

The curious case of ANAMUL

SPORTS REPORTER

From bursting onto the scene in 2012, to getting shunned from the team for three years and to now becoming an in-and-out figure in the past two years, Anamul Haque's journey in ODIs has been topsy-turvy to say the least.

The wicketkeeper-batter got an opportunity in the ODI series against New Zealand where he scored 43, two and 37 runs respectively in three matches.

In the first and third match, Anamul was able to provide a quick start opening the innings but his failure to kick on in the first game and finishing the job in the third one reinforced his reputation of being an unreliable batter who seems unsure of his role.

"I think his innings at times reflects insecurity. I think he doesn't feel assured as a cricketer and that hampers his game. He always thinks he needs to score big, otherwise he will lose his place from the team," prominent coach Nazmul Abedeen Fahim told The Daily Star.

The 31-year-old's career hit a block when he suffered a shoulder injury while fielding against Scotland in a group-stage match of the 2015 ICC World Cup,



which ruled him out for a few months.

After that, Anamul got slowly reduced to an afterthought, as the selectors seemingly lost faith in him and mainly considered him as a back-up option.

There was also a lack of clarity from the selectors.

Anamul made his return to the ODI side after almost three years after scoring heavily in the domestic four-day competition. Unsurprisingly, he failed to make his comeback count.

This lack of foresight was once again evident when Anamul got roped in the Test squad for last year's West Indies tour after he scored 1,138 runs in the Dhaka Premier League, breaking the world record for scoring the most number of runs in a 50-over competition.

This time too, Anamul failed to score big and was not picked in the white-ball matches in the tour.

Fahim believes to get the best out of Anamul, the think tank needs to back him

"I think it's important for the selectors, coach and the player to work together and assure the player and at times when needed back that player."

SCORES IN BRIEF

New Zealand: 98 in 31.4 overs (Young 26; Sakib 3-14, Soumya 3-18, Shoriful 3-22)

Bangladesh: 99 for one in 15.1 overs (Shanto 51 not out, Anamul 37)

Result: Bangladesh won by 9 wickets. Player-of-the-match: Tanzim Hasan Sakib.

Bangladesh ended their 18-match losing streak in ODIs against New Zealand in New Zealand in stunning fashion, routing the hosts for 98 and then chasing down the target with nine wickets to spare at the McLean Park in Napier yesterday. However, it was the defeated Kiwis that celebrated with the trophy after the match as they had won the three-match series 2-1 on the back of winning the first two ODIs.

PHOTO: AFP

Soumya Sarkar played his part with the ball in the third ODI, picking up three wickets, but couldn't contribute with the bat as he had to retire hurt on four after a bug flew into Soumya's right eye. The opener first applied water and then eye drops but the irritation was too much for him and eventually he chose to walk off. With that, Soumya became the ninth Bangladeshi batter to retire hurt in international cricket, fifth in ODIs.

BARRIER BREACHED but will history repeat?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh may have lost the just-concluded three-match ODI series, but winning their maiden encounter in the format against New Zealand in New Zealand on their 19th attempt provides the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side with the necessary confidence boost for the upcoming three T20Is.

The visitors turned up with a undampened spirit despite having conceded the series before the third and final ODI in Napier yesterday. And before they cruised to a nine-wicket victory, the home side were all out for their lowest-ever total, 98, against the Tigers in the format.

Shanto's leadership qualities on the pitch had garnered the attention of many, and the 25-year-old exhibited tremendous maturity off it. The Bangladesh captain, however, was reluctant to bask in the success and appeared fixated on further accomplishments.

"If you consider the history then obviously, we have done something to be proud of since we were able to win a game here. But if you ask me personally, I came here to win the series and I meant it," Shanto told the media yesterday.

"I think we were a bit unlucky in the first game as we ran out of bowling options due to the rain break. So yes, obviously happy, but I would have been happier if we were able to win the series."

Much like the historic Mount Maunganui Test win in 2022, in which the pacers led the way, the Bangladeshi seamers once again demonstrated their

"I believe this team could go to a better position. But rather than thinking of the outcome, it is crucial to consider whether we have the right kind of preparation and belief in our abilities."

BANGLADESH CAPTAIN NAJMUL HOSSAIN SHANTO

ability to exploit the bowling friendly surfaces, with player of the match Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Shoriful Islam, and Soumya Sarkar tormenting the hosts' batters to pick three wickets apiece.

Shanto, however, did not want to single out a particular bowler behind the success.

"I think the entire bowling unit bowled well today (yesterday). But I expect more from them and I personally believe they can bowl a lot better in such conditions. I think the bowlers are also thinking about how they can improve, and they were able to execute that today [yesterday]."

