

What's eating Asif?

ANISUR RAHMAN

Commonwealth gold medalist shooter Asif Hossain Khan is soul-searching after a poor performance in the South Asian Games' preparation that eventually forced him out of the Asian Air Gun Championship squad.

The National Shooting Federation of Bangladesh on Monday approved a 10-member Bangladesh squad for the Asian meet on the basis of performance and Asif found no place in the squad with his average points of 585, five short of the qualifying marks in the 10m Air Rifles.

"I myself can't not understand why I can't shoot well in the training though I have no problem with my new shooting kits and also getting support from all corners," Asif told The Daily Star yesterday after being dropped from the Qatar-bound squad.

Before picking the squad, the scores of three practice competitions were considered and BKSP students Mahmudul Hasan Sajib and Abdullah Hel Baki put Asif behind them by scoring more than the qualifying mark of 590.

The SA Games gold medalist, Asif admitted that pressure gets the better of him automatically whenever he tried to get a good start or finish with a flourish.

"Sometime I got off to a good start, but failed to con-

tinue it till the last shot and I don't know why this happened to me," said Asif.

The prolific shooter is actually not up to the mark since he was beaten brutally by the police in October 2006 though he was seen in his peak form during the fourth South Asian Shooting Championship in Pakistan in late November 2008.

Asif was also dropped from the Bangladesh contingent for the 2008 Olympic in Beijing for his poor performance and he celebrated his return shooting the best score of 694.3 in the 10m air rifles to bag gold in 4th SA Shooting Championship.

Afterwards, he was sent to the German city of Wesbaden to receive a month-long spe-

cial training at the Olympic Training Centre in May last year and he was also kept out of the fifth South Asian Shooting Championship at home to give him time to adjust to his new shooting wear as well as arm.

"I have talked with Atique bhai, Rinki bhai and Shahana apa about my problem and they told me that I might have facing a 'self image' problem and being caught with fear," said the young shooter.

"I have just started my coaching career and got a little time to work with Asif and I think he might have a lack of concentration and he should spend more time in the range," said Saiful Alam Chowdhury Rinki, who turned

into a coach recently.

Bangladesh Olympic Association is expecting a couple of gold medals from the shooting event, basically men's and women's 10m air rifles and Asif is the last Bangladeshi shooter, who grabbed the 10m air rifles gold in Islamabad SA Games.

Nevertheless, India are the major contenders for the hosts, who saw themselves wobbling against Indian world-class shooters during the fifth SA Shooting Championship as PT Ragunath (696.7), Sanjib Rajput (695.5) and Emran Hossain Khan (693.9) finished first, second and third respectively in the 10m Air Rifles event. Bangladesh Abdullah Hel Baki finished fifth in the 10m Air Rifle scoring 677.3 points.

Asif, however, promised to come back again. "I think I will come back to form if I can practice a bit more and I am determined to do something in the days coming forward."

The selected shooters for the 3rd Asian Air Gun Shooting Championship are: Junior Group: Abdullah Hel Baki (in 10 Air Rifles); Youth Group: Sadia Sultana, Tripti Datta and Mahmudul Hasan Sajib (10m Air Rifles) and Antara Islam (Air Pistol); Senior Group: Sharmin Akter Ratna, Sharmin Akter (10m Air Rifles), Sinthia Naznin Tumpa, Armin Asha and Nadimul Islam (Air Pistol).



ASIF HOSSAIN KHAN

Premiership supremo to visit Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

English Premier League chairman Sir Dave Richards has agreed to pay a visit to Bangladesh next year after the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin met him in Qatar during a friendly football match between England and Brazil.

"Richards has expressed a desire to come to Bangladesh in late February or March next year during the professional football league and he will discuss with the club officials, journalists as well as the BFF officials in a bid to help Bangladesh football," Salahuddin told reporters at his BFF office yesterday.

