

SPORT

Repainting never works

BISHWAJIT ROY

In a recent interview Richard McInnes opined that Bangladesh stagnated because nothing had changed. The former BCB Academy head coach, who had a long stint with Bangladesh cricket in two phases, in his long conversation with Wisden India did not say anything new while pointing out reasons behind Bangladesh's failure in international cricket.

Our cricket authorities always try to repaint a damaged wall instead of fixing the cracks when problems arise. And under the leadership of Nazmul Hassan Papon, the Bangladesh Cricket Board is doing this far too often, especially in the wake of the disastrous performances this year.

The result is that the problems remain the same, while the exterior gets a new outlook and, if things continue like this, we will be discussing the same problems forever.

As another international series approaches, at home against Zimbabwe, everybody is focused that any positives from the series will bring great relief to the team. The nation will then start pinning their hopes on the national team until another disastrous display against a top side creates a negative atmosphere in the BCB which

will allow them to take decisions; and they will, in all probability, take the popular decisions.

Enough was said against the players after the recent defeats and without doubt there have been a lot of problems for the top level players. But until or unless Bangladesh cricket authorities shift their focus from international cricket to the domestic circuit, nothing will change.

A recent trend is that many officials become part of the national or senior sides but nobody knows whether they add any value to the team. Three former national captains Akram Khan, Naimur Rahman and Habibul Bashar were tagged with the national team on their West Indies trip and we hoped the board would receive new ideas from their visit in order to solve the problems that plagued Bangladesh.

The expectation was that the BCB would get rid of the problems with the arrival of a number of former cricketers at the helm of the administration; they would give their utmost effort and knowledgeable input in order to increase the standard of domestic cricket, but one year has passed since their election and they have done nothing new.

Without any resistance, one season of the Premier League could be spoiled, though it is the bread and butter for the majority of cricketers. Funnily enough, the authorities could

delay the start of this season's Premier League due to some top players' participation in a tournament marking 150 years of Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

There are people in the BCB who know that until we improve the standard of our domestic cricket, we will continue to stagnate.

Was there a single board meeting dedicated to the problems of domestic cricket? No. We could not make a permanent domestic calendar. There is no pre-season preparation. We have two first-class competitions which are not meaningful at all.

The BPL brings in a lot of off-field problems but nobody will argue that we need a BPL-standard T20 competition in our country. It seems the BCB will simply cut off its head to cure a headache instead of doing something meaningful.

When a board only focuses on their senior team and international cricket, one can only expect what is happening now. Our development programme has probably hit its nadir.

You can blame the players; you can question their commitment; you can make changes as you wish or you can hire the world's top coaching staff for your teams, but nothing will change until the BCB administrators fix their main problem, which is the domestic cricket. It may not be as glamorous as international cricket, but it is the proper foundation to build on.



Bangladesh ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan bowls on the first day of the three-day practice match among the national cricketers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as part of their preparations for the upcoming home series against Zimbabwe.

PHOTO: STAR

Kookaburra or SG Test?

SPORTS REPORTER

Ahead of the Test series against Zimbabwe, the home team's management was in a dilemma about which ball they would be using in the three-match series -- Kookaburra or SG Test.

They could not reach a decision until yesterday although the Zimbabwe team will arrive today.

There are two types of balls that are being used in cricket and the most famous one of course is Kookaburra, which Bangladesh used for a long time before new head coach Chandika Hathurusingha recommended the SG Test balls which are used in India.

BCB's cricket operations committee discussed the issue in its meeting yesterday, and according to insiders, Hathurusingha got confused at the last moment about which one to use.

Kookaburra ball was used on the first day of Bangladesh's three-day practice game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

U-16 QUALIFIERS

Bangladesh face UAE today

SPORTS REPORTER

Fresh from a stunning 1-0 win over group favourites Jordan, an upbeat Bangladesh are all set to take on the United Arab Emirates in their second match of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Before the start of the Group B Qualifiers, the hosts had set their sights on a win over UAE, who have been struck off the FIFA rankings following their inactiveness for the last 18 months, who suffered a 0-9 drubbing at the hands of Iran in their first match on Wednesday.

