

'No overnight 360-degree transformation, but a start'



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SPORTS REPORTER

Since assuming responsibility as president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) ad hoc committee on April 7, Tamim Iqbal had attended two previous press conferences without taking questions. On Thursday, however, he finally engaged directly with journalists in a full question-and-answer session following his opening remarks. During the briefing, Tamim outlined a wide range of development plans for Bangladesh cricket, spanning stadium infrastructure, domestic competition structure, grassroots expansion and administrative reforms. BCB ad hoc committee member Fahim Sinha was also present during the press conference. Tamim made it clear that the initiatives being introduced are part of a gradual process rather than immediate transformation. "I'll say it again -- we're not doing anything that will completely transform Bangladesh cricket 360 degrees overnight, but this is a start," he said.

TAMIM'S PRESSER: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Stadium upgrade planned: Proposal to install a 27,000 square feet canopy at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium to improve spectator comfort.

Solar initiative: The BCB is conducting surveys to install solar panels on stadium rooftops to reduce

electricity costs and promote environmental sustainability.

Tiered structure: A new second-tier, three-day competition under the National Cricket League (NCL) is proposed. This new setup aims to provide a platform for 150-200 additional players.

Home-and-away push: Aim to revive matches outside major centres to broaden reach and engagement.

Academy partnerships: The board will rent and invest in club and private academy facilities to host age-group (U-15, U-17) camps and domestic matches.

Election timeline: Process expected to begin May 3, with elections likely within 30-45 days.

Presidential ambition: Tamim confirmed he will strictly follow the constitution and intends to run for the BCB presidency in the upcoming election.

Constitutional limits: Ad hoc committee will not amend the constitution; such decisions left to an elected board.

Improving global ties: Emphasis on strengthening ties with the ICC and BCCI to secure better bilateral series and high-profile tours for Bangladesh.

On Shakib: Discussion on Shakib Al Hasan extended to include other former captains -- Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Naimur Rahman Durjoy -- with openness to future roles if legal issues are cleared.



Chase woes resurface in Sylhet

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They had reached 67 for two in the first 10 overs, but still could not come near the 155-run target -- a familiar script of the Bangladesh national women's cricket team's long-standing struggles in chases over the 150-run mark once again unfolded yesterday. The Tigresses succumbed to a 21-run defeat in the second WT20I against Sri Lanka, conceding the three-match series 2-0 at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

Batting coach Nasiruddin Faruque perhaps pinpointed the problem area, stating the obvious -- "an inability to accelerate in the final overs."

Faruque also noted that the performance was marred by three run-outs, but admitted the larger concern for the Tigresses in the format. "In T20s, momentum shifts very quickly. While mistakes can sometimes be overcome in ODIs, it is much harder to recover from such errors in the T20 format," he added.

After Sri Lanka posted 154 for four, Bangladesh made a steady start. They, however, failed to keep up with the climbing asking rate -- a recurring theme in their T20I outings.

Opener Sharmin Akhter anchored the innings with an unbeaten 44 off 47 deliveries, while Juairiya Ferdous contributed 29 off 23 balls and Dilara Akter chipped in with a run-a-ball 23.

A closer look at those innings underlined the familiar shortcoming -- too many deliveries were consumed without enough acceleration, leaving the middle order with too much to do. As the required rate climbed, the pressure told, and the hosts eventually limped to 133 for five in their allotted 20 overs.

Bangladesh's difficulties in chasing sizeable totals in T20Is remain stark. They are yet to successfully chase a target of 150 or more in the format. On only two occasions have they crossed the 150-run mark while batting second -- against Ireland and Pakistan -- but ended up on the losing side both times.

Their highest successful chase in women's T20Is remains 146 for four, achieved against Sri Lanka in 2023 -- also their last win over the Islanders in this format.

Even yesterday's defeat mirrored the outcome of the opening match, where Bangladesh fell short by 25 runs while chasing 162 at the same venue.

In both matches, Bangladesh opted to field first, a decision Faruque described as a "collective call". But if the aim is to overcome their long-standing struggles in chasing, such choices will only bear fruit if accompanied by a shift in batting approach -- particularly in how the innings is paced after a steady start.

With the series already decided, Bangladesh could have one final opportunity to address that recurring flaw. The third and final match, a dead rubber on Saturday at the same venue, offers a chance not just to salvage pride, but to show signs of progress in a phase of the game that continues to hold them back.

"Those who play in the national team... play five, six, even seven tournaments. But what about those who play in the third or second division? We've never created a proper platform for them (second and third division cricketers). This is why it's rare for players from lower divisions to reach the national team."