The BFF president had a two-hour discussion with Richards at a dinner table and the discussion was later revived during the interval of the Brazil-England friendly match in Doha.

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PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka opener Tillakaratne Dilshan celebrates his century against India on the second day of the first Test at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday.

Young defender ruled out

SPORTS REPORTER

Defender Al Amin has been ruled out of the national football squad as the young defender suffered a fracture in his right hand during practice at the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan in Savar.

Al Amin, who is now carrying a bandage on his fractured hand, was first stuck in his hand during a football match in Narayanganj and two days back he got another hit in the same place in the practice at BKSP and a x-ray report found a fracture in the second metacarpal of his right hand and he needs at least three weeks to be cured, said team physio Dilulur Rahman.

Emon Babu is also a doubt as the Sheikh Russel's midfielder has been nursing a knee injury since he sustained

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Dilshan dictates Day 2

Cricket

AFP, Ahmedabad

Tillakaratne Dilshan continued his superb form by smashing his fifth century this year as Sri Lanka made a spirited reply in the first Test against India here on Tuesday.

Dilshan hit 112, his 10th Test hundred, as Sri Lanka cruised to 275-3 by stumps on the second day in reply to India's first innings total of 426.

The right-hander put on 74 for the first wicket with Tharanga Paranavitana (35) and 115 for the second with skipper Kumar Sangakkara, who made 31.

Former captain Mahela Jayawardene and Thilan Samaraweera built on the good start by adding 81 for the unbroken fourth wicket before stumps were drawn for the day.

Jayawardene was unbeaten on 36 and Samaraweera was on 45 with Sri Lanka 151 runs behind India with seven wickets in hand.

Dilshan, who passed a late fitness test on a sprained ankle to play the match, revelled in excellent batting conditions at the Motera Stadium to hit 12 fluent boundaries.

The 33-year-old opener has scored 961 runs in nine Tests this year at an average of 73.92, with 162 against Bangladesh in January being

the best of his five centuries in 2009.

Sri Lanka, who were comfortably placed at 189-1 soon after tea, lost Dilshan and Sangakkara in successive overs from Indian pace spearhead Zaheer Khan to slip to 194-3.

The left-arm seamer had Dilshan top-edging an intended pull to Rahul Dravid at gully, before Sangakkara hooked Zaheer to fine-leg where Sachin Tendulkar took a well-judged catch.

Left-hander Paranavitana was the lone batsman to be dismissed in the post-lunch session, caught by Indian captain and wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni off Ishant Sharma.

India, who earlier resumed at Monday's score of 385-6, lost their last four wickets for 41 runs and were all out soon after the first drinks break.

David, whose unbeaten 177 on the first day helped India recover from a disastrous 32-4, failed to add to his overnight score when he was bowled by Chanaka Welegedara in the morning's third over.

Zaheer brought up India's 400 by slashing two consecutive deliveries from Dammika Prasad over the slips to the third man fence.

Prasad responded with a full toss at Zaheer's mid-riff that sent the batsman sprawling to the ground. The bowler immediately apologised to

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Kalabagan crush BKSP

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Kalabagan Krira Chakra maintained their impressive run in the Premier Division Cricket League when they handed a 175-run defeat to BKSP at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Kalabagan brightened their chance to book a place in the Super League with their sixth consecutive success following the all-winners Abahani and Mohammedan.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, victors stumbled like ninetees on a damp surface as Victoria Sporting Club posted a three-wicket victory over Old DOHS in the low-scoring match.

It was third win for Victoria while DOHS suffered their fourth defeat in seven matches. The day's other match between Cricket Coaching School (CCS) and Khelaghar SKS was not held due to wet ground conditions at BKSP and the match will be played today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Kalabagan piled up 276 for 9 in their share of 50 overs and the innings was built around two half centuries from Golam Mabud (66 off 99 balls) and Mohammad Zahid (60 off 68 balls).

