



Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah Riyad down on his knees, which perhaps reflects the state of his team, after his misunderstanding with Afif Hossain had resulted in the latter's run-out.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers' tale of tantalising talent

MAZHAR UDDIN FROM ABU DHABI



Two consecutive boundaries from Liton Das to Moeen Ali in the first over of the Bangladesh innings provided hope to fans in the Tigers' second Super 12 game against England at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

The highly-rated right-hander once again showed his class with a gorgeous straight drive, coming down the track and meeting the pitch of the ball against the off-spinner and smacking it perfectly over the bowler's head.

The second boundary was even better as Liton adjusted nicely to a slightly wider delivery from Moeen and again used his feet to perfection to manufacture another magnificent inside-out shot over cover.

Those were glimpses of the talent that Liton possesses but he wasted yet another opportunity against the background noise calling for him to be dropped from the team ahead of the game against England following a string of poor performances with the bat.

Just when Liton needed to utilise his brilliant start, he was dismissed while attempting a rather loose shot. The right-hander top-edged Ali in his next over while going for a sweep and returned to the pavilion after scoring nine off eight balls.

The last time Liton scored a fifty in T20s

for the Tigers was 13 innings ago. Scores of 9, 16, 29, 6, 5, 10, 6, and 15 in his last eight innings may not justify his talent, but that is how things have gone for the 27-year-old, who made his international debut six years ago.

That inability to convert those beautiful starts into big knocks and a penchant for consistently being inconsistent reminds one of a few other talents that Bangladesh cricket has seen in the past.

From Mohammad Ashraful and Nasir Hossain to Sabbir Rahman, Najmul Hossain Shanto and Soumya Sarkar, there is a similar trend of talented cricketers who have been unable to repay the faith that they have been shown.

Now the question is how long Bangladesh cricket will continue to give opportunities to such cricketers who show glimpses of their ability but are unable to perform consistently.

The team management will obviously back players as it is their job to instil confidence during tough times, but it is also important for a player like Liton to realise that being talented is not enough. It is imperative to showcase what you have when it matters most.

India's star batsman Rohit Sharma hates when he is termed a talented batsman because he believes talent is nothing without hard work and that must be reflected through performances, or else there is no point being talented.

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'We are trying our best but nothing is going our way'

SPORTS REPORTER FROM ABU DHABI

On a day when Bangladesh were totally outplayed and had their limitations in terms of skill and execution completely exposed by a quality England side, the captain or coach of the losing party would have been expected to face the media. But surprisingly, the rather media-shy Nasum Ahmed was sent out to face the heat yesterday.

Although Nasum was the top performer for the Tigers with 19 runs off nine balls with the bat and a wicket to his name, the 26-year-old was certainly not the appropriate person to explain the shortcomings that led to the thrashing eight-wicket defeat.

Normally soft-spoken, Nasum's body language and approach was defensive while facing a barrage of bouncers from the journalists during the post-match press conference and he seemed to surrender to almost every question that was asked.

When asked why the team had failed to execute and were totally outplayed, Nasum

কনকা ফ্রিজ-এ চলছে ১০০% পর্যন্ত মূল্য ছাড়!

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adding only 27 runs and losing three wickets.

When asked whether the team discuss problems and look for solutions, Nasum repeated the same words that fans have become accustomed to: "We discuss everything among ourselves. We are unable to utilise the first six overs with the bat, which is the reason we are lagging behind. We are unable to score frequently but at the same time, we lose wickets at regular intervals. We do discuss such things and everyone is trying their best but nothing is going our way."

A tense Nasum, who even started to sweat at one point, informed that the Tigers were optimistic about getting a win and flipping the script.

"We still have three more matches to come and if we are able to win one game, I think we have the chance to do better in the next two as well. If we can win a game, it will definitely boost our confidence. We played good cricket in Oman despite losing the first game and we managed to reach the Super 12 by winning the next two matches. We all want to do well but nothing is going our way, it's bad luck," he said.

said: "We tried to win the game. If a batsman or a bowler could perform well, there is a chance to win a game. We are trying but it's not happening. We were unable to execute our plans."

Bangladesh's batting has remained one of the biggest areas of concern throughout the tournament, especially in the Powerplay overs, where the Tigers once again failed to get going,



"We've been lacking a good start; on these wickets it gets difficult later on. We are more skilled hitters than power hitters, we don't want to change that because we believe we can post good totals. We need to reassess and come up with a good plan."

