



Rising and falling on momentum

MAZHAR UDDIN from Colombo

Bangladesh cricket has always been dependent on momentum, the rise and fall of which find a magnified reflection in the team's body language. There has been a certain pattern for the Bangladesh team over the years, where a majority of the cricketers tend to rely on luck, which in turn relates to momentum or results in the recent past, and if things do not go in their favour, the urge to turn things around dips significantly. Whether it was after Tamim Iqbal dropped Rohit Sharma's catch early in the innings during the ICC World Cup match against India or the entirety of the last World Cup game against Pakistan, there was very little fight from the Bangladeshi cricketers. It all related to a premeditated, negative mindset. Much like Bangladesh, Pakistan also had a disappointing World Cup but the main difference between the two sides was that Pakistan had the belief in themselves to be able to overcome failures by looking to the future rather than holding on to the disappointments of the past. The result was evident as Pakistan were pumped up to finish the tournament on a high, which they did by beating the Tigers comprehensively while Bangladesh seemed to surrender without a semblance of a fight. It is the opposite when the Tigers manage to start well in a tournament or in a series, it gives the extra punch to the entire team as the belief and confidence rises significantly. But as seen in the World Cup, it does not take long for that belief to be shattered by one or two bad results. The majority of the players also rely on certain individual heroics to bring back the belief, which has been the case in the entire World Cup campaign where Shakib Al Hasan stood above with some extraordinary performance on a consistent basis. It speaks to seeking an easy way out, which could be an indication of a lack of faith in a concerted turnaround. It was seen in the way Bangladesh started off their ICC World Cup campaign against South Africa, where a flying start from openers Soumya Sarkar and Tamim was enough for the other players in the dressing room to believe in themselves. That initial belief came from their maiden tri-nation series win in Ireland just before the World



A dejected Mahmudullah Riyad walks back to the dressing room after adding just six while Sri Lankan players celebrate during the second ODI between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in Colombo on Sunday. This snapshot succinctly portrays just how bad Bangladesh's tour has been so far with the Tigers already having lost the three match series 2-0.

Cup, where the cricketers looked confident. Before coming to Sri Lanka for the ongoing three-match ODI series, there was a sense of uncertainty from the players, which had its roots in the poor end to their World Cup campaign. Even an experienced cricketer like Tamim took extra pressure on himself both as batsman and also as leader after he was given the role of the stand-in captain for the Sri Lanka series, after regular captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was ruled out due to a hamstring injury at the last moment. The absence of Shakib, who was granted a break by the BCB for the Sri Lanka tour after a terrific World Cup campaign, also affected the other team members as the pressure to perform consistently and fill the huge gap left by the experienced cricketer mounted. Soumya was trapped leg-before off a Nuwan Pradeep full toss in the second ODI after being dismissed by a vintage Lasith Malinga yorker in the first ODI and it all related to a lack of confidence rather than a technical error. Talking about lack of confidence, even experienced cricketers like Tamim and Mahmudullah Riyad are not far behind and it is their body language that says it all. "When we arrive in Sri Lanka, we were prepared to do well but we lost the series. We are all worried about it, [asking] why things are going like this. We all are talking to each other about how to overcome that and we will try to make a turnaround in the last game," Soumya told reporters yesterday. There was a mere smile on Soumya's face, mostly reflecting the dejection and although he did say they are eager to make a comeback, but there was no hint on how it could be done.

