



The bad patch of Bangladesh's stand-in skipper Liton Das continued as he was dismissed for a 16-ball 6 in the second ODI against New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Earlier, Bangladesh recalled Ish Sodhi to bat again after he was Mankaded by Hasan Mahmud. Ultimately, Sodhi's 35-run innings helped the visitors post 254. The leg-spinner, Sodhi, then returned with stunning figures of 10-1-39-6 to wreak havoc in Bangladesh's innings. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



"Their [New Zealand] lower order did really well. The wicket was not bad to bat on. Probably [we were] not up to the mark in batting. Our two senior guys played really well [with the bat]. Somebody has to get an 80 or 90 or 100."

Bangladesh stand-in captain
LITON DAS

"Excellent win by the boys. The way Henry and Blundell batted today took off the pressure. The way Ish bowled today was exceptional. Nice to see after all the hard work he has done. Nice to see Ish get the runs, and Kyle as well. Nice team performance."

New Zealand stand-in captain
LOCKIE FERGUSON

"Really good day. Coming on the winning side... historically, we haven't done too well. Thanks to Liton for calling me back. We thought it would start turning later in the day. Even Ravindra and McConchie got it to spin later. Not every day is like that. This is really a tough place to come and win."

ISH SODHI

SPORTS REPORTER

With the World Cup just around the corner, the three-match ODI series against New Zealand was expected to be an ideal platform for the vulnerable Bangladesh top-order to reassess its focus and gain confidence.

The return of Tamim Iqbal at the top will surely give a lot of confidence to the team management and the left-handed batter looked good during a 58-ball 44 in the second ODI against New Zealand yesterday.

What will cause a lot of concern for the team management, though, is the



and it was important for him to return to the groove. The series against New Zealand at home would have been an ideal platform for Liton to get amongst the runs, but he failed to make another opportunity count.

A prolific run getter for the Tigers in the last year with 338 runs in 17 innings at an average of 24.14, Liton has seen runs dry up this year. And the run-drought continued for the right-hander in Mirpur yesterday where he was dismissed for just six runs off 16 deliveries.

Chasing a competitive target of 255, the Tigers required a steady start on a tricky Mirpur surface. Liton looked uncomfortable right from the start of his innings and was unable to find rhythm, eventually handing a catch at third-man region while trying a slash to a wide

delivery from pacer Kyle Jamieson.

"I think it is a concern, not because he is not able to score runs but I think he lacks confidence. He is lacking the confidence of a top-order batter who needs to play the moving deliveries. Even when he played the first ball today (yesterday), he looked very slow and it seems like he is doubting his own game. He looks lost and doesn't know what to do and maybe he is trying different things in different ways," prominent coach Nazmul Abedeen Fahim told The Daily Star during the Bangladesh innings.

The added responsibility of leading the team in absence of regular skipper Shakib Al Hasan may have also made things difficult for Liton, according to Fahim.

"This could be a factor (captaincy adding pressure). You know it makes you think differently when you play as a normal player compared to when you play as a captain, but that shouldn't be the case," he said.

With just over two weeks before the start of Bangladesh's World Cup campaign, time is ticking for Liton to return to form. According to Fahim, it is important for the wicketkeeper-batter to spend time in the middle to regain confidence.

"There's no short cut. He needs to feel that he is able to middle the ball; it's about that good feeling. It's a matter of self-belief and I think that area has been dented. He needs to score runs and spend time in the middle, no matter where he plays," the veteran coach added.

BPL players' draft takes place today

SPORTS REPORTER

The players' draft of the 10th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) will take place at a city hotel today.

The BPL governing council already named 203 local players, divided into seven categories, in the players' draft for the auction.

BDT 80 lakh has been set aside for Category A, where Mushfiqur Rahim is the sole representative. Four cricketers (BDT 50 Lakh) are in Category B, 18 in Category C (30 lakh), 31 in Category D (20 lakh), 75 in Category E (15 lakh), 29 in Category F (10 lakh), and 45 in Category G (5 lakh).

So far, Shakib Al Hasan directly signed for Rangpur Riders, while Tamim Iqbal was roped in by Fortune Barishal Holders Comilla Victorians, Duronto Dhaka, and Chattogram Challengers will be represented by Liton Das, Taskin Ahmed, and Shuvagata Hom, respectively.

A total of 443 foreign cricketers were drafted into five categories, with salaries ranging from USD 80,000 to USD 20,000.

Earlier in June, BPL governing council member secretary informed that the seven-team franchise-based tournament would most likely begin after Bangladesh's general election in January next year.



Al Nassr superstar Cristiano Ronaldo scored a brace during his side's 4-3 victory against Al Ahli in the Saudi Pro League, taking his tally to nine goals since the start of the season. The 38-year-old striker stated after the match that there is plenty still left in the tank. "I still love football. Even at my age, I love playing, scoring goals and winning games. I'm going to keep playing until my legs say 'Cristiano, it's over'. Until then I'll keep playing and helping the team. They say I'm done but I'm still proving that it's not true."

PHOTO: AL NASSR

Zinnat gets bye in first round

SPORTS REPORTER FROM HANGZHOU

New York-based boxer Zinnat Ferdous got a bye in the first-round in 50kg weight category of the Asian Games, which officially got underway in Hangzhou yesterday.

Zinnat will face the winner of the match between Yesugen Oyuntseseg of Mongolia and Aira Villegas of the Philippines in pre-qualifiers on September 27.

"It's good for me as I have got the opportunity to watch the opening ceremony," Zinnat said. "I will also get chance to watch my opponents, rings and some others even though I was ready for my first fight."

Zinnat said boxing is changing rapidly, so past video clips of the opponents would not help her much.

"I had the opportunity to watch how the opponents fought but if it will be different this time. Nevertheless, it was nice to watch her just before my bout," added Zinnat.

Some 18 boxers are taking part in this particular weight category.

KOLY EYES A MEDAL

Though Bangladesh won a number of medals from shooting in the Commonwealth Games, the discipline has failed to fetch a single medal for the country in the Asian Games.

The hope this time will lie with Kamrun Nahar Koly, Shaira Khatun and Nafisa Tabassum.

"I feel a bit nervous in my first appearance in the



Asian Games. We had great practice today. If we can shoot like the practice session, we can hope to bring a medal for Bangladesh," said Koly, who will team up with Shaira and Nafisa for the 10m air rifle team event as well as individual event.

"Our women's team is really strong. We can expect a medal from any one individually or as a team," said Koly, whose personal best is 629.2 points.

GYMNASTS AIM FOR FINALS

Though Bangladesh coach expressed little expectation with Abu Sayeed Rafi and Sangkhya Khumi, the duo is determined to show their best to secure places in the final round.

Rafi will play in pommel horse and vaulting apparatus while Khumi will take part in four apparatuses with Rafi.

"We have been taking preparation for Asian Games for a long time and our target is to qualify for the finals," Rafi said.

"Though we don't have facilities like China, Japan and Korea, we have prepared with whatever we have and hope to fight against them."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh women's cricket team will play against India in the quarterfinals today while men's football team will play their last group match against group leaders China.

Athletes from hockey, chess, taekwondo and swimming will also start their campaigns on Sunday.



Members of the Bangladesh delegation take part in the parade during a colourful opening ceremony of the 2022 Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium in Hangzhou in China yesterday. Chinese President Xi Jinping declared the 19th Asian Games open, launching a two-week sporting extravaganza that boasts more athletes than the Olympics.

PHOTO: AFP

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS

SELECT HD2

English Premier League

Liverpool vs West Ham

Live from 7:00 pm

STAR SPORTS

SELECT HD1

English Premier League

Arsenal vs Tottenham

Live from 7:00 pm

Sheffield United vs

Newcastle United

Live from 9:30 pm