But it was Ariful Haque who picked up the pace of the Kalabagan innings by hitting four sixes and two fours during his 31-ball 49.

New ball bowler Riaz Mahmud claimed three wickets for 50 runs.

BKSP had desperately needed a flying start but pacer Shahadat Hossain caused an early damage by picking up three wickets and the sports institute side could not recover from the early jolt as

they were bundled out for 101 in 31.4 overs.

Left-arm spinner Enamul Haque, Nazmus Sadat and Rockybul Hasan took two wickets each. At Mirpur, bowlers dictated the terms as Victoria shot their opponents out for 74 runs in 32.2 overs after Old DOHS decided to bat first.

Only two batsmen—Fazle Rabbi (20) and Taibur Rahman (24)—could manage double figures.

Arslan Mir, who later rescued his team with the bat also making team highest 21 runs, claimed three wickets for 26 runs while Abul Bashar took three for 10 runs.

Victoria also made a disastrous start and lost wickets at regular interval but Arafat Salahuddin kept his nerve during his unbeaten 24-ball 12 as Victoria reached the target scoring 77 for 7 in 29.4 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KALABAGAN-BKSP

Venue: Fatullah

KALABAGAN: 276-9 in 50 overs (Sadat 26, Mabud 66, Rokibul 34, Zahid 60, Ariful 49, extras 8; Riaz 3-50, Mubarat 2-40, Tanvir 2-49). BKSP: 101 all out in 31.4 overs (Liton 22, Atiqur 34, extras 12; Shahadat 3-30, Enamul 2-19, Rockybul 2-10, Sadat 2-1).

Result: Kalabagan won by 175 runs.

VICTORIA-OLD DOHS

Venue: SBNCS

OLD DOHS: 74 all out in 32.2 overs (Rabbi 20, Taibur 24, extras 7; Arafat 2-17, Arslan 3-35, Monir 2-11, Bashar 3-10). VICTORIA: 77-7 in 29.4 overs (Kamrul 10, Arslan 21, Bashar 11, Arafat 12 not out, extras 10; Dollar 2-15, Rubel 2-26).

Result: Victoria won by three wickets.

IPL revises terms for overseas players

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The IPL has initiated steps to ensure that all cricketers who have been contracted by its franchises are available to play for the entire season from next year, except those with international commitments. This effectively means that these contracted players, and their national boards, will have to put the IPL ahead of their domestic commitments.

A press release issued on Monday said that in case of a default, the IPL will impose penalties on such players, including termination of player contracts and a ban on future participation, although Lalit Modi, the league's chairman, told Cricinfo that this would only happen in a worst-case scenario.

In what can be seen as a two-pronged deterrent, the IPL, which is owned by BCCI, will also ask the governing council of the Champions League Twenty20, comprising senior officials from India, Australia and South Africa, to take "appropriate action" against participating national boards in that tournament if they don't issue an IPL clearance for their players citing domestic commitments as a reason. While an IPL ban will affect players directly, any sanction on participating in the Champions League will impact the national board, which gets a share of the money from the organisers apart from an appearance fee for its competing domestic team.

However, the IPL said that this move does not cover players with international commitments and those who will play in matches

scheduled under the ICC's Future Tours Programme (FTP) during the tournament. These decisions were finalised during the league's workshop in Bangkok last week to ensure that the IPL franchises get their best players, who have been paid huge amounts by the teams, to be part of the league.

"The IPL will work with all the cricket boards to ensure that cricketers contracted with the eight franchises are available for the season," Modi told Cricinfo. "The IPL 2010 season is in March-April, when a lot of domestic tournaments will still be on. This is a one-off situation. A worst-case scenario could mean penalties on such players (who skip IPL matches citing domestic commitments), including termination of contracts, jeopardising future participation. However, we do not want to walk that path and are hopeful that we can sort this through discussions with the boards."

