

BCB clueless about Tigers' insipid show against Afghans

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon had no explanation for the national team's lack of intent in the crunch match against Afghanistan in the ICC T20 World Cup after a board of directors meeting yesterday in Mirpur where the biggest agenda for discussion was the team's performance at the event.

Chase down 116 inside 12.1 overs and play a semifinal of a World Cup for the first time, this was the equation for Bangladesh in their final Super Eight match against Afghanistan.

The Tigers, quizzically, abandoned that dream midway in their chase, and have essentially become the laughing stock in world cricket.

The BCB, however, were looking at the World Cup performances positively and quite comically, they chose to discuss World Cup performance in a board meeting before even speaking with the coaches, captain and the players and are yet to receive head coach Chandika Hathurusingha's report.

When asked about the team's approach in the Afghanistan game, Papon had no answers, saying, "What can I say about that?"

"When they needed to defend, they attacked and when they needed to attack, they defended," he added.

Papon, however, did not accept captain Najmul Hossain Shanto's explanation that the team stopped trying to win in 12.1 overs after fall of early wickets.

"I heard that the captain said that after three wickets went down, they didn't try. I think that's not acceptable. But when I saw the game, I didn't feel like that," he added.

All in all, it was a bizarre press conference yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium and curiously, this time no investigation committee was formed.



Rishad's emergence not yet a watershed for leg-spin

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Rishad Hossain grabbing the attention of the cricket world through his wrist-spin was perhaps the biggest positive takeaway for Bangladesh from an otherwise underwhelming campaign in the recently concluded ICC T20 World Cup.

The leggie grabbed 14 wickets in seven matches in competition, finishing as Bangladesh's most successful bowler in the competition, and joint third overall in the tournament.

Rishad's performance in the T20 World Cup vindicated the management's years of investment on the 21-year-old.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), which often finds itself at the receiving end of criticism – mostly for the off-the-field issues while on-field performances also don't help them much – had singled out the leggie years ago and had been preparing him for the national side.

Rishad first got into the scenes in 2017 through 'Robi Khoj: The Number 1 Spinner', a talent hunt where he was awarded the title of the 'Most Accurate Bowler'. Since then, Rishad has featured in many developmental teams of the BCB, even when he was hardly getting a game at the domestic level.

The officials at the board must now be heaving a sigh of great relief as their blueprint of nurturing Rishad for the national team has clicked, that too on the big stage, and they are now getting the applause from the country's cricketing fraternity for their long-term planning.

Although the emergence of Rishad Hossain is a huge positive for Bangladesh cricket, it would be unwise for the management to get complacent about their leg-spin reserves just now.

Rishad has started his career with a lot of promise, but there is no telling whether he would go strength to strength from here or end up as a one-tournament wonder.

Experts suggested that the process of nurturing



of leg-spinners in the country will also increase," he added.

The BCB's game development committee is currently running a camp for wrist-spinners and Sohel expects to find a few promising leggies from there.

"The spinners in the camp are from different age groups. The board is thinking of sending them to different age-level teams to get match practice," said Sohel.

Veteran coach Wahidul Gani, who is currently looking after the Under-14 and Under-15 setups, feels a collective approach from the BCB and domestic teams is required to ensure continued success in the wrist-spin department.

"This year in U14, U15 age-level tournaments, we made it mandatory to play a leg-spinner in every team and to give him five overs. This is how we are trying to give leggies playing opportunities. But I don't think it's the correct way to make a leg-spinner. The player needs to have talent and earn the trust of their coaches," Gani told The Daily Star.

"There is a saying in sports that winning is a poor teacher. We play to win, but we can get a good player while losing a match. We need to have faith in him and also need people who understand right-arm wrist-spin," he said, adding that Mushtaq Ahmed's inclusion as Tiger's bowling coach can play a big role in Rishad's development. "I think having Mushtaq will also help Rishad a lot because he has played at the top level. He knows the quality of batsmen at the top level and their footwork very well. I think Mushtaq's experience will help him a lot."

Problem-plagued Arambagh return after three years

SPORTS REPORTER

Once giant-killers, Arambagh Krira Sangha returned to football yesterday after overcoming numerous challenges in the last three years, securing a comprehensive 4-0 victory against Swadhinata KS in a Senior Division Football League fixture at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Dhaka.

"We formed a strong squad with an estimated budget of Tk 45 lakh after getting hope for financial help from Bashundhara Group," Arambagh general secretary Md Yaqub Ali told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that they want to play in the second-tier Bangladesh Championship League (BCL) for a few seasons before acquiring the capability to form a squad for the top-tier Bangladesh Premier League.

The traditional outfit, established in 1958, had faced demotion to the third-tier competition from the top-tier following their involvement in live betting, spot-fixing, match manipulation, and online betting in 2021.

Previously, they had struggled to form their squad due to involvement in a casino scandal in late 2019.

FIFA also banned the club from registering local players due to their inability to clear the wages of Brazilian coach Douglas Silva Dos Santos.