"But we've to think about how we can do even better since we have the T20I series coming up. So, if we want to become a good team and play well in the coming days we have to do these things consistently," he said.

While Shanto's philosophy revolves heavily around preparation and process, it will be critical for Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to follow suit, which has not been the case in the past.

In a similar outcome to the present, the Mount Maunganui Test win was Bangladesh's first triumph in the red-ball format against New Zealand. However, having lacked a long-term plan and belief in the existing core group of players in the winning team, BCB was unable to capitalise on a much-awaited success.

"I personally feel that how well we prepare before the game and are honest about our work is important. It is also crucial whether we have the belief [in ourselves] or not. I always believed that this group has the ability and hunger of winning a game or a series here [in New Zealand]," reiterated Shanto, who is making a strong case for him to be given more captaincy opportunities, having demonstrated great promise as a young leader.

It's imperative that BCB grooms him as the next captain for bigger events, such as the ICC Champions Trophy in 2025. However, given the board's track record, it remains likely that Shanto will be demoted once regular skipper Shakib Al Hasan, approaching his career's twilight, returns to team following injury recovery.

An 'outstanding achievement' for City



Reigning European champions Manchester City made light work of their Brazilian opponents Fluminense in the final of the FIFA Club World Cup King Abdullah Sport City stadium in Jeddah yesterday with a 4-0 win to cap off 2023 with their fifth trophy. Julian Alvarez scored the fastest-ever goal of the competition in the first minute of the game and netted a second in the dying minutes.

REUTERS, JEDDAH

From league champions to European champions and now world champions, Manchester City added a fifth trophy in 2023 to their bulging collection when they beat Fluminense 4-0 in Friday's Club World Cup final to cap their remarkable year.

City are the first English club to simultaneously hold the Premier League, FA Cup, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and the FIFA Club World Cup crowns – which delighted manager Pep Guardiola hailed as an "outstanding achievement".

"I am so proud of this Club. What we have done is an outstanding achievement," Guardiola said. The Spaniard hinted that his time at the club might be coming to an end when he said "the job was done" and "there was nothing else to win" after eight years at the helm.

"I have the feeling we've closed a chapter. We've already won all the titles," Guardiola told a news conference. "There's nothing left to win. I have the feeling the job is done, is over."

Guardiola, who arrived at City in 2016, claimed his 16th title with the club. He added he wanted to write a new chapter with the team where he has 18 months left on his contract.

"Now it's Christmas time, buy another book and start to write it again. The last eight years it's over," he said.

West Ham leapfrog Man Utd

REUTERS, LONDON

Jarrod Bowen and Mohammed Kudus' second-half goals gave West Ham a 2-0 win over Manchester United in the Premier League's early game on Saturday, as the Hammers briefly moved into the top six.

Bowen bundled home from close range in the 72nd minute after a lovely one-two with Lucas Paqueta, who played in Kudus six minutes later to settle the game with a sharp finish.

West Ham, recovering from a bruising 5-1 defeat to Liverpool in the League Cup in midweek, move up to sixth on 30 points and United drop to eighth on 28 points.

The first half was low on quality and its best chance fell to Alejandro Garnacho in the 35th minute, but the winger lost his balance and shot straight at Alphonse Areola.

Bowen broke the deadlock with his 11th league goal of the season, taking Paqueta's dinked ball in his stride before Onana's save rebounded off the forward and into the net.

Paqueta then capitalised on Kobbie Mainoo's mistake to set up Kudus, who fired home past Onana to secure all three points for the hosts.



Sk Russel prevail against 10-man Jamal

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra lived some nervy moments before registering a 2-1 win over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in the first match of the Bangladesh Premier League season at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday.

It looked as if Sheikh Russel would run away with the match after dominating the first half completely, with Selemani Landry giving them the lead in the fifth minute by smashing home a square pass from Sumon Reza following a brilliant through-ball from Kodai Ida in the midfield.

Although they didn't get another goal in the first half, the 2013 edition champions found numerical advantage in the stoppage time when Sheikh Jamal defender Mohammad Kiron was shown a direct red card after he had pulled Sarwar Zaman Nipu from behind as the last defender just outside the box.

And Jugoslav Trenchovski's charges extended the lead four minutes into the second half when centre-back Ganiu Ogungbe headed Kodai's corner-kick into the far corner of the net.

But credit to Sheikh Jamal, the three-time champions hit back right before the hour mark, with Shokhrukhbek Xolmatov's thumping effort beating Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Mitul Marma at near post.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, Sheikh Jamal continued pressing for the equaliser and went close a few times towards the end but Russel held on for three valuable points.