



Alarm bells ringing for Windies

STAR SPORT DESK

The proud cricketing tradition of West Indies finds itself in the unfamiliar and humbling position of having to play the World Cup qualifiers to ensure that they are part of the 2019 50-over World Cup. If the returns to the ODI fold of 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle and match-winner Marlon Samuels suggested that Caribbean qualification was a foregone conclusion, then West Indies received a rude shock in a warm-up defeat to rabble-rousing newcomers Afghanistan in Harare yesterday.

Afghanistan coming up trumps against West Indies is no longer a huge upset, but it was the manner in which the two-time World Cup winners lost the plot in a low-scoring match that will worry their supporters all over the world ahead of their qualifying campaign which will start with a Group A match against UAE on March 6 in Harare. In a game shortened to

35 overs a side because of rain, West Indies had Afghanistan on the ropes at 71 for eight, but they let the advantage slip in spectacular fashion as Gulbadin Naib and Samiullah Shenwari put on 91 runs in 11.5 overs. A revised target of 140 in 35 overs should have been a walk in the park, and even after the early departure of Gayle that seemed to be the case during a 44-run thirdwicket stand between

West Indies to 80 for three. Just 61 runs adrift of the target with 21.3 overs left, West Indies were well on track, but no one else reached double figures as Jason Holder's side lost their last eight wickets for 30 runs. Pacer Dawlat Zadran was the wrecker-inchief with four for 26 from

Samuels (36) and Evin

Lewis (34) that carried

seven overs. Holder had said the previous day that it was 'about time we win a World Cup', but with dangerous sides like Ireland and Netherlands in their qualifying group, it may be about time that they focus on getting to England first.



Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim practises in the nets as part of the preparation for the upcoming T20 tri-series in Sri Lanka at the BCB Academy ground yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

BCB appeals against Mirpur demerit point

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The Bangladesh Cricket Board has appealed against the demerit point imposed on the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium for a "below average" pitch used during the second Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka last month.

Match Referee David Boon rated the pitch below average citing uneven bounce throughout the match and inconsistent turn. That judgement came on the back of a "below average" rating for the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, the venue for the first Test.

The BCB's appeal seems justified because most of those who watched the second Test would say that the pitch had true bounce, while the variable turn has been a feature of past Mirpur pitches in matches against Australia and England.

The appeal will be heard by March 14 as per the period stipulated in the Pitch Monitoring Process and will be determined by Geoff Allardice, General Manager - Cricket, and Anil Kumble, Chair of the Cricket Committee.

Another series without Shakib?

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Bangladesh are apparently all set to play another series without Shakib Al Hasan as the inspirational all-rounder did not get the green signal from the consultant in Thailand regarding his return in time for the

Nidahas Trophy in Sri Lanka. Bangladesh Cricket Board physician Dr.

Debashish Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday that the ace all-rounder has been advised by the consultant in Bangkok to continue physiotherapy.

"The doctors in Bangkok said the same thing that the doctors here had earlier said. Shakib will return home tomorrow [Thursday] after undergoing physiotherapy there and his condition will be assessed after administering physiotherapy for a week; then we can decide if we continue with physiotherapy or go for any alternative treatment," Chowdhury informed.

When asked whether there is any chance for the Bangladesh Test and T20I captain to play in the T20 tri-series in Sri Lanka, Chowdhury said: "It is very important to make sure that we do not force his return. It is not possible to say whether he will be able to make his return in Sri Lanka but the reality is he will need one week for further assessment... so you can understand."

ball 95 which featured seven fours

and four sixes along with Amit

Majumder's 42 before being bun-

dled out for 238 in 50 overs after

skipper Shuvagata Hom's hundred

in a fighting total of 288 for eight in

50 overs, Shinepukur eventually

faced their third defeat after

Brothers Union reached the target

with five wickets and five balls to

Apart from Shuvagata's 98-ball

116, which featured 12 fours and

four sixes, young Afif Hossain also

scored 68 after Shinepukur elected

Myshukur Rahman's 107-ball 88

set the tone for the chase. Indian

batsman Debabrata Das scored 75

off 60 balls and Nasir Ali remained

unbeaten on 45 off 34 balls to help

Brothers clinch a relatively com-

fortable win with five wickets and

In reply, Brothers opener

At BKSP-3 in Savar, despite

being asked to bat.

spare.

to bat first.

operations committee chairman Akram Khan, who has been playing a role of a silent observer in all cricketing activities surrounding the national team even though his committee is supposed to handle everything in that sector, came to the scene yesterday to talk about Shakib's injury update and the appointment of a batting coach.

But what the former national skipper informed the reporters hardly echoed with the sentiment of the BCB physician.

> "He went for a checkup. We will know after his arrival but he is going with the team. If everything stays okay then he might miss one or two matches but the hope is that there is a possibility that he will play. The first [match] may be 50-50," Akram said. Bangladesh will play their first match against India on March 8 in the T201 tri-series in Colombo.