You need to have examples in cricket. When Rashid Khan started bowling leg-spin in Afghanistan, he set an example there. Many Afghan boys got interested through Rashid's bowling and started bowling like him. As Rishad does well in international cricket, the number of leg-spinners in the country will also increase.

Sohel Islam
Bangladesh Tigers head coach

wrist-spinners from a young age needs to continue and feel that Rishad can become a role model for the aspiring leggies in Bangladesh.

"I think the leg-spinners in different age-level teams now can be inspired by Rishad," said Sohel Islam, the Bangladesh Tigers head coach, who closely worked with Rishad, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"You need to have examples in cricket. When Rashid Khan started bowling leg-spin in Afghanistan, he set an example there. Many Afghan boys got interested through Rashid's bowling and started bowling like him. As Rishad does well in international cricket, the number

Ronaldo battling with Father Time

REUTERS

"Time beat him. Time takes everybody out. It's undefeated," said Rocky Balboa in the film "Creed" and those words could easily be applied to Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo who struggled to impose himself on their Euro 2024 last-16 game with Slovenia on Monday.

A tearful Ronaldo being embraced and comforted by team mates after missing a penalty in extra time that could have helped Portugal secure a spot in the quarter-finals before a shootout win is a cathartic image that stunned fans around the world.

Portugal won 3-0 on penalties minutes later, with Ronaldo converting the first spot kick and apologising to fans in the stands immediately after scoring before breaking down in tears following the game and being unable to finish an interview.

His tears showed more than just the sorrow or guilt of a player feeling the weight of responsibility from almost letting his country down. They were the tears of a frustrated player who expects greatness but was not the difference maker he once was.

During the 2022 World Cup Ronaldo said: "The best timing is my timing" as he arrived in Qatar with his career in turmoil, about to leave Manchester United to play in Saudi Arabia.

Ronaldo, a five-times Ballon D'Or winner, had arrived with a mission to prove he could still make a difference on the world stage. But he ended the tournament on the bench



and had no impact as a substitute in the 1-0 quarter-final loss to Morocco.

After that defeat, the shocking image of Ronaldo running to the tunnel in tears as desolate as the football world had ever seen him was something Portugal fans were not used to.

But with long-time Portugal manager Fernando Santos gone and newcomer Roberto Martinez trusting him with the captaincy and a leadership role in a young and talented squad, Ronaldo was given

another shot at glory in Euro 2024.

Despite being a model of longevity for more than two decades in an outstanding career, breaking numerous records and playing for some of the biggest clubs in the world, Ronaldo has been a shadow of his old self over the last two weeks in Germany.

Lacking the speed, explosion and agility that were his trademarks while pouncing on balls like a tiger to plunder goals in various ways that only he was able to, the 2024 version of Ronaldo has yet to score at this Euros after four games.

Against Slovenia, just as in the previous three games, his shooting was off kilter and his headers failed to trouble keeper Jan Oblak while his team mates seemed to be forcing the ball to him, disrupting Portugal's tempo and slowing them down.

At 39, Ronaldo would have become the oldest player to score in a European Championship if he had netted his extra-time penalty but he failed to beat the excellent Oblak and instead of relief came desperation.

Martinez still trusted him to take the first penalty in the shootout and Ronaldo duly delivered to help Portugal stay alive at the Euros, with several records that he is still seeking.

They will face France in the quarter-finals with the world questioning whether Ronaldo's brilliant international career is nearing an end. There could still be a happy ending for one of the world's greatest ever players – only time will tell.

SHORT CORNER

Taskin apologised for arriving late before India match, says Shakib

The unexpected reason behind Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed not featuring against India in the recent T20 World Cup has recently garnered attention. Reports disclosed that Taskin overslept on the match day and missed the team bus, a fact later confirmed by former captain Shakib Al Hasan. "So, when Taskin actually had reached the field, it was probably five to ten minutes before the toss. Naturally, it was difficult for the team management to include him in the team at that time," said Shakib.



Swimmers Rafi, Sonia receive wild cards for Paris Olympics

Swimmers Samiul Islam Rafi and Sonia Akhter are the latest athletes from Bangladesh to receive wild cards for the upcoming Paris Olympic Games after World Aquatics, international swimming governing body, confirmed their participation to the Bangladesh Olympic Association and Bangladesh Swimming Federation today. Rafi, who has been training in Thailand, will participate in the 100m freestyle while Sonia will take part in the 50m freestyle, informed BOA member and BSF general secretary BM Saif.

'We want to be champions, but also need to be realistic'

"Actually, if we look at the performance of our women's team, the performance graph is not that bad. It's true that we couldn't do well in our recent two series. But our performances before those two series were quite promising. Hopefully, we will have a good Asia Cup in Sri Lanka. We had won the Asia Cup in the T20 format once before. We have also won against Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. With the ability this team possesses, I'm optimistic that they will do well in the tournament," said Bangladesh Cricket Board's women's wing chairman Shafiu Alam Chowdhury Nadel during a conversation with The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan.

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Defending champion Marketa Vondrousova was eliminated in the first round of Wimbledon by Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro in straight sets, 6-4 6-2, yesterday. The Czech became the first female holder to fall at the opening hurdle since Steffi Graf 30 years ago.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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