



BEHIND THE LENS

Capturing the spectacular despite limitations

If times were normal, professional sports photographers would be roaming around the city capturing the best shots from the Dhaka Premier Cricket League, Bangladesh Premier League or other sporting actions. Everything, however, has come to a standstill because of the coronavirus pandemic. For all concerned, and especially those in sport, the memory lane is the one most travelled during this unwanted break. The Daily Star Sport took the opportunity to share the joy, sorrow, and pleasure of their special clicks. Here, our own Firoz Ahmed talks about stories behind his best captures.

As a photojournalist, I have had many self-satisfactory moments and among those, Tamim Iqbal's one-handed airborne catch against West Indies has occupied a special place in my heart. Because behind this picture lies some bitter truths and struggles of my professional career and also the satisfaction of achieving something brilliant owing to my sheer patience and concentration.

The ICC T20 World Cup in 2014 was going to be held in Bangladesh, but just before the grand reunion of the finest teams from around the world, the lens that I usually used got damaged. And hence, I had to work with my 70-200mm lens.

Just outside the boundary line is where the photojournalists usually set up and sit. The local photographers, unlike the ones working for ICC, have to sit at one place to take pictures as they are not allowed to roam around the ground during an ICC event. That is why I had to go through a lot of trouble as I could not focus across the ground with my 70-200mm lens, and even if I did manage to take some pictures, all of them used to come out blurry. And hence, I concentrated on taking pictures of the fielders, bowlers and the batsman who was close to me.

I won't lie; I had doubts in the beginning. The main weapon for a photojournalist is his lens. But it was very difficult to capture



everything that was going around me in the field with my 70-200mm lens. That is why I had questions in my mind: how am I going to give my everything for a shot? How do I take the best picture?

The clouds of doubt, however, began to clear up as I started working with utmost devotion and due to the encouragement I received from everyone back at the office.

Then came the moment I had been waiting for. Bangladesh

played West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur that day and it was Tamim fielding at short third-man area. In the final over of West Indies' innings, Dwayne Bravo attempted to drive an Al-Amin Hossain delivery through extra cover.

But the ball took the outside edge of Bravo's bat and within seconds I saw Tamim turning into a hawk! He leapt towards his right, floating in the air, and took an absolute one-handed stunner.

I, who had his sights fixed on Tamim's every move, timed my shutter clicks to perfection. And as a result, I was able to take an incredible picture with my 70-200mm lens. That picture would have been impossible to take with the lens that I worked with usually -- the one that got damaged.

It was the next moment when I realised that with patience and concentration, it is possible to achieve the unthinkable and this photo is a proof of that.

Shooting goes online but Baki, Shakil miss out

ANISUR RAHMAN



While in home confinement, chess players have found it ideal time to hone their skills through playing chess online. Now another breed of sports stars -- shooters -- are making use of their downtime by transforming their living rooms into makeshift ranges to engage in online competition following the game's world governing body's cancellation of all competitions due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The initiative, first-of-its-kind, was taken by former Indian rifle shooter Shimon Sharif and the two phases of the event have already taken place and streamed live on internet platforms. Some 50 top air rifle and pistol shooters from Europe, India, Iran and other countries took part in the competition.

India's Sanjeev Rajput and Shahzar Rizvi won 10m air rifle and pistol events respectively. Rajput shot 252.6 in 24-shot final which was held on Saturday following the successful hosting of the first round on April 15. Rizvi shot 241.7 to clinch the top prize in 10m air pistol event.

The whole process was carried online, with an electronic target board and computer making it possible through use of SCATT apps and a training software, which calibrates shots in such a way that they show results according to the 10-metre distance.

"This competition is an effort to keep

our sport alive even in these tough times," Sharif was quoted as saying by PTI. "This one is only for the elite shooters but later we will organise competitions which will be open to all once every quarter with a prize money."

Bangladesh's rifle shooter Abdullah Hel Baki was invited to the competition, but the two-time Commonwealth Games silver medallist declined the invitation due to lack of equipments and facilities at home.

"I was invited to the online shooting competition, but I told them that we are all at home where there is no opportunity to turn things into a makeshift range," Baki told The Daily Star yesterday.

While Baki did not follow the live streaming, another Commonwealth Games silver medallist, pistol shooter Shakil Ahmed, did watch the event online.

"I watched the live streaming after being informed by the BSSF general secretary [Entekhabul Hamid], I had no idea about it earlier," Shakil told The Daily Star.

"It would have been possible for us to compete in this competition if we had electronic targets and computers which have been sent to the competitors' houses by the respective federations. That is not possible in our country. We are not that advanced technologically to avail such opportunities," said Shakil, also a gold medallist of 2016 South Asian Games.

However, both Baki and Shakil said that they would have felt better if they were able to participate in the online shooting championships.



Real Madrid frontman Karim Benzema (R), even during a workout session, did not forget to wish 'Happy Ramadan' to his millions of fans while Ukrainian tennis star Elina Svitolina challenged her followers to a virtual tennis tournament.



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Archer finds WC medal

AFP, London

England's Jofra Archer said Sunday he'd finally found his World Cup winner's medal after "going mad" looking for the prized possession following a house move.

