



New Zealand players celebrate their 3-0 series victory over Bangladesh following a 164-run win in the third ODI in Wellington yesterday. Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal (bottom), like most of his teammates, was left to reflect on all the things that went wrong during the series.

PHOTO: TWITTER/AFP

'Going nowhere if we continue like this'

SPORTS REPORTER

"You can have the best coaches in the world, but the players need to understand what to do and what not to do. We are not consistent in overseas conditions as a team and as individual players. We have to find a way to fix it," dejected Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal said after hosts New Zealand completed a 3-0 whitewash at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday.

Despite putting up a fight in the second ODI with a better approach following a hammering in the first ODI, Bangladesh repeated old mistakes in every department in another 164-runs loss yesterday.

Although Bangladesh made a good start with the ball, poor catching behind the wickets from Mushfiqur Rahim was once again a problem. Although not as simple as the dropped chance off Jimmy Neesham in the second ODI, it once again deflated an impressive Taskin Rahman when Mushfiq dropped opener Henry Nicholls after getting a glove on the ball. Mustafizur Rahman also dropped a simple chance of Ross Taylor off the bowling of Rubel Hossain.

Fortunately for the Tigers, both Nicholls and Taylor departed in the same over as the reprieves and the hosts were 57 for 3 after 11 overs.

But since then, Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell added 159 runs for the fifth wicket, laying the foundation for a big total, helped by some wayward bowling.

Conway and Mitchell registered

SCORES IN BRIEF

New Zealand: 318 for 6 in 50 overs (Conway 126, Mitchell 100 not out; Rubel 3-70, Taskin 1-52)

Bangladesh: 154 all out in 42.4 overs (Mahmudullah 76 not out, Liton 21; Neesham 5-27, Henry 4-27)

Result: New Zealand won the match by 164 runs and won the series 3-0

Player-of-the-match: Devon Conway

Player-of-the-series: Devon Conway

"I thought the first and the last game, we were nowhere close to them [New Zealand]. I thought they played exceptionally well. We are a much better team [than this] but if we continue to play like this, we are going nowhere. We understand that conditions are different than back home, but we have to improve a lot to compete



Bangladesh's batting once again displayed no aggression and fighting instinct as they struggled to tackle the Kiwi seamers despite the pitch remaining sporting.

Tamim, Soumya Sarkar and Liton Das departed early and the visitors were 26 for three but the way Mohammad Mithun and Mushfiq dealt with the situation was even more disappointing. Consolidating, they brought Bangladesh's run rate below three runs per over, but then got out, leaving the side in further trouble.

Mahmudullah Riyad's unbeaten 76-run knock was the only consolation as the Tigers were bundled out for 154 in 42.4 overs.

"We had way too many soft dismissals today [Friday]. You know the new ball will do something in New Zealand. You just have to hang in tight. The perfect example was the last game. We only scored 25 or 26 in the first 10 overs but we cashed in in the next 20 overs. We didn't allow ourselves the chance to bat deep," he said.

With less than two days to go to start the first of the three match T20I series in Hamilton Bangladesh can't afford to look back and start afresh.

their maiden ODI hundreds and the latter could count himself lucky after Mushfiqur fumbled a return when the right-hander was sprinting for his century off the final ball of the innings as New Zealand posted 318 for six.

There is a lot to improve for the Tigers and Tamim said if things continue in this manner, Bangladesh are going nowhere.

with them. "If you take out the second game, we never looked to be competing with them, which is very disappointing. I said before the series that I had high hopes. I thought we definitely had a chance. We did get a chance in the second game but overall, it was a disappointing series for us. We didn't play well," he said.

More debutants gear up for final dress rehearsal

SPORTS REPORTER



The team management will be hoping for another good performance in the Three Nations Cup when Bangladesh take on hosts Nepal in the final group match at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu today.

As the men in red and green have already advanced to the final of the three-team event, management and coaching staff can certainly relax and try to gauge more new players ahead of June's World Cup Qualifiers. The players had less scope for leisure, completing their final training yesterday at the Army Ground after having swimming and gym sessions at the hotel premises in the morning.

Head coach Jamie Day said time and again that he would focus on judging new players and sealing a spot in the final after Nepal and Kyrgyzstan played out a goalless draw has given Day more leeway to test the players in his 23-man squad.

