangladesh player. Two of his tons contributed to winning causes (against England in Adelaide in the 2015 World Cup and against New Zealand in Cardiff in the 2017 Champions Trophy), while the other two failed to drive the Tigers to a win.

He tops the list for most sixes hit a Bangladesh player in ODIs (107) and T20Is (77).

He is the country's second-highest run-scorer in T20Is with 2444 runs in 141 matches at a strike-rate of 117.38 and an average of 23.50.

Under his captaincy, Bangladesh won 16, lost 26, and saw one match yield no result in 43 T20Is. He also scored 782 runs at an average of 23,

including two fifties and a high score of 52, as a captain in the shortest format.

He also led Bangladesh in six Tests. Under Mahmudullah's captaincy, the Tigers won one (against Zimbabwe in Mirpur in 2018) and drew one (against Sri Lanka in Chattogram in 2018) while losing four Tests. However, his batting average of 59.44 as a Test captain is significantly higher than his overall career Test average of 33.49.

His unbeaten 150 in his final Test, against Zimbabwe in Harare in 2021,

is also his career-best score in the format.

Mahmudullah has been a part of Bangladesh's 'Big Five', also including Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, and Mushfiqur Rahim.



Fizz awaits signal to play DPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's star pacer Mustafizur Rahman is suffering from a shoulder injury and is awaiting permission from BCB's medical department to play in the DPL.

Mustafizur had not taken a token for a players' transfer this season even though Prime Bank has now informed that they had not released the player. There are rumours that the left-arm pacer may be called up to play in the IPL. If he does not play the IPL, and gets the green light from the medical department, he may play the ongoing DPL.

Mustafizur was administered a PRP injection yesterday according to sources. The injection is used for stimulating healing and to reduce pain through regeneration. Sources informed that he has been prescribed 7-10 days of rest.

Prime Bank sources said that talks have been held with Mustafizur.

"He has not gone to any other team but since there is an injury concern and we don't know much about the report, the medical department would let us know. If he is free and does not play IPL and the board allows, we will see," a Prime Bank official said.

Quality present but balance missing in DPL

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier League (DPL) witnessed some brilliant individual showings in three very one-sided contests yesterday which highlighted the power imbalance that remains prevalent in the country's premier List-A tournament.

Tamim Iqbal hit his second hundred in as many games and his teammate Mahidul Islam Ankon played some dazzling strokes on his way to making 75 off 96 balls to help Mo h a m m e d a n Cricket Club register a nine-wicket win over Brothers Union at BKSP Ground 3.

Brothers Union batters had a hard time against Mohammedan's Taijul Islam (4-31) and Mehedi Hasan Miraz (2-30) and were bundled out for 187 in 48.4 overs.

In reply, Tamim hit an unbeaten 96-ball 105laced with nine fours and four sixes in a fluent and assertive knock as Mohammedan, who are the most star-

studded team in this year's league, completed their fourth straight win.

At BKSP Ground 4, Naim, who had made 176 to power Prime Bank to 422-8 in their last game against Brothers Union, was once again amongst the runs yesterday against Legends of Rugganj, scoring an 83-ball 81.

However, the rest of the batting self-destruct as Prime Bank got bowled out for just 154 with part-timer Saif Hassan picking up 4-37 and Tanzim Sakib getting 3-30.

In the chase, Tanzid Tamim (68 off 49) and Soumya Sarkar (50 off 40) hit brisk fifties as Rugganj chased down the target in just 23.2 overs.

Winning matches quickly is fast becoming a trend for Rugganj, stacked with star players from the national team, as in their earlier match they bowled Shinepukur out for 69 and finished the chase in 9.3 overs. That game ended at 12:13 pm after a 9:00 am start, not an endorsement of a competitive league.



In the day's other match, Abahani, who have lost some of the sway they used to hold in preceding seasons but still have the likes of national team captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and Parvez Hossain Emon amongst others in their side, recorded an eight-wicket win over Partex Sporting Club.

Abahani first bowled Partex out for 100 before Parvez's 50-ball 55 and Mosaddek Hossain's 27-ball 37 ended the chase inside 15 overs.

