



Bangladesh women's cricket team received warm reception at the airport in Dhaka yesterday morning following their return from Zimbabwe where they played in the Women's World Cup Qualifiers. Even though the event was cancelled midway through due to new Covid restrictions in southern Africa, the Tigresses qualified for next year's marquee event owing to their Women's ODI ranking. The team will have to stay in institutional quarantine for five days.

PHOTO: BCB

'Where will you get a player who is ready?'

SPORTS REPORTER



Will Shakib Al Hasan's return to the team change Bangladesh's fortunes in the second Test against Pakistan? While the presence of the all-rounder allows the Tigers' think-tank the opportunity to form a balanced side by playing either an extra bowler or batter, coach Mohammad Salahuddin believes that only good batting from the top-order can shift the tide.

"Why did we ultimately fail in Chattogram? Because of a poor top-order. Otherwise, we were not that bad. It's definitely a huge boost for the team to get the services of a player like Shakib, but we have to ensure our top order can handle the new ball," Salahuddin said.

The mentor to many stars like Shakib, Tamim Iqbal and Mominul Haque was exclaimed surprise that the team management had failed to solve a simple problem by finding Tamim a settled opening partner.

"We all know a proper cricketing culture or structure is not in place in our country

against a quality attack," he added.

While questions have been asked about the selection of players in recent time, Salahuddin countered: "Where will you get a player who is ready? Is there any system from where you can get a technically sound player? Until or unless you overhaul the system, you have to live with your reality. It will not help us if we bring someone in and drop them after two or three games. This kind of practice only creates more chaos," he continued, adding that it would be more useful if the team management gave players assurances and confidence and worked on their technical deficiencies.

"It's ridiculous that we want a player coming in from the Under-19 team or High Performance team to make a mark straightaway in international cricket. Because of so many unready players in the national side, we always love to distinguish between them as senior or junior players."

Despite Shakib's and pacer Taskin Ahmed's return, Salahuddin was unsure if Bangladesh would be able to conjure a better performance in the second Test, starting from November 4 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.



and we have been crying for it for so many years, but that's unfortunately why the national team has to deal with new players who are not ready to cope with the pressures of international cricket. In that case they have to learn how to manage many things instead of taking the challenge from very first assignment," explained the experienced coach.

"Tamim is successful because he plays the new ball with a straight bat, pushing the mid-on and mid-off areas, whereas most of his partners play sideways shots and their zone is mid-wicket or point. With such a technical flaw, you simply cannot survive

"See, the wicket was easy in Chattogram. The Pakistan spinners could hardly have an impact. Instead, our spinners, especially Taijul [Islam] bowled really well. Liton [Das] batted exceptionally while Mushfiq [Mushfiqur Rahim] also batted well but the rest failed to step up. I am not sure whether they will get the same kind of good pitch in Mirpur.

"Shakib always provides a special advantage and Taskin's recent form is also very encouraging, but the question is whether the top order can survive against the two-way movement from Pakistan's pacers?"

Glazer buys UAE T20 franchise

REUTERS

Manchester United co-chairman Avram Glazer has acquired a franchise in the United Arab Emirates' inaugural T20 Cricket League, the Emirates Cricket Board said on Wednesday.

The Glazer family, who also own National Football League (NFL) team Tampa Bay Buccaneers, have made their first foray into cricket by acquiring one of the six franchises in the league through their company Lancer Capital.

A member of the Glazer family was also among the bidders when two new Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises were unveiled in October but was unsuccessful with a bid.

The newly established tournament with six franchise teams is set to be staged across the UAE in February-March next year.

Will Naim's 'international experience' be enough?



"We are hopeful he will have a good performance in Test cricket if he gets the chance. He has already gotten international exposure by playing ODI and T20I matches. As our openers failed to deliver, we considered Naim's international experience."

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The inclusion of uncapped opener Naim Sheikh for the second Test against Pakistan has raised many eyebrows. Just after young opener Saif Hassan provided the selectors with ample evidence of how difficult it is to survive in international cricket, especially in the five-day game, with poor technique, why did they pick up Naim?

After all, Naim has hardly anything to show when it comes to longer-version cricket. The left-hander scored 183 runs in 11 first-class innings and played his last first-class game 19 months ago. His poor technique has also been exposed in recent T20I matches.

However, chief selector Minhajul Abedin was optimistic.

"We are hopeful he will have a good performance in Test cricket if he gets the chance. He has already

gotten international exposure by playing ODI and T20I matches. As our openers failed to deliver, we considered Naim's international experience," opined Minhajul.

Saif has been ruled out of the second Test against Pakistan, starting from November 4 in Mirpur, as well as from the tour of New Zealand after being diagnosed with typhoid. But Minhajul was unsure if Saif's absence would give Naim a chance to open the innings.

