

# 'Can't expect results without planning'

SPORTS REPORTER

 Bangladesh are close to finishing their tour of the West Indies and North America as they have only two T20Is remaining in Florida. The Caribbean part of the trip however ended with a 2-1 ODI series victory that can only be seen as a consolation prize after the debacle in the Test series.

It should have been a tour of dominance for the Tigers against the home side if the respective strengths of the sides are considered, but ultimately Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had to rejuvenate the team to make a comeback in the three-match ODI series after a demoralising 2-0 Test series defeat. Then it was no surprise that under Shakib Al Hasan's leadership the team went down badly in the first T20I -- a format that remains undiscovered territory for Bangladesh.

Despite the ODI series win, the results on tour have only served to deepen pre-existing areas of concern surrounding Bangladesh -- namely how long this team will continue to use the Big Five as a crutch. Hidden in that question are deeper issues surrounding the juniors' inability to take the baton and the lack of quality players in the pipeline. In this light, the future of Bangladesh cricket does seem bleak.

How has the most resource-rich sport in the country reached such a state of gloom? It certainly has not

happened suddenly; there are some reasons behind the downtrend.

"We only expect smartness from the players and overlook it when it comes to smart planning and policy. It's a different issue when it comes to extraordinary talent but in general you have to have a smart coach, smart planning and policy in place for the rest. But does it exist in our cricket administration? The overall picture is not good and I think the lack of proper planning and policy is the reason behind the downtrend of our cricket," believed former Bangladesh national team assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin, who is mentor to many national and upcoming stars.

"Look, Shakib [Al Hasan], Tamim [Iqbal], Mushy [Mushfiqur Rahim] have had that initiative to become a good international player and the way they analyse their performances for every series is really amazing. That may not be the case for the next generation of players but you have to consider the atmosphere in which they grew up. If you go back to the planning and coaching [when the current seniors were coming up] you will find the difference," he continued.

"Yes, Tamim had a problem with leg-stump deliveries and he corrected it through his own initiative, whereas Soumya [Sarkar] has been making the same mistakes time and again. But I cannot understand how a batsman like Anamul Haque played three innings in three different styles [in the three ODIs against West Indies]. Why

do you consider a batsman like Soumya without making technical corrections after he failed to score at every level and was dismissed in the same manner? Why would you select Ariful [Haque] ahead of [Mohammad] Saifuddin? We have suddenly picked up some young players for T20 cricket and then threw them away. No long-term planning exists but we still expect good results," he said.

He also gave his take on the reason behind the batsmen's failures in the Test series. "I think the lack of good preparation was the reason behind it. All the batsmen premeditatedly went on the back foot to handle the West Indies bowlers, which really surprised me. Our pace bowling is nowhere near international standard, but is there anybody in the administration to ask our two fast bowling coaches [Courtney Walsh and Champaka Ramanayake] why we are so poor in this department and what we need to do? Most alarming is that we don't have quality pace bowlers in the pipeline."

Salahuddin warned that Bangladesh may even suffer in their favourite 50-over format in the future. "See, our average players get the chance to play seven to eight one-day matches in a year during the DPL; so there is a chance that we will face the music in the future. With a faulty domestic structure and without long-term policy and planning we cannot go far beyond sporadic success, especially at home."



Bangladesh batsmen Soumya Sarkar (L) and Anamul Haque are the perfect examples of players not improving despite being given repeated opportunities.



PHOTO: AFP/STAR FILE



India captain Virat Kohli shows his wedding ring as he celebrates his first century on England soil on the second day of the first Test at Edgbaston yesterday. After being dropped twice, Kohli punished the England bowlers on his way to a fabulous 149 before becoming the last batsman out at 274, thirteen runs short of the home side's first innings total of 287. PHOTO: AFP

## Virat ton revives India

AFP, Birmingham



India captain Virat Kohli made Dawid Malan pay for dropping him twice with a superb maiden Test century in England as the tourists bounced back in the series opener at Edgbaston on Thursday.

India were in danger of conceding a first-innings lead of more than a hundred runs at 182 for eight.

But Kohli's superb 149 took India to 274 all out, just 13 runs adrift of England's 287.

Then with what became the last ball of the second day's play, off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin bowled Alastair Cook for a duck with a brilliant delivery that drew the batsman forward, pitched on middle stump and turned to hit the left-hander's off-pole.

It was the second time in the match that Ashwin had dismissed Cook, England's all-time leading Test run-scorer, in such a manner.

England were nine for one at the close, a lead of 22 runs.

But it might have been different story had not Malan dropped Kohli in the slips off James Anderson and Ben Stokes when the star batsman had made 21 and 51.

It looked as if the day might belong to Sam Curran when the 20-year-old Surrey left-arm swing bowler, in just his second match at this level, removed India's top order with a spell of three for eight in eight balls en route to Test-best figures of four for 74 in 17 overs.

Kohli was on 97 when No 11 Umesh Yadav came in but the tailender kept his wicket intact.

A late cut four off Stokes, his 14th boundary in 172 balls, saw Kohli to his 22nd Test hundred.

He then struck several stylish attacking shots, including a classic cover-drive for four off Stokes and a lofted six off leg-spinner Adil Rashid.

And when he hit two off Rashid to go to 135, it meant Kohli had made more runs in the one innings than he did in the whole of his maiden Test series in England four years ago when he was restricted to 134 runs in five matches at a meagre average of 13.4.

Kohli was last man out when he cut Rashid straight to Stuart Broad at backward point.

He batted for nearly five hours and faced 225 balls, including 22 fours and a six.

Kohli farmed the strike brilliantly during a last-wicket stand of 57 with Yadav, who faced 16 balls for his unbeaten one.

