

SPORT

Shift of focus and mindset

SPORTS REPORTER



The FIFA World Cup was the centre of attention for all sports lovers, especially in Bangladesh, over the past month but with its conclusion fans will now return their eyes to the Tigers, who will face the West Indies in a three-match ODI series from July 22 after a humiliating defeat in the Test series.

Both Bangladesh and wicketkeeper-batsman Anamul Haque will return to the one-day format after nearly six months since their defeat in the final of the tri-nation series against Sri Lanka at home in January this year.

Anamul was dropped for the final of that series, a game the Tigers eventually lost by 79 runs. The 25-year-old informed that the visitors were gearing up for a comeback against the West Indies after facing crushing defeats and losing the Test series 2-0.

"We have to prepare anew for the one-day series and if we can prepare well, we can do well. Obviously the players are trying to make a comeback as the format has changed and it will again be the white ball, in which Bangladesh have been playing well for a long time now," said Anamul, who along with Mustafizur Rahman and four other members of the ODI squad, joined the side for the first training session in Jamaica on Monday.

Bangladesh's inspirational ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza also flew for the Caribbean to join the demoralised Tigers on Monday at midnight and his first task will be to piece together the confidence of the players which has been brutally crushed.

However, Bangladesh are more confident when it comes to the fifty over format,

where they have a better record be it at home or overseas, and one can expect a better show.

The upcoming ODI series against West Indies will also be the beginning of the Tigers preparations for the upcoming 2019 ICC World Cup in England.

But no matter what the results are in the ODI series, which will be followed by the three-match T20I series, it was the manner of those defeats in the two-match Test series that will certainly haunt Bangladesh for a long time.

The Bangladeshi cricketers hardly showed any character in either of the Tests. They were on the receiving end of a humiliating innings and 219-run defeat in the first Test, during which they were bundled out for their lowest-ever score of 43 in the first innings.

Things remained unchanged in the second Test as the team again failed to cross the 150-run mark, eventually crumbling to a huge 166-run defeat.

Whether it is the fragile domestic structure or the Bangladesh Cricket Board's lack of willingness to deduce the exact reason behind the poor performance in Test cricket, the senior players are also to blame for not being able to cope with the difficult conditions despite having a wealth of experience.

Another alarming part is that there appears to be no player who can succeed the likes of Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim or Mahmudullah Riyad in any format in the future.

It will be important for the BCB to examine the reason behind the players' lack of interest in the longest format of the game rather than only focusing on limited overs success, which will definitely hurt Bangladesh cricket in the long run.

ANAMUL HAQUE

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Ariful Haque's all-round show powered Bangladesh A to a two-run victory against Sri Lanka A in the first one-day match at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB



SADAT

Ariful & Khaled secure two-run win for BD A

SPORTS REPORTER



An all-round performance from Ariful Haque paired with Khaled Ahmed's four-wicket haul helped the Bangladesh A team secure a nerve wracking two-run win over Sri Lanka A team in the first of a three-match one-day series at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Chasing a 281-run target, Sri Lanka needed three runs off the last ball to win but right-arm seamer Khaled held his nerves to dismiss Shehan Madhushanaka, who struck three sixes in his 12-ball 21-run knock, and bundle out the visitors on 278.

After being sent to bat, Sri Lanka were struggling on 72 for 4 at one point but Ashan Priyanjan and Dasun Shanaka steadied the ship by adding 84 runs for the fifth wicket.

Priyanjan was dismissed on 42 but Shanaka held on until he was dismissed by Khaled in the 46th over after scoring a run-a-ball 78, featuring six sixes and two fours.

Skipper Thisara Perera (22) and Shammu

Ashan (28) kept charging the Bangladeshi bowlers but eventually fell agonisingly short in the end.

Left-arm pacer Shoriful Islam bagged three wickets while medium pacer Ariful, who scored a quick-fire 47 off just 22 balls laced with four sixes and three fours, also bagged two wickets.

Earlier, Bangladesh posted a challenging total of 280 for 7 in 50 overs with opener Mizanur Rahman top scoring for the side with 67 while Fazle Mahmud added 59 runs.

The second match of the series will take place tomorrow at the same venue.

SCORE IN BRIEF

Bangladesh A: 280 for 7 in 50 overs (Mizanur 67, Soumya 24, Mahmud 59, Mithun 44, Ariful 47; Shanaka 1-24)

Sri Lanka A: 278 all out in 50 overs (Thirimanne 29, G Jayasuriya 20, Priyanjan 42, Shanaka 78, N Perera 22, Ashan 28, Madushanka 21; Khaled 4-72, Shoriful 3-54, Ariful 2-42)

Result: Bangladesh A won by two runs and led the 3-match series 1-0.

Player-of-the-match: Ariful Haque.

