



Tigers settled after Ctg U-turn

SPORTS REPORTER

OBHA Bangladesh notched only their second T20I win over Afghanistan in six encounters with a four-wicket victory in the final league game of the T20I tri-series on Saturday. The Tigers will now face the same opponents in the final on Tuesday in Mirpur.

The Chattogram leg of the series finished on a high for the hosts as the Tigers were finally able to break a four-game losing streak against Rashid Khan's side. The team landed yesterday in Dhaka in good spirits with a much-needed gain in momentum after a dismal defeat in the one-off Test against Afghanistan earlier this month, which was followed by defeat against the same opposition in their first league match in Mirpur.

"Since we lost the Test against them in Chattogram and also [the T20I] in Mirpur, as we needed some confidence before the

final and also [needed to sort out] our combination, winning this match gives us some advantage," pace-bowling all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin told reporters at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

Another manifestation of nerves being settled was that the selectors named an unchanged squad for the final after Bangladesh won both their matches in Chattogram. After they lost the match against Afghanistan in Mirpur, the selectors had rung in as many as five changes.

Saifuddin admitted that the visitors have enjoyed a mental advantage in this format of late, having won all four matches since 2014.

"It was 4-1 [in favour of Afghanistan] maybe. We know that they play in various places in T20s and some of them are experienced. But we have experienced players as well, so since there were two more matches against them [before



Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim wore a worried look as the team landed at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday. He will be looking to make his presence felt in the T20I tri-series final on Tuesday with a big score. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Saturday's game], we had the opportunity and it's 4-2 now. If we can win [the final], we can [further] reduce the margin."

Despite the two wins in Chattogram, the other being against Zimbabwe, Bangladesh will have their work cut out and a few deficiencies to resolve against a side ranked three places higher. The batting has been an issue with the top order yet to click in this series. Mushfiqur Rahim, arguably Bangladesh's best batsman in the format, has gotten a few starts without really making his presence felt. The Tigers also have a habit of losing a flurry of wickets that makes an easy task look hard.

In the last match against Afghanistan, skipper Shakib Al Hasan scored more than half the team's runs with an unbeaten 70 while the rest contributed 63 during the

chase of a meagre 138.

"We are talking about our shortcomings; our coach and captain have talked about those. Even if we can't give our hundred per cent, if each of us are able to contribute 60-70 per cent, we can match them and we proved that yesterday," Saifuddin added.

Afghanistan captain Rashid meanwhile was doubtful for the final, having suffered a hamstring injury during Saturday's match. The leg-spinner has been a thorn in Bangladesh's side and his absence will likely give the home side an advantage. The smallest margins will matter and false decisions in crucial stages can be disastrous in the shortest format when facing a side that had set the record for the highest number of T20 wins on the trot just last week.

Onus on Soumya as BD A start with 4-dayer

SPORTS REPORTER



The focus will be on Soumya Sarkar when Bangladesh A take on their Sri Lankan counterparts today in the first four-dayer of a two-match series at the MCG in Katunayake.

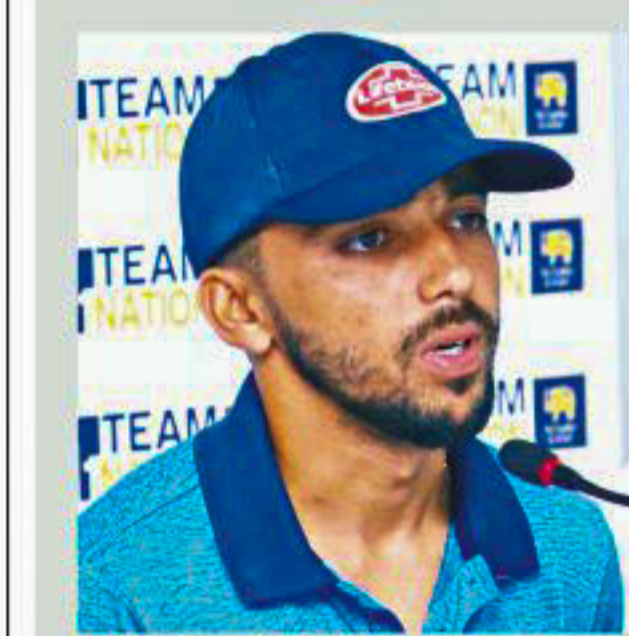
Soumya was dropped from the national team after the second match of the ongoing T20I tri-series following a poor run with the bat. The onus will now be on the stylish left-hander to seize the opportunity, regain some confidence and score runs in order to be in the conversation when the squad is picked for the next international assignment in India in November.