"We did not focus on winning before we came to Nepal. It was more about match experience. But it is nice to reach the final," Jamie told The Daily Star over phone.

The Brit ensured that there would be a number of changes to the playing eleven against Nepal, who lost 2-0 and played out a goalless draw in two successive friendlies against Bangladesh last November. The coach also expects a positive result.

"We are looking forward to tomorrow's match. There will be a good number of changes from the team that played the first match because, as I said before, we came to

see new players. We are looking forward to a positive result to take into the final."

Day's charges shifted from their usual counter-attacking style to building up from the back in the first game and the 43-year-old said he wanted to continue implementing that style against Nepal to check whether players are capable of playing that way in a World Cup Qualifier.

"We wanted to use these two games to see new players and see if we are capable of passing a bit more from the back. So we will continue that then make decisions on how we want to do things for June."

Newcomers Mohammad Emon, centre-back Mehedi Hasan and forward Mohammad Jewel are likely to debut against Nepal while players like Mahabubur Rahman Sufil, Riyadul Hasan, Yeasin Arifat, Mohammad Abdullah, Mehedi Hasan, Manik Mollah, Suman Reza, Shahidul Alam Sohel and Ashraf Islam -- who did not play the first match -- are likely to start.

Day added: "Nepal have a better squad now than when they visited Bangladesh in November."

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan was also ecstatic after confirming a berth in the final and was looking forward to leaving Nepal with a trophy. "We are already in the final but each match is very important for us. Everyone wants to win the match tomorrow although the most important match is the final. We want to win it for Bangladesh, which is celebrating its golden jubilee of independence. So, it is very important for us. Hopefully we can bring the trophy to Bangladesh," said Jamal, who came on as a second-half substitute in the first match.



Fitness trainer Ivan Razlog takes the Bangladesh players through a free-hand exercise session at the team hotel in Kathmandu yesterday, ahead of today's match against Nepal.

PHOTO: BFF



'Don't think I will stop'

REUTERS

Seven times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton indicated on Thursday he was unlikely to retire at the end of a season that he hoped would be the most exciting yet.

The 36-year-old Mercedes driver has signed only a one-year contract extension, casting doubt on the intentions for 2022 of the sport's all-time most successful driver and leading personality.

"In the current position I'm in, I don't feel like this is the end," the Briton told reporters ahead of Sunday's season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix when asked if he was thinking it could be his last year.

"We've got these (rule) changes that are happening next year which are exciting. I think this looks like it could be the most exciting season yet, we've got new teams, we've got new formats (it's) getting closer.

"I don't feel like I'm at the end. The next eight months or so I'll find out whether I'm ready to stop or not, I don't think I will personally, but you never know."

Hamilton's Mercedes team have won the last seven drivers' and constructors' titles while the Briton is set to become the first driver to win 100 grands prix with his career tally currently on 95.

He has plenty of outside interests, however, in music and fashion and has also become a prominent campaigner for diversity and equal rights.

"I don't quit when the going gets tough," said Hamilton. "I wanted a one-year deal... I'm fully committed to this sport. I think this sport is in the best place it's been in terms of steps we are taking.

"I love what I'm doing. I've arrived more excited than I have in a long time... we're going to have a really great battle, one way or another, and that's what I've always loved."

The 2021 season is the last before major rule changes and Mercedes are expected to face a tough task after a difficult three-day test in Bahrain with a car that appeared tricky to handle.

Germany, England, Italy start with wins

REUTERS, London



Former champions Germany, England and Italy got off to winning starts in their World Cup qualifying campaigns on Thursday but Spain were held to a 1-1 home draw by Greece.

Four-times winners Germany enjoyed a 3-0 win over Group J rivals Iceland in Duisburg thanks to goals from Leon Goretzka, Kai Havertz and Ilkay Gundogan.

The German team followed the example of Norway on Wednesday in making a protest before the start of the game, lining up in Tee-shirts spelling out "Human Rights". The 2022 World Cup finals will be held in Qatar, who have been criticised by human rights groups.

"We want to make it clear to society that we are not ignoring this but say clearly what the conditions are," Goretzka told RTL television.