Newaz takes U-19s under his wing

SPORTS REPORTER

Naveed Newaz has been appointed as the Bangladesh Under-19 cricket team's new head coach, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) confirmed yesterday.

The Sri Lankan will take the side to the ICC Under-19 World Cup to be held in South Africa in 2020.

Newaz, the 44-year old former Sri Lankan interna-



Eng clinch series

AFF, Leeds



England beat India by eight wickets to win the third one-day international at Headingley on Tuesday as they claimed a 2-1 series win in a three-match contest.

England, set 257 to win, finished on 260 for two, with Test skipper Joe Root 100 not out on his Yorkshire home ground.

Together with England one-day captain Eoin Morgan (88 not out) he shared an unbroken third-wicket stand of 186.

Earlier 2019 World Cup hosts England, top of the ODI rankings to India's second, restricted the tourists to 256 for eight after Morgan won the toss.

India captain Virat Kohli top-scored with 71 as Yorkshire's David Willey and Adil Rashid took three wickets apiece.

SCORES IN BRIEF

India: 256 for 8 in 50 overs (Dhawan 44, Kohli 71, Karthik 21, Dhoni 42, Pandya 21, Kumar 21, Thakur 22 not out; Willey 3-40, Rashid 3-49)

England: 260 for 2 in 44.3 overs (Vince 27, Bairstow 30, Root not out 100, Morgan not out 88; Thakur 1-51)

Result: England won by eight wickets and clinched the 3-match series 2-1.



ROOT... 100 not out

Russell returns to WI ODI fold

AGENCIES, Kingston

Andre Russell, who last played a one-day international in November 2015, returns to the West Indies squad for the three-match ODI series against Bangladesh, which starts on Sunday in Guyana.

Kieran Powell and Alzarri Joseph are also part of the 13-member squad while Carlos Brathwaite, Marlon Samuels, Nikita Miller, Sheldon Cottrell and Kesrick Williams, who had featured in the squad for the World Cup Qualifiers, have been left out.

Since the 2015 World Cup, Russell played only one ODI, against Sri Lanka in Colombo, during which he suffered a leg injury. **Squad:** Jason Holder (c), Devendra Bishoo, Chris Gayle, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope (wk), Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Jason Mohammed, Ashley Nurse, Keemo Paul, Kieran Powell, Rowman Powell, Andre Russell.

Game-time for booters

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh football team will be looking to implement their training lessons when they take on Al Mesaimeer Sports Club in a practice match at Mesaimeer Training Academy ground in Qatar today.

The match is scheduled to kick off at 10pm (BST).

The Bangladesh team have been in Qatar for a two-week preparation camp for August's Asian Games and September's SAFF Championship and they will play their first practice match under English coach Jamie Day, who took charge last month.

Bangladesh played their last international friendly against Laos on March 27 under the guidance of Australian coach Andrew Ord.

Day has been trying to pick a right combination for upcoming assignments and the match against Al Mesaimeer SC is being considered as a platform for the 38-year-old coach to judge the ability of the players.

"We are expecting them [the players] to have hopefully taken on board what we have been working on in training regarding their shape with and



Members of the Bangladesh national football team take part in a training session at Mesaimeer Training Academy Ground in Qatar yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

without the ball," Day said. "Everyone will play roughly the same amount of game time during the match."

As most of the top Qatari clubs are currently outside the country, the Bangladesh team management only managed a practice match against a Second Division side, who have a Croatian coaching staff.

"They look like a very good side that have some big strong players, so it will be good for me and my staff to see how the boys cope against that in what I think will be a physical match. I am not worried about the result, we are just looking to see if they have taken on board what we have

been working on," said Day.

The coach also believes that he would be able to see the players' fitness which has been a concern due to the long gap in training since the match against Laos.

"We want to achieve some match fitness which is needed and the boys to have a game against a strong side, so we can see where we are at as a team," added the coach.

Meanwhile, promising midfielder Hemanta Vincent Biswas joined the long injury list and the Bangladesh Olympic Association has been asked to replace him from the Asian Games-bound football squad.

tional and former head coach of the Sri Lanka Under-19 cricket team, will be responsible for overseeing the Bangladesh Under-19s programmes and will prepare the side for the next Under-19 Cricket World Cup.

The BCB began their preparations for the next Youth World Cup with a fresh batch of teenage cricketers last May.

After finishing third in the 2016 Under-19 World Cup at home -- their best result in the tournament -- the Bangladesh Under-19 team finished sixth in the latest edition of the biennial tournament in New Zealand earlier this year.

That downturn was attributed to the lack of practice that was given to the youths, especially as they had very few practice matches.

The first international assignment for Newaz -- who is a Cricket Australia High Performance (Level Three) Coach -- with the junior Tigers' will be the Asia Cup, to be held in the United Arab Emirates from September this year.