In club cricket, the clubs serve their own purpose and the team that spends the most can acquire the best quality players. But if only a few teams completely overpower the remaining teams, that creates an imbalance that is far from ideal from a national interest point of view.

Bangladesh's premier 50-over competition suffers from a lack of grind that cricketers are supposed to face in domestic cricket to get ahead in international cricket.

With the changes in cricket administration after the fall of the Awami League regime, expectations were that the teams will even out further in terms of strength and more title contenders would emerge.

But so far, only the names of the dominant outfits have changed, the power dynamics remain the same.

BCB ANNOUNCES SQUAD FOR ICC WOMEN'S ODI WC QUALIFIER

SQUAD

Nigar Sultana Joty (Captain), Nahida Akter (Vice Captain), Ishma Tanjim, Dilara Akter, Sharmin Akter Supta, Sobhana Mostary, Shorna Akter, Jannatul Ferdus Sumona, Rabeya, Fahima Khatun, Fariha Islam Trisna, Farzana Haque, Shaniha Akther Maghla, Marufa Akter and Ritu Moni.



Newcomers Sheltech Cricket Academy lifted the Women's DPL trophy yesterday at Bashundhara Sports Complex after securing an eight-wicket win against BKSP, having clinched the title ahead of the league's final day. Led by national skipper Nigar Sultana Joty, Sheltech became first-time champions, finishing their campaign unbeaten with eight consecutive wins.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Lamine Yamal and Raphinha dazzled as Barcelona thumped Benfica 3-1 in the second leg of their Champions League last 16 tie on Tuesday, reaching the quarterfinals with a 4-1 aggregate win. Raphinha netted either side of a stunning Yamal strike as the Catalans dominated in the first half, building on their 1-0 last 16 first-leg win in Lisbon.

PHOTO: AFP

Team cohesion triumphs over individual brilliance

AGENCIES

For years, PSG had been synonymous with star power, banking on marquee signings to fulfil their European ambitions.

But in a defining moment of the club's evolution, they proved that unity and tactical discipline could outweigh individual brilliance. PSG's hard-fought victory over Liverpool in the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday was a testament to their transformation.

The Parisians entered the tie as underdogs, particularly after losing 1-0 at home in the first leg despite dominating play. With Kylian Mbappe having departed and PSG enduring a lacklustre group-stage campaign, expectations were tempered. Yet, Liverpool's new boss, Arne Slot, had warned of Luis Enrique's tactical acumen, and his words proved prophetic.

PSG's resilience shone through at Anfield, where they matched Liverpool's intensity and prevailed with a 1-0 victory, forcing the contest to penalties. The shootout saw Gianluigi Donnarumma redeem himself with crucial saves, ensuring the Parisians' passage to the quarterfinals.

"Over the two legs, we deserved to go through. Football does not always acknowledge merit, but tonight I'm happy we qualified because we deserved it," PSG captain Marquinhos said.



Liverpool were eliminated from a major European knockout tie for the first time ever after winning the first leg away from home, progressing from 30 straight ties before Tuesday's game.

Liverpool lost a penalty shootout in the European Cup/UEFA Champions League for the first time (W3 before).

PSG's newfound ethos revolves around teamwork rather than reliance on a singular talisman. President Nasser Al-Khelaifi echoed this sentiment: "We are building something special with young talent. We have the best coach in the world and players with immense technical ability." Luis Enrique's philosophy – centered on possession, pressing, and collective effort – was on full display. Ousmane Dembele, a player once criticised for inconsistency, delivered the crucial goal with a composed finish on the break. Meanwhile, Donnarumma, who had been

blamed for PSG's first-leg loss, thwarted Darwin Nunez and Curtis Jones in the decisive shootout.

"Knocking Liverpool out is incredibly difficult," Enrique said. "But we showed our identity. No matter the stadium, we play our football with courage."

With emerging stars like Desire Doue and Bradley Barcola stepping up, the club is embracing a sustainable future. Their next hurdle will be Aston Villa or Club Brugge, but with Ligue 1 nearly secured and a reinvigorated mindset, PSG have every reason to dream big in Europe.