



While Bangladesh performed brilliantly in their win against South Africa in their World Cup opener, there were still some things that did not quite go to plan. (Clockwise from Bottom L) Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim not being able to carry their bat for even bigger scores and The Tigers' missed opportunities while fielding were some of them.

PHOTO: AFP

BEST QUOTE



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Khaled Mahmud
Bangladesh team manager

A picture worth waiting for

BISHWAJIT ROY

A flashback: On February 18, 2015, the Bangladesh team led by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had paraded around the Manuka Oval applauding the crowd in Canberra after Mushfiqur Rahim had taken the bails off the last Afghanistan wicket. A clinical performance from the Tigers in their opening fixture of that World Cup, which they won by a huge 105-run margin, had virtually banished any thoughts of a stumble that were prevalent in the build-up to the mega-tournament. Still, many raised their eyebrows and their then coach Chandika Hathurusingha reportedly asked his players after the celebrations if winning that match was the only thing the Tigers had come to Australia for.

After four years, we -- those of us in the newsroom and the people in this newspaper -- had to struggle for a vigorous picture of the Tigers

roaring or celebrating in such manner after their more glorious 21-run win against a formidable South Africa in the opening match of the 12th version of cricket's showpiece event.

True, they celebrated all those precious moments during the match. But once the job was done, serenity prevailed in the camp

THIRD EYE

and Mashrafe made it clear during the post-match briefing that they did not want to be too excited and, more importantly, that they were quick to shift their focus to their next encounter against New Zealand tomorrow at The Oval in London.

A sharp change in mindset indeed from what they did four years back! This notion definitely gave the impression that they have just got off to a good start in a

long and demanding journey and need to take positives from the match and rectify mistakes on way to fulfilling their first dream of making it into the last four.

No doubt they won a good, competitive match against a quality opponent, but there were also some pictures many might not prefer to publish on the auspicious occasion -- like Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim returning to the pavilion despite such wonderful knocks, or those missed chances in the fielding department. But the man in charge, Mashrafe, probably knows better than anybody that they cannot afford such luxuries in such a high-intensity tournament.

When they take on New Zealand tomorrow, they have to make sure they will not miss out on opportunities and execute their plans in order to not only continue their good run, but also bury the ghosts from a 3-0

ODI drubbing at the hands of the Kiwis in their backyards three months ago.

Nothing went in the Tigers' favour during that series. They especially had no answer for the speed and barrage of short deliveries from the likes of Lockie Ferguson, Trent Boult and Matt Henry. The conditions are altogether different in the ongoing World Cup and the Tigers are in good shape, but New Zealand have the versatility under their belt to give Bangladesh a tough time again. So the only a perfect Tigers can ensure revenge for that previous series defeat.

The 'dream start' re-ignited the dream of millions and a win against New Zealand will no doubt make the Eid celebrations even more colourful, but Mashrafe and Co. have a long way to go to make their final dreams come true, and for a picture of the Tiger-like celebration.

FACTS

Bangladesh have faced New Zealand four times in the World Cup since their maiden appearance in the quadrennial mega event in 1999. However, the Black Caps hold a 100 per cent win record against Bangladesh in the World Cup, having won all four matches.

Mahmudullah Riyad became the only Bangladesh batsman to have scored a century against New Zealand in the World Cup when he struck 128 runs in the 2015 edition in Hamilton. Mahmudullah's unbeaten knock remains the highest score by a Bangladeshi in the World Cup, however, the Tigers went on to lose the match by three wickets.

Of the two teams, Shakib Al Hasan is the second highest run getter with 575 runs from 21 matches to his name while New Zealand's Ross Taylor took first spot with 921 runs. The star all-rounder struck two hundred and two fifties at an average of 30.26 against The Black Caps. In addition, he is also the leading wicket-taker in the matches played between the sides, picking up a total of 35 wickets at an average of 25.74 while his best bowling figures were four for 33.

Every side will be wary of WI: Waugh

AFP, London

Steve Waugh has warned Australia that the West Indies' array of stroke makers and aggressive bowlers will pose the first serious threat to the World Cup holders.

Former Australia captain Waugh was impressed with the no-nonsense way his country defeated minnows Afghanistan by seven wickets in their opening match on Saturday.