The selectors picked put together a strong second-string squad for the tour and will be looking to the players like captain Mominul Haque, Mehdi Hasan Miraz, pacer Abu Jayed, Mohammad Mithun, Shadman Islam, Jahurul Islam and Anamul Haque.

Mominul, who will lead in both the four-day series and the ensuing three-match one-day series, said in the pre-series press conference that they were 'looking forward to playing good cricket on the tour'.

Nazmul Hossain, who took Soumya's place in the T20 tri-series squad, was also drafted in the A side but will only be available from the second four-dayer, which will start from September 30 in Galle.

Ashan Priyanjan will lead the home side in the four-day series. The three one-dayers will be held on October 7, 9 and 12.



Looking forward to playing good cricket on the tour.

MOMINUL HAQUE
BD A CAPTAIN



Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan hobbled off the ground after suffering a hamstring injury in the last league stage match of the T20I tri-series and it is uncertain whether he will feature in the final. PHOTO: STAR

U-19s seek aggression

Leave for NZ today to play 5 one-dayers

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Under-19s will be looking to continue their good recent form when they take on their New Zealand counterparts in a five-match one-day series in Christchurch.

The Young Tigers, who earlier this month suffered the heartbreak of falling just five runs short while chasing a paltry 107-run target in the final of the Under-19 Asia Cup final in Sri Lanka, will leave Dhaka this morning to play the youth ODI series.

It will be the first time that a Bangladesh team will visit New Zealand after the Christchurch mosque shootings that claimed 50 lives on March 15 this year. The Bangladesh Test team were 50 yards from the Al Noor mosque when the shooting took place and escaped to the nearby Hagley Oval. The tour was called off immediately and the team returned home the following day.

The U-19s' campaign will start with a warm-up match on September 27. The five matches will take place at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Christchurch on September 29, October 2, 6, 9 and 13.

Junior team selector and former national cricketer Hannan Sarkar expressed

high hopes about the series while talking to reporters yesterday.

"I will not be surprised if the team win the series by a 5-0 margin. This team has been playing good cricket for the last six months. The boys showed their character in the tri-series in England and then, except the batting in the [Asia Cup] final, they played good cricket. I think the team is shaping up very well ahead of the next [Under-19] World Cup to be held in South Africa in January next year.

"So far, the batting has given the team a lot of confidence, with the exception of the Asia Cup final. Like the senior team, something seems to go wrong when they play in the knockout stage. Now this team has to show the aggression like the India Under-19 team. Indian junior teams just replicate the aggression of their senior team and I think this is the area where we should improve," he added.

SQUAD

Akbar Ali (captain), Tawhid Hridoy (vice-captain), Tanzid Hasan, Parvez Hossain, Shahadat Hossain, Rakibul Hasan, Asadullah Hill Galib, Shoriful Islam, Mrittunjoy Chowdhury, Mahmudul Hasan, Tanzim Hasanb, Avishek Das, Shamim Hossain, Anik Sarker and Hasan Morad.

'I'm a better coach than Roger'

AGENCIES, Basel



Rafael Nadal joked he is the better coach compared to Roger Federer after the two players provided their expertise to each other in the Laver Cup.

Down a set to Nick Kyrgios, Federer received help from Nadal to get back into the match.

"After five shots [in the rally], you are winning more [points] than him," Nadal said. "Like 8-5 for you -- I checked the numbers so the percentages are much better for you. I know it's difficult because he reads the ball so well. Wait for the right one and then attack because he's not missing."

And the support clearly helped as Federer fought back and won 6-7(5), 7-5, 10-7. Later Federer revealed his delight. He said: "He saved me today. I think that is the true reason why he is the champion he is today, because he's not scared of changing a winning tactic, and he's also a big believer in investing."

"What I really enjoy with Rafa, our ideas often align. When it comes to rally points, he is excellent. He knows how much is enough and how much is too much. And he's a great problem, solution finder."

In the evening Nadal took to the court against Milos Raonic and Federer encouraged his great rival to come forward more often.

He said: "When you see a chance to come to



After saying Rafael Nadal's (R) coaching had saved him against Nick Kyrgios, Roger Federer returns the favour in the Spaniard's game against Milos Raonic at the Laver Cup on Sunday. PHOTO: REUTERS

the net against him, always challenge him to do a passing shot. You're so good at the net. Spin, slice, more like this. Like in the old days!"

And Nadal was impeccable at the net as he beat Raonic 6-3, 7-6. After the match, Nadal

was asked who was the better coach between him and Federer and he joked: "Oh yeah, [I'm] much better. No, I think it is a great thing that everybody helps each other. And it is a great team spirit."

