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'Two tons not good enough'

SPORTS REPORTER

His consistent performances in domestic cricket brought him to the Test team in October 2013, but Marshall Ayub had a short stay with the national side as the right-hander lost his composure soon after.

The 26-year-old batsman came to the limelight again yesterday by hitting hundreds in consecutive innings at Mirpur in the second round of the National Cricket League, but he was well aware of the fact that a few good performances would not help him fulfil his dream of returning to the national fold.

"I believe that the current Bangladesh team is now in the best form in its history, so it's very tough to get into this team. I am not thinking about my return to the national team, instead my main focus is on the next five matches in the competition," said the soft-spoken 26-year-old, who helped Dhaka Metro draw their match against Khulna by scoring two centuries in the match.

Marshall was also not ready to think about the opportunity of making the A team.

"I am not thinking about making the national or A team. I had a desire to make a good start in the National Cricket League and I am happy that I did it. Now I am looking forward to continue my form. The back-to-back centuries have given me the feeling that I have once again got the form I had two years ago."

"One must concentrate on his own game because only good and consistent performances ultimately ensure participation in the domestic competition as well as the national fold," he added.

He also said that it was a good sign for Bangladesh cricket as the number of hundreds and double hundreds significantly increased.

"Previously we could see a maximum of one or two double hundreds, but now the number has increased which indicates improvement in our batting," he observed.



Dhaka Metro batsman Marshall Ayub raises his bat after scoring a match-saving 115, his second century in the match against Khulna, in Mirpur yesterday. His centuries earned his side a valuable draw in the National Cricket League's second round.

PHOTO: BCB

Marshall magic muscles Metro

SPORTS REPORTER

The second round of the National Cricket League came to an exciting end yesterday with teams battling it out to produce two draws and two wins.

While each of the four games witnessed its own share of thrill, it was the top tier matches that garnered a majority of the attention on the final day.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Dhaka Metro's Marshall Ayub scored his second century of the match to deny Khulna a victory, a result which seemed imminent after the first session yesterday.

Metro were following on and were reduced to 35 for 4 after an hour's play.

That's when Marshall and Asif Ahmed stepped up to produce a fighting century stand and reignite Metro's chances of enforcing a draw.

SCORES IN BRIEF			
KHULNA V DHAKA METRO KHULNA: 455 DHAKA METRO: 271 and 248 for 5 (Marshall 115 not out, Asif 70; Mehedi 2-76) Result: Draw	DHAKA V RANGPUR DHAKA: 449 and 55 for 2 in 4.2 overs (Shuvagata 40 not out; Tanveer 1-11) RANGPUR: 248 and 255 all out in 111.1 overs (Sohrawardi 121; Mahbubul 4-51, Shuvagata 3-26) Result: Dhaka won by eight wickets.	BARISAL V SYLHET BARISAL: 527 for 9 dec and 146 for 7 (Mosaddek 61, Fazle 47; Jayed 2-14, Kapali 2-18) SYLHET: 400 Result: Draw	CHITTAGONG V RAJSHAHI CHITTAGONG: 383 and 181 RAJSHAHI: 308 and 260 for 3 (Junaid 102, Nazmul 92, Sabbir 49 not out; Jubair 3-92) Result: Rajshahi won by seven wickets.

The fifth wicket pair shared a 143-run stand and ensured that the Khulna bowlers toil under the heat. Sure enough, they were aided with some defensive captaincy from the Khulna skipper, but that aspect of course can't take much away from the beauty of the stand.

Asif, who hit two sixes and eleven fours, departed after scoring 70. He was replaced by Mehrab Hossain Jr, who along with Marshall batted out the day. Marshall remained unbeaten on 115. His outstanding effort in the

match, that also included a fine 104 in the first innings, earned him the player-of-the-match award.

The other top tier match at Bogra saw Dhaka smash 55 runs in just 4.4 overs of the fourth innings to complete an eight-wicket win over Rangpur. After being asked to follow on, Rangpur started the final day on 55 for 3 and not many had expected them to put up a fight. But a century from Sohrawardi Shuvo kept Dhaka at bay. Not only did he score a century, but he also spent six hours at the

crease and with some support from the tail helped Rangpur to battle 111 overs and take the innings late into the tea session before being bundled out to 255.

It left Dhaka with a tough proposition of scoring 55 runs from a maximum of seven overs for a victory. But they did it in style with Shuvagata Hom smashing an unbeaten 40 off 21 balls, which contained four sixes.

At Tier Two, hosts Rajshahi overcame a first innings deficit to register a seven-wicket win over Chittagong. A brilliant opening stand from Junaid Siddique and youngster Nazmul Hossain Shanto, which saw them share 193 runs, laid the foundation. Rajshahi reached their target of 257 immediately after lunch.

19-year-old Mosaddek Hossain, who had scored a double century in the first innings, struck a fierce 61 in the second as the other match between Barisal and Sylhet in Khulna ended in a draw.

Positives in defeat

BD women return home today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team's tour of Pakistan came to a tame end yesterday as the visitors went down by six wickets at the Southend Club Cricket Stadium in Karachi. The defeat meant that Bangladesh lost the two-match ODI series 2-0. They are scheduled to return home today.

Apart from losing the ODI series, Salma Khatun and co also suffered 2-0 defeat in the two-match T20I series. While the results may depict an extremely gloomy picture, Bangladesh's women actually did put up a good fight. The first ODI, for instance, displayed the sheer amount of talent that this team have. The national team's batting has rarely clicked at the highest level and as a result the visitors surprised many when they came close to chasing down a total above 200 in the first ODI.

