All's well that ends well: Saifuddin

SPORTS REPORTER

All-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin could have been a hero during Bangladesh's 28-run defeat against India at Edgbaston on Tuesday had he not been stranded at the non-striker's end when Jasprit Bumrah bowled the No. 10 and No. 11 batsmen.

However, the now-eliminated Bangladesh still have a game in hand against Pakistan and Saifuddin said that the Tigers will be targeting a win in their last game on Friday at Lord's in order to return home with a happy memory.

"Everyone in the team is sad that we are knocked out of the tournament. We came here with a lot of dreams so everyone is sad that we are out of the World Cup. There is a phrase that 'all's well that ends well.' So, our target now is to win the last game and return home happy," the 22-year old said outside the team hotel in

Birmingham before boarding

the team bus yesterday. Saifuddin was confident ahead of their clash against Pakistan, an opponent Bangladesh have defeated in their last four match-ups.

"We defeated Pakistan when we met last time in the Asia Cup. We also played well against them in recent games. So we are confident and hopeful that we will also

win at Lord's."

Saifuddin had shown great intent in the Tigers' previous game against India. The 22-year old revived Bangladesh's chances with a 66-run seventh-wicket stand with Sabbir Rahman when Bangladesh were reeling on 179 for six in the 34th over in chase of a mammoth 314 for nine.

Saifuddin was however left stranded at the other end on 51 as he ran short of partners and could not finish it off as he had hoped. The all-rounder, grim after such an exit from the flagship event, said that he knew he had the ability to turn the game around and mentioned that it is why



he has been playing in his position.

"Yes I think it was possible [to win the game]. All cricketers play with the confidence to turn a game around. All the players have the ability to win the match for their country from any situation. I think I also had that ability and that is the reason why I have been playing in my position."





2019



Paceman Mustafizur Rahman (L) and opener Soumya Sarkar leave the team hotel in Birmingham to board the Bangladesh team bus. Mustafizur would like to continue his form with the ball after bagging five wickets against India while Soumya Sarkar is on the other end of the spectrum, still looking to contribute in a big way as Tigers left for London yesterday to play their last group fixture against Pakistan tomorrow. PHOTO: SAKEB SUBHAN

A new level and a just result

SAKEB SUBHAN from Birmingham

To say it was the morning after a night of shattered dreams would be too dramatic. After exactly a month of chasing a target that seemed to move farther away with each strained step, Bangladesh's semifinal hopes came to an end in a 28-run defeat to India in their penultimate groupstage match in Birmingham on Tuesday. It was not a match Bangladesh, ranked seventh to India's second, were supposed to win. Shattered dreams it may not have been, but the very fact that there will be a feeling of genuine emptiness in both the team and its legions of followers is perhaps the Tigers' biggest

achievement over the past two months.

On a sunny afternoon yesterday, team members boarded the bus from Birmingham towards London, where they will complete their tournament with a match against Pakistan at Lord's on Friday. While disappointed, the players were not downcast. Unlike their runs to the 2015 World Cup quarterfinal or the 2017 Champions Trophy semifinal, this time Bangladesh's race was ran on their own steam and not boosted by a washout or a no-result against Australia. By contrast, their momentum was retarded by a washout against lower-ranked Sri Lanka in Bristol on June 11, which was when the dream started to widen the gap with its chasers. While there will be a bit of regret about Bangladesh not closing out a match against New Zealand on June 5 at The Oval, the Tigers would know that they could with the resources at their disposal.

There will be what-ifs: what if they read

the wicket better against New Zealand and, instead of looking to put 300 on the board, just aimed at 270? What if the rain stayed away in Bristol? However, it could be said that those results canceled each other out. They have only themselves to blame for sacrificing two points against New Zealand while they were unlucky not to get the extra point by playing a match they would have expected to win.