> If Akram's version is the correct one, then the BCB may take the all-rounder to Sri Lanka but it would be

unwise to drag an injured player into a cricket tour.

Shakib had sustained an injury to his left little finger during the ODI tri-series final in Mirpur on January 27 and missed the Test and T20I series against Sri Lanka, both of which the home side lost badly. However, it is now believed that it was not a wise decision for him to start fitness training on February 22, which Meanwhile, BCB director and cricket has ultimately aggravated his condition.

An all-round show and a ton in vain

SPORTS REPORTER



Prime Bank Cricket Club, Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity and Shinepukur Cricket Club each registered

their third wins in six games beating Agrani Bank Cricket Club, Kalabagan Krira Chakra and Brothers Union respectively in the Dhaka Premier League yesterday.

At the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali stadium in Fatullah, Delwar Hossain's all-round performance guided Prime Bank to a 42-run win over Agrani Bank as the allrounder first smashed a blistering, unbeaten 14-ball 41 to help post a fighting total of 272 for eight before picking up three wickets with his seam bowling to bundle out the opponents for 230.

Delwar struck three of his five sixes off left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak to take 22 runs in the 49th

over as the batting side added 69 runs in the last five overs. Earlier, Mehedi Maruf and Mehrab Hossain Jnr struck fifties and added 94 runs in the opening wicket to lay the foundation for a big total.

However, since the departure of the two openers, Prime Bank lost the way in the middle before Delwar's late surge helped the batting side post a challenging total.

In reply, Agrani Bank never looked comfortable and kept losing wickets at regular intervals. Wicketkeeper-batsman Dhiman Ghosh top-scored with 73 and Jahid Javed remained unbeaten on 48 at the end to complete the rites of their fourth defeat in six games.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Taibur Parvez and Abul Hasan's 136-run seventh-wicket stand kept Kalabagan in the hunt till the end but they eventually fell to a 15-run defeat their fifth in six matches -- at the hands of Khelaghar.

Chasing a target of 239,

Kalabagan were teetering on 34 for seven inside 11 overs before Taibur and Abul held the ship together, both left-handers striking halfcenturies as they inched towards Kalabagan eventually ended the the target.

However, after Rafsan Al Mahmud dismissed Abul for 76 off 107 balls, which included three sixes and four boundaries,

dramatic win also came to an end. Taibur top-scored with 81 off 113 balls with seven fours as chase on 223 for nine. Pacer Hasan Mahmud bagged

Kalabagan's hopes of snatching a

three while off spinners Robiul Islam and Anjum Ahmed took two wickets each for the bowling side.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHELAGHAR V KALABAGAN KHELAGHAR SKS: 238 all out in 50 overs

(Robiul 21, Mahidul 25, Amit 42, Menaria 95; Muktar 2-27, Nahid 2-43, Rahatul 3-44) KALABAGAN KC: 223 for 9 in 50 overs (Taibur 81, Abul 76, Sanjit 31 not out; Mahmud 3-47, Robiul 2-24, Anjum 2-27)

Result: Khelaghar SKS won by 15 runs.

SHINEPUKUR V BROTHERS UNION SHINEPUKUR CC: 288 for 8 in 50 overs (Kaul 19, Afif 68, Shuvagata 116, Minhaz 24; Khaled 2-57, Suhrawardi 3-68) BROTHERS UNION: 289 for 5 in 49.1 overs (Mizanur 37, Myshukur 88, Junaid 31, Das 75, Yasir 45 not out; Raihan 2-49)

Result: Brothers Union won by 5 wickets.

PRIME BANK V AGRANI BANK PRIME BANK CC: 272 for 8 in 50 overs (Maruf 54, Mehrab 52, Al-Amin 25, Pathan 21, Ariful 39, Nahidul 21, Delwar 41 not out; Shafiul 2-45, Raza 2-50) AGRANI BANK CC: 230 all out in 46.5

overs (Raza 42, Dhiman 73, Jahid 48 not out, Ishak 34; Rubel 3-44, Shariful 2-44, Delwar 3-41)

Result: Prime Bank won by 42 runs.

series in 2018 SPORTS REPORTER Earlier, Khelaghar rode on their Indian recruit Ashok Maneria's 98-

The Bangladesh A team will participate in three series this year, including two away tours, informed Bangladesh Cricket Board cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan yesterday.

BD A set for 3

The second-string national team's only engagements last year were a fourday game and a five-match one-day series against Ireland, while the year before

they played no matches at all. "The national team's series against Afghanistan is yet to be confirmed but we do have three series for the A team. Sri Lanka will come to Bangladesh in April and then the A team will tour Ireland in June, which will be followed by a tour of West Indies,"

Akram told reporters at the

Sher-e-Bangla National

Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Hassan: The interferer-in-chief

SAKEB SUBHAN



He was talking about the stop-gap

ence to head a cricket board. Nowhere

in his CV, however, is a role that

imbues him with cricketing expertise --

it is not necessary for most cricket

board presidents, but it is a different

matter for one who weighs in on

cricketing matters every chance he gets.

ment is nothing new as even during

happier times, such as on a successful

tour of Sri Lanka just under a year ago,

he came up with soundbites like: "I

would have gone home today [April 5,

2017, a day after Bangladesh lost the

first T20I in Colombo] if we won yes-

terday, but since we lost I have to stay

behind."