Keeping the scores aside, the most noteworthy aspect of the entire series though was the very fact that the players agreed to tour Pakistan, which in itself was a brave decision.

Unlike the first ODI, Bangladesh's batting failed to click in the second. Batting first, the visitors lost early wickets and never managed to recover. Pakistan slow left-arm Anam Amin ran through Bangladesh's defences with miserly figures of 4 for 7 in ten overs. She was well complemented by pacer Asmavia Iqbal. At the end Bangladesh were restricted to 123 for 9 in 50 overs. Opener Aysha Rahman was the only one who managed to figure out the bowlers as she drove her way to a 56-ball 39. Tailender Nigar Sultana played out the innings with a 109-ball 39.

Bismah Maroof's 41 led Pakistan's chase and the hosts eventually reached the target in 38.3 overs.

A positive aspect, with regards to Bangladesh in the tour, was that there were players other than Salma Khatun who performed; a sign that suggests that there are other players out there who seem to be getting into the groove.

SCORES IN BRIEF	
BANGLADESH: 123 for 9 (Aysha 39, Nigar 30 not out; Anam 4-7, Asmavia 3-28)	PAKISTAN: 124 for 4 in 38.3 overs (Bismah 41, Marina 31; Nahida 2-22, Rumana 1-13)
Result: Pakistan won by six wickets.	

Bangladesh opener Aysha Rahman (R) plays a straight drive as Pakistan wicketkeeper Rabiya Shah looks on during the second ODI at the Southend Club Cricket Stadium in Karachi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



IN A NUTSHELL

'Curse' talks annoy Cameron

England's rugby, football and cricket teams have crashed out of World Cups in the first round in the past 16 months, but Prime Minister David Cameron denied he is the "curse" behind the failures.

"That annoys me so much. That's nonsense," Cameron replied.

"Who was Prime Minister this summer when we won the Ashes, thank you very much? I was Prime Minister when we had the best ever haul of Olympic medals. I always support England and we don't always win. Shock, horror, surprise.

"I shouldn't let these things annoy me but I was there on the great nights when Mo Farah won gold. I've witnessed some great sporting triumphs. There is no curse," said Cameron.

'Isolate Cuttack for 2 years'

Slamming the crowd behaviour and the police response to it during the second T20I between India and South Africa, former captain Sunil Gavaskar said that Barabati Stadium in Cuttack should be banned as an international venue for two years.

"The policemen, who are stationed on the boundary should be monitoring fans, not watching cricket" "Cuttack should not be given an international match for the next couple of years.

"Do the crowd throw valuables when the team does well? When the team does badly, the fans have no business to throw rubbish," Gavaskar said.

Asif's action reported

Pakistan's new off-spinner Bilal Asif has been reported for a suspect action, team manager Intikhab Alam told AFP.

Asif, 30, took 5-25 in the third and final ODI against Zimbabwe in Harare on Monday to help Pakistan win the game and take the series 2-1. But during the match, umpires Jeremiah Matibiri of Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka's Ruchira Palliyaguruge reported Asif's action to the match referee.

The ICC reported that Asif is "permitted to continue bowling in international cricket until the results of his bowling test are known".

Compiled by Star Sport Desk

Malik's 5-year wait ends

APP, Karachi

Former Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik has been recalled to face England in the upcoming Test series in the United Arab Emirates, officials said Tuesday, five years after his last match in the longest format.

The 33-year-old middle order batsman's excellent limited-overs form saw him added as the 16th member of Pakistan's Test squad for the three-match series against England starting on October 13.

Chief selector Haroon Rasheed said the team management had requested that Malik, who also bowls off-spin, be included.

"Pakistan team manager Intikhab Alam had made the request, saying that he and head coach Waqar Younis were of the same view over retaining Malik given his present form in T20s and the one-day matches," said Rasheed.

"We decided to retain Malik keeping in mind his current batting form and the off-spin bowling option that could be handy in the all-important Test series against England," said Rasheed.

Since his recall to limited-overs cricket in May this year, Malik has scored 500 runs at an average of 100.00 per innings in 11 one-day matches.

Malik played the last of his 32 Tests against England at Birmingham in 2010.



The Cricket Association of Bengal Under-17 team arrived in Dhaka yesterday to play four three-day matches against BCB Under-17. The series will take place from October 7 to 24.

PHOTO: BCB

Legends collide next month

PTI, Washington

Several cricket icons including master blaster Sachin Tendulkar and spin wizard Shane Warne will play Twenty20 matches in the United States next month.

More than two dozen of the world's most famous cricket players will play matches at three big-league baseball stadiums at Citi Field on November 7, Minute Maid Park in Houston on November 11, and Los Angeles's Dodger Stadium on November 14.

"We want to leave an impression behind. That's what we are here for—to entertain people, to leave great memories behind and get them excited about some quality cricket," Tendulkar was quoted as saying.

Players include Pakistan's Wasim Akram, West Indies' Brian Lara, South Africa's Jacques Kallis, England's Michael Vaughan

and Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene. Brian Bedol, a sports television executive and investor in the event, likened "Cricket All-Star Series" to Pele's arrival in the US in the 1970s.

The event has been organised by Leverage Agency, the sports and entertainment firm.

"You're not sitting there for a day or two. It's going to be a fast-paced event with a lot of runs," said Ben Sturmer its CEO.

Three baseball stadiums are being converted into a cricket stadium for the purpose. With the help of a pitch specialist from New Zealand, the elements of the pitch are being crafted in Indianapolis and will be trucked to the stadiums, the report said.

Warne said all these games would be highly competitive.

"To make history in America playing these cricket games, Sachin and I are walking out and tossing the coin in New York at Citi Field," he said.