

Mahmudullah banking on bowlers

SPORTS REPORTER

Following batting failures in the first two games of the three-match T20I series, Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad said that if his batters can take responsibility, the bowlers have the ability to defend a fighting total against West Indies in the third and final T20I in Guyana today.

Bangladesh's batting remained the biggest area of concern as the top-order was unable to make an impact in the Powerplay in the first two games while the lower middle order also failed to live up to the expectations.

"I think T20 cricket is such a game where, at times, the openers will give a good start while middle-order might not be able to continue, but someone has to take the responsibility like Shakib Al Hasan did in the previous game. His innings helped us reach



Lionel Messi was back in Paris Saint-Germain training on Tuesday, cutting short his vacation, like most of his teammates as the Parisian club started a new journey under new coach Christophe Galtier. The former Nice coach took over from Mauricio Pochettino as the Qatar-owned club appointed a seventh manager since 2011.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Tigers need a show of faith

MAZHAR UDDIN

Following defeat one after another across the formats, the confidence levels of the Bangladesh cricket team approach a nadir ahead of the third and final game of the T20I series against the West Indies in Guyana tonight.

Questions regarding the approach from the cricketers have been persistent regardless of whether it is in Tests or in the shortest format of the game. It seems that the Tigers are onboard a ship without a radar, unaware of their destination much less how to get there.

Bangladesh's batting was the biggest concern in the first two T20Is as the Tigers lost early wickets and were unable to utilise the Powerplay.

Prominent coach Mohammad Salahuddin believes it will be important for the Tigers to come up with a better approach in the opening position. He also believed they needed to utilise the last five overs to put up a fight.

"We all know what we are lacking. We have a big gap in the opening slot and we have very few players who can finish the game with the bat in the latter stages of an innings. These two areas are very important in the T20 format and I think the players need to improve their skills and undergo proper training. But other than that I don't see any solution at the moment," Salahuddin told The Daily Star

yesterday.

"I think very few in the team have the ability to use the first Powerplay to dominate opposing bowlers. So I think it will be better if they can improve their skills. I think, since we have experienced players in the middle, they can lay the platform for the last five overs."

Bangladesh fielded three seamers in the



second T20I, dropping left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed. But Salahuddin felt it would be better if the Tigers used two spinners and two left-arm spinners in the third game.

"I think there is very little chances of us winning against the West Indies through

our pace attack. Given our strengths, I think it would be better if we played with an extra left-arm spinner. You can't undo them by bowling 140kmph unless the bowlers have skills and variations. So it's better if we play with an extra spinner since we may be able to trouble them more," he said.

All eyes will be on skipper Mahmudullah Riyad after the previous T20 World Cup campaign ended in disaster last year, prompting lingering questions about his leadership qualities and whether he can come up with the aggressive attitude required from a captain, especially in the shortest format.

"If we follow the pattern of captaincy, we have to understand that what we do at home won't work abroad. At times you need to think outside the box. I think it is because of the mentality we have in our domestic cricket and I think we need come out of it," Salahuddin added.

According to Shakib Al Hasan's mentor, only time can change the Tigers' T20 fortunes and he advised against frequently chopping and changing the team.

"You have to work with the resources you have because there aren't other options. How long will you keep changing the team? If you make so many changes, the players get confused and the team also loses confidence. You can fail initially, but you have to place trust in them," he said.

Long way to go for local gymnasts

ANISUR RAHMAN

After working with the country's budding gymnasts for over two months, Korean coach Cho Sung Dong realised that Bangladeshi gymnasts and the coaches not only lack basic techniques but also trail in their thought processes toward the game.

Following some successes in Singapore Open in recent past, Bangladesh Gymnastics Federation (BGF) roped in high-profile Korean coach Cho Sung Dong in April in a quest to improve its level, with sights set on winning medals in the 2026 Asian Games.

"After coming here, I saw that the players lack basic techniques because the coaches are unable to guide gymnasts properly. They [coaches] don't even know how to teach players step by step," Dong told The Daily Star in an interview following a training session at the National Sports Council auditorium.

"The gymnasts and coaches are the same because they are not passionate enough about their intention and target. And I think it is a coach's duty to set targets for players instead of only spending time on the court," Dong added.



"Like the gymnasts from Japan, China and Korea, the players need to set their own targets and the Bangladeshi gymnasts are trailing in this aspect. They also lag behind in their thought process compared to the gymnasts of Japan, China and Korea."

Dong, who guided the Korean gymnasts to gold in Olympic Games, is now training some 14 budding players to help them improve mentally and physically in order to be able to compete at the international level.

"I have been working to change mentality of players and instill the can-do attitude in them. If that can be achieved, their confidence level will go up besides refinement in their basics that I am striving for in training sessions," the Bangladesh Gymnastic coach said. "The gymnasts also need a perfect body to be able to exercise properly and I am also trying to help the players get into the perfect body shape."