But the tournament was one of overwhelming



positives. Bangladesh reached a new level by making defeats of South Africa and West Indies seem a matter of course. Against West Indies, they chased 321 in 41.3 overs. Shakib Al Hasan has been peerless in this World Cup. Rohit Sharma with his charmed hundreds and Mitchell Starc with a bagful of wickets that may end up north of 30 will probably take home the coveted player-ofthe-tournament award, but Shakib's 542 runs and 11 wickets so far -- unmatched numbers by any all-rounder in World Cup history -- makes him the most impactful player in the tournament.

That Mohammad Saifuddin and Sabbir Rahman dared themselves and supporters to dream during a chase of 314 after Shakib was sixth out with the score on 179 in the 34th over was no small feat and speaks volumes about the team's growing belief.

Therein lies the avenue of work still to be done. The belief was still growing throughout the campaign. It is no coincidence that Bangladesh's worst bowling and fielding

performances came against the three teams -- England, Australia and India -- that they knew beforehand would be hard to compete with. A refrain during skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's press conference before the India game was how difficult it would be to beat India. It was similar before England and Australia.

There was progress over the three matches in that department as well. While against England, Bangladesh had basically thought themselves out of the match from the toss when they chose to field, against Australia fielding and bowling errors

were offset somewhat by a bright response to a difficult chase. Against India, a poor first hour allowed India a head start, and though Bangladesh started believing as the match wore on, the head-start conceded was too difficult to make up later against a team of India's quality.

The Tigers are still a work in progress and there was steep progress over the last month. However, if they manage to finish the tournament by winning against Pakistan and possibly finishing fifth, a place just outside the semifinals would be a just result for a growing team.

SINGER

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ENG-NZ

SCOREBOARD

R/B 4s/6s

60/61 8/0

106/99 15/1

24/25

11/12

42/40

11/27

15/12 1/0

16/12 1/0

1/1 0/0

ENGLAND

Roy c Santner b Neesham

Buttler c Williamson b Boult

Woakes c Williamson b Neesham4/11

Fall of wickets: 1-123, 2-194, 3-206, 4-214

Morgan c Santner b Henry

Stokes c Henry b Santner

Extras: (b-4, lb-4, w-7)

Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs)

5-248, 6-259, 7-272, 8-301.

Bairstow b Henry

Plunkett not out

Rashid b Southee

Did not bat: Wood.

Bowler

Santner

Archer not out

Root c Latham b Boult

imam vows no let-up from Pakistan

AFP, London

Imamul Haq says Pakistan will go all out against Bangladesh on Friday even if they have no realistic chance of reaching the World Cup semifinals.

Victory for New Zealand against England on Wednesday would leave the door open for Pakistan to seal a place in the last four if they win their final group But a win for the tournament hosts

would all but end the 1992 champions' chances of reaching the last four --England would be out of reach on 12 points while New Zealand have a farsuperior net run rate to Pakistan so would likely progress even if the two teams finished level on 11 points.

Imam said there was no despondency in the Pakistan camp despite the difficult situation.

"We are not thinking on the lines of not reaching semifinals," said Imam. "Our plan is to play the semifinal with an all-out effort and at the end if that doesn't happen then we have to play positive cricket and end on a high."

Pakistan won just one of their first five World Cup matches but bounced back strongly with victories against South Africa, New Zealand and Afghanistan to



give themselves a shot at reaching the semifinals.

Imam said the 41-run defeat against defending champions Australia earlier in the competition was painful.

"I think the Australia defeat hurts me a lot. I was set and playing well. I should have won that match for Pakistan," said Imam.

"We lost four quick wickets and I think I should have won that game and we would have beaten a big team in the World Cup."

Imam, who scored his only fifty of the tournament in that match, said he was disappointed with his batting during the tournament.

Kids to watch **BD-Pak match** at Lord's

AFP, London

Children will be able to watch an international match from the pavilion at Lord's for the first time on Friday as cricket bosses scramble to make sure seats are filled.

Officials fear a repeat of the scenes during the 2017 Women's World Cup final between England and India, when TV images of a sparsely populated pavilion contrasted with packed stands in the rest of the ground.

A Marylebone Cricket Club statement said 250 schoolchildren had been invited to watch Friday's World Cup match between Pakistan and Bangladesh in the pavilion.

