

Your
Healthy
Secret!

Young Tigers go viral

SPORTS REPORTER

The topic of discussion nationwide yesterday was the Bangladesh Under-19s' triumph in the ICC Under-19 World Cup. Starting from cabinet meetings to press briefings at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) headquarters in Mirpur, it was the Akbar Ali-led side's emergence as world champions by beating India by three wickets in the final that was the hot topic of discussion.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina described clinching the country's first World Cup trophy as a gift to the nation on Mujib

Bangladesh have always boasted promising young talent in age-level sides but the harsh reality has been that a large number of the talented players have faded away due to lack of planning surrounding age-level performers.

However, according to the BCB boss, the board has something special planned for this batch.

"This is a real problem [how the Under-19 stars fade away]. We have been discussing about it for two and a half years. Some players did very well but they will not get a chance in the national team right away. So, what to do with them?" asked Hassan.

CHAMPIONS under sunshine

(Top) There could not be a better and fitting place for Parvez Hossain Emon to have taken a picture with the coveted World Cup trophy. The left-hander, who returned after hobbling out of the Senwes Park in Potchefstroom only to play a courageous 47 to help Bangladesh Under-19 clinch their maiden World Cup title by defeating India in the ICC Under-19 World Cup final on Sunday, stood in front of a sign that read 'Home of Champions' when the young Tigers visited the Sports Village in Potchefstroom yesterday.

Meanwhile Shoriful Islam was captured kissing the trophy and his emotions could be justified given that the young Tigers had been working hard for the past two years just to get their hands on the trophy.

WHAT
THEY SAID

Amazing scenes here in Potchefstroom as Bangladesh pull off a miraculous victory and are the u/19 world champions.. well fought india.. standard of cricket today and throughout this tournament has been world class.. con-grats Bangladesh #U19WorldCup #FutureStars

--JP Duminy

Congratulations @BCBTigers! Hope this inspires the entire world and may this be just one of many more accolades to come. Also, dear India, you have been exceptional so far, keep your heads high.

--Sir Vivian Richards

Wonderful moment for @BCBTigers thoroughly deserved this victory. #WorldCup #CWCU19 #FutureStars

--Tom Moody

This has been a U19CWC final to savor. Well played to both teams for putting on a spectacle. Some of the bowling today was so intense and mature. Congrats to @BCBTigers on their first World Cup. Well deserved.

--Ian Bishop @irbishi

Wonderful moment for @BCBTigers Well played All over the tournaments #WorldCup #CWCU19 #FutureStars

--Gulbadin Naib

This is a huge moment for Bangladesh cricket. And on the evidence of today's match, very well deserved.

--Harsha Bhogle

Congratulations to @BCBTigers for being champion of #U19CWC Hard luck to @BCCI.it was an amazing contest between #IndvsBan @ICC

--Kamran Akmal

Bangladesh cricket has given a very strong message to the world. New U19 World Champions, Bangladesh #U19CWC

--Sana Mir

Bangladesh pip India for maiden title.

--Hindustan Times

Under-19 World Cup final: Bangladesh stuns India; lifts maiden world title.

--The Hindu



Winning the ICC Under-19 World Cup trophy by the Bangladesh Under-19 Cricket Team is a gift for the nation in the Mujib Borsho.

SHEIKH HASINA
PRIME MINISTER

Borsho (Mujib Year).

"Winning the ICC Under-19 World Cup trophy by the Bangladesh Under-19 Cricket Team is a gift for the nation in the Mujib Borsho," Hasina was quoted as saying by BSS during a cabinet meeting at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday morning.

The Bangladesh Under-19 side are scheduled to return to the country tomorrow afternoon and the prime minister said the young Tigers would be accorded a grand reception.

"We'll also accord a grand reception to the ICC Under-19 World Cup-winning Bangladesh team," Hasina declared.

Road, Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader mentioned the venue for the reception while saying that the date for the reception is yet to be set.

"The date will be set after the team returns. The reception will be held at Suhrawardy Udyan," Quader said later at the cabinet meeting chaired by the prime minister.