The Bangladeshi girls are now upbeat to reach their target following their surprising win over Jordan, also on Wednesday, and they had a light training yesterday at the Kamalapur Stadium where coach Golam Rabbani Choton asked his charges to focus on the match against UAE instead of dwelling on the past.

De Kruif coming on Sunday

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Dutch football coach Lodewijk de Kruif has back-peddled from his stance and is set to return to Bangladesh on Sunday to join the ongoing national camp ahead of two international friendly matches against Sri Lanka in the last week of this month.

De Kruif, who threatened not to come back if his unpaid wages were not cleared, has finally agreed to leave the Netherlands on Saturday following a counter-stance from the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

"We told de Kruif today [Thursday] that his salary would only be cleared once he returned to Bangladesh and he agreed to come back. He is supposed to reach Dhaka early Sunday," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag last night, adding that they already sent the air ticket to the coach. Shohag however informed that assistant coach Rene Koster had refused to come back until his dues were cleared.

ZIMBABWE ARRIVE HERE THIS AFTERNOON

Craig, Tinashe back

CRICINFO, Harare

Zimbabwe have brought back Craig Ervine and Tinashe Panyangara for the upcoming Tests and ODIs in Bangladesh and have named two uncapped players -- Brian Chari and Wellington Masakadza -- in the Test squad.

While Panyangara was expelled for indiscipline in August, Ervine, who last played a Test in March 2013, had made himself available earlier this month for the Bangladesh tour, 18 months after he had refused a winter contract in April 2013.

The southern Africans arrive here today afternoon to play three Tests starting October 25, followed by five ODIs in November and December.

Chari, a top-order batsman, and Masakadza recently toured Bangladesh as part of the Zimbabwe A squad. Chari was the leading run-

scorer in the two unofficial Tests with 174 runs at an average of 43.50, and Masakadza, a left-arm spinner, impressed the selectors with 12 wickets, including figures of 6 for 63, at an average of 16.

Richmond Mutumbami had injured his arm during the tri-series against Australia and South Africa but has recovered to make both squads.

All-rounders Tafadzwa Kamungozi and Natsai M'shangwe, who have played ODIs but are yet to make their Test debuts, were named in both squads. Shingi Masakadza also made a comeback to the Test squad, having last played a Test in September 2013, against Pakistan.

Chari, Shingi and Wellington will return to Zimbabwe after the Tests and will be replaced for the ODIs by three players out of Neville Madziva, Timycen Maruma, Solomon Mire, Peter Moor, Tawanda Mupariwa and Brian Vitori.

Two prominent players who had

played the only Test against South Africa -- Sean Williams and Mark Vermeulen -- were missing from both squads.

SQUADS

TEST: Brendan Taylor (captain), Sikandar Raza, Regis Chakabva, Brian Chari, Tendai Chatara, Elton Chigumbura, Craig Ervine, Tafadzwa Kamungozi, Hamilton Masakadza, Shingi Masakadza, Wellington Masakadza, Natsai M'shangwe, Richmond Mutumbami, John Nyumbu, Tinashe Panyangara, Vusi Sibanda, Malcolm Waller.

ODI: Elton Chigumbura, Brendan Taylor, Sikandar Raza, Regis Chakabva, Tendai Chatara, Craig Ervine, Tafadzwa Kamungozi, Hamilton Masakadza, Natsai M'shangwe, Richmond Mutumbami, John Nyumbu, Tinashe Panyangara, Vusi Sibanda, Malcolm Waller, three out of Neville Madziva, Timycen Maruma, Solomon Mire, Peter Moor, Tawanda Mupariwa and Brian Vitori.

'Pacy' fourth ODI today

PTI, Dharamshala



Bolstered by their dramatic come-from-behind win in the last game, India will look to keep the winning momentum going when they meet West Indies in the fourth one-day in Dharamshala on Friday on what is expected to be a pacy track.

The series is locked at 1-1 and the picturesque HPCA Stadium will provide the perfect setting as the two teams square off to seize the initiative before the final match of the series is played at Eden Gardens on October 20.