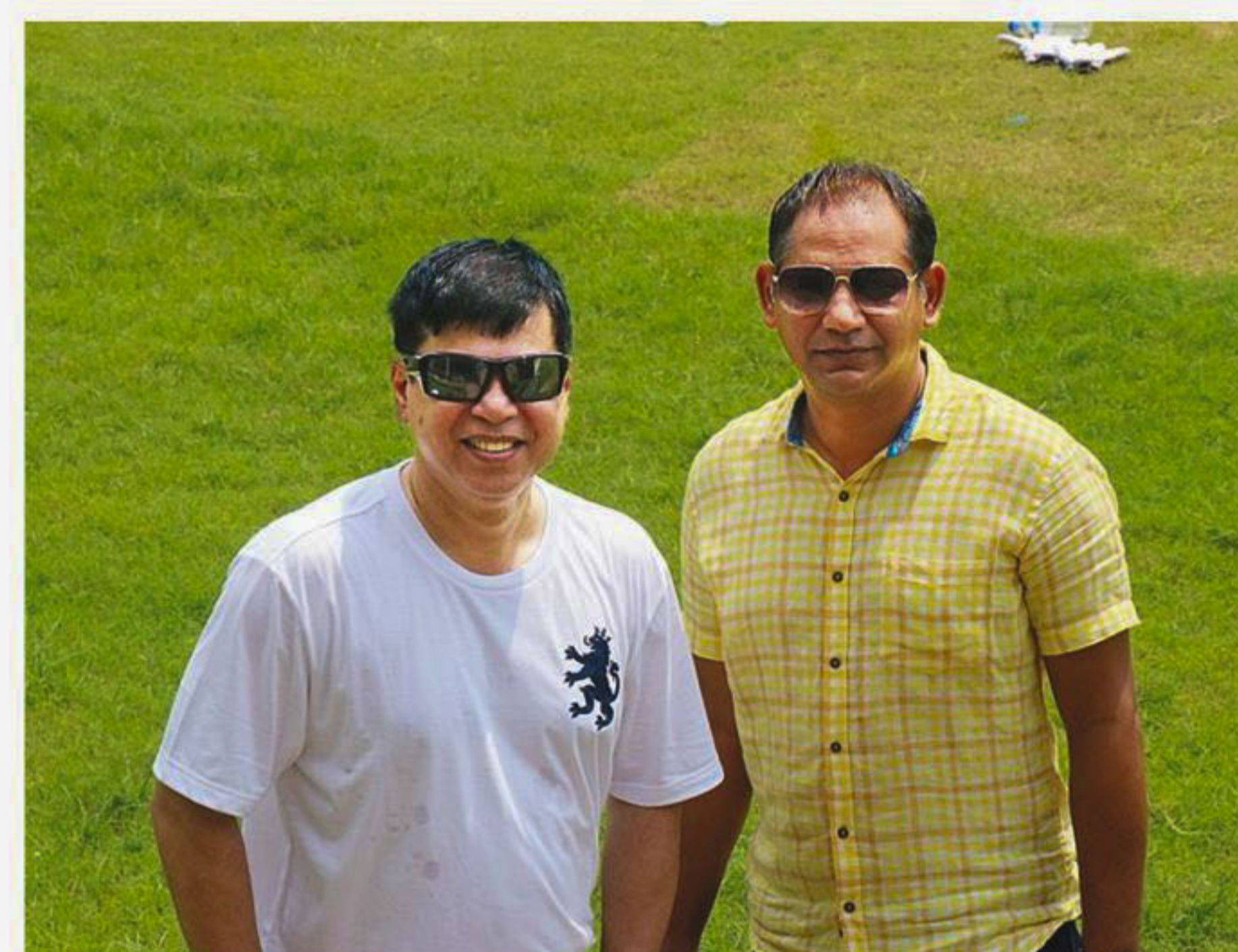
Future, not past the yardstick for selectors

BISHWAJIT ROY



How can we measure the performance of the selectors? There are no standard indicators by which we can identify the success or failure of a selection committee. That is why the selectors always try to remind us that they are actually performing a thankless job as the players and coaches are the ones who receive the accolades after every success. Minhajul Abedin and Habibur Bashar can however consider themselves lucky as they got some recognition from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan when they were given another extension as chief selector and selector respectively, till next year's ICC World Twenty20 in Australia. Here, the indicator was the success of the national team. Minhajul also had no doubt about how good a job the panel have done so far and reminded everyone that everything depended on the result of the national team.

hopes for the future of the country cricket should be the motto for any selection panel. Here lies the question as to whether this selection panel can provide an assurance of a bright future for Bangladesh cricket, or are they only playing games with Mr. X and Mr. Y or Mr. Z. Bangladesh has become a force in ODI cricket, although this World Cup provided enough indication that they have to go far to take the team to the next level and that there is still a long way to go to become a force in Test and T20I cricket. Still, while they are banking on the national team's success, it is actually their predecessors who laid the foundation, putting their belief in a bunch of young cricketers who later came to be known as the 'Big Five' and became the main architects of successes. But we are still not sure what life will be like after the current senior players. The national team are currently struggling from a lack of a steady opening pair for some time now, while pace bowling is a big concern for the team and no one