The 25-year-old pacer published a photograph of the medal on a bed with the caption: "Randomly searching the guest bedroom and boom."

Last year saw the Barbados-born Archer establish himself on the global stage as he helped England win their first men's 50-over global title, with his 20 wickets at 23.05 the most taken by any member of the champions' squad during the tournament.

Players won't be greedy: Paine

AGENCIES



Australian Test captain Tim Paine says players won't be "greedy" with Cricket Australia and the players' union to discuss finances this week ahead of new contracts being awarded. CA has stood down the vast majority of its staff for the rest of the financial year, citing uncertainty created by COVID-19, and is in talks with the Australian Cricketers' Association regarding players' pay.

The MoU dictates that CA must, by April 30, provide the ACA with a list of national contracts plus revenue estimates for 2020-21.

Wicketkeeper Paine said the players accept they would get less pay because of the revenue sharing model they have in place with CA. He agreed, however, that the players needed to get a clearer idea of CA's financial position before agreeing to any further cuts.

"Players need to know the absolute financial positions of the game and the players aren't going to be greedy," Paine said on ABC Radio. "Our livelihood, all the people associated with the ACA and the players' association, their livelihood is dependent on the game of cricket being healthy."

"So at the moment if a pay cut for us is on the cards and that keeps our game thriving well into the future, then that's something we'll certainly have to look at."

Paine wasn't that surprised at the financial state of cricket in Australia.

"I think commercially a lot of sponsors have been pretty hard hit and it's obviously going to hit Cricket Australia at some stage then as well," Paine said.

"I think there's a bit of safeguarding towards the potential of India not coming (in December) which is worth something like 250 to 300 million dollars."

Paine said he hasn't been briefed on any contingency plan. "I haven't just yet and I don't want to be. I'm hoping that they [India] get here, that would solve a lot of issues," Paine said.



Serie A restart delayed by Italy's PM

AFP, Rome

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on Sunday delayed a decision on restarting Serie A football but gave the green light for top athletes to resume training in a week's time.

Conte unveiled the first details of how Italy will emerge from a lockdown.

He said individual athletes would be allowed to resume training on May 4 and teams could train together again from May 18.

But about a Serie A season interrupted on March 9 with Juventus leading Lazio by a point, he said: "It will start again only when it is safe."

Ferrera raises €55k with Maradona shirt

AGENCIES

Diego Maradona thanked Ciro Ferrara after the sale of a 33-year-old Argentina No.10 jersey raised €55,000 to help Naples deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We won another match, for Napoli and our beloved Neapolitans," Maradona wrote on Facebook. "Perhaps it was the most important match and we won it together, united the way we always did. I thank you Ciro, because you let me once again feel the emotion of being part of these magnificent people."

"You allowed me to hear the roar of 80,000 at the San Paolo... I felt that same joy and passion. Unforgettable."

Akmal banned for three years

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal was banned Monday from all forms of cricket for three years after pleading guilty to failing to report match-fixing approaches, the country's cricket board announced.

Umar, who turns 30 in May, withdrew last month from challenging the charges. His ban is effective from February 20, when he was provisionally suspended by the board.

The decision was announced by a disciplinary committee after a brief hearing of the Pakistan Cricket Board.

Umar last represented Pakistan in against Sri Lanka in Lahore last year, falling to a first-ball ducks.

'Tests make you a complete cricketer'

AGENCIES



India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who is often termed as the world's best fast bowler, has said people assume that he earned his place into Team India on the basis of his performance in the Indian Premier League (IPL) but that is not the actual case.

The Indian pacer made this revelation during a live session on Instagram with former India batsman Yuvraj Singh.

Bumrah first hogged the limelight through his unconventional bowling action during his IPL debut for Mumbai Indians in 2013. The then 19-year-old Bumrah picked 3 wickets in his debut game against RCB.

"That I made it to the Indian team by my performances in the IPL is a myth. 2013 is when I came into the IPL then 2013, 2014, 2015 I was not



playing regularly. I did well in (Vijay) Hazare and in domestic circuit then I came into the Indian team in 2016," Bumrah told Yuvraj.

Bumrah made his ODI and T20I India debut in 2016 and earned the Test call-up in 2018. The 26-year-old has been a regular in all three formats and is known for his toe-crushing yorkers and death-over spells.

"Many people told me that I won't play for long, there was an expectation that the last person to play for the country would be me. They told me that I would just play the Ranji Trophy. But I kept on improving and I persisted with my action," said 26-year-old Bumrah when Yuvraj asked him about his unusual bowling action.

Bumrah also stressed on the importance of the longest-format of the game, saying one becomes a complete cricketer only after playing Test matches.

"Bowlers come up to me and say ODI T20 thik hai (ODIs, T20I is okay). But they forget, Tests make you a complete cricketer," Bumrah said.

"You have to play Test cricket to survive in the long run," he added.

Bumrah has gone to play 64 ODIs, 50 T20s and 14 Tests. He made his Test debut in January 2018 and in a quick time, he became Virat Kohli's go-to bowler even in the five-day format.