Proteas crush India to draw T20I series

AFP, Bangalore

An unbeaten half-century by skipper Quinton de Kock and paceman Beuran Hendricks' performance with the ball helped South Africa thrash India by nine wickets to draw their T20I series 1-1 on Sunday.

Beuran returned figures of 2-14 to restrict India to 134 for nine after Virat Kohli's surprising decision to bat first in Bangalore.

De Kock then anchored the chase with his 79 -- his second successive half-century -- off 52 balls on a pitch where teams usually opt to bat second.

The left-hander smashed six fours and five sixes.

SCORES IN BRIEF:

INDIA: 134 for 9 (Dhawan 36; Hendricks 2-14, Fortuin 2-19, Rabada 3-39)

SOUTH AFRICA: 140 for one in 16.5 overs (De Kock 79 not out, Hendricks 28)

Result: South Africa won by nine wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Beuran Hendricks.

Player-of-the-series: Quinton De Kock.

U-16s lose 3-0 to Yemen

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh were eliminated from the AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers following a 3-0 defeat to Yemen at the Aspire Stadium in Doha last night.

The boys in red and green had raised slight hopes of qualification for the 16-team final round following their 3-0 win against Bhutan after having lost the opening game 2-0 against Qatar.

And the charges of Robert Ryles kept the Yemenis at bay for two-thirds of the game, but once they conceded the opening goal, the resistance completely broke down.

Although Yemen completely

dominated the first half, they did not have too many open chances except in the 15th minute, when Ahmed Hasan Mushed managed to beat Bangladesh goalkeeper Mehedi Hasan only to see his shot cannon off the far post.

Bangladesh hardly made any attacking moves, with their best effort of the half being a powerful attempt from the edge of the box by midfielder Saif Hassan Saeed, with a Yemeni defender heading the ball clear for a corner.

The game continued to flow in the same fashion, with the Yemenis having a world of possession, but the Bangladesh defence held firm until a superb effort from Mohammed Ali Hassan undid Bangladesh's resistance.

The Yemeni forward received a through ball from a teammate and

expertly shrugged off his marker, Bangladesh captain Jony Shikder, before picking the corner of the net.

The lead was doubled eight minutes later when substitute Hamzah Mahross headed home a corner before he made the scoreline 3-0 six minutes later.

The margin of defeat could have been larger had it not been for an excellent penalty save by the Bangladesh goalkeeper in stoppage time, but Bangladesh's late capitulation was disappointing in itself.

In the last edition of the qualifiers two years ago, Bangladesh lost against eventual group winners Yemen 2-0, but earned a stunning 2-0 win over Qatar to finish second in the three-team group.

Southeast University faced off against Bangladesh University in the second match of the Faraaz Intersarsity Gold Cup at the Bir Shrestha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. Southeast University won the match 7-1.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

SHORT CORNER

MS Dhoni to miss BD T20I series

Former India captain MS Dhoni, who took a break from cricket to serve in the Army after India's ouster from the 2019 World Cup, has extended his break and will not be available for selection until November this year. He will miss out on both the Vijay Hazare Trophy as well as the home T20I series against Bangladesh.

What this also means is that the earliest he can now make a comeback to the Indian side will be when West Indies visit for a T20I series in December.

There have been plenty of speculations around his future and how the selectors deal with the transition. --Agencies

Holdings Abahani knocked out of U-18 Football Tournament

Chittagong Abahani knocked out defending champions Dhaka Abahani in the third quarterfinal of the Walton U-18 Football Tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Regulation time ended in a 1-1 draw before the port city side prevailed in tiebreak, beating their superior namesake 5-4 on penalty shootout.

Naymur Rahman Emon had given Dhaka Abahani the lead in the 67th

minute from a spot-kick but Rasel Uddin equalised for Chittagong Abahani four minutes from time to take the game into tiebreak. -- Sports Reporter

Match officials for SL series appointed

The ICC has appointed its match officials for Pakistan's home series against Sri Lanka starting from Oct 27 in Karachi with the first of the three One-day Internationals before the teams clash for three T20Is in Lahore.

Australian David Boon has been appointed as the ICC match referee and two ICC Elite Panel Umpires, namely Michael Gough and Joel Wilson were appointed for the ODI series.

In 2015, Zimbabwe became the first international side to tour Pakistan after the attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in 2009. But the ICC had refused to appoint its match officials then, citing security fears.

In 2018, however, the global cricket-governing body appointed Boon as the match-referee for the T20 series for a home series against West Indies.

Boon played 107 Tests and 181 ODIs for Australia from 1984 to 1996 and has been on the ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees since 2011. As an ICC official, he has refereed in 135 ODIs and 51 T20Is.

Gough had visited Karachi earlier this year for the HBL Pakistan Super League. --Agencies