Dong believes that there has been an apparent change since his arrival with gymnasts showing interests to learn new techniques.

Asked how he plans on winning a medal in the 2026 Asian Games with a small number of gymnasts, Dong said, "It is a common problem in the world that every country has a limited number of gymnasts. But winning medals depend on efforts put in, facilities and method of training the countries adopt. We need a long time to achieve the target but we want to finish among the top three in the 2026 Asian Games team event as well as win a gold medal in the individual event."

RYBAKINA, HALEP meet in semis

REUTERS, London

Elena Rybakina recovered from a shaky start to overwhelm Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 on Wednesday and set up a Wimbledon semifinal with Simona Halep, becoming the first Kazakhstan player to reach the last four of a Grand Slam.

Rybakina, the 17th seed, struggled in the first set but then started finding her serving range, at one point taking seven games in a row to secure the second set and put her in control of the third.

The 23-year-old, who would not have been allowed to play at this year's Wimbledon had she not switched allegiance from Russia four years ago, finished the match with an ace - her 15th of the match.

"It's amazing and I'm really happy that I got through after a really tough match," she said.

Explaining a final set wobble after serving for it at 5-1, she added: "Maybe I was nervous. She played really well, was defending really well. I just tried to focus on myself to find my way and then I found it."

Rybakina struggled to reproduce the serving power and accuracy that had been a hallmark of her march into the last eight, failing to land almost half her first deliveries in the opening set.

She broke early in the second and though Tomljanovic's athletic court coverage enabled her to hit straight back, the tall Kazak then took total command,

breaking to love before winning the set on the back of 11 straight points.

She cranked up the pressure in the decider, taking a 3-0 lead after winning seven games in a row, and breaking again for 5-1.

Tomljanovic was left throwing her arms up in despair as nothing she tried seem to come off and she sensed her hopes of a first Grand Slam semi-final were slipping away for the second year in

a row.

Serving for the match and the biggest win of her career, Rybakina slumped to 0-40, and though she fought back to deuce, Tomljanovic completed to break to cling on to her outside hope.

The Kazak then wasted two match points on Tomljanovic's serve but it was the briefest of respites as Rybakina hammered down three service winners to close out her victory in style.



Romania's Simona Halep celebrates winning a point against Amanda Anisimova of USA during their quarterfinal match of the Wimbledon Championships at The All England Tennis Club in on Wednesday. The former champion won the match 6-2, 6-4.

PHOTO: AFP

Advertisement

The Hoque Foundation: A 17-year-old's dream to alleviate extreme poverty in Bangladesh

The Hoque Foundation is a Dhaka-based charity organisation that merged the power of research with the disparities and inequalities of Bangladesh and the developed world to solve extreme hunger and lack of affordable healthcare.

A photograph of Shayanel Hoque, a young man in a green shirt, handing a white food package to a group of people, including women and children, who are standing in a line outdoors.

The Hoque Foundation's founder, Shayanel Hoque, in Gulshan giving out large packages with 2 week's worth of food supply in the month of Ramadan 2022. Photo: Courtesy

Seventeen-year-old Shayanel Hoque is a visionary and philanthropist who dreams of alleviating extreme poverty in Bangladesh.

Growing up at an early age, he realised the state of Bangladesh's healthcare is not as developed as other nations around the world. With each passing day, more and more of his family members and people around him would suffer from the lack of health infrastructure in Bangladesh.

First, it was his paternal grandmother who passed away at the age of 63. She won her battle against multiple myeloma cancer in 2008, however lost against breast cancer in 2011. Second, his maternal grandfather passed away at the age of 53 due to cardiac arrest in 2017 during the month of Ramadan. Third, his paternal grandfather passed away in 2021 caused by a brain stroke and later brain death. Indeed, Shayanel has suffered enough, let alone what 170 million other Bangladeshis go through.

To this end, and on his sole mission, he began his work by working amongst Ph.D. researchers from Harvard, Oxford, Brown, and Yale University to deliberately identify the lacking issue. By great surprise, he found medical technology and government spending to cause a plethora of spiralling issues.

The founder of The Hoque Foundation, Shayanel Hoque, decided to follow his passion knowing what may lie at the end of the road.

Eventually, in 2021, both his research papers were published at international peer-reviewed journals which sparked his interest in his charitable organisation. Joining forces with large corporations in Bangladesh for donations, The Hoque Foundation began sending 3 food trucks to the most rural regions in the country.

So far, The Hoque Foundation has successfully helped over 500,000 individuals suffering from extreme poverty in several donation drives.

At present, they are researching the implementation of quality healthcare physicians at extremely low costs, nutritional foods, as well as filtration technology for access to clean water.

His motivation from the great catastrophes faced in his life and the scale of this unsolved issue in his country drives him to constantly create a difference and be a changemaker.