However, his unwarranted involve-

It was not really a novel development when Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan said on Monday that 'I will be there in Sri Lanka to look after everything, and I will be with them [the team] at all times'.

coaching solutions for Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka for a tri-nation T20I world makes his or her own. series this month, and inserted himself as part of the solution -- not a surprise for those familiar with the president's tendencies. It is relevant to mention here that Hassan is a ruling party lawmaker and CEO of BEXIMCO Pharmaceuticals, positions that have given him the administrative experi-

> It was Hassan's decision to alter the squad selection procedure, which sowed the seeds of Bangladesh's current poverty of resources. He included then coach Chandika Hathurusingha in the process even though the Sri Lankan did not stay in the country during the national team's downtime to view domestic talent, resulting in a stagnancy in the pipeline of new players. That led to the exit of a strong voice in selection -- then chief selector

In April 2017, when the team drew all their series in Sri Lanka, Hassan's

undue involvement raised questions but they did not gain currency. But now after Bangladesh have lost, at times humiliatingly, to a middling Sri Lanka side in all formats at home over the first two months of the year, the time is ripe to wonder what it says about the system in place to govern and execute the country's cricketing ambitions that the board president feels the need to be with the team 'at all times' to guide them -- a role that no other board chief in the cricketing

They do not need to make it their own because they, or their predecessors, have appointed and empowered personnel in various sectors of running a national team. Hassan, on the other hand, has not just presided over but exacerbated a system in which the various sectors -directors, selectors, coaches, players -- are dependent on him for decisions or directions regardless of whether it is necessary or even welcome.

Faruque Ahmed -- and saw the instalment of a puppet selection panel

headed by Minhajul Abedin. The ineffectual board of directors --



BCB president Nazmul Hassan

populated by Hassan yes-men -- and the often, notably when he retroactively cricket operations committee (COC) is not much better. The most recent example of the COC's ineptness is the forced vacation of Bangladesh fielding and assistant coach Richard Halsall for the duration of the tri-series, a decision that was likely influenced by Hassan and one that has only added to the air of chaos and instability.

Hassan was not content having blurred the lines between selection

forced Mominul Haque into the squad for the first Test against Australia at home last August, undermining the man he empowered just a year earlier. And now that Hathurusingha has

left, a bad situation has become worse as the puppet selection committee is now open to even greater undue interference from the president, who does not even have Hathurusingha's nous. Rather than setting up good systems and coaching; he stepped in as selector that promote a separate selection

panel that can act of its own accord, Hassan continues unabated in his effort to blur lines further. A prime example is the mess of conflicts of interest that is Khaled Mahmud, who has been given a plethora of roles in Hassan's administration and the conflicts extend to the board president.

Mahmud's laundry list of designations include BCB director, Abahani coach, development committee chairman, BEXIMCO cricket director. A cursory glance will reveal at least two conflicts of interest there. Thankfully, he has been removed as technical director of the Bangladesh team in the aftermath of the Sri Lanka series. Unfortunately, it has opened up further space for the board president to 'look after the team' in Sri Lanka.

His undermining of coaches, selectors and players - which has the knockon effect of weakening the country's visible reality in his glut of television interviews where, instead of staying in the background, he tries to propagate the perception of his role as saviour of Bangladesh cricket.

His over-the-top involvement, while problematic, may have at least been tolerable if he retained a modicum of consistency in his positions or if the team was actually benefited by his overarching presence. But that is far from the case. For example, having risked team destabilisation by talking Mashrafe Bin Mortaza into T20I retirement in Sri Lanka last year, he now wants Mashrafe to come back. At least

the reasoning then was solid, that T20Is are the format to blood youngsters. A few losses later, that has been thrown out the window but Mashrafe has displayed the good sense that his president so clearly has shown to lack and refused to come back.

There is also enough reason to believe that the team do not savour the presence of the president in the everyday cricketing sphere. It is a safe bet that they certainly do not appreciate the public tongue lashings that Hassan metes out after bad results, a quality made all the more infuriating by the growing impression that Hassan's destabilising influence itself may be part of the problem.

In Monday's press address, where the 16-man Bangladesh squad was announced, Hassan said that he had not only finalised the squad but also the possible playing eleven. He also announced that Bangladesh pace cricketing institutions -- is an ever- bowling coach and legendary former West Indies fast bowler Courtney Walsh will be the interim coach for the Sri Lanka tri-series. Walsh, having witnessed Hassan's nose-poking style of administration, is probably aware that he will not have the full run of the team in Sri Lanka.

> Against this backdrop, there is not a high chance that they will do well against Sri Lanka and India in the triseries, which is just as well, because if the team do manage some success it will only serve to entrench Hassan in his role of interferer in chief -- and if the past holds any clue, that will only be to the team's detriment.