The next IPL will be held from March 12 to April 25, instead of the usual April-May slot, to avoid a clash with the ICC World Twenty20 that starts soon after. However, this advanced IPL schedule clashes with the Australian domestic season, which ends on March 23, and the South African season that ends on March 28. Players from both these countries are among the most sought-after in the Indian league. The Australian cricketers will then be busy with the New Zealand series that ends on March 31.

Apparently, the IPL wants to adopt the model of the Champions League Twenty20, which ensured that the best players from the top domestic teams from the seven participating countries (India, Australia, South Africa, England, West Indies, Sri Lanka and New

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Changes suggested to selectors TOR

SPORTS REPORTER

The special committee for selectors has recommended a fifteen percent increase from the existing salary and allowances package for the national selectors.

The committee met yesterday to discuss the observations put forward by the national selection committee members regarding the terms of reference in their new contracts and has put forward some recommendations for board approval.

Selectors were opposed to the proposal of office timing of 9am to 5pm and they have also expressed their desire to get the contract to run till the 2011 World Cup.

"We never told it that they have to maintain 9am to 5pm

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Shevchenko warns of tough battle

AFP, Kiev



Ukraine star Andrei Shevchenko has warned his teammates to be prepared for a tough battle against Greece in Wednesday's World Cup play-off second leg in Donetsk.

The two countries are all square after Saturday's first leg in Athens ended goalless.

"We and Greece have a 50-50 chance to reach next year's finals," Shevchenko said.

"In Athens we played very good in defence and, I believe, we could repeat such a performance in Donetsk."

"At home Greece were playing in a physically powerful style...but it was a fair play style opposition without roughing."

"We expect the Greeks will continue playing that style in Donetsk and are ready for it."

Ukraine's press celebrated Monday the first leg draw, claiming it a successful start for the overall triumph.

"In Athens we achieved a result that seri-

ously raises our hopes for the final success," the Voice of Ukraine daily suggested.

"We gained a draw in Athens. In Donetsk we need nothing less than a victory!" voiced another paper, Segodnya.

But coach Alexei Mikhailichenko played down expectations, saying that the battle was far from over.

"It's too early to celebrate. Nothing is decided yet," Mikhailichenko said.

"Of course the home turf gives us some virtual advantage. But in modern football there's no substantial difference between home and away grounds."

"I think that the rivals still have equal chances for the final success. And the clash in Donetsk will be the real final, the deciding match."

In Wednesday's match Ukraine should field a full-strength squad with one exception. Poltava defender Grigory Yarmash has caught a cold and returned to his club side with a fever.

Dynamo Kiev midfielder Taras Mykhalik, who has injured his right knee and was substituted in the match at Athens, remains uncertain for the return showdown, Ukraine's team doctor said.



PHOTO: AFP

Ukraine and Barcelona defender Dmytro Chygrynskiy heads the ball during a training session in Kiev on Monday, two days ahead of their World Cup play-off qualifying match against Greece in Donetsk. Ukraine will have to beat Greece to win the ticket for South Africa.



Did U Know?

A Tanzanian soccer match was postponed in 1978 after the referee was arrested on the pitch and accused of smoking marijuana just before the kick-off.



Michael Phelps

(America's Beijing Olympic star)

"I am pleased with the week as much as I can be, with how much training I've done, which is little. And it shows."

After his poor performance at the Berlin Short Course World Cup swimming meet.



Neo Cricket & SuperSport2

India v Sri Lanka
First Test, Day 3
Live from 11:00am

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 9:30pm

SuperSport3
FIFA WC Qualifier
Playoff
France v Ireland
Live from 3:00am (Thursday)

SuperSport5
FIFA WC Qualifier
Playoff
Slovenia v Russia
Live from 2:45am (Thursday)

SuperSport6
Italy v Sweden
Int'l Friendly
Live from 2:45am (Thursday)

SuperSport7
FIFA WC Qualifier
Playoff
Bosnia v Portugal
Live from 2:45am (Thursday)