



Pace troubles continue

MAZHAR UDDIN from Colombo

From their ICC World Cup campaign to the first of the three match ODI series against Sri Lanka at the R Premadasa stadium in Colombo yesterday, Bangladesh's fast bowling department has continued to be the biggest area of concern.

Much like the World Cup, once again the Tigers' seamers were unable to pick wickets with the new ball in the absence of regular skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as Kusal Perera's blistering fifth ODI ton helped Sri Lanka post a huge total of 314 for eight after electing to bat first.

It was not just the placid Premadasa pitch that allowed the Lankan batsmen to punish the Bangladesh bowlers; there was also a marked dearth in common sense in the likes of Mustafizur Rahman and Rubel Hossain when it came to adapting their lines and lengths to the situation and the pitch.

Among the three seamers, it was Shafiu Islam -- making a comeback to the ODI team after three years -- who performed best as he did provide an early breakthrough with the new ball, removing Avishka

Fernando and ending up picking three wickets, but he too went for 62 from nine overs.

Rubel conceded 54 runs from his nine overs after being hammered for 24 runs in his first two overs by Perera while Mustafizur, who picked up two wickets, ended up conceding 75 runs from his 10 overs.

In the World Cup, the Tigers did not bowl back of a length deliveries -- which would have been suited to conditions -- and instead bowled short or too full but against Sri Lanka, they tried to bowl back-of-a-length on a placid wicket, allowing the batsmen to easily hit them on the up.

The Bangladesh seamers never looked to bowl according to their field and offered enough room for the Lankan batsman to free their arms as there was very little in the wicket to assist the bowlers and there was no evidence of a thing called partnership bowling.

There were many instances yesterday when captain Tamim Iqbal set up a packed off side field with fine leg in the circle, only for the bowlers to then bowl down the leg side and leaking easy runs.

Sri Lanka reached hundred in the 14th over and at one point, courtesy of some brutal hitting by left-hander Perera, they were eyeing a total somewhere near the 350 mark as they

reached 200 in the 31st over losing just two wickets.

However, things changed for the Tigers since the departure of the centurion Perera as the bowlers managed to pull down the run rate, with part-timer Soumya Sarkar being particularly effective with his medium pace, picking up a wicket.

In the spin department the Tigers definitely missed the services of Shakib Al Hasan. The team management opted for three off-spinners in Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Mosaddek Hossain and Mahmudullah Riyad, considering the number of left-handers in the Sri Lankan line-up.

Mehedi and Mosaddek both went for over six runs per over but still the Tigers managed to make a comeback in the latter stages of the innings.

Although there were concerns over the Tigers' death-overs bowling, Mustafizur and Shafiu did a decent job to concede 69 runs from the last 10, which was relatively cheap considering the flying start from the Lankans.

Apart from the wayward bowling display, the Tigers' fielding and catching also remained below par. Mahmudullah dropped Kusal Mendis on 28 at long off, with Soumya being the aggrieved bowler, despite covering some good ground but the ball popped out of his hands.



Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Perera struck a fiery 99-ball 111, laced with 17 boundaries and a six, to help his side register 314 for eight in 50 overs in the first of a three-match ODI series against Bangladesh in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

MOMENTS

MALINGA'S PERFECT RESPONSE TO AN EMOTIONAL FAREWELL

The chants of 'Mali..Mali' followed by a guard of honour from his teammates provided a heroes reception to Sri Lanka's legendary fast bowler Lasith Malinga as he walked onto the ground for one last time in ODI cricket in the first of a three-match series against Bangladesh. It did not take long for Malinga to pick up his first wicket in the very first over, that too off a trademark toe-crusher yorker, as he bowled the Tigers' stand-in captain Tamim Iqbal, who lost his balance and fell to the ground. Indeed, this is how heroes leaves the stage in style.

THE TRUE GENTLEMAN'S

GESTURE FROM KUSAL MENDIS Sri Lanka were right on top of Bangladesh as they reached the 200-run mark in just

the 31st over of the innings. Although they lost centurion Kusal Perera in the previous over after the batsman had added a hundred run-third wicket stand with Kusal Mendis. The last thing the home side would have wanted at that juncture was losing any more wickets but for Mendis it was sportsmanship which too priority over that. There was a mild appeal of a caught behind from Rubel Hossain in the 34th over with wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim and the umpire remaining unmoved but Mendis took the walk back to the dressing room and set an example of honesty. He could have easily survived at least that part of the game. Mendis, who was dropped on 28 by Mahmudullah at long-on, was back in the hut after scoring 43 as television replays revealed the light touch the ball had on his bat.



Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga was given a guard of honour during the first ODI against Bangladesh, which was the last match in the format for the legendary bowler, in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Lessons from Malinga farewell

MAZHAR UDDIN from Colombo



There was a festive atmosphere with emotions running high among the Sri Lankan fans present in huge numbers to bid farewell to legendary fast bowler Lasith Malinga, who had announced his retirement from ODI cricket in the first of the three-match ODI series against Bangladesh.

Tickets for the first ODI were sold out a day before the game as the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo was ready to give Malinga a fitting send-off for his achievements during his 15-year career.

There were banners like 'Our Slinga, Our pride' and 'Thank You Malinga' all over the venue, contributing to an emotional atmosphere and creating a moment to honour the 35-year-old Slinga.

It was not that Malinga had started to become unwanted in the Lankan ODI side for poor performance; to the contrary the fast bowler with the famous slingshot action delivered some outstanding per-formances in the just concluded ICC World Cup, including a match-winning performance against even-tual champions England.

It was not the first time that a world-class cricketer announced his

retirement despite being near the peak of his powers to keep self-respect and to allow youngsters opportunities with the nation's future in mind.

Much like Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Ricky Ponting, Micheal Clarke and many other legends in world cricket, Malinga also decided to hang up his boots at the right time. Lankan skipper Di-muth Karunaratne told the media that they had even requested Malinga to play for a few more years or at least complete the current ODI series.

But Malinga had already made up his mind and rightly so, before all his achievements were forgotten and there arose a demand for his removal from fans, media and the cricket board. Yesterday, it seemed Malinga was at his peak and watching the venom in his bowling, even in his last ODI, was something remarkable. The way he dismissed Bangladesh stand-in captain Tamim Iqbal with a trade-mark toe-crushing, incoming yorker which actually toppled Tamim as well as the bails brought back memories of his heydays.

There was the sense of not giving an inch from the legendary fast bowler and it seemed like it was just his second or third international match. He continued to bowl some unplayable deliveries that kept the crowd on their feet as chants of 'Mali..

Mali' swept the stadium.

The right-arm seamer went on to dismiss Soumya Sarkar with another gem of a delivery that went through the gate of the left-hander to hit timber.

Now, which Bangladesh cricketer had the opportunity to say goodbye to international cricket with a final match? The answer is none.

It could be a great lesson for both senior and young members of the Bangladesh team who have wit-nessed the sheer determination and firm willingness of Malinga, who could have easily played for some more time but decided to call it off at the right time.

It is important to know the right time to make way for the youngsters as there has been a lot of talk over the retirement of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who is also on the verge of calling time on an illustrious career.

But disappointingly, the cricket culture of Bangladesh is yet to reach a level where a player could make his own decision that will be backed by the board, fans and media at the right time before a situation arises where everyone will start questioning that player's ability to stay in the team.

Malinga's farewell could be a great example for Bangladeshi players to realise the fact that you should respect the demands of the time.

SL-BD SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA	R/B	4s/6s		
Fernando c Soumya b Shafuul	7/13	0/0		
Karunaratne c Mustafizur				
b Mehedi	36/37	4/0		
Perera c Mustafizur b Soumya	111/99	17/1		
Mendis c Mushfiqur b Rubel	43/49	4/0		
Mathews c Sabbir b Mustafizur	48/52	3/0		
Thirimanne c Soumya				
b Mustafizur	25/30	1/0		
Perera c Soumya b Shafuul	2/3	0/0		
De Silva c Sabbir b Shafuul	18/12	3/0		
Malinga not out	6/6	0/0		
Pradeep not out	0/0	0/0		
Extras: (lb-1, nb-1, w-16)	18			
Total: (For eight wickets in 50 overs)	314			
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-107, 3-207, 4-212, 5-272, 6-276, 7-302, 8-309.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shafuul	9	0	62	3
Mehedi	9	0	56	1
Rubel	9	0	54	1
Mosaddek	7	0	45	0
Mustafizur	10	0	75	2
Soumya	5	0	17	1
Mahmudullah	1	0	4	0
BANGLADESH	R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim b Malinga	0/5	0/0		
Soumya b Malinga	15/22	1/0		
Mithun lbw b Pradeep	10/21	1/0		
Mushfiqur c Mendis b Pradeep	67/86	5/0		
Mahmudullah c sub b Kumara	3/10	0/0		
Mosaddek run out	12/16	1/0		
Sabbir c Fernando b DM de Silva	2/5	0/0		
Mehedi c Mendis b DM de Silva	2/5	0/0		
Shafuul b Pradeep	2/9	0/0		
Rubel not out	6/6	1/0		
Mustafizur c NLTC Perera				
b Malinga	18/14	3/0		
Extras: (lb-4, w-24)	28			
Total: (all out in 41.4 overs)	223			
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-30, 3-30, 4-39, 5-150, 6-182, 7-187, 8-199, 9-200, 10-223.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	9.4	2	38	3
Pradeep	9	1	51	3
NLTC Perera	6	0	36	0
CBRLS Kumara	7	0	45	1
DM de Silva	10	0	49	2
Result: Sri Lanka won by 91 runs				
Player-of-the-match: Kusal Perera				

Woakes, Broad shatter Ireland's dream

AFP, London



England bowled Ireland out for just 38 to win their one-off Test at Lord's by

143 runs on Friday, emphatically crushing the visitors' hopes of a stunning upset.