MAHMUDULLAH RIYAD
BANGLADESH T20I CAPTAIN

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SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH
124 for 9 in 20 overs (Mushfiqur 29, Mahmudullah 19; Mills 3-27, Moeen 2-18, Liam 2-15)

ENGLAND
126 for 2 in 14.1 overs (Roy 61, Malan 28; Shoriful 1-26, Nasum 1-26)

RESULT
England won by 8 wickets.

PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH
Jason Roy.

De Kock's refusal to take knee mystifies SA

AFP, Johannesburg

Quinton de Kock's refusal to take the knee at the T20 World Cup, despite the potential cost to his career, divided opinion in South Africa on Wednesday and highlighted persistent concerns about racism in sport.

"Gone are the days when cricket was the standard-bearer of progress, unity and inclusivity in the country; that flag is arguably now being flown by Siya Kolisi's Springboks," wrote News24 columnist Pieter du Toit in reference to the country's Rugby World Cup winners.

"Add to that the dire administration of the game, with allegations of mismanagement and corruption, and the normal peaks and troughs of a sports team, and cricket is at a low point."

Former Test captain De Kock on Tuesday pulled out of the World Cup Super 12 match against holders West Indies after Cricket South Africa ordered all of its players to take a knee ahead of every game at the tournament in the UAE.

"De Kock divides opinion" read a banner on news channel eNCA, where commentators debated his right to self-expression against his responsibility to support his team and his nation. A

hashtag #IStandwithQuinton started appearing, especially among right-wingers, defending his right to dissent.

However, many agreed that there will probably be huge implications for De Kock, one of the team's star players with more than 10,000 runs to his name in international cricket.

"This is probably the end of his participation in the World Cup and maybe even his international career as a cricketer," wrote analyst Max du Preez in column on an Afrikaans news site.

Twitter users noted that De Kock has made hand gestures in support of rhino conservation at matches. "The only sign or symbol that you will see from Quinton de Kock is for the rhinos. For everything else, he STANDS his ground," tweeted the account

Blacks in Whites. Radio commentator Bongani Bingwa also noted De Kock's willingness to embrace other symbols. But like many others, he questioned the wisdom of CSA requiring such gestures. "If Quinton De Kock wears pink for cancer or black arm bands to honour deceased greats or to oppose GBV (gender based violence) when required, why object to a universally accepted gesture to fight racism?" he said. "But equally is it still a principled stand if it's mandatory?"



'A lot of credit to our bowlers'

AGENCIES

England raced to a second successive victory at the Twenty20 World Cup with an eight-wicket drubbing of Bangladesh yesterday in the two nations' first ever meeting in the format.

Opening batsman Jason Roy smashed 61 off 38 balls as England romped to their victory target of 125 in 14.1 overs.

Player-of-the-match Roy reached his seventh T20 half-century with a straight six in his 50th match and put on a key partnership of 73 with Dawid Malan, who made an unbeaten 28.

"Very special match for us, we had to back up our last performance and came out firing with the ball. A lot of credit to our bowlers again," said Roy after the match.

England skipper Eoin Morgan also praised his bowlers. "The bowlers have started the tournament exceptionally well, they've adapted really well again today, very disciplined and backed up with good catching and ground fielding."

"It's a huge compliment to how far out white-ball cricket in general has come along, a lot of players involved in the 2019 World Cup success and that's lent itself to T20 cricket as well. [Roy] It's nice for him and Dawid to get some time at the wicket. The way Jason plays is so imposing, makes it difficult to set fields, so great to see him in good touch," Morgan added.



India anxiously 'enjoying' a week-long break

SPORTS REPORTER

As both India and New Zealand were comprehensively beaten by Pakistan in their T20 World Cup openers on October 24 and October 26, respectively, the upcoming encounter between the two sides thus becomes a potential do-or-die affair in order to stay in contention for a place in the semifinals.

Assuming the other three sides in the group -- Afghanistan, Scotland and Namibia -- are not likely to cause any upset against the three big guns -- Pakistan, India and New Zealand -- the fate of the encounter between India and New Zealand is of paramount importance for the two sides at such an early stage of the tournament.

The Men in Blue will take on the Black Caps on October 31, which means India will get two more extra days to prepare with respect to New Zealand, which could play a part in deciding the outcome in favour of the T20 champions of 2007.

The Kiwis have an edge over their upcoming rival in terms of overall T20I head-to-head results, having won 8 against India's 6 with the other two matches tied.