

Much learning left as Tigers try to find Miraz's role

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Hyderabad

It rained in Hyderabad yesterday afternoon, a day before the third and final T20I between Bangladesh and India, but soon it ebbed away giving way to sunshine, although not for very long.

As the groundsmen were bouncing balls on the pitch to check the bounce, the rain returned, leading to frantic efforts to cover the pitch at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. More rain is in the offing today in the morning but the skies should clear up before the dead rubber match begins in the evening.

The series is already lost for Bangladesh, having lost the first two games convincingly, so the only thing at stake for the Tigers today is pride.

After the hammerings they received in Gwalior and Delhi, a serious reflection on the difference in skill level between Bangladesh and India and how it can be reduced should have taken place. However, from the comments of Tigers' fielding coach Nic Pothas, that does not seem to be the case.

"If we want to measure pure outcome, then there's a lot of countries that come



Bangladesh veteran Mahmudullah Riyad, who made his T20I debut against Kenya in 2007, is set to play his final T20I when the Tigers take on hosts India in the last match of the three-match series in Hyderabad today.

to India that have bad tours. You have to measure the learning. We have to consider the future, what is coming up – the Champions Trophy and the T20s," he said yesterday at the press conference.

Yet, when asked what the actual learnings were, Pothas delved into vagueness.

"India would always put you under immense pressure because of the level of skill they have. So learning is how to absorb pressure for long periods of time, how do you read the game better under pressure but most importantly how you prepare."

Today will also be Mahmudullah Riyad's last hurrah as a T20I player, who

is set to step away from the format after the match.

Mahmudullah's departure from T20Is right on the back of Shakib Al Hasan's, who had announced it in Kanpur before the second Test against India, marks a significant change in Bangladesh's T20I landscape.

It was expected that Mehedi Hasan Miraz would perhaps step into Shakib's shoes in T20Is but Pothas said the management is still unsure where the all-rounder fits in.

"At the moment, because he [Miraz] wasn't at the T20 World Cup, we are going to be using him in different positions to actually find a role where he will play for the future," Pothas said.

While the team management searches for a role for Miraz, who has not really found a foothold in T20 bowling, someone like Mahedi Hasan, who can be a good option as a Powerplay bowler, is not getting a lot of game time.

The confusion over the team's makeup will only get worse going forward if the management does not find the answer, which so far has not come this series.



Last chance for Tigresses

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team will hope to play to their potential in order to finish their ongoing ICC Women's T20 World Cup campaign on a high note when they take on South Africa in their last Group B match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium today.

The match is scheduled to start at 08:00 pm (Bangladesh time) and will be telecast live on Nagorik TV.

The 'Tigresses' chance of going beyond the group stage is all but over after they lost back-to-back matches against West Indies and England despite making a winning start in the meet against Scotland.

"It's all about just going out there and have confidence, just play to your potential. So, we know there are certain things that we can't control, but we can control our own game and play to our potential," Bangladesh head coach Hashan Tillakaratne said ahead of the match.

Before the start of the tournament, concerns were raised about the batting department and their performance validated it as they failed to cross 120-run mark in any of their three innings. Along with that, catching has been below-par for the Tigresses as they dropped nine catches in three innings.

"Well, batting is a bit of a concern. We have worked like you know dot ball percentages. So still we are yet to achieve those targets...Our fielding has been below par. All three games we dropped about nine catches. So, we need to improve on that," he said, adding that he is hopeful that skipper Nigar Sultana Joty, who seen hobbling on the ground in the last match, will be available against South Africa.

Bangladesh, who previously played 14 WT20Is against their South African counterparts, won two games and lost 11 matches with one match ending in no-result.



England's left-arm spinner Jack Leach celebrates with skipper Ollie Pope after their commanding innings and 47-run victory over Pakistan on Day 5 of their first Test in Multan yesterday. Leach took all three Pakistan wickets on the final day as he led the attack with a four-wicket haul in the second innings to bundle out the hosts for 220, helping the visitors wrap up the game with almost two and a half sessions to spare and take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. PHOTO: AFP

'In Australia, Mayank will touch 160kph'

Delhi coach Davendra Sharma has wrought many gems. Mayank Yadav, the quick who drew attention hitting 156kph plus in the last IPL, is the latest to come through the Delhi club where Davendra coaches. The veteran coach spoke to *The Daily Star's* Abdullah Al Mehdi on the secret of Mayank's pace, the young speedster's idols and the club he grew up in during an exclusive interview. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Mayank Yadav hasn't bowled at 150kph yet in this series. Was it due to a workload management plan?

Sharma: He did reach close to 150kph this series, but he had bowled at 156.7kph in the IPL. Mayank has natural speed. As a coach I feel that Indian wickets are not very fast but when he goes to Australia he will touch 160kph.