India's series-levelling victory at Delhi's Kotla was combination of West Indies' self destruction while cruising towards an easy win and also inability to play on a track where there is some turn on offer.

Spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja and Amit Mishra exploited the helpful conditions perfectly as West Indies lost eight wickets for 45 runs in their pursuit of a competitive total of 263.

However, India might find it difficult for their spinners to extract same kind of help from the track in Dharamshala as they have done from 22-yard strip in Delhi.

Notwithstanding the erratic display from the Caribbean batsmen, the battle in the backdrop of the Dhauladar mountain range should be exciting, considering the fast and bouncy nature of the pitch.

There is always a chance of rain in the hills. Therefore even a light spell of shower will further aid the pacemen besides making the conditions colder.

The teams chose to stay put in Delhi post the match on October 11 and arrived at a much-higher altitude here only on the eve of the match.

Facing a decent West Indies pace attack on a lively surface will be a test for the Indian batsmen. The home team had a tough time batting first here against England in January 2013, when it lost half its men for 79 runs before going on to lose the match.

Anyway, it will be a challenge for the Indian bowlers to contain the in-form Dwayne Smith and Marlon Samuels, who have been the stand-out performers with the willow, for the visitors.

While Samuels hit an unbeaten 126 in the first game at Kochi that the West Indies won convincingly, Smith was guilty of throwing his wicket away at the cusp of century (97) in the second game in the capital.

Overall, it will be interesting to see how the unpredictable visitors bat on a tricky surface.

On the bowling front, West Indies skipper Dwayne Bravo would surely expect his fast bowlers to come to the party. He has the option of bringing in speedster Kemar Roach to support Ravi Rampaul and Jerome Taylor.

All-rounder Andre Russell will be expected to keep things tight in the middle overs.



Bangladesh women U-16 booters run with the ball during their training session at the Kamalapur Stadium yesterday. They will take on UAE in their second match of the AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

PHOTO: STAR

Nat'l C'ships in Gopalganj this year

SPORTS REPORTER



The National Swimming Championships this year are going to be held outside the capital for the first time with Gopalganj hosting the 27th edition of the meet at a newly-built complex in the southern district from Monday.

With approximately 500 swimmers expected to compete in 38 events -- 19 each for men and women, the clubs have also been given opportunity for the first time to participate in the four-

day championships. But all the timings will be recorded manually as no electronic device has been installed at this new venue.

"As part of spreading swimming across the country, we are taking these championships out of the capital for the first time and this year we are organising the competition at the newly-built pool in Gopalganj," said Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) general secretary Rofiz Uddin Ahmed at a press conference at the BOA Auditorium yesterday.

The swimming complex in Gopalganj was inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in February

this year and it is going to host a competitive tournament for the first time.

"We don't want to confine swimming within Dhaka. We will hold the next championships in another district," said Rofiz, adding that they were planning to hold the Bangabandhu Swimming Championships involving all SAARC nations in the capital within the next three-four months.

The BSF had held national championships at junior level outside the capital once in Bogra.

Chief financial officer of sponsors RMM Group, who are providing TK 15 lakh, Hemangshu Sarker promised to stay with the sport in the next year too.

Cairns appears in court

AFP, London



New Zealand cricket great Chris Cairns appeared in a London court on Thursday charged with perjury relating to a libel action he brought in England in 2012.

Cairns won 146,000 dollars after he sued former Indian Premier League chairman Lalit Modi over a 2010 tweet accusing the all-rounder of match-fixing during his time in the now defunct Indian Cricket League.

However, Cairns was charged with perjury and appeared before a judge at London's Southwark Crown Court on Thursday.

Cairns, who lives in Auckland, appeared

alongside lawyer Andrew Fitch-Holland, who faces one count of perverting the course of justice.

Fitch-Holland, 49, was lead adviser to Cairns in the action against Modi.

The pair spoke only to give their names. Judge Alistair McCreath gave both Cairns and Fitch-Holland unconditional bail to appear for a plea and case management hearing at the same court on January 16 next year. Both men have previously indicated they will contest the allegations.

The trial, which could last for up to a month, is expected to begin in early October next year, traditionally a time when there are few major fixtures in cricket's otherwise crowded calendar.