Meanwhile, at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur, BCB President Nazmul Hassan also talked about future plans regarding the promising youngsters.

However, the BCB president was reluctant to discuss details about the plans BCB had sketched for Ak-bar and Co but informed that he will talk about it once the Under-19 side return.

"If we include them in the High Performance (HP) camp, we see that the ones who were in the national team previously or the ones who have been waiting, are making it to the HP team. So, the young ones aren't able to make it. Therefore, there is a chance for these players to fade away and many have in the past. That's why we made a plan regarding them, it has actually been set for a while. But I will not reveal what that plan is today [Monday]. I will talk about it when the team comes on Wednesday," said Hassan.

Even though Akbar and his troops have served the BCB a very delightful news, the board still has a lot to worry about as the national side have succumbed to their sixth consecutive Test defeat after their loss by an innings and 44 runs against Pakistan in the first of two Tests in Rawalpindi yesterday. Hassan mentioned that some stern action awaits the national side.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The common link in two seminal triumphs

MAZHAR UDDIN

Hasibul Hossain Shanto running towards his teammates after scoring the winning runs in the ICC Trophy final against Kenya back in 1997 is an iconic image in Bangladesh cricket's history.

Those who witnessed that rare triumph more than 20 years ago still vividly remember the celebrations that broke out on the streets of Dhaka, with many smearing each other with coloured powder.

The Bangladesh Under-19 team's victory over India in Potchefstroom on Sunday to claim the title of the ICC Under-19 World Cup is arguably the biggest incident in

Bangladesh cricket since that ICC Trophy win in 1997.

And why not? It was the first time in the history of the country's sport that Bangladesh became world champions.

It was a familiar sense of deja vu as Hasibul was once again seen running towards his team moments after Rakibul Hasan hit the winning shot to spark wild celebrations. Hasibul, now an age-level selector for the BCB, re-lived those moments from 1997.

The former national pacer has been a part of the young Tigers' set-up from the beginning, when the game development committee led by Khaled Mahmud proposed an overhaul at the Under-19 level. That overhaul followed the defeat

to India in the quarterfinals of the ICC Under-19 World Cup in 2018.

Hasibul said that the pride he felt while celebrating both feats were identical, but becoming world champions would have a special place in his heart.

"I was a player when I celebrated the ICC Trophy win, but the joy after Bangladesh clinched the World Cup is something different. I have been part of the entire process and witnessed the ups and downs from a young group who wanted to achieve something big. It gives me huge satisfaction. As a selector, I can only say that it was totally a team effort and every single person involved in the process deserves appreciation," Hasibul, who is still with the Under-19 team in South Africa, told

The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

The 42-year-old also believed that much like the ICC Trophy triumph helped Bangladesh cricket take the next step in international cricket, this win would work as fuel for the nation's cricketing dreams.

"This is just the beginning. Fortunately, I witnessed both sides of the coin in my career, first as a player and now as an age-level selector. I think this win was really needed in order for us to take the next step, like we did after the ICC Trophy win in 1997. We became the newest Test-playing nation a couple of years after that win. Belief is very important and such triumphs give you that push to go a step further. I hope this World Cup win will work exactly the same for us," he concluded.

The birth of belief

SAKEB SUBHAN

Such has been the conditioning of the Bangladeshi cricket fan that, before Bangladesh Under-19s' World Cup final against their Indian counterparts in Potchefstroom on Sunday, there was a general acceptance among followers that this was as good as it would get.

The common sentiments revolved around India being one step too many, let alone winning a title against the bogey men and boys of Bangladesh's senior and age-level teams. Just last year, the U-19s lost the Asia Cup final against India by five runs. Akbar Ali was part of the team that lost the Under-19 Asia Cup semifinal by two runs against the same opposition in Mirpur in 2018.

The senior team's Indian heartbreaks in knockout matches include the last-ball defeat in the 2018 Asia Cup final and the one-run loss in a virtual knockout match in the 2016 World T20. The series of losses from such situations have entered the team's psyche and become the self-perpetuating 'virus' in the minds of players and public alike that Shakib Al Hasan had claimed it was after the Test series defeat in South Africa in 2017.