When he first came to me, he was 14 years old. He looked pretty weak but when he bowled, he showed that he was very quick off the pitch. So he was continued and given admission and played U-14, U-16 and did well for the club.

He used to bowl at the legs when he was young. To become a good bowler, you need to have rhythm, action and follow-through. We worked on those and you can see now how good his rhythm is and how steady his action is along with great seam position.

DS: What do you think is the secret to his speed?

Sharma: It's god-gifted. You see his rhythm, his height and the height his hands come from. When the ball comes from seven feet height and lands on the seam, it goes higher than the batsman's chest. That's extra bounce at pace.

DS: What kind of problems did he create for batters early on?

Sharma: Even before they could have a backlift, it used to hit their pads. Incoming deliveries would hit the handle and if they managed backlift, by then off-stump would cartwheel. It was about beating them with speed.

DS: He has a rapid wrist action with a jerk that comes at the end. Something like Brett Lee or Jasprit Bumrah?

Sharma: Yes, you are completely right. It takes a hit during that release. Yes, it's close to Brett Lee and Daly Steyn and he used to particularly like Dale Steyn. It's also true that it's like Bumrah a bit. He has bowled a lot to adopt those details.

DS: Does he speak to Bumrah?

Sharma: Yes, he talks to him when both are in the Indian team. The Indian team is such that they help each other a lot.

DS: Do you feel he would come to the red-ball format one day?

Sharma: Yes, definitely, he used to play just red-ball before in Ranji Trophy. But he has been taken off red-ball for now since there you have to bowl really long spells. After he finds footing in white-ball, he would come to red-ball. He has been coming to the club to bowl for the last month with me. He was taking preparations for Bangladesh series.

DS: Can you help us understand the club you work at?

Sharma: Our club is 50 years old and from Delhi, named Sonnet Cricket Club. I have spent 36 years myself at the club. I played Ranji Trophy for five years as a wicketkeeper-batter for Delhi. I have a century together with Virender Sehwag in a Ranji game against Maharashtra.

Our club is very good and before Mayank, the club had produced 13 international players. Rishabh Pant was also there. The club's motto is based on three Ds: determination, dedication and discipline.



Greece 'gave their souls for Baldock'

REUTERS, London

Greece's two-goal hero Vangelis Pavlidis paid an emotional tribute to George Baldock after his side's 2-1 Nations League victory over England at Wembley on Thursday.

British-born Greek international Baldock, who joined Panathinaikos from Sheffield United in May, died this week aged 31 after being found in a swimming pool at his Glyfada home.

The Wembley crowd observed a minute of silence before kickoff and Greece's players looked flat at the final whistle despite sealing their first-ever win against England.

During their celebrations they lifted a shirt bearing the name of Baldock.

"It was a very special day and match for us. Our thoughts are with George," Pavlidis said.

"We are professionals and had to play the match. We gave our soul for him tonight. Today is not a day to talk about football. He was part of our team. We will miss him very much.

"Also to wish strength to his family and not talk about football. The whole day was numb. We won tonight and don't want to celebrate. There are just no words."

Baldock, who was of Greek ancestry, was capped 12 times for the country, his last appearance coming in March.

Greece manager Ivan Jovanovic praised his team's spirit, saying they had been inspired to play in Baldock's memory.

"At such moments football comes second," he said. "The time he was with the team he made his mark and that was visible in the way the players played today."

MSC to decide on IFA Shield participation

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League runners-up Mohammedan Sporting Club are planning to participate in the upcoming IFA Shield as part of their pre-season preparation after Indian Football Association, West Bengal officially invited the country's popular outfit on Wednesday.

Mohammedan participated in the tournament many times previously, finishing runners-up behind champions East Bengal in 1995.

Sheikh Jamal DC are the last Bangladeshi outfit to participate in the tournament in 2014 when they finished behind champions Kolkata Mohammedan.

Mohammedan director and football committee secretary Abu Hasan Prince said they have, on principle, agreed to take part, but the final decision will be taken on Saturday's technical committee meeting, subject to approval by the football committee chairman.

"It's a good opportunity for us to prepare for the season by taking part in the renowned IFA Shield tournament," Prince said, adding that they have already asked IFA to inform them about the facilities and requested the organisers to allow them a contingent of 30 members instead of 24.



Lionel Messi, who missed Argentina's last round of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers in September due to injury, put in an impressive performance on his national team return to set up their only goal in a 1-1 draw against hosts Venezuela on Friday. While Messi was left frustrated following the stalemate, it was a different story for their archrivals Brazil, who managed to get their qualifying campaign back on track with a last-gasp 2-1 victory away to Chile, thanks to an equaliser from Igor Jesus (R) and an 89th-minute winner from Luiz Henrique. Argentina, however, still lead the standings with 19 points from nine games while Brazil moved to fourth on the table with six points fewer than the defending World Champions. PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS