

Japan international forward Shinji Kagawa will undergo surgery on the right foot injury he suffered at the Asian Cup and will miss the rest of the season, his Borussia Dortmund club said on Thursday.



Mushfiq relishes underdogs tag

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim affirmed that the Tigers were hardly under any pressure despite opening their World Cup against the form team, India, at home.

The Bangladesh cricket team trained under lights at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur for the first time since March and the wicketkeeper-batsman said playing at home against India would be beneficial to them.

"We have nothing to lose. They [India] will be under pressure as they are going to play at our home," said Mushfiqur while speaking to the media.

"We can play all out against India. If we had played against Ireland or Netherlands in our first game, the pressure would be firmly on us to win but now it is like us playing against Zimbabwe. They [India] will be expected to win.

"It won't be easy or too hard [playing at home]. If we think of it as a player, it is an advantage to us. We are playing at home, in our own conditions and in front of our crowd," he added.

In the space of four years, Mushfiqur has become a senior professional in the team, and is among the six players to have played in the 2007 World Cup. Probably he doesn't look like it but the Bogra lad's contribution, especially with the bat, is important for the Tigers. "It is great that I've become a senior player in the team. I will hope to use the experience of the previous World Cup to good effect," he said.

Though his batting usually stands out, the 23-year-old said he was happy with his job behind the stumps. "Over the

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National team's opening batsman Imrul Kayes goes for a catch under lights during their practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Doleshwar survive the drop

SPORTS REPORTER

Prime Doleshwar beat BKSP at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday to survive one more year at the Premier League.

After winning the do-or-die affair, Doleshwar took their points tally to seven, edging out BKSP who were at six points.

In a match where the losers would be relegated, Doleshwar proved too strong for the contest. Winning the toss, Doleshwar chose to field first and their bowlers ripped through the BKSP batting-order.

Delwar Hossain and Rajgopal Sathish, the two opening bowlers, took three wickets each and left the BKSP team struggling at 72 for seven in 28 over.

Abid Hossain, at No 7, scored a much-needed 51 while Mohammad Forkan scored 32. BKSP's innings stopped at the 47th over with

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Gazi Tank drown Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

For Abahani it was a double delight in the second round of the Premier Division Cricket Super League as they not only bounced back from their shocking first round defeat but also saw their traditional rivals Mohammedan suffering a defeat at the hands of Gazi Tank.

It was however a youthful Gazi Tank who hogged the spotlight with a four-wicket victory at the BKSP. Gazi maintained a hundred percent success against Mohammedan this season to topple the giants from second position to throw the title race wide open.

Abahani kept the top spot by improving their tally to 22 points after beating Cricket Coaching School (CCS) by four wickets at the Shahid Chandu Stadium in Bogra while Gazi followed them with 20 points and Mohammedan slipped to third position on 19 points.

Gazi's young all-rounder Sabbir Rahman was one of the best performers on the day but he also drew the attention for the wrong reasons for the second successive occasion in the competition. In the end of the match, Sabbir was fined Tk 10,000 for using abusive language against Pakistani batsman Shoaib Malik, who was also reprimanded for an aggressive reaction.

Riding on Jahurul Islam's blistering hundred, Biman also continued their winning run with a 15-run victory over Old DOHS at the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi.

GAZI-MOHAMMEDAN

Gazi went into the match on the back of a seven-wicket victory in the first round but Pakistani pacer Azhar Mahmood threatened to avenge the defeat before Nasir Hossain's unbeaten 62 ensured their second successive victory against the Motijheel outfit.

In chase of 167 runs, Gazi Tank survived from 29 for 4 to reach the target for the loss of six wickets. Azhar destroyed the top order by taking all four wickets but crisis man Nasir stood tall again and got brilliant support from Alok Kapali (31) and Sabbir (39).

Nasirlobbered six boundaries during his 98-ball innings.

Earlier leg-spinner Sabbir claimed three wickets for 30 runs including the prized one of Malik, who top scored with 43 before being stumped by Mohammad Mithun. Sanjamul Islam picked up three for 11 as Mohammedan were bundled out for 167 runs in 49.4 overs.

ABAHANI-CCS

A 191-run fourth wicket partnership between Marshal Ayub and Indian Rajat Bhatiya powered Abahani to chase down 265 with three

balls to spare.

Marshal hit 94 off 124 balls that featured eight boundaries while Rajat missed the three digit figure for three runs. Rajat smashed seven fours during his 98-ball knock.

Nazmul Hossain, who captured three wickets conceding 20 runs, denied both the batsmen from a hundred.

Earlier three half centuries from Saikat Ali (72), Taposh Gosh (52) and Mohammad Atik (54 not out) enabled CCS to put up a challenging total of 265 runs for four wickets.

BIMAN-DOHS

Out-of-favour with the national side, Jahurul still smote six sixes and four boundaries during his 101-ball 102 while Elias Sunny contributed 60 off 84 balls with eight boundaries as Biman posted 237 for nine in their stipulated 50 overs.

In reply, number eight batsman Forhad Reza hammered a run-a-ball 80 that included eight boundaries and a six while Nurul Hasan came up with a quickfire 25-ball 40 but their effort was not good enough as DOHS were all out for 222 runs with two overs to spare.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MOHAMMEDAN: 167 all out in 49.4 overs (Nafis 38, Malik 43, Azhar 28, extras 5; Nasir 2-30, Sanjamul 3-11, Sabbir 3-30).

