

# SPORT



## What now for Mominul?

SPORTS REPORTER



After the tour of West Indies in August this year, Mominul Haque got a hint from the Bangladesh team management that he was in consideration for a comeback in the ODI side for the Asia Cup.

There were also some guidelines provided to the 26-year-old, labelled as a Test specialist, to increase his range of shots in order to cope with the demands of the limited overs format.

During Bangladesh A team's tour of Ireland in August, Mominul tried to follow those instructions and remained aggressive, smashing a career-best 133-ball 182 against Ireland A in the fourth one-dayer.

"I had to learn how to play aggressive cricket in completely different conditions and it was an entirely new experience for me. It was satisfying in a sense that I had managed to play a lot of shots throughout the series. I had very limited shots at my disposal and probably that is the reason it had an impact on my career in the shorter formats," Mominul had told Cricbuzz following the Ireland tour in August.

He was rewarded with a call up to the ODI squad for the Asia Cup. The left-hander made his ODI comeback after three years with the game against Afghanistan followed by the game against Pakistan, but scored only nine and five runs respectively in those two matches.

After only two failures, Mominul finds himself in the

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**Bangladesh selector  
Habibul Bashar**



cold again after being dropped from the 15-member Bangladesh squad for the three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe at home, which could have been an ideal platform for the left-hander to regain some confidence.

National selector Habibul Bashar admitted that it is unfortunate for someone like Mominul to lose his place only on the basis of two matches. However, the selector stated that their emphasis was on experience while they were willing to experiment with new players.

"We had to bank on experience and team combination to form the team. I won't say two innings in the Asia Cup was enough to judge Mominul, but had he scored in those games it would have been better for him. As he did not score runs, we had to look for a few new players which is why he was dropped," Habibul told reporters yesterday.

Instead of doing any good to the cricketer's confidence, this uncertainty and confusion over his place in the limited overs format might have an adverse impact on his performance in Test cricket -- the format where he is most fluent.

"We did not get the expected performance from him in Test cricket recently as he is one of the most important players in the Test side. We don't know whether his thoughts over ODI cricket have hampered his Test performance, but we surely don't want that. At the moment we are considering him more in Test cricket," he added.



**Mahmudullah Riyad was back in business at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Having recovered from back pain which was aggravated during the recently concluded Asia Cup, the Bangladesh batsman underwent a net session yesterday and hit his toe with the bat to leave the session abruptly. However, to everyone's relief, the batsman has been cleared to resume training today for the upcoming home series against Zimbabwe.**

PHOTO: BCB

### TALK ON ZIM SERIES



We feel a bit of pressure when we play against Zimbabwe. If you compare our performances with them then any upset will bring additional pressure to us. So, it's a challenging series for us and everybody should perform well.

**Bangladesh pacer Rubel Hossain said yesterday regarding their upcoming home series against Zimbabwe**

## Day eyes steady rise

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team coach Jamie Day said he would want to see the team make a steady rise in FIFA rankings by continuing the good work the team has done over the past two months or so. The national team is currently ranked 193rd, and the English coach said he would ideally like to see the team climb up to 180th in the near future.

"My target is now 180. If we aim and try hard for 150 and if we get to 160, 170 or 180, it's still an improvement," the 38-year-old coach told reporters yesterday after having a meeting with the Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin and National Teams' Committee chairman Kazi Nabil Ahmed.

After a long absence from competitive international football, Bangladesh participated in three tournaments over the last two months -- the Asian Games in Indonesia, the SAFF Championship and the Bangabandhu Gold Cup in

Bangladesh. Although the Olympic team managed to seal a pre-quarterfinal berth in the Asian Games, the senior team failed to get out of the group stages in the SAFF Championship while losing in the semifinals of the just-concluded Bangabandhu Gold Cup. The coach obviously saw the performances, if not the results, as signs of improvement.

"I want to see big jumps in improvement, big rise in performances. The job for us now is that we have to find a way to keep going up in rankings, keeping this level up. We need to work out how we can achieve that," Day said.

However, after a busy couple of months, there are no international engagements on the horizon for the booters, with only an international friendly against an yet-unknown opponent being lined up for the November international window. The coach, who will go back to England for a vacation today, said more international matches are needed for the team to improve constantly.

"Looking forward to November's international window, something we

talked about and looks to what kind of game we are going to play and the team we want to play against. We want to play as many games we can and get the players used to playing international football games," Day said.

The coach will pick the players for November's friendly after watching the second phase of the Federation Cup, which is expected to start from October 22. After that, the Bangladesh Premier League will be underway and the coaching staff will have to keep an eye on the players to make their picks. However, with the foreign players' quota once again increased to four, Day might not have an ideal opportunity to see the improvement of his charges, especially the forwards who have been woefully shy of scoring form.

The coach hinted that he would like to see more local players than foreign ones in the starting eleven of clubs. "The long-term plan is how to get our international players playing regularly, every single one of them. As a national coach, I want every player from midfield to defence to play regularly."

## Morgan guides England



AFP, Dambulla

Captain Eoin Morgan to a damp squib play for the

hit 92 decisive runs to guide England win over Sri Lanka with rain halting second straight match in their one-day series.

England were awarded a 31-run victory on a faster run rate after torrential downpour at the Dambulla ground.

The tourists scored 278-9 from 50 overs, with Morgan hitting 11 fours and two sixes in his innings, while Test captain Joe Root made 71.

The umpires stopped play with Sri Lanka on 140-5 after 29 of their overs. Thisara Perera was on 44 and Dhananjaya de Silva on 36 when play was halted. They put on 66 for the sixth wicket after Sri Lanka looked in deep trouble at 74 for five.

Heavy rain was still falling an hour after the suspension and England were given victory under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern run rate system.

Only 15 overs of the first ODI between the two sides was possible on Wednesday before the game had to be abandoned without a result.

"We have had a halted start in training and the first game with the rain," said Morgan.

"I wouldn't say it was our best game. The batting managed to scrape something together. We should have gone past a par score but ended up scraping to that."

Morgan and Root put England on target to reach 300 but veteran paceman Lasith Malinga took critical wickets at the start and in the lower order to finish on five for 44 on the tricky Dambulla pitch.

He claimed England opener Jason Roy with the fourth ball of the day, brilliantly ended Morgan's innings caught and bowled and also took Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes and Liam Dawson cheaply.

Malinga shook England, who slipped from 209 for four. Tailender Adil Rashid's 19 runs off 15 balls helped raise England from 254 for nine to a respectable score.

Chris Woakes was England's most threatening bowler, taking three for 26 off just five overs.

Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal bemoaned the loss of his top order batsmen.

"Apart from the first seven or eight overs when batting we competed really well," he said.

"We are always giving away three or four wickets -- and that's an area we have to improve as a unit, because that was a winning target."

### SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 278 for 9 in 50 overs (Root 71, Morgan 92, Buttler 28; malinga 5-44)

SRI LANKA: 140 for 5 in 29 overs (K. Perera 30, T. Perera 44 not out, de Silva 36 not out; Woakes 3-26)

Result: England won by 31 runs D/L method

Player of the match: Eoin Morgan

### 'It's useless to make Messi a leader'

AGENCIES, Rio de Janeiro

Diego Maradona lampooned Lionel Messi for using "the bathroom 20 times before a game" and suggested the Argentina star stay in the international wilderness.

Messi has not appeared for the national team since the last-16 loss to eventual champions France at the World Cup in Russia.

However, Maradona is adamant any return should come with the caveat of no captaincy.

"Messi is a great player, but he's not a leader," Maradona told Fox Sports Mexico.

"Before speaking to the coach and players he will be on the PlayStation. Then, on the field, he wants to be the leader. It's useless to make a leader of a guy who goes to the bathroom 20 times before a game."

"Let's stop making a god out of Messi. Messi at Barcelona is one thing and another with Argentina. I wouldn't call him up, but never say never."

"He is the best in the world along with Cristiano [Ronaldo] but you have to take leadership away from him to be the Messi we want."

## Pant, Rahane put India in control

AFP, Hyderabad



Ajinkya Rahane and Rishabh Pant hit unbeaten half-centuries to hand India the

advantage against West Indies on day two of the second Test in Hyderabad on Saturday.

The hosts were 308 for four at stumps, trailing the West Indies by three runs. Rahane, on 75, and Pant, on 85, have put on an unbeaten 146-run fifth-wicket stand in Hyderabad.

Paceman Umesh Yadav also played a part in India's domination with his career-best figures of 6-88 that helped bowl out the West Indies for 311 early in the morning session.

In reply India were in trouble at 162-4 with West Indies skipper Jason Holder taking two wickets including his counterpart Virat Kohli's prized scalp in the after-

noon session.

The right-left batting combination of Rahane and Pant ensured a wicketless final session with their contrasting batting.

Rahane played a cautious knock to register his 15th Test fifty while Pant was his swashbuckling self as he hit 10 fours and 2 big sixes in his 120-ball stay so far.

Teenage opener Prithvi Shaw also smashed 70 off 53 balls as India mounted a strong reply only to lose to their way after lunch.

Shaw fell to left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican after hitting 11 fours and a six.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: First Innings 311 all out (Hope 36, Chase 106, Dowrich 30, Holder 52; U Yadav 6-88, K Yadav 3-85)

INDIA: First Innings 308 for 4 (Shaw 70, Kohli 45, Rahane 75 not out, Pant 85 not out; Holder 2-45)



**After scoring a century on his Test debut against the West Indies in the previous match, opener Prithvi Shaw set the platform for the hosts with a solid 70 on the second day of the second Test at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday. India were 308 for four at stumps.**

PHOTO: AFP