But an email to the membership sent by MCC secretary and chief executive Guy Lavender explained the pavilion was "heavily undersubscribed" for the match, with less than 50 percent of tickets sold.

we were outstanding today: Morgan

AFP, Chester-Le-Street

Eoin Morgan hailed "outstanding" England and "match-winner" Jonny Bairstow as the World Cup hosts clinched a semifinal place with a 119-run rout of New Zealand at Chester-le-Street on Wednesday.

Needing a victory in their final group match to avoid the nightmare scenario of potential elimination, England rose to the occasion to reach the World Cup semis for the first time since 1992.

England captain Morgan felt the turning point came when his openers Bairstow and Roy piled on 123 for the first wicket, laying the foundations for their 305-8.

Bairstow top-scored with 106 from 99 balls and Roy added 60 before New Zealand were bowled out for 186.

"I thought we were outstanding today. It started with the two boys at the top of the order. They set a good solid platform playing in the manner they do. Jonny getting his hundred was match-winning," Morgan said.

"The wicket did change after the 25th over and it did slow up. It was difficult to score. Every batsman found that so to have so many on the board was encouraging. It was about trying to get as close to 300 as possible."

After losing to Australia at Lord's,

England were in danger of failing to finish in the top four of the 10-team group phase but composed performances against India and New Zealand have restored belief they can win the tournament for the first time.

Morgan believes rediscovering the aggressive, confident style that marked their rise up the one-day international rankings has sparked their revival in the nick of time.

"The manner in which we have played in the last two games is the identity we have been playing with for the last four years," Morgan said.

"Playing with freedom and intent with the bat and had bowlers looking to take wickets throughout the 50 overs with the ball. Hopefully we can produce that aggressive, positive identity in the semifinals."

New Zealand are still likely to qualify for the semifinals barring a huge victory for Pakistan against Bangladesh on Friday.

Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson conceded his side were out-classed by

England and need to improve. today. We definitely need to be better moving forward," Williamson said.

"Full credit to the way England played "England did get the best of the conditions but they were the better team. They outplayed us in all facets."

England's Mark Wood (R) celebrates the dismissal of New Zealand's James Neesham for 19 during their World Cup group stage match at the **Riverside Ground in** Chester-le-Street yesterday. The pacer took three for 34 as England bowled the Kiwis out for 186 to win the game by 119 runs. The win ensured England the semifinal spot while New Zealand, despite the defeat, were all but certain of a last-four spot.

PHOTO: AFP

Southee De Grandhomme Neesham **NEW ZEALAND** R/B 4s/6s Guptill c Buttler b Archer 8/16 1/0 0/0 Nicholls Ibw b Woakes 27/40 3/0 Williamson run out 28/42 2/0 Taylor run out Latham c Buttler b Plunkett 19/27 Neesham b Wood De Grandhomme c Root b Stokes3/13 0/0 12/30 1/0 Santner Ibw b Wood 7/16 0/0 Southee not out 7/13 Henry b Wood **Boult st Buttler b Rashid** Extras: (b-2, lb-6, w-6) Total: (All out in 45 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-14, 3-61, 4-69, 5-123, 6-128, 7-164, 8-166, 9-181, 10-186. Bowler Woakes Plunkett

Result: England won by 119 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Jonny Bairstow.

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TODAY'S MATCH **GTV, BTV & MAASRANGA** ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP AFGHANISTAN V WEST INDIES LIVE FROM 3:30PM (BANGLADESH STANDARD TIME)

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New Zealand all-rounder James Neesham was instrumental for the Kiwis in their World Cup encounter against England yesterday. The right-arm seamer picked up the two crucial wickets of Jason Roy and Chris Woakes and ended with the figures of two for 41 from his ten overs, which included a maiden. Courtesy of Neesham's tight bowling, England -- who looked capable of posting a total over 350 -- lost their momentum and ended up posting 305 runs in 50 overs. Neesham then tried to steady the ship with the bat for his side and scored 19 runs off 27 balls before being dismissed by Mark Wood.