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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'SA win was team effort'

Tamim Iqbal took the World Cup by storm in 2007 through his stunning attack against India in the opening game. Since then, he has transformed his batting and is now the vice-captain of the Bangladesh team. Here is his account as said to The Daily Star Sport.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2007 World Cup?

Tamim Iqbal (TI): The team was to be announced at 2pm in the afternoon and I was waiting anxiously for the news at a friend's place.

I felt really big, as if I've done something in my life. It was a great feeling, absolutely fantastic.

DSS: What was your plan behind the 51 against India? Was it your idea to go for it?

TI: There wasn't any plan as such. I was actually wondering how I'd play a 140kmph ball! I had never faced that sort of face locally, sometimes from Mashrafe bhai but I never faced this kind of pace on a regular basis.



TAMIM IQBAL

DSS: Any frustrating part of the World Cup...?

TI: Before the World Cup, there was a tri-nation tournament but I failed in both matches there. I asked myself, "Do I really deserve to be here?"

But Faruque bhai came up to me and told me not to worry and that I'd play all the matches. It was huge coming from a chief selector and it gave me a lot of confidence.

DSS: What was your best memory during the tournament?

TI: During the 2007 World Cup, the best memory for me was the South Africa win. Nobody really talks about this win too much

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IN DIRE STRAITS: A Mohammedan player is under pressure from two Mukti Joddha players during their 1-0 reverse in the Grameenphone Bangladesh League at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

MSC hit new depths Windies target semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan Sporting Club slumped to their third consecutive defeat going down 1-0 to Mukti Joddha Sangsad in their Grameenphone Bangladesh League match at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Rokonuzzaman Kanchan struck the decisive goal in the 34th minute in his first start of the season. Kanchan replaced top scorer Mithun Chowdhury, who missed the All Red's sixth game for accumulating bookings.

Like the game between Brothers Union and Abahani on Thursday, yesterday's game was also marked by physical tussles among the players and this game was also suspended for seven minutes after the supporters of Mohammedan hurled bricks towards the Mukti Joddha Sangsad players and referees.

It is a pitiful fall for grace for the giants who have never previously lost three games in a row in the league. Even former goalkeeper and member of team management committee, Sayeed Hasan Kanon could not recall the last time Mohammedan had been in such a predicament.

A depleted Mohammedan had a dream start to the league winning their first three matches but they went off the rails by going down 2-0 to Rahmatganj MFS, then suffered an identical 2-0 reverse to Brothers Union before conceding the single-goal defeat to a rejuvenated Mukti Joddha Sangsad, who are now on top of the table with 15 points from

six matches, two ahead of holders Abahani. Mohammedan are in fourth place with nine from six games.

Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik blamed the bias of the referees for the defeats and pointed fingers at the poor squad Mohammedan had formed.

"After the harassment of referee Mizanur Rahman [by Mohammedan supporters], referees are taking revenge by blowing the whistle against us. Today we were not given a genuine penalty despite handing the ball by defender Saikat inside the box and there was also an off-side goal against us," claimed Manik adding that Mohammedan were part of a conspiracy, both in and outside the club.

Mohammedan, who lost most of their last season's players during the transfers this season, had the lion's share of possession but they could hardly break the stiff backline of Mukti Joddha and they only mustered their first shot on the target in the 80th minute.

Mukti Joddha Sangsad played with a packed midfield from the word go, keeping striker Kanchan up front on his own as they thwarted all Mohammedan attempts from the midfield.

However, the veteran striker Kanchan squandered a good chance on 10 minutes floating a Alamu Bukola header over the cross bar from close but the former national striker did not mistake to head a rebound home on 34th minutes when it came his way after a Zahed Chowdhury shot was parried by Mukti's goalkeeper Titu.

Mohammedan came close to equaling

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AFP, Bridgetown



West Indies coach Ottis Gibson believes his unpredictable team can defy the odds and reach the World Cup semi-finals, something they haven't achieved for 15 years.

The West Indies tackle Sri Lanka in three ODIs from Monday, a crucial opportunity for the Caribbean side to get used to the South Asia conditions ahead of the World Cup which takes place from February 19-April 2.

"I think we have a team that can win the World Cup. We'll go there with the expectation of doing very well and putting ourselves in a position that we can reach the semi-finals, which is a very realistic possibility," said Gibson.

"We would love to win and we will try to win. The aim is to reach the semi-finals and put ourselves in a position to capitalise from there."

"The World Cup is one of the biggest stages in international sport and we want to make sure we feature during the tournament. We are not listed among the favourites and that could work in our favour."

The West Indies haven't reached the semifinals since 1996 when they lost to Australia by just five runs in an agonising loss. Gibson was speaking before the squad left for Sri Lanka where the West Indies played to a 0-0 draw in the three-match Test series in December.

The ODI series was to be played in December but was rescheduled due to bad weather.

"It is a good opportunity to put some of the plans in place that we are going to take into the World Cup," said the coach.

"When we went for the Test series we did really well as a team and we made progress. We also had a chance to get used to the conditions. Now we are heading back to Sri Lanka for these three ODIs and we will be looking to put in place the plans that we will be taking into the World Cup."