"We included Naim not only for the second Test against Pakistan but also considering our upcoming tour of New Zealand. Some questioned the size of the squad but we had to think about the New Zealand trip. The same team will fly for New Zealand on November 9. We are still unsure if he will open the innings in the second Test. We may opt for a different pair," he said.

Windies collapse before SL lose two

AFP, Galle

Ramesh Mendis led the Sri Lanka fightback at Galle with a six-wicket haul to bowl out the West Indies, but the hosts stumbled after returning to bat in the second Test on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka were 46-2 at stumps on day three, trailing by just three runs. But they lost Dimuth Karunaratne, who made six before he was run out in a superb piece of fielding by Kyle Mayers.

Karunaratne was man of the match in the first Test with scores of 147 and 83 but paid the price for attempting a quick early single as Mayers ran in and found him well short of the crease.

Oshada Fernando too was run out after being turned back by non-striker Pathum Nissanka.

With Angelo Mathews out with

a hamstring injury, losing two early wickets was a massive blow for Sri Lanka. They have never lost a home Test to West Indies.

Earlier, off-spinner Mendis belatedly found his line and length, dismissing Nkrumah Bonner to end his 75-run stand with West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite.

It broke a two-session drought for Mendis, who then ran through the tourists' middle order, ending with figures of 6-70 as the West Indies were all out for 253 after tea -- a lead of 49.

The West Indies fell apart against the bounce of the new ball, though Mendis was denied a seventh wicket when wicketkeeper Dinesh Chandimal dropped Kemar Roach on eight.

Left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya dismissed Brathwaite with a ball pitched on leg-stump that turned away sharply from the right-hander to clip the top of off-

stump. The West Indies, who have yet to win a Test match in Sri Lanka, were looking at a decent total and a considerable first-innings lead when they finished on 145-2 at lunch.

Brathwaite's straightforward footwork and impregnable defence were a vital bulwark for the West Indies after two top-order collapses in the first Test.

The skipper cashed in when loose balls were on offer and was relentless against Sri Lanka's two left-arm spinners, forcing the hosts to recalibrate to boundary protection.

But the afternoon collapse saw the visitors hand the initiative back to Sri Lanka on a fast-deteriorating wicket.

The second Test has been plagued by inclement weather and bad light, and Wednesday was the first full day played.

Sri Lanka lead the two-Test series 1-0.



West Indies' Roston Chase (L) celebrates as Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne gets run out on third day of the second Test in Galle on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP



TEAMS ARRIVE IN DHAKA

Captain Babar Azam gets off the plane as both Pakistan and Bangladesh teams returned to Dhaka yesterday for the second Test of the series, to be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from Saturday. The visitors won the Chattogram Test by eight wickets following a clean sweep in the three-match T20I series.

PHOTO: PCB

India's dilemma with return of Kohli

AFP, MUMBAI



Virat Kohli will return to lead India in the second Test against top-ranked New Zealand on Friday, posing a welcome selection dilemma for the hosts.

The Mumbai clash will mark Kohli's return after he stepped down as Twenty20 captain at the end of the World Cup last month and took a short break.

Shreyas Iyer's 105 and 65 in his debut Test, which ended in a draw in Kanpur against the Black Caps, has made it tough for Indian selectors to decide on their final XI.

"I think it's a good problem to have," Indian bowling coach Paras Mhambrey said Wednesday. "We have so much talent -- speaks a lot about the state Indian cricket is in, and with youngsters coming up, we want to give them the opportunity.

"Someone like Shreyas comes in, gets a hundred and follows it up with a fifty, and that's fabulous. But sometimes you also have to go in with combinations that suit that particular wicket."

Ajinkya Rahane, who led India in the first Test of the two-match series, has struggled to score runs and averaged under 20 across 12 matches this year. Top-order batsman Cheteshwar Pujara has made promising starts but failed to convert them into bigger scores. "We know that they (Rahane and Pujara) have a lot of experience behind them, they have played enough cricket," said Mhambrey.

"We also know as a team that they are one inning away from coming good, so as a team, we are backing them.

"We know the value they bring to the team."

New Zealand, the world Test champions after beating India in the title clash in June, denied the hosts a win in an enthralling five days of play in the opening match.

The final pairing of Rachin Ravindra and Ajaz Patel survived in dimming light as gutsy New Zealand held on for a memorable draw.

In Mumbai, Patel returns to his city of birth and where he played lot of cricket before his parents moved to New Zealand.

The 33-year-old spinner said he looked forward to playing at Wankhede Stadium, with many of his relatives watching from the stands.