Earlier, Curran's wicket-taking burst began when Murali Vijay was lbw on review for 20.

Two balls later Curran dismissed KL Rahul for four via an ugly flat-bat drag-on.

Left-hander Shikhar Dhawan (26) nicked a well-directed Curran outswinger to Malan at second slip.

India, 76 for three at lunch, lost their next two wickets on 100 with Ajinkya Rahane (15) caught in the slips off Stokes before the all-rounder bowled Dinesh Karthik for a duck.

Kohli nicked Anderson only for Malan to drop a low catch at second slip.

That was the last delivery of the over and the next ball saw all-rounder Hardik Pandya missed on nought when Cook dropped a routine first-slip chance off Stokes.

But Curran returned to have Pandya lbw for 22 with an inswinging yorker.

Soon after completing a 100-ball fifty with his ninth four, Kohli was missed again by Malan, this time off Stokes.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 287 and second innings 9 for one (Cook 0, Jennings 5 not out; Ashwin 1-5)

INDIA: First innings 274 (Vijay 20, Dhawan 26, Kohli 149, Pandya 22; Anderson 2-41, Curran 4-74, Rashid 2-31, Stokes 2-73)

## SLC drops plans to emulate IPL

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket authorities Thursday shelved long-delayed plans for a Twenty20 competition akin to the massively lucrative Indian Premier League, instead announcing a local tournament with no foreign players.

With an eye on the billions of dollars and millions of viewers drawn to the IPL, the island nation launched its own premier league in 2012 but the competition was a flop, lasting just one edition.

Sri Lanka Cricket had hoped to revive the tournament, modelled on the short-format competition that has lured international stars like England's Ben Stokes and the West Indies' Chris Gayle to India.

But a board official said the plans had been scrapped and replaced by the Sri Lanka Cricket T20 League, which would feature exclusively local players.

The new league will nurture emerging local talent by giving young players the opportunity to play alongside the island's best, the official said.

The four teams will face each other twice in the tournament, which is slated to begin August 21.

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## 'Fielded like schoolkids'

ICC



Angelo Mathews didn't hide his disappointment after Sri Lanka had "a terrible day" at work in the second one-day international against South Africa, losing by four wickets on Wednesday.

Having put up just 244/8 after opting to bat in Dambulla, Sri Lanka surrendered to Quinton de Kock's belligerent 87 as South Africa chased down the target in just 42.5 overs to go 2-0 up in the series.

"We gave away too many wickets up front [56/3], and then we lost wickets at crucial times too, so we never got going. We didn't hold on to catches as well, and while defending low scores, you need to hold on to every chance. We had a terrible day on the field," Mathews said after the match.

"Neither did the bowlers bowl well. We were a bunch of schoolkids when it came to today's fielding."

De Kock and Hashim Amla (43) were both given reprieves early in the South African innings, and the batsmen cashed in, adding 91 runs for the first wicket to put South Africa in a commanding position. Faf du Plessis (49) and JP Duminy (32) did the needful after that.

Niroshan Dickwella, who scored 69 alongside Mathews' 79\* to help Sri Lanka recover from 56/3, agreed with Mathews that Sri Lanka made too many mistakes on the field.

"We made mistakes throughout the game. If we want to win a match, we can't make so many mistakes," Dickwella said.

Dickwella's dismissal in the 26th over at a team total of 123 after he and Mathews had added 67 runs for the fourth wicket initiated a middle-order collapse and Sri Lanka went from 123/3 to 227/8, leaving Mathews with too much to do.

"Maybe you can make two or three mistakes and fix those things within the game itself and win the match. But if you make mistakes through the match, it's hard to win," added Dickwella.

## Kohli's 'mic drop' revenge

AFP, Birmingham



England captain Joe Root said the controversial send-off he received from India skipper Virat Kohli after being run out on the opening day of the first Test at Edgbaston was "quite funny" and added to the "theatre of the game".

England had been well-placed at 216 for three, with Root seemingly on course to score a first Test century since his 136 against the West Indies during last year's day/night clash at Edgbaston.

But his 11th Test fifty without a hundred since that innings ended in frustrating fashion when, with Yorkshire team-mate Jonny Bairstow calling him for a tight second run, he was run out for 80 by Kohli's direct hit from midwicket.

It was also the finish of a stand worth 104 and the start of a collapse that saw England lose six wickets for 67 runs on the way to a stumps score of 285 for nine.

Kohli rubbed salt into the wound by blowing kisses in the direction of Root and putting his finger to his lips.

He also did the 'mic drop' gesture in imitation of Root's celebration of his one-day series-clinching hundred against India at Headingley.

Meanwhile the words Kohli appeared to utter in Root's direction after the run out could yet lead to action by match referee Jeff Crowe, the former New Zealand captain.

"I didn't see it at the time but I saw it

last night," Root told BBC Radio's Test Match Special in an interview broadcast on Thursday.

"It actually adds to the theatre of the game. It's good to have those little moments within things. I thought it was quite funny."

He added: "I'm sure within the five-match series there will be plenty of that stuff going on. It adds to the whole drama of this series."

Asked if Kohli's celebration would fire England up, Root replied: "We'll



have to wait and see. I can't see it becoming an issue throughout this game or moving forward.

"But it makes entertaining cricket for everyone to watch, which is exactly what you want in Test cricket."

As for the run-out itself, the England skipper refused to blame Bairstow, saying: "It's no-one's fault in particular."

"You could probably say we were both at fault. There's no hard feelings between me and Jonny."



With England Test skipper Joe Root's mic drop celebration after sealing an ODI series win over India on July 17 fresh in his mind, India skipper Virat Kohli (R) responded in kind after running his counterpart out on the first day of the first Test in Edgbaston on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP