Ahead of their all-important World Twenty20 final against West Indies on Sunday, England indulged in a game of football to loosen up at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

'Character will be the key'

AGENCIES, Mumbai



England batsman Joe Root believes if they stay true to their character, it WORLD their character, it will not be a problem to beat West Indies in the ICC World

Twenty20 final on Sunday. England put in a dominant

performance in their semifinal clash against New Zealand in New Delhi on Wednesday to reach the final, while the West Indies blazed their way to a thrilling win over hosts India on Thursday.

"I don't think there's been an attitude swing or the way we approach practice or anything like that. We went into the tournament and stayed true to what we believe in as a side and the way we play our cricket. I think that's probably been the most important thing," Root said ahead of the final.

The promising youngster struck a match-winning 83 from 44 balls to script their famous win against South Africa chasing a huge 230 as they have not looked back since then.

did not go away how we wanted to play and the way we wanted to approach our cricket. Having that self-belief in each other and we could get and win against South Africa and build our confidence from that point onwards. Everyone contributed in some way, shape or form which is always nice getting into the final," Root said.

He however credited the captain and coach duo of Eoin Morgan and Trevor Bayliss for this turnaround, especially after their ignominious exit in ODI World Cup in Australia last year where they had failed to get past any team apart from minnows Scotland and Afghanistan.

"Morgan's captaincy has been fantastic across ODI and T20Is.

approach probably has been a little bit shift for us and we stuck to our guns and when we went wrong we have not taken a step back. We have "It's about making sure that we looked forward all the time.

> "We still have got a very inexperienced side but a keen bunch of players who are willing to learn and improve. It will only make us better in the long run. That's a massive factor how we got to here. Obviously, the management has been calm and positive. Guys have stuck to their gameplans. Everyone has gone about their businesses."

Bayliss was appointed coach replacing Peter Moores in the aftermath World Cup exit and Root said as the Australian's cool demeanour is a blessing for the side.

"He's been great throughout. He's got an emotion-less face whether we're in front or massively behind in a game. You never get any sort of tension or emotion from him. He is

We've chosen this way and always calm and relaxed about everything. Especially, in a final, that's very important to have a calm head within the dressing room can sometimes bring you back down when you get too high," said Bayliss

Root had missed out playing at the iconic Eden Gardens and was a 12th man during England's 2012-13 tour to India but this time as a go-to Man of the side the side he's aiming to make the difference.

"This is what you dream of as a kid, these opportunities like to play in a World cup final. Everyone is quite excited and can't wait for the match to start. Was 12th man here a few years ago. Every game here has been rocking, hopefully it will be the same on Sunday."

Asked whether India not being there will be an easy proposition for them, he said: "I don't think it really matters. If you are to win the World cup you have to beat the best team in the tournament.

Conflict of interest pollutes DPL

World's Most Preferred Cement Brand from Switzerland

BISHWAJIT ROY



"There is nobody who fights for our cause." These were the words used by a cricketer to express his helplessness over the player-by-choice system, a mechanism that doesn't

Holcim

leave any room for the players to bargain with clubs of the Dhaka Premier League (DPL); a domestic competition which is still the bread and butter for a majority of the country's cricketers.

When even a footballer can sign a contract worth Tk 50 lakh, at a time when the game has hit a new low in the country, a member of the most popular sport has to remain satisfied with a maximum payment of Tk 30 lakh in the most-coveted domestic competition.

On one hand the freedom of the cricketers is increasingly getting curbed and on the other the clubs are receiving higher amounts of money from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) as grants. It's all happening because the club officials are calling the shots as they also run the board.

For cricketers, there is an organisation named Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) which rarely lives up to its name. Its president (Naimur Rahman) and vice-president (Khaled Mahmud) are on the board while former national cricketer Akram Khan is also on the board. But they have hardly raised an issue.

"I am not sure about whether all of the country's clubs are engaged in this saga. There is a core group in the board who are doing these things. The current president himself had promised that they would not employ the player-by-choice system for the second time," lamented CWAB secretary Debabrata Paul.

"And yes, our members are in the board but are silently accepting it. The main problem is that a majority of our players depend on the income from the league and the clubs are taking advantage of this. The main threat is that

they can suspend the league," he added.

Holcim

Strong Structure

Speaking to The Daily Star, Khaled Mahmud said that it was unfair to restrict the players' rights for bargaining. "This is not good. If someone demands more and gets it from any club, there is no right to bar him from doing that. Of course we raised our voice against this system but we are helpless," he said.

The clubs have regularly raised problems regarding their increasing expenditure and that's why they have tried to limit the income of the players, while trying to take more money from the board.

One cannot deny the huge contribution that the clubs have had in Bangladesh's cricket but that doesn't mean that it's payback time for the board. The clubs contributed to the game in the past and they did that with pride. One wonders if that pride is missing now.

The BCB has recognised the Dhaka Premier League as its only 50-over competition. However it lacks the zeal that it had once.

It seems the clubs have no interest other

than trying to gain some money from the board. It also seems that it's now all about maintaining the councillorship and the power of the board.

When it comes to the competition, the game's governing body unfortunately assumes the role of a subordinate to the mighty clubs and agrees to delays, cuts in payment, increase in grants etc.

True, once club cricket was the main attraction and due credit must be given to them for the progress of cricket but the reality is that those golden days are gone. Times have changed but unfortunately we have persisted with the old, often flawed, way of conducting a domestic tournament.

Who will put the bell on the cat's neck when club officials themselves are the big shots in the board? The board cannot shy away from its responsibility of making sure that the 50-over competition is run in a proper way. They must stop the ridiculous state of affairs.

Musfiqur in the eye of a tweetstorm

SAKEB SUBHAN

It was bound to happen. The mercury in two cricket-mad nations had been bubbling to breaking point and on Thursday, much like a scene from a cartoon, the thermometer burst. There has been much hand-wringing about how Bangladeshi fans on social media have been venting their frustration at their team's failures on social media and how most of that venting has had the Indian team in its crosshairs. There has also been plenty of return fire. But on Thursday, it was not an ordinary fan but the Test captain of Bangladesh who -- there is no other word for it -- trolled the Indian cricket team.

"Happiness is this....!!!!!! #ha ha ha..!!!! India lost in the semifinal..," tweeted Mushfigur Rahim moments after India lost in the semifinal of the ICC World Twenty20 to West Indies. There were also three sunglass-wearing emojis within those 70-odd characters.

Mushfigur's Facebook presence also weighed in, featuring a selfie of the smiling Mushfigur in front of a television screen showing West Indian celebrations. "Happiness is this....Now I can sleep much better ... West Indies you beauty!!!!" was the message interspersed with frowning emojis with and

without sunglasses.

Both of these were taken down, but not before a tweetstorm broke out the likes of which will probably force the usually mildmannered and reticent Mushfigur to hide out in a region of the country without 3G coverage or wi-fi. Livid Indian fans no doubt saddened by their team's elimination, did not hold back in letting Mushfigur know exactly what they thought of him, his team and his country.

Mushfigur immediately tried to make amends, tweeting "Sorry to all of you guys...as i am a big West Indies supporter but anyway sorry again for some harsh words...!!!!," this time without any emojis.

The comedy in all this cannot be ignored, and is indeed very rich, or at any rate easy. It was Mushfigur at the crease when Bangladesh needed two runs to win off three balls against India, and that win would have seen India all but eliminated at the group stage. What followed was Mushfiqur's dismissal followed by Mahmudullah Riyad's and a last-ball runout. So, in fan speak and especially India-Bangladesh social media speak, Mushfiqur should not be heard speaking about cricket at least till Bangladesh start winning again, much less troll the team that they slipped on

Happiness is this....!!!!! #ha ha ha..!!!! India lost in the semifinal.. ***

a banana peel against. And he was told that in no uncertain terms.

Although all this may seem harsh and there is a tendency to view social media outbursts as impulsive eruptions not to be taken too seriously, in today's world Mushfiqur is fair game. Within an hour of the

tweets seeing the backlights of smartphones

around the world, multiple Indian news outlets carried the story. A few days ago Australian cricket writer Jarrod Kimber wrote an in-depth piece for ESPNCricInfo about how the Bangladeshi fans have been reacting on social media about every perceived slight against their players, and before that Indian journalist Boria Majumdar wrote a piece on the India Times blog about the propensity of Bangladeshi fans to see conspiracy at every turn, especially in light of Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny's suspensions for illegal bowling actions. Their insinuation was that Bangladeshi fans need to grow up to match their team's progress. That can now extend to the players.

Till Thursday the finger of blame was pointed at the passionate supporters, but it must now be asked whether the cricketers themselves feed the jingoistic passions in their supporters. It has not just been Mushfigur -- from former BCB president Mostafa Kamal's outburst against the ICC after the 2015 quarterfinal loss to India to captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's strong insinuation that they were dealt a hard hand by the Taskin ruling, the victim mentality is pervasive. Mushfiqur's tweeting accident was just the latest and unfortunately highprofile example of that.

Kohli's golden run finally ends

REUTERS, New Delhi



As the full toss left Andre Russell's blade and settled deep into the stands, Virat Kohli stood dazed, gazing at the trajectory of the ball and perhaps wondering what else he could have done. For the umpteenth time in the World

Twenty20, the 27-year-old had papered over the cracks in India's top order, his unbeaten 89 accounting for almost half of his country's 192 in the semi-final against West Indies. In between the 11 boundaries and single six that flowed from

his bat, the supreme athlete ran himself ragged, regularly converting singles into twos and occasionally two into threes. Kohli the bowler also resurfaced when it mattered.

India captain MS Dhoni, as is his wont, sprang a surprise by tossing the ball to Kohli and the part-time dibbly-dobbler struck immediately, dismissing the dangerous Johnson Charles with his first delivery, ending a 97-run partnership. However, a loss meant India's test captain finished the

World Twenty20 with 273 runs from five innings with a staggering 136-plus average and a strike rate of almost 147. Only Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (295) scored more and he had played extra matches in the qualifiers of the tournament.

His prodigious scoring means Kohli will remain in the mix for the player-of-the-tournament award but for a proud team man, it would probably mean very little.

Treble on the cards for WI

AFP, Mumbai



West Indies captain Darren Sammy said he hopes to help Caribbean fans smile replacement for the injured Andre Fletcher, again by completing unique hat-trick at the World Twenty20 after

reaching the final.

An emotional Sammy said the West Indies had their backs to the wall before shocking India by seven wickets to emulate their women's team, who also won their semi-final hours earlier.

After the West Indies won the Under-19 World Cup in February, a double victory in Kolkata on Sunday would seal an unprecedented treble and hint at a cricketing revival for the islands after years of decline.

Sammy's team, champions in 2012, will face England in Sunday's men's title match while the West Indies women will play their first World Twenty20 final against Australia.

"We came here on a mission. We were inspired by the U-19 boys earlier this year, the ladies won earlier today, now we have two West Indies team in the final," said an emotional Sammy at the post-match presentation.

against everyone else." Chasing 193, the West Indies were struggling

"We feel this is this West Indies team

at 19 for two after losing star batsman Chris Gayle for five, when Lendl Simmons rose to the occasion to become their unlikely hero. Fighting jetlag after flying in as a late

Simmons, who survived two no-ball catches, hit an unbeaten 82 to silence the crowd. "Great great!!! Well done Windies!! #silence #wankhede proud to be West Indian,

tweeted Caribbean legend Brian Lara. Before the match, Sammy had said the semi-final was a "David and Goliath"

encounter, with more than a billion Indians willing their team to win. The West Indies dominated cricket in the 1970s and 1980s, winning the 50-over World

Cup in 1975 and 1979, but they have since fallen on hard times. A bitter pay dispute with the West Indies

Cricket Board on the eve of the tournament did not raise optimism about their chances of making an impression in the tournament. But the former Test powerhouse defied

their doubters to beat England, Sri Lanka and South Africa in the group stage and then make India eat humble pie in Thursday's semi-final.

The women's victory earlier also came as a surprise and captain Stafanie Taylor hoped the win would act as a catalyst for women's cricket in the Caribbean.

Sack Wagar and Afridi, report says

PTI, Karachi

The fact-finding committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board has recommended that head coach Wagar Younis be sacked and the board also appoint a new captain of the national T20 team.

A well-informed source in the board told PTI on Friday that Mohsin met with chairman Shahryar Khan this week and expressed his desire to work as chief coach after Waqar's exit. The source said the com-

mittee would also recommend that Sarfaraz Ahmed be appointed new national T20 captain and Afridi be sidelined even as a player.

The committee is believed to have come to the conclusion that Afridi and Waqar failed to unite the team and made repeated tactical blunders leading to the defeats.

Elliott calls time on ODIs

REUTERS, Auckland



cricket.

A year after he created what has been considered New Zealand's most memorable cricketing moment, allrounder Grant Elliott has retired from one-day international

The 37-year-old Elliott hit a six from the penultimate ball off South Africa's Dale Steyn in the World Cup semifinal last year to propel New Zealand to their first World Cup final.

The shot was voted by the New Zealand public as the sporting moment of 2015. "I have played my last one day game,"

Elliott told Newshub at Auckland Airport on Friday after the New Zealand team returned home from the World Twenty20 tournament in India following a semi-final exit.

"But there are three formats. I won't be considered for test cricket, I haven't seen my test clothing for a few years. There's still T20 cricket and my body feels good. "I'm going to reassess and let the dust

settle. As long as I'm enjoying my cricket, I haven't made a call on anything yet. So I'll just get home and assess it." Originally from South Africa, Elliott

moved to New Zealand to play international cricket, making his Test debut against England in 2008 but only



STATS								
BATT	ING							
Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	4s	6s	C
83	1976	115	34.06	2	11	151	28	1
BOW	LING							
Mat	Wkts	BBM	Ave	Econ	SR	4w		
83	39	4/31	30.23	5.43	33.3	1		

competed in five matches in almost two years.

He developed into a successful limited-overs player but was a surprise selection in New Zealand's World Cup squad last year, having not appeared for the team in more than 14 months. He also spent more than two years out of the side prior to that.

The right-hander's composure was most evident during the tournament as New Zealand went through pool play unbeaten and his 84 not out against South Africa in the semi-final typified his influence on the team.

Elliott also top-scored with 83 in the final against Australia, who won the game at the Melbourne Cricket Ground by seven wickets. His last one-day international was

in February against Australia at Seddon Park in Hamilton, when he scored his 11th half century.

He finished with 1,976 runs at 34.06 with two centuries. Elliott was also a handy slow-medium bowler, who finished with 39 wickets at 30.23 in his 83 one-day internationals.