

SPORT

'Batting will improve if bowling does'

SABBIR HOSSAIN

Bangladesh batsmen's inability to deal with a quality bowling attack like India's has been much talked about following the Tigers' meek surrender to the home side in a two-match Test series. Fingers have been pointed at technical frailties of the batsmen for the embarrassing defeats inside three days in each Test and there have been many suggestions about what the cricket establishment needs to do to overcome the batsmen's shortcoming in Test cricket.

Are there any quick remedies? Of course, there are no shortcuts and only a longer-term policy coupled with a total overhaul of first-class cricket can change the scenario.

While most have been talking about the importance of improving the standard of batsmen, renowned local coach Mohammad Salahuddin -- who has seen many cricketers grow from their early career -- put emphasis on producing quality bowlers both in pace and spin departments.

"The batting standard of a country basically depends on its standard of bowlers. If you don't face quality bowlers in your domestic competition and in the nets, you simply cannot improve the standard of your batsman.

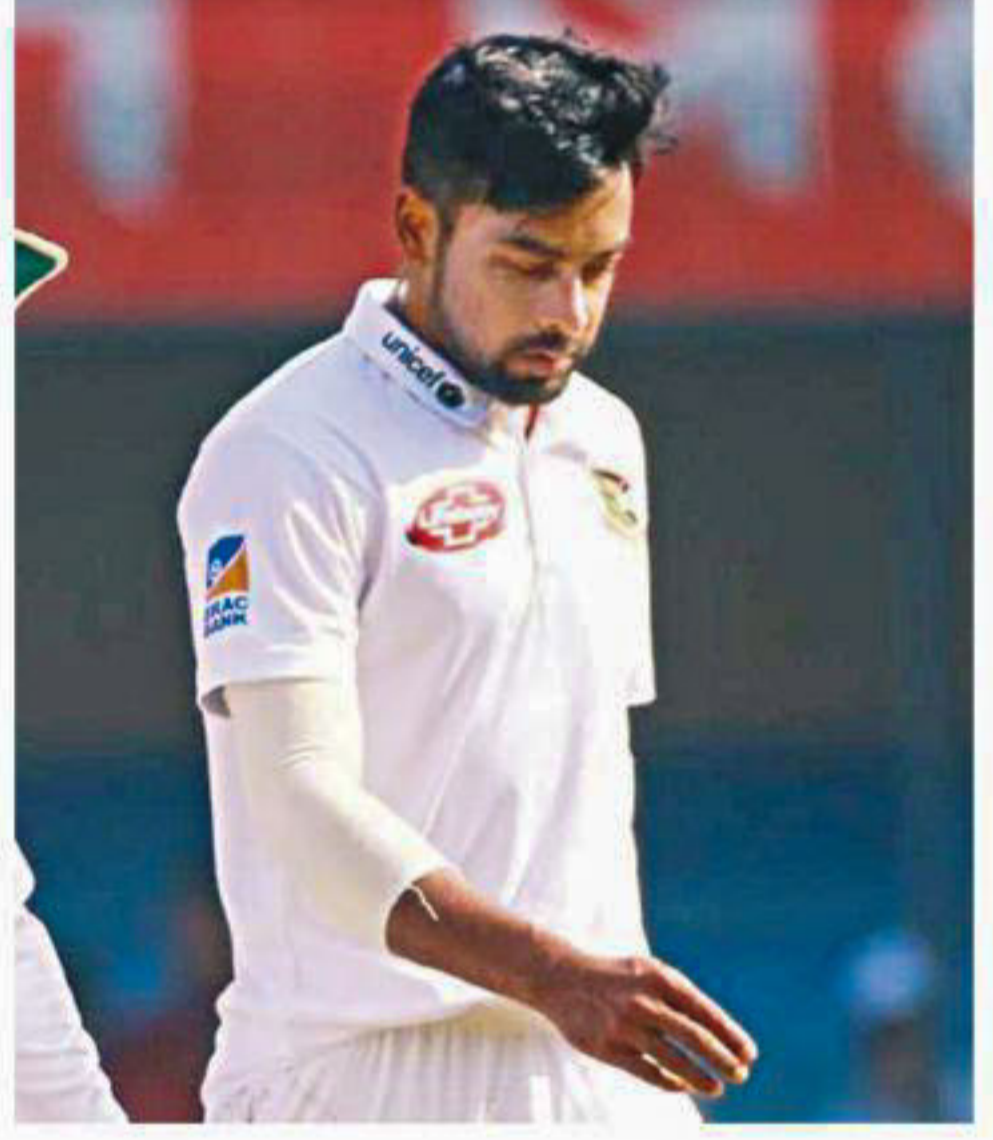
bowling unit and bring a number of pacers and spinners under a long-term training programme. "The culture of focusing only on the national team players must change," he said.

He was not surprised by the results in India and instead believed that it was just one more time that the reality of Bangladesh cricket was exposed.

"There has been a lot of criticism about the inability of Bangladesh's batsmen after the India tour, as if our batsmen don't know how to bat. But I must say they are not habituated to this kind of bowling on such good pitches. If Shakib and Tamim [Iqbal] were there it might have been a bit different. Yes, our batsmen have the experience of facing 140kmph bowling, but if there is swing and bounce along with that speed, it's simply new to them. You need to take good preparation and have enough practice to face this challenge," he said.

"What is our reality? We are facing swing bowling at 125kmph speed," he added.

Salahuddin also requested the authorities to ensure that a team has sufficient time and opportunity to practice before participating in the first-class competitions. "Yes, the board are trying to improve the standard but my request is to take a measure so that all divisions can get enough time for preparation. Preparation is very important in



While there were bright performances from Bangladesh pacers like Abu Jayed (L) in the recent tour of India, respected local coach Mohammad Salahuddin was of the opinion that scenes like opener Shadman Islam's stumps being uprooted will continue unless there is wholesale improvement in domestic bowling.

PHOTO: AFP/BCCI FILE

Where will the clarity of mind come from if you don't have the experience of dealing with quality bowlers? This Indian team is the best example. Therefore, we need to take immediate measures to improve the standard of our bowlers," explained Salahuddin.

"We got a few successes at home following a particular strategy. But look, we have been struggling for a good pace bowling unit from the very beginning and we have had hardly any bowlers who could take wickets in Test cricket. For a while there was a unit when Mashrafe-Shahadat [Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shahadat Hossain] were there. We are talking about our spin strength, but why? Our spinners are only good in typical home conditions but we don't have many spinners with the ability to apply variations in the other conditions. Shakib Al Hasan may take wickets using flight because of his experience, but our spinners hardly have any idea about what they need to do when there is no turn," he continued.

Salahuddin suggested that the board must take a massive initiative to form a good

modern cricket and we have to build it up at domestic level. We should in no way send a team for a match after two or three days' preparation," he suggested.

Salahuddin agreed with those who believe that the country needed to focus on the basic infrastructure to ensure good practice facilities for players all over the country and competitiveness in the domestic cricket.

He however seemed to have serious reservations about the commitment of the upcoming players.

"If Shakib and Tamim needed six to seven years to become world-class players, then their next generation should have achieved it by three or four years because this generation has got a better platform than the two stalwarts had. But I feel, maybe I am wrong, that players these days are only satisfied with a call-up to the national team and they have hardly any drive to become a world-class player. This is really a big concern for our cricket."

Salahuddin also stressed that the country's cricket culture and standard will not improve until highest priority is given to its Test cricket.



Jahanara Alam, member of the 15-member Bangladesh Women's T20 squad, practised with her team at the Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday ahead of the T20 cricket event of the 13th South Asian Games, to be held in Kathmandu and Pokhara, Nepal from December 1.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Cricketers' injury rundown

SPORTS REPORTER

Over the past two weeks, both Bangladesh male and female cricketers have suffered injuries while on duty or have been resting for an old injury. While

Mahmudullah Riyad suffered a hamstring injury during the Tigers' Kolkata Test against India, Liton Das and Nayeem Hasan were hit on the helmet and suffered concussions in the same game. Meanwhile, leg-spinner Aminul Islam suffered an injury on his right hand while fielding during Bangladesh Emerging Team's opening game against their Hong Kong counterparts in the recently concluded Emerging Teams Asia Cup. Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe also suffered a groin injury while practising in Mirpur on November 17 and Bangladesh women's team's ODI captain Rumana Ahmed has been recovering from a knee injury for the past few months.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury yesterday briefed the media on the latest condition of these players.

MAHMUDULLAH RIYAD Mahmudullah suffered a Grade-1 hamstring injury. He did a scan yesterday [Monday] but we are yet to receive any report. The important thing here is that even if it is a slight hamstring injury, we prescribe players a minimum of seven days' recovery period for rest and rehabilitation. There is a possibility of recurrence if they return to cricket without taking proper rest. Our main aim is to stop him from getting injured again because it takes twice as much time to recover if the player suffers from the same injury again, in which case it takes almost a month to recover. And if the player suffers the same injury for the third time then there is a possibility of the player missing the entire season.

LITON DAS AND NAYEEM HASAN They received primary treatment over there [in Kolkata] after being hit on the head [helmet]. They were scanned at a local hospital there and the report showed no

bleeding or anything serious. So, it can be assumed that their concussions are not that serious. But as per the rules, they need to be in complete rest for the first two days. ICC has some guidelines regarding head injuries. They can return to normal activities two days after suffering the head injury. Till now the report suggests that they are out of danger. But we will do more tests once they return home.

AMINUL ISLAM They [Bangladesh Under-23] will be going for the SA games soon. There are a few injury problems there. [Aminul Islam] Biplab and Shafiqul [Islam] will not be going as they are yet to recover from injuries.

MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA Mashrafe is trying to continue his rehabilitation programme. He did physiotherapy and gym session today [Tuesday]. But he is not able to put in the time we want him to for the rehabilitation programme. His pain has reduced but it cannot be said that he has fully recovered.

If he could give more time out of his busy schedule then he could have recovered faster. Considering the time he was injured and the time that is left, it can be hoped that he will recover before that [BPL]. But his rehabilitation will play a big role. The more time he can give, the easier it will be for him to recover.

RUMANA AHMED Our women's team [ODI] captain Rumana has been suffering from a knee injury for the past five-six months. We are trying to manage it. It usually takes a few months to recover from this type of problem. The main problem is that we could not keep her at rest for a long period as she had to participate in some important tournaments. But now we have decided that she will be rested till the next world cup [Women's T20 World Cup in February 2020]. She will be under the total care of physio and trainer for the next two months. She has been in rest for the past month and a half and will also be away from cricket for the next month and a half.



Mahmudullah Riyad (L) was attended by the physio after pulling his hamstring on the second day of Bangladesh' pink ball Test against India in Kolkata. Mahmudullah, who had hobbled off the field, took no further part in the match.

PHOTO: BCB FILE

Windies pick 15 for U-19 World Cup

AGENCIES, Ports of Spain

West Indies have named a 15-man squad, led by Kimani Melius, for the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup in South Africa in January and February 2020.

This squad features three players who also participated in the 2018 edition. Captain Melius is one of the three, alongside all-rounder Nyeem Young and bowler Ashmead Nedd.

The 15-man squad features a five-man pace attack keeping in mind South African conditions. Squad: Kevlon Anderson, Daniel Beckford, Matthew Forde, Joshua James, Nyeem Young, Antonio Morris, Ashmead Nedd, Mbeki Joseph, Leonardo Julian, Avinash Mahabirsingh, Kirk McKenzie, Ramon Simmonds, Matthew Patrick, Jayden Seales.

WI wary of Afghan spin attack

One-off Test in Lucknow starts today

AGENCIES, Lucknow

Afghanistan's Test journey may only be three matches old, but they've already secured two wins, including a big one against Bangladesh in their most recent game, and their spinners pose a very real threat to West Indies when the teams meet in a one-off Test in the northern Indian city beginning Wednesday.

Both teams are familiar with the conditions in Lucknow.

Karim Janat, a 21-year-old all-rounder who played a vital role in the Twenty20 series with 5-11 in the second game with his seam bowling, has received his first Test call-up. Another young fast bowler, Nijat Masood, is also among the 15-member squad in which left-arm spinner Hamza Hotak is making a comeback after two years.

West Indies captain Jason Holder said his side is wary of the spin-friendly slow wicket in Lucknow.



Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan (2nd from L) and his teammates are pictured during practice yesterday, the eve of their one-off Test against West Indies in Lucknow.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

"Afghanistan will be no pushovers, especially in these conditions which they are familiar with," Holder said. "It will be up to our batsmen to negotiate their spinners and do it well. I believe we have the quality to

do that." West Indies has depth in its batting lineup to challenge the spin threat of Rashid and company with the likes of Shai Hope, Shimron Hetmyer and Roston Chase.

Eng rally round Archer

AFP, Wellington

England players will rally around an "emotional" Jofra Archer after the paceman was racially abused by a spectator in New Zealand, director of cricket Ashley Giles said Tuesday, as local officials scoured CCIV footage to identify the culprit.

"It's a shame that sort of thing is still in society," Giles told reporters after Archer was subjected to racist comments after being dismissed late on day five of the opening Test in Mount Maunganui.

The Barbados-born bowler tweeted after the match that it was "a bit disturbing hearing racial insults today whilst battling to help save my team".

The 24-year-old later told ESPNcricinfo that the abuser was a solitary New Zealand spectator making comments "about the colour of my skin".

Archer has been a powerful advocate for diversity in cricket and Giles, when asked how the player was faring, replied: "The tweet, it was obviously emotional, it hurts."

"We fully support Jof, there is no place for racism in the game... you know what our team is like, they'll rally round him."

The incident has overshadowed the result of the first Test ever played at Mount

Maunganui's Bay Oval, which New Zealand won by an innings and 65 runs.

Black Caps captain Kane Williamson described the taunt as "horrific", while New Zealand Cricket said the culprit would be reported to the police and face a life ban if identified from the venue's CCIV footage.

Williamson said such racism was "against everything that we as Kiwis are about".

"It's a horrific thing. In a country and a setting where it is very much multicultural," he told news website stuff.co.nz. "It's something we need to put to bed quickly and hope nothing like that ever happens again."

Both Williamson and New Zealand Cricket chief executive David White apologised to Archer. White ordered extra security to ensure there was no repeat at the second Test beginning Friday in Hamilton and called on spectators to "self-police" unacceptable behaviour.

"We'll be increasing security around the areas where the players are, in particular when they're coming on and off the field, but it's quite difficult when players are on the boundary," he told Newstalk ZB.

"I'd like to think there's a bit of self-policing going on as well, we shouldn't be accepting this kind of behaviour in our society."