

SPORT



Mithun eager to reach next level

SPORTS REPORTER



The Zimbabwe series will mark the first time that, since making his ODI debut in 2014, wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Mithun will play consecutive series for Bangladesh.

The 27-year-old has been in and out of the national team until he eventually proved his worth in the recently concluded Asia Cup, where the right-hander struck two fifties.

Mithun was given a chance to make a comeback after six months in the Asia Cup with the new role of batting in the middle order. Mithun, who usually opened the innings in the past, grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

"Actually I did not find that [shift to middle order] difficult as it's my profession. Every day after waking up in the morning I don't feel good until I go to the ground and I feel satisfied if I do something good. I have to give my time where I am able to earn money and therefore take care of my family. As I don't do anything else for a living, the motivation also comes from cricket," said Mithun to reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The 27-year-old batted at number five in the Asia Cup and smashed his maiden ODI fifty in the opener against Sri Lanka in

Dubai, where along with Mushfiqur Rahim he added a match-winning 131-run third-wicket after Bangladesh were reeling on two for two, effectively two for three as Tamim Iqbal had retired hurt.

A cool customer, Mithun repeated his show of handling pressure in the crunch game against Pakistan, hitting another fifty in a 144-run partnership with Mushfiqur after they were cut down to 12 for three.

Mithun however is looking forward to correcting the mistakes as he threw away his wicket after reaching his fifty to be dismissed in the sixties in both games.

"Obviously I was unable to finish the game the way Mushfiqur bhai did as I was dismissed midway. Next time, whenever I will be in such situation I will try to finish the job. If I was able to finish from that point I would have taken the main role, which is important," Mithun said.

Bangladesh will start the training camp for the three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe who will arrive tomorrow scheduled to start from October 21 and Mithun said that, thanks to his Asia Cup performances, he will start the series with renewed confidence.

"There has been no real change as such, except that my self-belief has increased. I used to be uncertain before, thinking that I would be dropped again if I failed. That fear is not there for the time being."

Shakib returns in high spirits

SPORTS REPORTER



When an injured Shakib Al Hasan left for Australia for treatment on his infected left little finger, the anxiety on his face was clearly visible but

when he returned yesterday there was a big smile on his face as he walked out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International airport in Dhaka.

The all-rounder had good news for his fans and the country's cricket as he said that his infection is under control but needed monitoring. He was expected to be back to playing within the next three months so that he can test whether cricketing activity causes pain to the injured finger that he hurt in January and which forced him to return home midway through the recent Asia Cup in the UAE.

"The update is good as the infection is under control but I have to monitor that through blood tests every week to know whether it [infection] increases or if there are any other issues. But so far, the infection is under control," Shakib told reporters yesterday.

The 31-year-old however informed that there is no possibility of undergoing surgery in the next six to 12 months, adding that the best outcome would be to be able to play without surgery.

"If there is any infection in the bone then there is no possibility of that going away with medication since antibiotics travel through the blood and it won't travel to the bones. For sure there won't be any surgery for the next six to 12 months. Whether it's me or the physio [Thihan Chandramohan], we are thinking about the ways in which it would be possible to play without a surgery," he said.

There were concerns about whether Shakib would be able to recover before the next World Cup in England next year. The

champion all-rounder informed that there is no set time frame for his recovery and that it might take a month or even six months to fully recover.

"This is such a problem that there is no time frame as I may be able to play after a month as there is no pain and I am feeling much better. It's important for me to regain the strength in my hand and I will be able to return through rehabilitation soon. And if the strength comes I will be able to return in the next month. But if the pain reoccurs after the rehabilitation then I have to wait for surgery.

"It's a bit uncertain but the good thing is that the infection has subsided. So it's possible to play without surgery now and if that happens that would be the best option. But it's tough to confirm it as it might take a month or even six months. I hope that I will be able to play

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Bangladesh all-rounder
Shakib Al Hasan

after a month. But still, as there is a matter of gaining strength it won't be possible before that and it may take more than a month," said Shakib.

The all-rounder once again informed that the injured finger will never be hundred per cent fit again but added that it is not like he would not be able to play cricket with it.



TALKON ZIM SERIES



Normally I don't play with any personal goal and even if I do I have never been successful. So, I don't want to focus on personal goals rather try to play according to the demand of the team.

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman
Mohammad Mithun

Umesh crushes Windies India clinch 10th straight home series

AFP, Hyderabad

Paceman Umesh Yadav claimed a match haul of 10 wickets to lead India to a series sweep against the West Indies with a win inside three days in the second Test on Sunday.

The hosts chased down their 72-run target in just 16.1 overs in an extended final session to win by 10 wickets.

Prithvi Shaw and Lokesh Rahul, both on 33, remained unbeaten.

The 18-year-old Shaw hit the winning boundary as the world's top Test side registered their 10th successive series triumph on home soil.

India have not lost a Test series at home since 2012, when they went down to England 1-2.

Yadav, who returned overall match figures of 10-133 - his maiden 10-wicket haul in 40 Tests - taking four wickets in the West Indies' second innings.

"Not many people realise but he is a very, very talented bowler. He can bowl you unplayable deliveries every now and then which we experience in the nets all the time," skipper Virat Kohli said of the paceman.

"It's just that he is gaining more confidence about his own game."

Sunil Ambris top-scored with 38, offering some resistance with skipper Jason

Holder for the seventh-wicket, but the tourists were bowled out for just 127 in the final session.

Ravindra Jadeja ended their stand, getting Holder caught behind for 19 and then trapping Ambris lbw.

Yadav had rattled the West Indies top order earlier, sending back opener Kraigg Braithwaite on the second delivery of the innings.

Shai Hope then scored a gritty 28 before falling to Jadeja's guile.

There was promise for the West Indies at one stage in the match, after they bowled out India for 367 and limited the hosts' first innings lead to 56.

Holder, who returned after missing the opening game in Rajkot that also ended in three days, returned figures of 5 for 56 with his pace bowling in the first innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: First innings 311

INDIA: First innings 367 (Shaw 70, Kohli 45, Rahane 80, Pant 92, Ashwin 35; Gabriel 3-107, Holder 5-56, Warrican 2-84)

WEST INDIES: Second innings 127 (Hope 28, Hetmyer 17, Ambris 38, Holder 19; Umesh 4-45, Ashwin 2-24, Jadeja 3-12)

INDIA: Second innings 75 no loss (Rahul 33 not out, Shaw 33 not out)

Result: India won by 10 wickets and clinched two-match series 2-0.

Player-of-the-match: Umesh Yadav.

Player-of-the-series: Prithvi Shaw.

Tigers call in psychologist

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) once again felt the need for a psychologist for cricketers and decided to call in sports psychologist Ali Azhar Khan, who will conduct a few sessions with the players ahead of the Zimbabwe series that starts with the first ODI in Mirpur next Sunday.

The need for a psychologist in the Tigers camp has been discussed for quite some time with many cricketers suffering from off-field problems and family issues that have been made public. It is also believed that a psychologist can help cricketers absorb pressure in crunch situations in big matches.

Earlier BCB president Nazmul Hassan and Tigers ODI skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had talked about the need for a psychologist.

"A psychologist will join the Bangladesh team and conduct a few sessions for six to seven days. Ali Azhar Khan will join the team on October 17 and as he is a Bangladeshi it will help the cricketers to understand. He will start conducting sessions with the cricketers from October 17 or 18," chairman of cricket operations committee Akram Khan told reporters yesterday.

A Bangladesh-born Canadian sports psychologist, Azhar has previously worked with the Bangladesh team back in 2014 after the disastrous ICC World T20 at home. Akram informed that the cricketers were benefited after conducting sessions with him.

Apart from Azhar, Australian performance psychologist Phil Jauncey had also worked with the Bangladesh cricketers during the tenure of coach Chandika Hathurusingha. Before that, sports psychologist Dr Soumendra Saha worked with the Tigers ahead of the 2011 ICC World Cup.

'Strikers should fight for own place'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin has urged local strikers to fight against foreign ones to earn their place in club competitions and solve the scoring problem of the national team.

The game's governing body last season allowed only two foreign players in a match in the wake of the national team's defeat against Bhutan. However, this season the game's local governing body has backtracked on that decision by allowing four foreign players, which many think would shrink the opportunity for local strikers to hone their skills before playing international matches.

"In professional circuit, there is no way of making room for local strikers in the starting eleven; rather a player has to create his own place with performance," Salahuddin told reporters at the reception of under-18 women's team at the BFF House yesterday.

"Personally I am against fielding four foreign players in a match but we were

forced to do so as the clubs argued in favour of it following the AFC Cup regulations. We took the matter to the AFC and the AFC told us to follow its guidelines," Sahaluddin explained.

"Allowing four foreign players in a league match is not a problem; the striker must secure his own place fighting against foreign players. We also fought against foreign

players to secure our places in the starting eleven during our playing career. I myself was dropped in the first four matches for Mohammedan and then scored a brace in the fifth match and since then I never sat in reverse-bench," said Salahuddin, who urged the players to perform the whole season for a club instead thinking about pocketing money by just sitting on the side-bench.

The Bangladesh team has long been suffering from lack of scoring. They scored only three goals in the three matches of SAFF Championship this year, and only one of those goals coming from a forward. The team managed a single goal in the recent Bangabandhu Gold Cup where they were knocked out from the semifinals.



KAZI SALAHUDDIN



India pacer Umesh Yadav (R), who claimed a maiden 10-wicket haul, celebrates after dismissing West Indies' Roston Chase on the third day of the second and final Test in Hyderabad yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kohli backs Yadav for Australia Tests

AFP, Hyderabad

Skipper Virat Kohli Sunday said paceman Umesh Yadav was likely to feature in India's XI

during the upcoming tour of Australia after his heroics in the West Indies Test series sweep.

Yadav claimed his maiden 10-wicket match haul to help the world's top Test side thrash West Indies by 10 wickets inside three days of the second Test in Hyderabad.

Yadav's heroics stood out after he lost his pace partner in Shardul Thakur due to a groin strain, returning career-best figures of 6 for 88 in the first innings.

He was equally menacing in the second West Indies innings as his four wickets were instrumental in the tourists being bowled

out for 127 in just 46.1 overs.

Kohli was quick to admit that the muscular Yadav has done good before the all-important Australia tour starting November. The first of the four Tests begins in Adelaide on December 6.

"Umesh is right up there to be featuring in Australia," Kohli told reporters.

"He has got the pace, he has the got the fitness levels to run in all day, picks up wickets at crucial times and he gets good bounce as well," he said.

Yadav has taken 117 wickets in 40 Tests with an economy rate of 3.58 since making his debut against West Indies in 2011 at Delhi's Feroz Shah

Kotla ground.

His ability to work up pace of over 140 kmph and decent seam movement always makes him the captain's pick for home and away tours.



NAT'L CRICKET LEAGUE Third round from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 20th National Cricket League is set to resume when the third round begins across the four venues today. In Tier-1, Khulna will host defending champions Rangpur at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna while Barisal will face off against Rajshahi at the Barisal Divisional Stadium.

In Tier-2, Dhaka Division will lock horns with Sylhet at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar while Dhaka Metropolis take on Chattogram at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura.

As all the second round matches were interrupted by the cyclone 'Titli', Dhaka Metro and Dhaka Division are the only teams to have managed to win a game so far.