After the Norway protest, FIFA said it would not be sanctioning the team, saying it supported free speech.

The Germans took the lead after a delightful move as Joshua Kimmich found Serge Gnabry with a perfectly weighted pass and he

touched it back for Goretzka to volley home in the third minute.

Havertz made it 2-0 after another defence-splitting pass from Kimmich released Leroy Sane who squared it back for the Chelsea forward to curl in a low shot.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored twice and Ollie Watkins marked his debut with a goal as England crushed San Marino 5-0 at Wembley.

San Marino, who have never won a competitive game, held out for 13 minutes before James Ward-Prowse opened his England account with a smart finish and Calvert-Lewin made it 2-0 with a header.

Raheem Sterling made it 3-0 just after the half-hour mark at which point it seemed England might run riot.

But San Marino's mostly part-time players dug deep with Calvert-Lewin's second goal the only addition to the score until substitute Watkins slotted in late on as England moved top of Group I.

In Parma, Roberto Mancini's Italy had a tougher task but also

made a positive start with a 2-0 win over Northern Ireland in Group C.

Two goals inside the first 39 minutes from Domenico Berardi and Ciro Immobile settled Italy's nerves as they look to banish the disappointment of failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

Northern Ireland rallied in the second half, forcing Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma into several saves.

A frustrating night for Spain in Granada began promisingly when Alvaro Morata opened the scoring for the hosts after 32 minutes, moments after Dani Olmo had rattled the crossbar.

However, shortly before the hour mark, substitute Inigo Martinez - on for captain Sergio Ramos - was penalised for a rash tackle on Greek midfielder Giorgos Masouras.

Anastasios Bakasetas smashed the ball in from the spot to stun Luis Enrique's side.

Robert Lewandowski struck a thunderous 83rd-minute equaliser as Poland fought back to earn a 3-3 draw with Hungary in a pulsating Group I game in Budapest.

Hungary led 2-0 thanks to goals

from Roland Sallai and Adam Szalai before a triple substitute inspired a rapid revival from Paulo Sousa's side with Krzysztof Piatek and Kamil Jozwiak making an instant impact.

Piatek connected with a low cross from Gregorz Krychowiak to beat Peter Gulacsi and moments later Hungary's defence crumbled, allowing Jozwiak to slot the ball into the net.

Hungary regained the lead through Willi Orban only for Bayern Munich forward Lewandowski to earn his side a point with a rasping drive.

Jonas Wind inspired Denmark to a 2-0 win over Israel in Tel Aviv, with his flick setting up Martin Braithwaite for a clever chip for the opener. Wind volleyed the second after the break, his third goal for his country in his fifth appearance.

Scotland twice came from behind to snatch a 2-2 draw with Austria in Group F.

A spectacular overhead kick from John McGinn five minutes from time salvaged a potentially vital point for the Scots, who like Austria last qualified for the World Cup in 1998.



Germany players lined up in letters spelling out 'Human Rights' for the team picture ahead of their World Cup qualifying fixture against Iceland in Duisburg on Thursday. Swedish talisman Zlatan Ibrahimovic (R) celebrates with teammates after Viktor Claesson's decisive goal against Georgia in Stockholm.

PHOTO: TWITTER/REUTERS

Bonner ton denies SL

REUTERS

Nkrumah Bonner scored an unbeaten maiden Test century as the West Indies reached 236-4 on the final day to draw the first Test against Sri Lanka in Antigua on Thursday.

Set an imposing 375 to win, the West Indies were 139 runs short when the captains agreed to end the match in the final session.

Bonner, who made his test debut aged 32 last month, brought up his century off 243 balls, overcoming a long wait while on 99 to achieve the milestone, and finished unbeaten on 113.

He had resumed on



15 overnight with captain Kraigg Brathwaite and the West Indies on 34-1.

They had pulled off the fifth-highest successful run chase in Test history with their three-wicket win over Bangladesh in Chattogram last month, knocking off 395 runs to secure a famous victory.

On the slow pitch at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua, however, it was always going to be very difficult and the West Indies' first task was to avoid being bowled out.

Sri Lanka spinner Lasith Embuldeniya bowled Brathwaite to leave the hosts 91-2 at lunch but Bonner and Kyle Mayers put on 90 more runs without loss to tea.