After the 2018 Asia Cup final loss, ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza wondered in an interview whether it was the memory of earlier heartbreaks that caused fear, even when they were in a position of strength, and caused a collapse that

seemed inevitable.

This is why what Akbar Ali and his ten titans did was perhaps the greatest gift to the nation. When they were 64 for two and 102 for six, it would have been easier to let past memories dominate. But Akbar, in particular, chose to create a new one instead of succumbing to fear.

Perhaps the defiance of looming heartbreak, that too on the biggest stage, could only have been possible in a young mind.

Lots of champions have said that having won championships before gave them an advantage when facing an otherwise equal foe in a final. In one fell swoop, the U-19s banished that disadvantage to the dustbin of history. Many may have snickered when Bangladesh Test captain Mominul Haque said that they could learn a lot from the young Tigers. Jokes were made about how the Tigers are looking at teenagers for inspiration, but there is a lot to learn from the young ones.

One crucial lesson is that belief is not just a word to be mumbled in press conferences, but something that could become a weapon.

And that is the enormity of what the Under-19s have achieved. It transcends cricket and sport in general. They have made sure that when a Bangladesh athlete battles for an apex prize in his or her field, the athlete and supporters will believe they can win. For cricket, it is especially auspicious that the pioneers have their careers ahead of them.

Sean to miss BD Test

AGENCIES

Sean Williams, the Zimbabwe captain, will miss the one-off Test against Bangladesh due to the birth of his child. Craig Ervine, the middle-order batsman, will take over the leadership duties from Williams. His expected to join the squad for the three-match ODI series versus Bangladesh, commencing on March 1. Squad: Sikandar Raza, Regis Chakabva, Craig Ervine (C), Kevin Kasuza, Timycen Maruma, Prince Masvaure, Christopher Mpofo, Brian Mudzini-ganyama, Carl Mumba, Tintenda Mutombodzi, Ainsley Ndlovu, Victor Nyauchi, Brendan Taylor, Donald Tiripano, Charlton Tshuma.

Anamul powers East

SPORTS REPORTER

Anamul Haque registered his 22nd first-class hundred as South Zone sealed a dominant ten-wicket win over East Zone in the second round of the Bangladesh Cricket League in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Anamul and Shahriar Nafees added an unbeaten 187-run opening stand, with the latter unbeaten on 68, as South easily chased a 185-run target on the fourth and final day.

The right-handed Anamul was unbeaten on a 111-ball 109, featuring four sixes and twelve fours, to give South their first win from two games. On the other hand, East fell to their first defeat after a win in the first round.

Following on in their second innings, East resumed the day on 323 for five but were bundled out

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH ZONE: First innings 482 and second innings 187 for no loss (Nafees 68 not out, Anamul 109 not out)
EAST ZONE: First innings 306 and second innings 360 all out (Pinak 121, Affif 115; Mahedi 4-88)
Result: South Zone won by ten wickets.
CENTRAL ZONE: First innings 170 and second innings 325.
NORTH ZONE: First innings 166 and second innings 323 all out (Tanbir 177, Mushfiqur 38; Shahidul 3-78)
Result: Central Zone won by six runs.

after adding just 37 to their overnight score.

Aff Hossain was seven runs short of a century and soon registered his fifth first-class ton, but after his departure for a 175-ball 115, East were bundled out in no time. Off-spinner Mahedi Hasan bagged four while left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak scalped three for South.

There was an exciting battle

elsewhere at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, where North Zone batsman Tanbir Hayder's brilliant hundred in chase of a 330-run target went in vain against Central Zone, who clinched a close six-run win in the end.

Resuming the final day on 156 for five, North lost wickets at regular intervals although Tanbir stood firm at the other end and provided a ray of hope, eventually registering his seventh first-class hundred.

The right-hander, running short of partners, was the last man out after scoring 177 and bringing his side agonisingly close to a memorable win.

Shahidul Islam bagged three while Mustafizur Rahman, Mukidul Islam and Shuvagata Hom took two wickets each for Central, who registered their first win while North fell to a second straight defeat.