MINHAJUL ABEDIN (L) AND HABIBUL BASHAR

The Tigers won 27 matches and lost 30 out of 60 ODIs, won six and lost 14 of 21 Tests and won 13 T20Is and lost 25 out of 39 matches since 2016, the year that Minhajul was appointed chief selector after Faruque Ahmed resigned from the post in protest of the controversial two-tier selection system that he believed would curtail the freedom of the selectors. In response to the new extension, Minhajul also reminded everyone of the vastness of their work from the domestic circuit to national team. Certainly, bringing Mr. X to the team and then subsequently dropping him after a few bad performances to make way for Mr. Y and again calling back Mr. X for Mr. Y's failure and then putting both in long hibernation for another fresh cycle before selecting them again is no way the job should be done by the selectors. Spotting new talent, creating enough space to nurse them in order to raise

knows who will take the baton of the spin attack after Shakib Al Hasan. The time has come to make sure that the seniors will get some rest to prolong their careers but can this selection panel make room for that with backup options? The current series in Sri Lanka is probably the best example of how far away they are from that luxury. Cynics say that this selection panel enjoys very limited freedom in terms of final selection and they have had to swallow bitter pills sometimes when directives have come from board high-ups for the selection of a player. Still, the responsibility rests on the Minhajul-Habibur pair, especially when they are portraying a bright picture. They will not be remembered for what the team achieved during their tenure but how they shaped the future at a critical juncture of Bangladesh cricket.

No Vikings in upcoming BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Vikings will not participate in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) slated to begin from December 6 this year. DBL Group, the owners of the Chattogram based franchise, decided to step aside from their role and thus the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has issued a tender in order to look for parties interested in owning the franchise. "They will not continue under the name of DBL Group. We have issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) and if anyone is interested, then the Chattogram team may come under a different name," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury informed the media yesterday. The franchise started their journey as Chittagong Vikings under the ownership of DBL Group in the 2015/16 season. If the franchise do not get a new owner, the BPL will possibly roll on with six teams for the upcoming edition.

Cricket pioneer Shamim no more

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh cricket lost a pioneer yesterday, when the country's first captain Shamim Kabir breathed his last at a hospital in the capital. Shamim, aged 74, whose demise left the entire Bangladesh cricket fraternity in grief, was suffering from cancer. He became the first captain of Bangladesh when he led the national team against the touring Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in a three-day match from January 7-9, 1977 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hassan expressed deep sadness at the passing away of the former cricketer. "He was a pioneer. Shamim Kabir captained Bangladesh when times were difficult for cricket and the game had very limited resources. It was due to the passion and dedication of people like him that cricket in Bangladesh is where it is today. On behalf of the board, I extend heartfelt



SHAMIM KABIR (1945-2019)

condolences to the family of Shamim Kabir. We pray for the salvation of his soul." Nazmul was quoted as saying in a BCB media release. An opening batsman and wicketkeeper, Shamim played in 15 first class matches between 1961 and 1969 for different teams including East Pakistan, East Zone and Dhaka University. His cricket career might have been brief but it had a big impact on many players with whom he played. One such person is Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, a cricket coach and writer who was deeply saddened by the demise of Shamim. "Shamim bhai was the purest image of cricket. He was the frontman of the first chapter of our cricket history. Back when I was young, seeing a Test cricketer up close was an unusual sight for those of us who used to play in different cricket leagues. Shamim bhai was not a Test cricketer but whenever I saw him, it felt like that maybe a Test cricketer would look like him. An eye-catching, well-built, handsome man who used to wear the green cap in a unique fashion. He loved me, also scolded me at times and I consider myself lucky for that. Today, there is nothing left to do other than to pray for his departed soul. Stay well Shamim bhai," was the emotional message from Jalal on social media.

Bangladesh tie A team series

SPORTS REPORTER

A magnificent 143-ball 126 from opener Naim Sheikh helped Bangladesh A finish their five-match one day series against the visiting Afghanistan A on a high note. The home side registered a 62-run victory in the last game of the series -- ensuring a 2-2 series tie with one match being abandoned due to rain -- at the BKSP 3 ground in Savar today.