"All three former captains (Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, and Naimur Rahman Durjoy) are in similar situations... we should not only talk about one."

41 DAYS TO GO



The youngest on the world stage

The record for the youngest player to appear in a FIFA World Cup is held by striker Norman Whiteside. He played for Northern Ireland against Yugoslavia in the group stage of the 1982 tournament in Spain at just 17 years and 41 days old. That match also marked his debut in international football.

**Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'When Senegal danced the world awake'



A tense Champions League semifinal first leg on Wednesday saw hosts Atletico Madrid and Arsenal play out a nervy 1-1 draw, with both goals coming from the penalty spot. Viktor Gyokeres fired the visitors ahead before Julian Alvarez responded, the latter bringing up his 25th Champions League goal in just 41 appearances -- the fastest by an Argentine, surpassing Lionel Messi. Alvarez also became the first Atletico player to score 10 goals in a single edition of the tournament. However, late drama sparked fury as a potential Arsenal winner was denied after VAR overturned a penalty, leaving coach Mikel Arteta fuming.

PHOTO: REUTERS/ARSENAL



Mamunul exits, but regrets linger

SPORTS REPORTER

"Mamunul Islam has been the best midfielder of his generation, but did not get the stardom due to the lack of international success for the nation," -- that was how former star striker Alfaz Ahmed summed up the career of former Bangladesh captain Mamunul Islam.

The 40-year-old midfielder is set to bring the curtain down on a long, 30-year playing career when he takes the field for Fortis FC against Rahmatganj MFS in a Bangladesh Football League (BFL) match at the Bashundhara Kings Arena today.

Perhaps Alfaz's words perfectly capture Mamunul's journey -- one that could be described as a tale of unfinished business, particularly on the international stage.

"I don't know how much I could contribute to the nation, but there was no shortage of effort when I represented Bangladesh on the international stage," an emotional Mamunul said at his retirement announcement briefing at Fortis FC in Madani Avenue yesterday.

Although he never won silverware in the red and green, Mamunul will be remembered by fans for his distinctive presence in midfield -- his long hair, precise left-footed passes, dangerous set-pieces, and swift transitions that often



unsettled opposition defences.

Mamunul spoke candidly about two lingering regrets -- not winning the SAFF Championship and failing to get playing time during his stint with Indian Super League side Atletico de Kolkata.

Yet, what resonated most in his words was the absence of a proper farewell in national colours -- a moment he never quite got.

MAMUNUL ISLAM, 40

Caps: 75 matches — goals: 3, assists: 15

Debut: vs Indonesia, FIFA friendly, 2007

Last match: vs Burundi, Bangabandhu Gold Cup, 2020

Captaincy debut: vs Nepal, FIFA friendly, 2012

Last as captain: vs Bhutan, Asian Cup qualifiers, 2018

Domestic career: Brothers Union 2005; Abahani 2008, 2018-20; Mohammedan SC 2009; Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, Sheikh Russel KC, Muktijoddha Sangsad and Chittagong Abahani, before spending his final four years at Fortis FC.

In his own words, Mamunul achieved "name, fame, money, trophies and individual accolades" in his career -- yet none of it, he admitted, compares to the unfulfilled dream of winning something for the country.

As he prepares for one last appearance, Mamunul remains uncertain about life after retirement, though he has expressed interest in continuing with Fortis FC in some capacity if given the opportunity.

But beyond the future, it is the past that seems to linger -- the absence of a defining international triumph, an opportunity abroad that never truly came, and a farewell that never materialised.

And so, as he walks off the pitch for the final time, Mamunul's career may be remembered not just for its longevity and achievements, but for the lingering sense of what might have been.

quietly -- as a substitute against Burundi in 2020, without the closure he had hoped for.

A former BKSP student, he represented several top domestic sides, including Abahani, Mohammedan SC, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, Sheikh Russel KC, Muktijoddha Sangsad and Chittagong Abahani, before spending his final four years at Fortis FC.

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Brazilian forward Dorielton Gomes was decisive as Bashundhara Kings came from behind to beat Mohammedan 2-1 in a crucial Bangladesh Football League match at Cumilla on Thursday. Dorielton scored the winner after setting up the equaliser for Faisal Ahmed Fahim, following Mozaffarjon Muzafforov's opener in the 28th minute. Kings lead the table with 34 points from 15 matches, six clear of Abahani, while Mohammedan are sixth on 17 points. Brothers Union and Arambagh KS drew 2-2 in Munshiganj, with both teams on 14 points from 15 matches.

PHOTO: BFF