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Shakib wins the less significant ‘war’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan yesterday did not hesitate in admitting that his struggling side was ‘at a war’ and that he had to do anything he could to see his side win at least one battle, if not the entire war.

Bangladesh had lost six successive games in the ongoing World Cup before bouncing back to somewhat redeem themselves with a three-wicket win over Sri Lanka at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

However, the impact of the victory – which boosted Bangladesh’s chances of making it to the 2025 Champions Trophy by finishing in the top seven of the standings, and also saw Sri Lanka officially out of the semifinals race – was overshadowed by what had transpired in a smog-choked Delhi.

Angelo Mathews of Sri Lanka was ‘timed out’ for the first time in international cricket when Bangladesh skipper Shakib had opted to appeal for his wicket on grounds that he was in breach of the ICC law that states that an incoming batter needs to be ready to take strike within two minutes of a dismissal.

“One of our fielders came to me and said ‘If you appeal now, he will be out’. Then I appealed and the umpire asked me whether I was serious [about it] and if I was going to take it back or not. I said ‘No, if it is in the rule, if it’s out then I won’t take it back,’” Shakib, wearing a coy smirk on his face, clarified what had happened at the post-match presentation ceremony.



Bangladesh pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib celebrates with his teammates after casting Sri Lanka opener Pathum Nissanka, who put away eight fours for his 36-ball 41 in their ICC World Cup encounter in Delhi yesterday. Sakib returned figures of three for 80 on his World Cup debut, helping Bangladesh to bundle out the Lankans for 279. [Inset] Sri Lanka batter Charith Asalanka notched up his second ODI ton to help the Lankans past 250.

PHOTO: AFP



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BOWLERS IMPRESS under pressure

MAZHAR UDDIN from New Delhi

The unprecedented ‘Timed out’ dismissal of Angelo Mathews may have been the key talking point during Sri Lanka innings, but Bangladesh bowlers did enough to make their presence felt on a batting-friendly Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi yesterday.

Coming into their eighth ICC World Cup match on the back of six consecutive defeats, skipper Shakib Al Hasan took the bold decision of opting to bowl and the bowlers responded to bundle out Sri Lanka for 279 in 49.3 overs.

Lankan skipper Kusal Mendis mentioned during the toss that anything above 300 would be a safe total in this pitch and eventually, Charith Asalanka’s second ODI hundred helped Sri Lanka post a challenging total.

World Cup-debutant Tanzim Hasan Sakib scalped team-high three wickets – including the prized wicket of Asalanka – but the pacer remained expensive. Left-arm pacer Shoriful Islam and Shakib also bagged a

couple each, Miraz took one, while Taskin Ahmed kept things tight.

Bangladesh’s fielding also remained up to the mark. In the innings’ second over, wicket-keeper Mushfiqur Rahim set the tone with a brilliant diving catch to send back opener Kusal Perera.

Pathum Nissanka and skipper Mendis, however, added 61 runs for

The Tigers acquired a good grip on proceedings from then onwards and with Matthews ‘Timed out’ dismissal, Sri Lanka were struggling 135 for five at halfway.

Sadeera Samarawickrama then joined Asalanka to restart the rebuilding process. But, once again, Shakib provided the vital breakthrough by removing dangerous Samarawickrama (41) to break the 63-run stand.

That dismissal, however, did not dent Sri Lanka’s spirit as the innings’ highest partnership, 78, materialised through Asalanka and Dhananjaya De Silva.

Asalanka fought the lone battle and shepherded the tail from then, and picked up his century in the process before being dismissed on 108 off 105 balls, laced with five sixes and six fours.

Bangladesh bowlers demonstrated a disciplined act in the last five overs, conceding just 27 runs while picking up four wickets, paving the way for the Tigers to have the necessary momentum when they came out to chase.

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the first wicket but Bangladesh struck a double blow.

First, Shakib sent Mendis (19) packing and was aided by Shoriful who took a sharp catch in the deep. Nissanka (41) was the next to fall, bowled out by pacer Sakib, leaving the island nation at 72 for three inside 13 overs.

Does Liton understand the value of his wicket?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh opener Liton Das had managed three starts at this World Cup – a stat that cannot be considered poor given how abysmal the Tigers’ overall batting performance has been throughout the mega event.

Time and time again, however, Liton has failed to put a value on his wicket despite having big expectations pinned on him.

Liton was watchful against Sri Lanka yesterday and looked in good touch. But the rush of blood or the sheer unawareness came before. Only good timing does not make a good batter, at least not in international cricket and certainly not in a World Cup game.

After Dilshan Madushanka had added to his World Cup haul with the wicket of opener Tanzid Tamim, out to a rash shot, Liton proceeded to pull the left-arm pacer in the very same over, with the ball going straight to the man at square-leg. The ball travelled fiercely and just about carried before Kusal Perera dropped and it went away for four.

With the new ball doing a lot, openers need to ensure that they see off that swing and movement. Winning a war means losing some battles while winning the crucial ones. Preserving wicket even when being a little bogged down is about making such a concession in order to reach bigger goals.

That shot was on, but the manner in which Liton played it was not, as the right hander survived a scare. It was also a shot pretty similar to the shot he played against Trent Boult in the Tigers’ New Zealand game when Liton moved across and flicked it straight to the fielder at fine-leg in the very first delivery of the innings.

Had he shown more intent, it should have cleared the fence. Had he felt that it was too early, he could have rolled his wrist to keep it down. Neither he played it with enough authority to clear the fielder nor did he try to keep it down in Boult’s first delivery. The pattern then developed yesterday with that dropped catch.

Liton’s two sixes off Kasun Rajitha once again showed his calibre, but the war was still on and he had not paid attention.

Madushanka had troubled Najmul Hossain Shanto in the fifth over of the innings, beating the batter on a couple of occasions with outswingers. When Madushanka came in for another over, Liton, suffering from a cramp, did not move his feet much but more importantly, he showed no urgency of occupying and surviving the natural shape Madushanka was getting – an inswinger for Liton.

The yorker hit Liton at the base of the foot, plumb in front of stumps as he departed after a 22-ball 23. While many batters may fall to such a delivery, the signs were enough evidence to suggest Liton should have been more alert for that delivery.

Against India and Pakistan, Liton had gotten starts but threw it away to poor shots at crucial moments.

“I need to go big when I get in,” Ian Bishop at commentary was suggesting when Liton came in to bat yesterday. At this moment, however, Liton has not made it big with his best knock at this World Cup – a 76-run knock against England – coming in a losing cause. His case, much like the rest of the team, has been the lack of impetus to read situations better, and given his batting position, it proved calamitous at this World Cup.



SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 279 all out in 49.3 overs (Nissanka 41, Samarawickrama 41, Asalanka 108, Dhananjaya de Silva 34; Shoriful 2-51, Sakib 3-80, Shakib 2-57, Miraz 1-49)

Bangladesh: 282 for 7 in 41.1 overs (Liton 23, Shanto 90, Shakib 82, Mahmudullah 22, Mushfiqur 10, Hridoy 15 not out; Madushanka 3-69, Theekshana 2-44, Mathews 2-35)

Result: Bangladesh won by three wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Shakib Al Hasan

The Tigers, especially Shakib, had been receiving a lot of stick for one of their most underwhelming showing in World Cups. Bangladesh came to this game on the back of an 87-run thumping at the hands of the Netherlands, the only associate nation in this tournament.

Bangladesh’s dire plight was not helped when Shakib decided to take a short trip back home in the middle of the tournament to prepare separately, or by the way his team tackled many issues in the ongoing event – Liton Das throwing out media personnel from the team hotel in Pune and later apologising for it can be brought to the fore in this regard.

No wonder Shakib felt that he was ‘at war’.

“I don’t know if it’s right or wrong but I felt like I was at a war and I had to take a decision to make sure that my team wins, and whatever I had to do for it, I did. There will be debates about whether it is right or wrong, but if it’s in the rules then I do not mind taking those chances,” he said.

Shakib, who won the player of the match for his 82-run knock and two wickets, said that the clash with Mathews ignited a ‘fight within himself’ that now rarely comes to the 36-year-old, helping him to play a match-winning knock.

Shakib did manage to win the war yesterday, but, unfortunately, the same can not be said of his side, who are still lingering at the bottom half of the table.

Ranatunga vows to reform ‘most corrupt’ SLC

AFP, COLOMBO

Sri Lanka’s sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe sacked the national cricket board on Monday, days after a humiliating defeat by India at the World Cup.

Ranasinghe has been at loggerheads with Sri Lanka Cricket – the richest sports organisation on the financially-stricken island – for months over allegations of widespread corruption.

The country’s 1996 World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga, 59, has been appointed chairman of a new interim board, Ranasinghe’s office said in a statement.

The former captain was “the most suitable person to revive cricket”, the minister told reporters in Colombo. “The priority is to get the team to perform better.” Three judges were included on the seven-member panel to help investigate corruption, he added.

Ranatunga said he had accepted the challenge of rebuilding cricket.

“Sri Lanka Cricket had become known as the most corrupt institution in the country,” he added. “I want to change that image.”

The move came a day after the board’s second-highest officer,

secretary Mohan de Silva, quit.

Minister Ranasinghe publicly demanded the entire board’s resignations after Sri Lanka’s 302-run World Cup thrashing by hosts India last week. The defeat prompted a public outcry and police have been deployed outside the board office in Colombo since Saturday when there were angry



protests. Ranasinghe said that Sri Lanka Cricket officials had no moral or ethical right to remain in office.

The interim panel is the 10th appointed by a sports minister for various reasons since 1999 – when the government intervened after the president’s uncle lost the election to lead the board – despite International Cricket Council rules against political interference.

On Saturday, Ranasinghe wrote to full members of the ICC asking for their understanding and support.

“Sri Lanka Cricket has been besieged with complaints of player disciplinary issues, management corruption, financial misconduct and match-fixing allegations,” Ranasinghe said in the letters, released to Sri Lankan media. “I would like to emphasise that interim measures will only be taken to establish good governance principles.”

The minister was last month forced by the ICC to withdraw a three-member panel he had appointed to investigate alleged corruption at the board after it was deemed to violate the interference rules.

There was no immediate reaction from the ICC to Ranasinghe’s latest move. Sri Lanka have not won the World Cup since 1996, with Ranasinghe blaming the board for the “deterioration” of standards.

Another cabinet minister, Prasanna Ranatunga – brother of the newly appointed interim board chairman – told parliament in August that the 1996 triumph had been “the biggest curse for our cricket”.

“Money started flowing to the cricket board after 1996 and with that came those who wanted to steal,” he said.



Sri Lanka all-rounder Angelo Mathews was left bemused as he became the first player to be given “timed out” in international cricket in a World Cup clash against Bangladesh in New Delhi yesterday. Being unable to secure his helmet strap tightly enough, Mathews had taken more than two minutes -- a timeline mandated by ICC for any incoming batter -- to take strike and was given out after Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan appealed. There are only six instances of such dismissal in first-class cricket and none in List A or T20s.

PHOTO: AFP

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