

# SPORT



The failure of Bangladesh's top order is perfectly illustrated by the expression on Mahmudullah Riyad's face. The stalwart walks off dejectedly after a soft dismissal in the second ODI against New Zealand at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Mental barrier still biggest hurdle

MAZHAR UDDIN from Christchurch

Even before Bangladesh arrived in New Zealand there was talk that adapting to the tough conditions would be the main challenge for the visitors and since then the word 'conditions' has been ingrained into the minds of the Tigers.

It has to be mentioned that the cricketers did not get enough time to rest following the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) as they had to catch long flights almost immediately afterwards. They also only arrived days before the ODI series, which gave them little time to acclimatise to the conditions.

That mental fatigue along with the physical stress from the BPL was evident in all members of the team and they were two of the biggest reasons -- alongside adjusting to the weather, time zone and relatively alien pitch -- for that eight-wicket loss in the first ODI in Napier.

However, during the first ODI the Tigers did at least manage to spend time in the middle and realise the pace, bounce and movement off the pitch after facing the music from the likes of Trent Boult, Lockie Ferguson and Matt Henry.

By the time the team had travelled from Napier to Christchurch, two days before the

second ODI, they were faced with even more challenging weather, with heavy winds and a chilly climate.

To make matters worse, rain was forecast for the day of the match and it seemed from the Tigers' body language that they were desperate not to lose the toss as the fear of batting first in overcast conditions began to eat at them mentally.

Compared to the McLean Park in Napier, the Hagley Oval is a far bigger ground and, according to the head groundsman and curator, the pitch was expected to be a true surface with a high possibility of totals over the 300-run mark being posted given the batsmen could negotiate the initial movement.

There is saying in cricket along the lines that no matter how tough conditions in the middle are, you must keep a positive and confident environment in the dressing room so the players remain calm and relaxed.

But perhaps the early morning forecast and overcast conditions before the start of the second ODI were the initial shocks and that was followed by the biggest shock when skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza lost the toss and was asked to bat.

The Kiwis went with a similar bowling attack but it was expected that the Tigers would have a

better approach and learn from their mistakes in Napier. However, it was more like a repeat telecast of the first ODI as Bangladesh's top order once again looked clueless with the visitors losing their first six wickets before reaching the hundred mark.

Mohammad Mithun was the only Bangladesh batsman who looked to fight it out in the tough conditions, striking a second consecutive fifty. However, he too would feel that he missed out on a century as the platform was set for a big knock despite the early damage.

Mithun lost his focus after pulling his hamstring while attempting a quick single, but Sabbir also displayed his ability to face quality pace bowling and looked comfortable until his soft dismissal for 43.

But the others, especially senior players like Mushfiqur Rahim, who was playing in his 200th ODI, Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad failed to provide any sort of assurance, failing to take on responsibility when it was required most.

There are no huge technical flaws or inability to face quality seamers, it is a mental barrier over the tough conditions and a lack of belief in backing themselves that has prevented them from coming out of their shell.

## A Bengali-speaking Kiwi policewoman

MAZHAR UDDIN from Christchurch



Whenever the month of February comes around, the whole of Bangladesh observes the month in honour of the martyrs of the language movement that took place on February 21, 1952.

It was due to that movement that Bengali was recognised as a state language of Pakistan, Bangladesh being the Eastern part of the country at the time. The day gained worldwide recognition after being recognised as International Mother Language Day by UNESCO in 1999.

However, it came as a surprise when a female police officer, who was on duty at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch on Saturday, greeted this reporter by saying: "Kemon Acho? Ami Bangladesh ke bhalobashi (How are you? I love Bangladesh)."

Nadine Vickers, the policewoman, later revealed that she married a Bangladeshi and learned Bengali and interestingly she was more comfortable interacting with this reporter in Bengali than in English.

Nadine travelled to Bangladesh in 2013 to work for a healthcare project in Modhupur, Tangail where she met Roton Bormon, whom she later married.

"I went to Bangladesh back in 2013 with three other Kiwis for a holiday. At the same time I was also involved in Kailakuri Healthcare project in Modhupur. There was a Kiwi doctor who opened a hospital there in 1980 for the poor. I used to assist the doctor, espe-

cially to raise funds as our main donors were from New Zealand and the United States. My husband Roton used to work there as an interpreter. He is the one who taught me Bengali," Nadine told The Daily Star in Bengali.

Nadine and Raton got married in 2017, four years after meeting, and the same year moved back to New Zealand, where Nadine joined the police force while her husband also got a job in Christchurch.

"It was tough initially to learn Bengali but doctor bhai helped me and I also learned from the locals. I was unable to speak initially but when I started to learn seriously it took me six to eight months to properly speak in Bengali. I had no idea about the language, politics or other things of Bangladesh before going there," she said.

However, much like all great love stories, there was a twist in Nadine's too. The two families were initially opposed to the marriage but they were later convinced.

"In Christmas of 2013 my family and a few friends came to Bangladesh and met Ratan along and eventually they agreed. There was some issues initially but after meeting him, they accepted our relationship. He is very gentle and friendly and I like spending time with him. He also like to travel so we used to travel a lot inside Bangladesh," Nadine said.

The local Bengali community will mark the 21st February in Wellington and Nadine informed that she was hoping to attend the programme and added that even if she couldn't make it she had plans to visit Bangladesh later this year.



I think they [Bangladesh] have got some really good bowlers. Obviously [Mashrafe Bin] Mortaza is a very experienced bowler and he can be quite difficult to get away. But I think if you can put them under pressure, they just have not got that experience to be able to just hold in there for a long period of time.

MARTIN GUPTILL  
NEW ZEALAND OPENER



New Zealand opener Martin Guptill scored his second consecutive century against Bangladesh in the second ODI at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



INJURY  
SCARE  
FOR  
MITHUN,  
MUSHY

### BD-NZ SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH:	R/B	4s/6s
Tamim Iqbal b Henry	5/28	0/0
Liton b Ferguson b Boult	1/4	0/0
Soumya c Taylor b Grandhomme	22/23	3/0
Mushfiqur b Ferguson	24/36	2/0
Mithun b Astle	57/69	7/1
Mahmudullah c Latham b Astle	7/8	1/0
Sabbir c Neesham b Ferguson	43/65	7/0
Mehedi c Nicholls b Neesham	16/20	1/0
Saifuddin b Ferguson	10/15	0/0
Mashrafe c Boult b Neesham	13/18	0/1
Mustafizur not out	5/12	1/0
Extras: (b-1, w-17)	23	
Total: (all out in 49.4 overs)	226	
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-16, 3-48, 4-81, 5-93, 6-168, 7-190, 8-206, 9-211, 10-226.		

Bowler	O	M	R
Henry	10	2	30
Boult	10	1	49
Grandhomme	4	0	25
Ferguson	10	0	43
Astle	10	0	52
Neesham	5.4	0	21
NEW ZEALAND:			
Guptill c Liton b Mustafizur	118/88	R/B	4s/6s
Nicholls c Liton b Mustafizur	14/23		14/2
Williamson not out	65/86		3/0
Taylor not out	21/20		3/0
Extras: (b-1, w-10)	11		
Total: (For two wickets in 36.1 overs) 229			
Did not bat: Latham, Grandhomme, Neesham, Henry, Astle, Ferguson, Boult.			
Fall of wickets: 1-45, 2-188.			
Bowler	O	M	R
Mashrafe	6	0	37
Saifuddin	6	0	44
Mehedi	7.1	0	42
Mustafizur	9	0	42
Sabbir	4	0	28
Soumya	1	0	10
Mahmudullah	3	0	25



Vladimir Lisin, the president of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF), expressed his satisfaction at the infrastructure of the sport in Bangladesh, but hoped local organisers and sponsors would show more interest and enthusiasm to raise the profile of the sport.