Ahead of the fifth and final one-dayer between Bangladesh A and Afghanistan A in Savar, both sides observed one minute silence in memory of Shamim Kabir, the first man to captain the national team at the international level.

After being asked to bat, Bangladesh had lost two wickets for 45 runs in 13 overs before Naim strung together an 80-run third-wicket stand with Aminul Islam Biplob to bring some stability to the innings. Although Biplob saw his stumps shattered off a Karim Zannat delivery after scoring a 40-ball 22 in the 27th over, Naim went on to stitch another 84-run fourth-wicket partnership with Afif Hossain. Afif, who had missed his fifty by just five runs in their previous game, went on to score a 50-ball 53 before being dismissed in the 43rd

over. However, Naim's spectacular century ensured that Bangladesh finished on a challenging score of 262 for nine. Following the exchange, after an early hiccup -- in the fourth over when Afghanistan opener Ibrahim Zadrans was dismissed by pacer Abu Jayed for just five to leave the score at 18 for one -- the visitors had bounced back in the match with a 56-run second-wicket stand between Rahmunullah Gurbaz (54 off 41) and Shahid Kamal (14 off 32). However, after that, a sudden collapse saw Afghanistan slump

to 102 for seven in the 26th over as they lost five wickets for just 28 runs. Although there was a 65-run partnership between Nasir Jamal (47 off 72) and Sharafuddin Ashraf (35 off 35) for the eighth wicket, it still could not see the visiting side over the line as they were bundled out for 200 in 45.1 overs. **SCORES IN BRIEF** BANGLADESH A: 262 for nine in 50 overs (Naim 126, Afif 53, Aminul 22; Karim 4-73, Fazal 2-56) AFGHANISTAN A: 200 all out in 45.1 overs (Gurbaz 54, Nasir 47; Mishu 3-40, Shaiful 2-32) **Result:** Bangladesh A won by 62 runs.

Saif shines for BCB XI

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB XI ended the second day of their four-day match against Chhattisgarh State Cricket Sangha in the ongoing Dr (Capt) K. Thimmappiah Memorial tournament at the Alur -1 (Platinum Oval) in India yesterday. Beginning the day on 254 for three, BCB XI posted 334 in 111.5 overs, courtesy of a magnificent innings from opener Saif Hasan. The right-hander played brilliantly for his 176-ball 92 but was unlucky to have missed out on his ton, being dismissed in the 100th over. However, contributions from Yasir Ali (62 off 134) and Najmul Hossain (39 off 86) helped BCB XI post a commendable total. Saif also shone with the ball, scalping two for 24 to help BCB XI reduce Chhattisgarh State to 210 for four in 59.1 overs at the close.



MOHAMMAD NAIM... 126

Kohli rubbishes rift with Sharma

AFP, Mumbai



India skipper Virat Kohli said Monday that talk of a rift with star batsman Rohit Sharma was "ridiculous" and "baffling" and insisted all was well in the team camp ahead of the West Indies tour. Rumours of cracks within the Indian team were reported by local media after Kohli's team bowed out of the World Cup following their semifinal loss to New Zealand earlier this month. Sharma -- the vice-captain of the one-day and Twenty20 international side -- recently unfollowed Kohli and the captain's Bollywood wife Anushka Sharma on Instagram, adding fuel to the suggestions the two senior players were not on good terms. But Kohli dismissed the speculation ahead of the team's departure for the tour of West Indies, which starts on August 3 with the first of three Twenty20 internationals followed by three ODI matches and two Tests. "In my opinion it's baffling to be honest. Ridiculous to read some stuff that comes out," the 30-year-old told reporters in Mumbai. "Here we are feeding off lies, we are overlooking facts, turning a blind eye to all the good things that have happened. And creating fantasies and scenarios in our head and we want to accept this is the truth." "I have seen this for too long now. It's bringing personal lives into the picture. It is disrespectful after a moment." Kohli, the world's top Test and ODI batsman, scored five fifties but was unable to record a three-figure score. Stories circulated that the two big guns were leading different camps during the World Cup in England, with pundits suggesting the captaincy could be split between the pair. "I have played the game for 11 years, Rohit's played for 10 years, it's bizarre that you know... this from the outside when the changeroom environment is so good," said Kohli.