Ireland, playing only their third Test, were chasing just 182 runs to complete what would have been one of the biggest upsets in cricket history.

But they did not get close, lasting just 94 balls as Chris Woakes took a career-best six wickets for 17 runs and Stuart Broad returned figures of 4-19.

Their second innings score was the seventh-lowest total of all time.

LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS

Date	Inn Total	Match	Venue
Mar 1955	26	NZ v Eng	Auckland
Feb 1896	30	SA v Eng	Port Elizabeth
June 1924	30	SA v Eng	Birmingham
Apr 1899	35	SA v Eng	Cape Town
Feb 1932	36	SA v Aus	Melbourne
May 1902	36	Aus v Eng	Birmingham
July 2019	38	Ireland v Eng	Lord's
Mar 1946	42	NZ v Aus	Wellington
Feb 1888	42	Aus v Eng	Sydney
June 1974	42	Ind v Eng	Lord's

"I knew that was a lot of runs (to make) on that surface," said Root, whose side mustered just 85 runs themselves in their first innings.

"It's very pleasing, the way we managed certain pressure situations," he added. "It wasn't by any stretch the perfect game for us but sometimes that can be a really important part of your learning. We'll take a lot from this game."

Ireland, playing England for the first time in a Test, have now lost all three of their Tests following losses to Pakistan and Afghanistan, but their day started brilliantly.

The home side resuming on their overnight 303 for nine, saw their second innings end with the first ball of the third day's play when debutant Olly Stone was bowled for a duck by Stuart Thompson.

Rain delayed the scheduled 1000 GMT start by a few minutes but any hopes England had of adding to their overnight total evaporated when Thompson's inswinger knocked over Stone's leg stump.

Ireland had yet to give off the mark in their second innings when rain stopped play just seven balls into their chase and kept the players off the field for more than an hour.

But when the match resumed the overcast conditions -- the floodlights were switched on --



England all-rounder Chris Woakes scalped six wickets for just 17 runs in an awe-inspiring performance which sealed a 143-run win over Ireland in their one-off Test at Lord's in London yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

made conditions ideal for seamers Woakes and Broad.

The cascade of wickets in an innings where only opener James McCollum made it into double figures began when Woakes had Ireland captain William Porterfield caught behind by wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow for two.

Andy Balbirnie, who top-scored with 55 in Ireland's first innings

total of 207, fell next when he edged Broad to Root at first slip.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 85

IRELAND: First innings 207

ENGLAND: Second innings 303

IRELAND: Second innings 38 all out

(McCollum 11; Broad 4-19, Woakes 6-17)

Result: England won by 143 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Jack Leach.

Gayle returns for India ODI series

AFP, St. John's



Chris Gayle changed his mind about international retirement and the West Indies selectors on Friday gave the 'Universe Boss' a

place in the one-day squad to face India in a three-match series.

Gayle said in March that he planned to retire following the Cricket World Cup but changed his mind during the tournament.

Gayle was not selected for the T20 squad announced on Tuesday for the three matches that open the Indian tour.

Gayle is playing for the Vancouver Knights in the Global T20 competition being held in Brampton, Canada, though the ODI schedule means he would have to miss the semifinals and final if the Knights get that far.

"Chris is a very valuable player and he brings a lot of experience, a lot of knowledge, he lends a lot to any dressing room and it is great to have him in the squad," interim West Indies head coach Floyd Reifer said in a Cricket West Indies statement.

The ODI series gives Gayle the chance to break Brian Lara's records for most ODI runs for the West Indies (10,348) and by a West Indian (10,405). Gayle trails by 10 in the



first category and, including a tsunami relief match and two games for an ICC World XI against Australia, by 12 in the second.

The West Indies dropped batsmen Sunil Ambris and Darren Bravo, off-spinner Ashley Nurse and fast bowler Shannon Gabriel from the squad that finished ninth in the 10-team first-round group at the World Cup.

Andre Russell, who was forced out of the World Cup with a knee injury, has been omitted for the ODIs after being included in the T20 squad.

Squad: Jason Holder (capt), Fabian Allen, Carlos Brathwaite, John Campbell, Roston Chase, Sheldon Cottrell, Chris Gayle, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope (wk), Evin Lewis, Keemo Paul, Nicholas Pooran (wk), Kemar Roach, Oshane Thomas.