The Russian billionaire, who was elected as the president of the sport's world body in November last year, spoke to local media during his visit to the Bangladesh Shooting Sport Federation's (BSSF) headquarters at the Gulshan Shooting Complex yesterday morning. He was accompanied by ISSF's secretary general Alexander Ratner during the visit to Bangladesh.

"We would expect the BSSF to prepare a strategic plan for development of the sport so that it will be easier to help for us," Lisin said. "There are more than 150 member federations. It is not possible to financially help all. What we can do is support the

federations, support the athletes to develop the sport in future."

Lisin, the first ISSF high official to visit Bangladesh, stopped in Dhaka on way to Bhutan where he is supposed to inaugurate

a shooting range before flying off to India for the World Cup scheduled to get underway later this week. The Russian industrialist said he was satisfied to see the infrastructure here although the support for the sport



ISSF president Vladimir Lisin speaks as the federation's general secretary Alexander Ratner (L) and the BSSF president and general secretary listen intently during a press meet at the BSSF headquarters in Gulshan yesterday.

PHOTO: BSSF

## 'Shakib will be cautious about IPL'

SPORTS REPORTER from Christchurch



Injury and Shakib Al Hasan seem to go hand-in-hand these days as the star all-rounder, who missed last year's Asia Cup due to a finger injury, was once again ruled out at the last moment for the crucial tour of New Zealand after he sustained yet another injury to his finger during the Bangladesh Premier League final.

Shakib is still recovering from that injury and it is unlikely that the left-armer will recover in time for the third and final Test against the hosts starting from March 16.

With the World Cup in England scheduled for to start on May 30,

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan was asked whether the board would allow Shakib to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL), which concludes on May 12, keeping his injury concerns in mind.

"We have decided that Mustafizur Rahman won't be allowed to play in the IPL keeping the World Cup in mind. Talking about Shakib, firstly you have to consider what he wants because he is very interested in playing in the IPL. Secondly, if he does not play then I doubt whether the people of Bangladesh will watch the IPL because everyone follows it because of Shakib and Mustafizur," Hassan, who is currently in Christchurch with the Bangladesh team, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Obviously there is a high chance

of getting injured while playing in such tournaments and the worst part for me is that our players are not able to play for the national team due to injuries they sustain while playing in franchise leagues. I think he will remain cautious. What else can I say?"

Hassan also admitted that the cricketers did not get enough time to adapt to conditions in New Zealand owing to their tight schedule.

"We are also very concerned about it. With our current schedule there is very little chance of getting rest. I would say this is the first time we came to play a series without making any preparations to adapt to conditions as the players came here directly after finishing the BPL," he said.

## Local support the key, says ISSF president

### Hasan, Hossain help Young Tigers recover

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudul Hasan and Shahadat Hossain strung together a 110-run sixth-wicket stand as Bangladesh U-19s recovered from 84 for five to finish the second day of the second four-day match against England Under-19s on 194 for six at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

However, the home side still trail by 143 runs as the visitors added 42 to their overnight score of 295 for six in the first innings.

Shahadat added 56 runs off 111 balls, featuring six fours and a six, for the young Tigers while Mahmudul remained not out on 62 and opener Tanzid Hasan chipped in with 36 runs off 51 balls.

needs to grow from within.

"I visited six African countries in November, but the infrastructure here is much better than those countries. However, when I look at this shooting range, I see empty walls. These walls should be covered with sponsorship. That is where the game can grow financially. Sponsors give money; spectators give money. We have to sell our sport...on the internet, on TV. If we can make a good show of the sport, it will mean more sponsors and more money," Lisin observed, adding that for the first time the ISSF has arranged a dedicated TV channel to broadcast the upcoming Delhi World Cup live on a free-to-air basis.

BSSF general secretary Entheekhabul Hamid informed that during their meeting with the ISSF high-ups, they sought cooperation in areas such as athletes' performance, training, shooting range facilities, etc. as their target is to elevate Bangladesh's shooting from the Commonwealth Games level to the elite European and Olympic level.