But the 54-year-old believes the West Indies will provide a much sterner test when they meet at Trent Bridge on Thursday.

"The West Indies will provide a more realistic gauge on how the team are tracking, for they possess a squad full of match-winners that can dominate if they gain any sense of ascendency in a match," Waugh wrote in a column on the International Cricket Council's media page.

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"No ground is big enough when this behemoth of a batting order clicks into overdrive but they also have a vulnerability against high-quality bowling as they tend to play one dimensional at times."

'We're capable of beating Kiwis'

SPORTS REPORTER from London

The structure of the ongoing World Cup in the United Kingdom and the special importance of momentum for the Bangladesh team mean that a regular refrain over the coming month will be that the Tigers' next match will be the toughest. It will suit Mashrafe Bin Mortaza well, because for the skipper taking it match by match is not mere sport speak but a mantra to live by. With Bangladesh having aced their first challenge by beating South Africa in their first World Cup game at The Oval on Sunday, eyes now turn to their next game at the same venue tomorrow against New Zealand.

It is just not a rebooting of expectations to say that New Zealand may well be a tougher proposition. While Bangladesh may have enjoyed a bit of advantage playing on a wicket that was staging its second match -- after the World Cup opener between South Africa and England -- the wicket against New Zealand will be a fresh one that still has a tinge of green. South Africa missed out on the services of the injured Dale Steyn, but New Zealand are expected to have their full pace battery at the ready -- Trent Boult and Matt Henry will test with early movement while Lockie Ferguson will look to burst through defences with his 145 kmph-plus fare. In their first match they shot out Sri Lanka for 136 and convincingly beat favourites India in a warm-up. Moreover, Bangladesh do not have a happy recent history against their opponents, having lost 3-0 in an ODI series in New Zealand in February.

On a well-deserved rest day yesterday, when most of the team were taking in the sights and sounds of London, team manager and former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud was aware of the pitfalls of facing the Kiwis. However, he was not cowed and drew courage from the knowledge that the 15 players Bangladesh have for the World Cup will give the side enough options to field an eleven best suited to prevailing conditions.

"It will depend on the wicket, but we are prepared," Mahmud said in front of the team hotel. "The four players who were left out yesterday are all good players. Our bench is very strong. Sabbir [Rahman] scored a 100 in New Zealand, Liton [Das] is performing well in the nets and [Abu Jayed]

Rahim also proved himself in Ireland. So if we have to make any practical changes after seeing the wicket, we are prepared for that. All respect to New Zealand, they are strong, but I also believe that we are capable of beating them."

There is more than a little substance behind that belief, with Mahmud singling out Bangladesh's bowling -- the batting cornered all attention -- during the opening win.

"I think Mustafizur's comeback was very strong for us. He is bowling so well in the nets that it is unbelievable. I would say that yesterday, he bowled at 80 per cent of the quality he bowls with in the nets. I believe he can do even better."

"We are very lucky in that when you look at our batting, four players are very experienced

in international cricket. In our bowling, four players are also very experienced -- Mashrafe and Shakib no doubt. But then you have Rubel and Mustafizur, even [Mehedi Hasan] Miraz is experienced now because he has played a fair amount of matches. We can say now that we are very good contenders for the top four."

After a strong team performance against South Africa, Mahmud still said there was room for improvement, especially in fielding, as Bangladesh dropped a few catches and missed some run-out opportunities. "In our fielding -- we did well, the boys worked really hard -- but we missed a few catches and a few runout chances, that could become expensive for us in these conditions."

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HAPPY MOMENT



It was not a happy outing for England opener Jason Roy in the ICC Cricket World Cup encounter with Pakistan in Nottingham. The 28-year-old first missed a simple catch when he dropped Mohammad Hafeez on 14 as the batsman went on to score a team high 84 for Pakistan. A dejected Roy desperately looked to compensate with the bat but the right-hander was given leg-before by the on-field umpire when he attempted a sweep shot off leg-spinner Shadab Khan. Roy asked for a review but the umpire's decision stood, forcing the opener to leave with just eight runs while Pakistan got their first breakthrough of the innings.

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