



After a 3-0 ODI series hammering at the hands of hosts New Zealand, it is time for Bangladesh to regroup and hope for better performances in the toughest format of the game. Ahead of the three-match Test series, starting from February 28, Bangladesh coach Steve Rhodes appeared to be explaining his plans to two members of the squad -- opener Shadman Islam (L) and pacer Ebadat Hossain -- outside the team hotel in Christchurch yesterday.

PHOTO: MAZHAR UDDIN

Wounded Tigers reach Christchurch

SPORTS REPORTER from Christchurch

After being white-washed in the three-match ODI series, a demoralised Bangladesh team reached Christchurch yesterday, where they will be looking to overcome the disappointment and gear up for the upcoming three-match Test series against New Zealand.

The Tigers will play a two-day practice game from tomorrow in Lincoln before heading to Hamilton for the first Test. However, there are still a few injury concerns for the visitors.

The team management have kept Soumya Sarkar in the Test squad owing to an injury to Mohammad Mithun, who suffered a hamstring injury in the second ODI which led him to miss the third and final game.

Mushfiqur Rahim is also struggling from multiple injuries. The wicketkeeper-batsman, who has a broken rib, is also dealing with a wrist injury and to make matters worse, the right-hander endured a blow to his finger while batting in the third ODI.

There was speculation that the team management would keep Sabbir Rahman, who struck a maiden ODI hundred in the third game, for the Test series. However, it was eventually finalised that the right-hander would

return home today with Rubel Hossain.

While Mithun is a near-certainty to miss the first Test, there is also uncertainty about whether Mushfiqur will be able to recover in time with only six days in hand.

Meanwhile, the remaining members of the Test side such as Ebadat Hossain, Abu Jayed, Khaled Ahmed and Shadman Islam practised in Christchurch during the ODI series while left-arm spinner Taijul Islam also joined the squad.

Shadman had a promising Test debut at home against the West Indies in November last year, scoring 76 and, more importantly, displaying a lot of composure.

Although it is the 23-year-old's first time in New Zealand, Shadman was confident he could negotiate the seam-friendly conditions well.

"I got some time here to adjust with the weather. I have also played in England before and the weather [here] is pretty similar. But the wicket here has some extra bounce and there are strong winds in New Zealand but I will try to not take extra pressure and play my own game and remain positive," Shadman told The Daily Star.

Shadman believes it will be challenging to cope with the swing and bounce but he added that it would be important to survive the first two hours of the innings, opining that the pitch would become easier for batsman later on.

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Black armbands for Chawkbazar victims

SPORTS REPORTER from Christchurch

There was a lot of shock and disbelief among the Bangladesh cricket contingent in New Zealand ever since a tragic fire broke out in Dhaka's Chawkbazar area, claiming at least 70 lives, on Wednesday night.

Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Rubel Hossain, Sabbir Rahman and other players were constantly seeking updates about the horrifying incident from this reporter and expressing their condolences.

"This is tragic, so many lives were ended in just a few seconds and no one could help them," a deeply-shocked Tamim said.

"Can you imagine how much pain they went through as they struggled to save themselves?" Mahmudullah said.

It was learned that the team management has decided that the Tigers will wear black armbands during the first Test, starting in Hamilton from February 28, to signify the team being in mourning.

Why did we just see 'Wasn't as serious as it looked'

SAKEB SUBHAN



"I don't care what you write about our performance," a Bangladesh cricketer once said to reporters during an informal chat. "But please leave our personal lives and what we do in the dressing room alone."

During Bangladesh's third ODI against New Zealand at the University Oval on Wednesday, after Mushfiqur Rahim's dismissal had left Bangladesh on 41 for four in the 10th over, the broadcast commentators were not talking about the car crash that Bangladesh's innings was shaping up to be. Their words and the pictures on screen resembled not a cricket match but a critique of a soap opera.

Mushfiqur was remonstrating angrily with someone and Tamim Iqbal was trying his best to hold his hand and calm Bangladesh's most famously emotional cricketer down. It gave us an insight into how cricketers behave with each other. 'Us' signifies not just the millions watching around the world but also the few hundred at the ground because it was shown on the giant screen.

Here is the kicker: the scenes were not in front of the makeshift dugout where the players coming in and going out keep their equipment and also sit to catch a closer glimpse of the action. Those scenes were actually taking place inside the visiting team's dressing room -- a place all players consider sacrosanct and sanctuary from the public eye. It is a place they vent their emotions, as Mushfiqur did, and also change clothes. Even those non-players closest to the team are not allowed in.

So why was the world at large witness to this incident? Has it not put an already under-siege Mushfiqur -- injured and suffering -- and the Bangladesh team at large under more pressure?

It is not the Bangladesh team's fault that the venue does not have a sufficiently protected dressing room. Far from pointing fingers at Mushfiqur or Tamim, should we not be asking for the broadcasters and commentators for minimal common sense, and perhaps an apology to the team?

'Wasn't as serious as it looked'

MAZHAR UDDIN from Christchurch



There was a lot of confusion after an apparent argument between Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim in the dressing room was captured by cameras and projected on the big screen after the wicketkeeper-batsman was dismissed against New Zealand in the third and final ODI, which the Tigers lost by 88 runs.

Mushfiqur was dismissing after top-edging a shot while trying to flick Trent Boult off the fifth ball off the ninth over as he was struggling following a finger injury sustained earlier in the innings in Dunedin.

After returning to the dressing room, Mushfiqur was seen arguing with Tamim over some issue and the left-hander appeared to be calming him down. As the moment was caught on the big screen, even the commentators mentioned that it appeared the duo were engaged in a verbal scuffle.

