

SPORT

'If you want to catch someone, then must prepare accordingly'

Bangladesh returned to international hockey after 40 long months through the Men's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament but finished with the wooden spoon from their maiden campaign in Asia's top competition after suffering four defeats on the trot. Despite a disappointing yet expected outcome of a last-place finish, Arshad Hossain, the 20-year-old promising forward was inclined to focus on the positive aspects while talking to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman yesterday.

The Daily Star (DS): How did Bangladesh perform overall in their first-ever Asian Champions Trophy campaign?

Arshad Hossain (AH): You know, since all participating teams have been quality sides, both in terms of paper and ranking, I think we had a good campaign and gained much experience overall. In all four matches, we played better than anticipated, considering we stayed out of the international circuit for 40 months. I believe, if we are given more international exposure and necessary facilities to improve in future, we can give all good sides a

played international hockey in 2018 Asian Games before taking part in Champions Trophy this time. If you observe India, they are playing international matches regularly. Recently, they even managed to beat Olympic-gold medallist Argentina because of their planning and willingness to improve. If you want us to catch someone, then you must prepare us accordingly. We also have the problem of irregular domestic competitions, which are badly needed to draw the attention of upcoming players and to maintain an effective pipeline for the national team as well.



run for their money.

DS: But the fact remains that Bangladesh conceded 24 goals in four matches, of which the biggest 9-0 defeat was against India. Do you think the margins of defeats were justifiable?

AH: Both India and Japan play in the Olympics. And since Japan also conceded a 6-0 defeat to India, so in that case, I will say that our margin of defeat against India wasn't bad indeed. Besides, we played the first match against India after venturing into the tournament on the back of only a 10-day training. We did try our best to implement the plan that the coach had designed for the India match.

DS: That implies you reckon Bangladesh could have produced better results if they were given more time to prepare.

AH: It's not that we would have beaten them if we were given more preparation time but we could've certainly produced a much better performance than what we showcased. However, there was no shortage of effort from us to display something good but the fact is that we last

DS: Bangladesh lag behind other participating teams, no doubt. Can you point out the areas where Bangladesh have been trailing more than others?

AH: First of all, Bangladesh lag far behind in experience than other teams like India, Japan, Pakistan. After being used to a particular style of play, you also need to play more matches to experience match situations but we don't have such opportunities on a regular basis. Fitness was the second area we lacked because we recently played the domestic competitions after more than three years. The problems overall were a combination of experience, fitness and technique.

DS: You struck three of the four goals Bangladesh scored in four matches. How do you evaluate our own performance?

AH: Spectators always expect from the forwards to get goals and they only remember the scorers irrespective of the performances on the turf. I always tried to cash in on the opportunities because you don't get many in such big matches. Moreover, I tried to reduce the pressure on the players by contributing to an early lead.

**ADAMANT BUTTLER fails to deny Aussies**

AGENCIES



Australia ground down a battling England to win the second Test in Adelaide Monday and go 2-0 up in the Ashes series, leaving the visitors' dreams of winning back the hallowed urn in tatters.

It might have taken longer than most onlookers expected to achieve the result they almost unanimously did, but Australia secured their second hefty win in as many Ashes Tests and are all-but assured of retaining the urn.

In the 117-year history of five-Test Ashes series, only one team has recovered from a 0-2 deficit to win the last three matches and that was largely due to the individual mastery of Don Bradman in the summer of 1936-37.

The win, by 275 runs, was achieved with Jhye Richardson completing his maiden Test five-for, and with a minimum 21 overs remaining in the final session.

Richardson was hugely impressive in his return to Test cricket after almost two years battling shoulder injuries, and selectors face a tough call in finalising their attack for the next Test at the MCG starting Boxing Day with captain Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood expected to return. And in finishing the match with five wickets, spinner Nathan Lyon joins legendary leggie Shane Warne as the most successful Test bowler at Adelaide Oval.

The result extended England's winless streak in Tests in Australia to 12 stretching back to the final match of their successful 2010-11 campaign.

