

Hathurusingha hails ‘maturity’ of quicks

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a rare sight to see Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, known as a hard taskmaster, heap praises on his side as the Tigers crushed Afghanistan by a record 546 runs in the one-off Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Saturday.

While the calibre of the side fielded by the visitors can be brought into question after a thoroughly one-sided affair, Bangladesh can be credited for having sheer clarity while executing most of their game plans, carrying it out in the manner in which they did, spearheaded by the pace brigade.

The Tigers think tank learnt from the mistake that embarrassed them in 2019 against the same side who handed a 224-run defeat at home, owing to a spin-friendly track which the likes of Rashid Khan and Mujeeb Ur Rahman used to full advantage. This time around, however, Bangladesh veered away from that ploy and opted for a track that suited their much-accomplished quicks.

Hathurusingha credited his team for overcoming the mental barrier that the Tigers have often faced when showing the willingness to play on tracks that are green and offer help for the pacers at home. The 54-year-old praised the mentality his camp had about playing on such a wicket which was a far cry from what is usually offered in Mirpur.

“I don’t know if you have seen it but I’ve written on social media that it is more than a Test win. What I meant was, the way we prepared for this game is something we haven’t done before,” Hathurusingha told reporters on Sunday.

“If we think about the way we prepared the wicket, which was fast and green, I think that it was a big win for us.

“To play on that type of a wicket and then come away with flying colours is a big mental barrier that we broke because, before the game, I felt a lot of people had doubts about the way we would go. We even played in a way that we normally don’t. We had a different strength,” the 54-year-old added.

The Tigers’ fast-bowling trio of Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, and Ebadot Hossain shared 14 scalps as they disallowed any kind of Afghan resistance. Hathurusingha was “very pleased” at seeing his pacers being disciplined on a wicket that offered enough assistance for the quicks.

“Now, we have options to use fast bowlers to win matches. The pleasing thing is even on that fast, bouncy wicket they didn’t get carried away. The way they bowled was so good, a very professional approach. They didn’t use the bouncer for the sake of using it. Most of the wickets came when batters were on the front foot. Those little things show the maturity of the fast bowlers. They have come a long way,” he said.



After a satisfying outcome in the one-off Test against Afghanistan, Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha wasted no time to shift his focus to the next month’s ODI series against the same opponents as he speaks with ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal during a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

‘I try to be the best version of myself’

Bangladesh opener Zakir Hasan burst onto the scene with a century on Test debut against India last year and came close to scoring a second hundred in just his third Test on Friday. The left-hander garnered praises of his head coach Chandika Hathurusingha following the Tigers’ record win against Afghanistan. The Sri Lankan appreciated Zakir’s ability to handle both pacers and spinners with authority. In an exclusive interview with **Mazhar Uddin of The Daily Star**, the 25-year-old spoke about his game, ambition and more. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): What was going through your mind after having missed the last series against Ireland due to injury?

Zakir Hasan (ZH): To be honest, I didn’t think much as I had prepared myself during the A team’s four-day series against West Indies. I think the match-practice went well for me ahead of the Afghanistan Test. I never thought of making a comeback but focused only on the task ahead and gave my best.

DS: How did you adjust to the revamped Mirpur pitch?

ZH: We don’t normally play on such wickets in Mirpur, with grass in it. So, it was a challenge for the batters and the bounce was not even all the time as well. But ultimately, I don’t think much about what’s not in my hand, rather focus more on how I can bat well. Perhaps not thinking much helped me, to some extent. The type of wicket we played against Afghanistan will certainly help us to gain some confidence when we play abroad.

DS: Do you feel a bit unlucky to miss out on a ton?

ZH: Obviously, all batters wish to score a hundred in every innings. I was looking forward to the hundred and it was unexpected after I got run out in my seventies. I think it will remain as a lesson for me whenever I bat in such a situation in future.

DS: Is the ability to stay at the crease for long your key strength?

ZH: Kind of. In Test matches there is nothing to hurry as a top-order [batter] and the more you can spend time at the crease, the better. It also helps to understand the game and make the innings a big one.

DS: Do you wish to be an all-format player or just focus on Tests?

ZH: To be honest, I should have the ability to play all formats. Whenever there is a Test, I have to focus on it and since there is a long gap now, I will try to work on my batting for the other formats as well and prepare for the future.


DS: Having much-improved fast bowlers as teammates, does that elevate your game?

ZH: Definitely. When you have a really good pace-bowling unit and you face them at the nets, it actually boosts your confidence to face any bowler in world cricket.

DS: Do you look up to anyone as a batting role model?

ZH: Not really. I never tried to copy anyone but I try to be the best version of myself. However, yes, I really enjoy [Mominul Haque] Showrab bhai’s batting and admire his sense of discipline.





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Bangladesh head coach
CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA



‘WITH RACISM, THERE IS NO GAME’

Brazil outclassed Guinea 4-1 in a friendly on Saturday as Joelinton, Rodrygo, Eder Militao and Vinicius Jr scored for the five-times world champions. In a powerful move Brazil abandoned their iconic yellow and green shirts and were instead kitted out in an all-black strip in a stand against racism for the first half of the game. The 22-year-old Real Madrid forward Vinicius has been subjected to frequent racist abuse this season and Brazil decided the friendly was a good opportunity to strike back as the match was staged in Espanyol’s stadium near Barcelona. The Brazilian Football Confederation was behind the gesture accompanied by the slogan of “Com racismo nao tem jogo” (With racism, there is no game).



PHOTO: REUTERS

Rashid returns for Bangladesh ODIs

SPORTS REPORTER



Ace leg spinner Rashid Khan returned for the ODI series against Bangladesh after being rested for the one-off Test, which concluded in Mirpur on Saturday.

The three-match ODI series will be played from July 5 to 11 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

The Afghan selectors announced an 18-member squad, led by skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi where the likes of Mohammad Nabi, Mujeeb Ur Rahman also feature.

Uncapped leg-spinner Izharulhaq Naveed, who impressed in the last Big Bash, was named in the ODI squad. Shahidullah, Zia-ur-Rehman, Wafadar Momand, Mohammad Saleem and Sayed Shirzad are the other new faces to be added to the squad that recently toured Sri Lanka.

Squad

Hashmatullah Shahidi (capt), Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, Riaz Hassan, Rahmat Shah, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Nabi, Ikram Alikhil, Rashid Khan, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Abdul Rahman, Shahidullah, Zia-ur-Rehman, Wafadar Momand, Mohammad Saleem, Sayed Shirzad

Afif, Ebadot back in T20 squad

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Batter Afif Hossain and pacer Ebadot Hossain returned to the squad as Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday announced a 15-member squad for the two T20Is against Afghanistan, which will be held on July 14 and 16 at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

Afif was dropped from the squad that faced Ireland at home in March while Ebadot last played in the T20 World Cup last year.

SQUAD

Shakib Al Hasan (Captain), Liton Das, Rony Talukdar, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Shamim Hossain, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Nasum Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain, Shoriful Islam, Rishad Hossain, Afif Hossain

Booters train in Bengaluru

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team began their third-phase preparation for the SAFF Championship with their first training session in Bengaluru yesterday.

Bangladesh completed their first and second phases of preparation in Dhaka and Cambodia before heading to Bengaluru, where the eight-nation tournament will kick off on June 21.

The men in red and green went through some unexpected issues including a lengthy immigration procedure due to e-visas of the team’s foreign coaching staff and unsatisfactory accommodation at a hotel before a change of accommodation helped them settle. Yesterday afternoon’s training session was their first since their 1-0 win over Cambodia on Thursday.

“We had our first training session on artificial turf today after arriving here the day before yesterday night following a long journey and with fatigue from the game in Cambodia. We are now working on some areas that we need to improve from the previous games,” head coach Javier Cabrera said in a video message.

Cabrera is now fully focused on Bangladesh’s first match against Lebanon on June 22 and he is studying footages of Lebanon’s Intercontinental Cup matches against Mongolia and India, he added.



PHOTO: REUTERS

England paceman James Anderson produced a beauty on the morning session of Day 3 at Edgbaston yesterday that nipped back in and snuck through Alex Carey’s bat-pad gap to castle him and gave him 1100th first-class wicket. Australia were bowled out for 386 before lunch in their reply to the hosts’ first innings total of 393, with Usman Khawaja scoring 141 runs - his first Test century in England.