However, Bangladesh ODI skipper Mashrafe later clarified the incident, saying that Mushfiqur was unhappy due to his finger injury and was discussing that issue.

Mushfiqur himself cleared the air, informing that he was annoyed with himself for being dismissed during a crucial stage of the match as he was feeling uncomfortable. He added that it was not as serious as it may have looked.

"It was nothing like I was having a verbal fight with Tamim," Mushfiqur told The Daily Star yesterday. "I was not feeling comfortable while batting as my nail was hurting. Since I



got out playing a rash shot, I was furious with myself thinking that I shouldn't have gotten out in that situation.

"Tamim came to me and tried to calm me down but I couldn't control my emotions. I was trying to tell him that I should have stayed on longer as we were in a pretty bad position at that time. I had no idea it was being shown on TV and the giant screen as we often discuss various issues in the dressing room. Tamim and I are good friends, and I think he would tell you the same."

Tamim did say the same, echoing

Mushfiqur's words, and informed that the matter should end there.

"First of all, I was not even near Mushfiqur when he got out and came to the dressing room. When I realised he was unhappy with himself, as one of the senior members of the team I went there and tried to calm him down because we all know Mushfiqur is a very emotional person. I will not say what we talk about in the dressing room but I can say that it was nothing serious, which people may have assumed after seeing it on TV. I think this matter should end here," Tamim said.

It felt like a 330 chase, not 360: Morgan

AGENCIES, Bridgetown

Contrasting centuries by Jason Roy and Joe Root paced England to a comfortable six-wicket victory over the West Indies with their record one-day international run chase in a high-scoring opening game of a five-match series in Barbados on Wednesday night.

Set what looked a daunting target after Chris Gayle's 24th ODI hundred anchored the home side to 360-8, Roy blazed 123 off 85 balls at the top of the order while Root cruised to a comparatively sedate 102 off 97 deliveries to take help the tourists reach their target with eight balls to spare.

"The calm nature in which we came back with the ball was great," England skipper Eoin Morgan said after the game. "We did well in the last 10-15 overs -- they were headed for 380-400. It felt like a 330 chase, and not 360 -- that's how well we started the chase with Roy and Bairstow."

"Joe and Roy, when they bat together, complement each other. The way they batted today proves that," he said. "We just didn't have a great day in the field, and we need to hold our catches on this kind of a

ground and wicket. Adil bowled well when he was asked. We are happy with where we are, and that's good with the World Cup in perspective."

"Credit to our batters, we did a remarkable job," Jason Holder, the Windies captain, said. "Gayle took his time and batted deep. He's always been a star for us, and it's great to see him play the way he's playing."

Holder, however, was disappointed with the fielding effort. If

Roy dropping Gayle had made England's task harder, Windies returned the favour by dropping both Roy and Root twice each.

"Didn't bowl as well as we'd like, and we simply didn't do well in the field," Holder said. "Our energy and body language wasn't up to the mark, perhaps due to missed chances. The bowlers did create chances, but we didn't hold them -- almost six-seven chances. If we hold

onto those, we will definitely be better in the next game."

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: 360 for 8 in 50 overs (Gayle 135, Campbell 30, Hope 64, Bravo 40, Nurse 25 not out; Woakes 2-59, Stokes 3-37, Rashid 3-74)
ENGLAND: 364 for 4 in 48.4 overs (Roy 123, Bairstow 34, Root 102, Morgan 65; Holder 2-63)
Result: England won by six wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Jason Roy



135 OFF 129 BALLS



123 OFF 85 BALLS



102 OFF 97 BALLS

(L-R) West Indies opener Chris Gayle struck a brilliant 129-ball 135, helping his side post a mammoth 360-run total in the first ODI yesterday. However, centuries from England batsmen Jason Roy and Joe Root trumped the left-hander's efforts as England made a mockery of the chase and won easily.

PHOTO: AFP

'Beat Pakistan and KO them'

PTI, New Delhi



India stand to lose by boycotting Pakistan in the upcoming World Cup, feels former captain Sunil Gavaskar, who said the country can continue to "hurt them" by shunning bilateral ties.

Led by former India spinner Harbhajan Singh, calls for a complete cricketing boycott against Pakistan has grown ever since the terror attack in Pulwama last week. India are scheduled to play Pakistan on June 16 during the World Cup.

"Who wins if India decide against playing Pakistan in the World Cup? And I am not even talking about the semis and the finals. Who wins? Pakistan win because they get two points," Gavaskar told India Today.

"India have so far beaten Pakistan every time in a World Cup, so we are actually conceding two points when by beating Pakistan, we could make sure that they don't advance in the competition. [But] I am with the country, whatever the government decides, I am with it totally. If the country wants we shouldn't play Pakistan, I am with them," he added.

"Where does it hurt Pakistan? It hurts them when they don't play a bilateral series against India. In a multi-team event, India will lose by not playing them. The entire matter needs to be looked at with a little more depth."

Pandya out of Aus series

REUTERS, New Delhi

All-rounder Hardik Pandya will miss India's limited overs home series against Australia, their last before this year's World Cup, with lower back stiffness, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) said on Thursday.

A key cog in India's scheme of things at this year's World Cup, Pandya returned from a brief suspension - for his inappropriate remarks on a television show - to help secure the team's 4-1 ODI series victory in New Zealand earlier this month.

"The BCCI medical team decided to rest the all-rounder and let him undergo strength and conditioning work for his lower back at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru," BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary said in a statement.

"Pandya will begin his strength work from next week."