Only New Zealand (18 Tests from 1987-2011), as well as Sri Lanka (15 from 1988), West Indies

England keeper Jos Buttler had defied the eight-pronged Australia attack and his own reputation as a belligerent white-ball basher only to push the match into its last phase. Buttler, who had a wretched time behind the wicket, dropping several catches, produced a spectacular rearguard, spread over 207 deliveries, for an uncharacteristically dogged 26 that kept alive England's faint hopes of saving the match. The right-hander dogged resistance, however, ended in a bizarre fashion as Australia thrashed England by 275 runs in the day-night second test to go 2-0 up in the five-match Ashes series on Monday. It was soon snuffed out when the batsman, retreating deep into the crease to work a Jhye Richardson delivery on the off-side, trod on his own stumps.



(14 from 2000) and Pakistan (14 from 1999) who are all yet to win a Test here this century, have endured longer droughts in Australia.

England captain Joe Root said his side cannot afford to feel sorry for themselves after losing the second Test.

"The Ashes are on the line here, if that is not motivation, I don't know what is," Root said.

Buttler's 26 runs from 207 balls delayed Australia's victory charge for a while and Root said that should be the blueprint for the remaining matches in Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart.

"Ultimately that is the attitude and the mentality we have to harness over the next five days. I am extremely proud of the way the guys fought today, that attitude and desire that's how we need to go about a whole test match. I thought Jos's innings was outstanding on that pitch. He should have gained a lot more confidence from this," he added.

Interim Australian skipper Smith said: "We wanted to stay calm because we knew it would take a couple of good balls and a couple of wickets to get the win. I had fun this week, enjoyed it," he added. "The guys played well, controlled the game from the first day."

Marnus Labuschagne won player-of-the-match for scoring a century and a fifty but it was "exceptional" Mitchell Starc who was praised by Smith.

"They all bowled exceptionally well as a group, led by Mitchell Starc. Mitch led the attack really well. He summed it up quickly, not a great deal of swing so he bashed a good length, across the right-handers, in great rhythm."

The third Test begins in Melbourne on Sunday.

Relieved Tigers to train outdoors

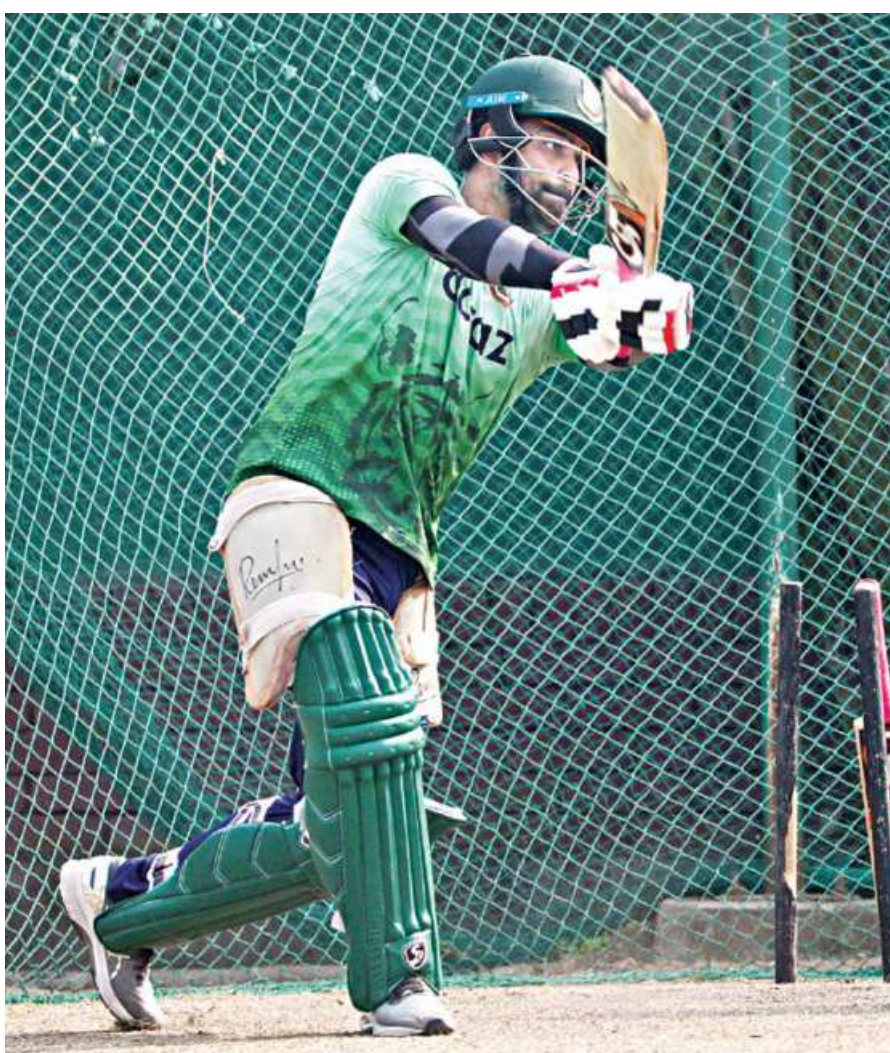
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A state of stability and relief returned to the Bangladesh camp on their two-Test tour of New Zealand after all the members of the side returned negative in their latest round of Covid-19 tests yesterday, allowing them to start preparing for the series from today.

Team director Khaled Mahmud informed that the players will be allowed to train outdoors in groups for the first time since landing on December 10.

"We had our last Covid-19 test here yesterday [Sunday] and the results came in today. All of us are tested negative," Mahmud told the media in a video message from Christchurch. "We have a training session at Lincoln University ground at 10:15am [local time]. Here we will also avail gym facilities," a relieved Mahmud added.

Earlier, a phase of turbulence began for the Tigers after Bangladesh's spin-bowling coach Rangana Herath tested positive for Covid-19 and a few members of the side came in contact with a Covid-patient on their flight to New Zealand.



After being sidelined for over two months from any forms of cricket due to a thumb injury, Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal returned to practise in Mirpur yesterday in an attempt to get back in action, presumably in the one-day format of the ongoing Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) next month.

PHOTO: BCB

Nasum reaches 100

SPORTS REPORTER



Left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed picked up a second consecutive five-wicket haul in the ongoing Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) and also scalped his 100th first-class wicket along the way, helping BCB South Zone bundle out BCB North Zone for 385 in their first innings on the second day of their encounter at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

South Zone replied well with the bat and ended the day on 112 for two, still trailing by another 273 runs with Towhid Hridoy (39 not out) and Amite Hasan (31 not out) set to resume the third day's play.

Earlier, after North Zone resumed the day on 246 for four, Nasum started off by removing centurion Naeem Islam. Nasum, who scalped

a solitary wicket the previous day, had Naeem caught behind after a 342-ball 137, featuring 15 fours and a maximum. Nasum went on to pick four more wickets, bagging his sixth five-wicket haul in first-class cricket.

The left-arm spinner reached the



100-wicket mark in first-class cricket when he trapped in front Shafiqul Islam, the last North Zone batter, to end with figures of six for 126.

Apart from Nasum, off-spinners Nahidul Islam and Mahedi Hasan also picked a couple of wickets each for South Zone. Meanwhile, at the

Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Walton Central Zone ended the second day on 223 for nine, still 22 runs behind Islami Bank East Zone's first-innings total of 245.

Central Zone, however, were left reeling at 32 for five at one stage as East Zone pacers Anamul Haque and Asaduzzaman Payel removed the top five batters. But a 152-run sixth-wicket stand helped Taibur Parvez and Jaker Ali helped Central Zone stage a brilliant comeback.

Jaker, however, would still be disappointed as he missed out his maiden first-class hundred by just eight runs. He was trapped leg-before by left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam after scoring 92 off 180 balls, smashing eleven fours and three sixes, while Taibur departed after scoring 76.

Payel picked up three wickets while Anamul, Nayeem Hasan, and Tanvir bagged two wickets each for East Zone.

Bangladesh Under-19 cricketers take selfie during an official photo session in Mirpur yesterday prior to their departure for the UAE, where they will take part in the ACC Asia Cup. Bangladesh begin their Group B campaign against Nepal on December 24. After completion of the Asia Cup, the team will travel directly to the West Indies to defend their ICC Under-19 World Cup title next month.

