

Eight-nation hockey proposed

SPORTS REPORTER

Total Sports Marketing (TSM), a local sports marketing company, is considering staging an eight-nation hockey tournament in Bangladesh after December 15 with the participation of big names such as India, Pakistan, South Korea and Malaysia. "Our plan is still at the initial stage as we are studying the commercial viability of an eight-nation tournament in Bangladesh, even though we have verbally informed the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) about our plan," said Moinul Haque, chief executive officer of TSM, yesterday.

BHF general secretary Khaza Rahmatullah said that they have not yet received any official proposal from the company, but they would consider the proposal if TMS agrees to bear all the expenditure of the event.

BHF held one such invitational tournament with eight nations from three continents in 2001.

Haque however said that they are determined to host an international hockey tournament on home soil each year over the next five years as they have a strong marketing wing to sell the television rights to the international market.

Haque informed that TSM is currently producing the ongoing Bangladesh-New Zealand Test series and has also made the TV production of tri-nation series involving West Indies, India and Sri Lanka in West Indies.

Baki finishes on ninth

SPORTS REPORTER

Shooter Abdullah Hel Baki finished ninth in the 10m Air Rifle event in the 6th Asian Air Gun Championships at Tehran's Azadi Sports Complex in Iran yesterday.

Baki had to be satisfied with a ninth position in the qualification with a score of 619.5 points out of 654, just behind eight shooters who qualified for the shoot-off round, according to National Shooting Federation of Bangladesh (NSFB).

The NSFB, however, could not confirm the difference between Baki and the eighth-placed shooter but informed that a Chinese shooter topped the qualification with a score of 627.3 points.

Jesimuzzaman will compete today in the same event but in the youth category.

AB confident about fixing the problems

AFP, Dubai

Star batsman AB de Villiers expressed his confidence on Monday that South Africa can rectify the problems which led to their defeat against Pakistan in the first Test last week.

Speaking ahead of the second Test starting here on Wednesday, the 29-year-old admitted South Africa were disappointed to lose by seven wickets in Abu Dhabi.

"The mood is good, we've moved on from the disappointing performance, obviously we were hurt quite a bit after the Test, we haven't played cricket like that in a long time and we were very, very disappointed," de Villiers said after team practice on Monday.

Tigers fall into Kiwi trap

BISHWAJIT ROY



As required, Bangladesh received a notable contribution from one of their stalwarts -- Tamim Iqbal -- who hit 95 on the first day of the second and final Test against New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Even so it cannot be said that the day, which ended at the tea interval because of continuous rainfall, belonged to the Tigers. The rain interruption may have frustrated the sizeable Mirpur audience but in reality it came as a blessing in disguise for the home team because it not only stopped the batting rot but most importantly saved some time.

Scoring 228 runs at over four runs per over definitely is on the surface an impressive feat, but the real problem was the way in which four of the five wickets were surrendered. It is not only scoring at a good pace, but also consuming time that is of vital importance for the Tigers. In that respect, the Bangladesh top order failed to apply themselves on a pitch where New Zealand's four-man pace attack extracted the bounce to trap the batsmen with short deliveries.

Tamim was certainly the most frustrated man in the end as the left-hander missed the chance to end his long century drought by just five runs, but he can only blame himself. Tamim initially survived two dropped chances but he failed to make the most of his luck as the problem, from the very beginning, was with his mindset. He executed some brilliant shots but he was also restless in his shot selection, for which he eventually paid the price. The New Zealand skipper placed a fielder at gully immediately after the left-hander glided a boundary through the region and painfully, the experienced Tamim was entrapped by Brendon McCullum's ploy as he seemed to be giving catching practice to Kane Williamson.

Tamim's dismissal was however not the only instance of a lack of nuance among

Bangladesh's batsmen. One has to ask why Shakib Al Hasan went for that sweep shot just before the tea interval? The situation could have been much better if the left-hander accompanied his captain Mushfiquar Rahim to the close of play, especially as he was set with 20 runs from his one-hour stay. There is no reason yet to expect much from young opener Anamul Haque, who has so far been suspect in his efforts to establish himself at the highest level and yesterday's poor dismissal only added to the impression. However, the dismissals of Tamim, first-Test hero Moinul Haque and Shakib simply gave the impression that the top batsmen paid for a wrong approach and thus spoiled the opportunity of being in the driving seat at the end of the day.

After the early loss of Anamul, Marshall Ayub joined Tamim to display some eye-catching cover drives but the right-hander missed the line against Neil Wagner to put an end to his impressive but insubstantial 41, but still the home team went for a good lunch at 111 for two.

Moinul, who hit a well-composed 181 in the first Test, got some runs but he was also restless in his shot selection and his slash to a short and wide delivery to offer a simple catch for wicketkeeper BJ Watling was frustrating. In the end, losing three wickets in the second session may have a telling impact on the final result.

Neil Wagner, drafted in to replace Bruce Martin, took two wickets and generally looked threatening. He complemented Trent Boult well and made sure that ten expensive overs from Doug Bracewell, who was most unfortunate to not have Tamim's wicket twice, did not hurt them too much. It is to New Zealand's credit that they read the pitch well, although the overcast conditions did not yield much swing, and exploited the Tigers' discomfort against short bowling, and that they got the most out of their new inclusion. But in the end it was the story of the Bangladesh batsmen's inability to read the situation.

A story half told

SPORTS REPORTER



It was a day which in all sense was truncated as the final, and potentially most intriguing, session was cancelled due to rainfall at the tea break. Consequently the first day's play of the second Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand had no clear winners, and neither can it be confidently said that the honours were shared as an expectant crowd were robbed of a final act.

Bangladesh spent most of the day scoring runs at over four an over, but with Shakib Al Hasan's ill-judged swipe giving New Zealand their fifth wicket and ushering in tea, it was the visitors who were probably more eager for the rain to stay away.

Before that however, Tamim Iqbal rode his luck and built 50-plus partnerships with Marshall Ayub and Moinul Haque. While doing so, the trio lent the Test a blistering pace on a wicket that provided more bounce and promised more turn than Chittagong's surface for the drawn first Test.

"There was no plan to score quickly or score all the runs on the first day," said Marshall when asked whether the more sporting nature of

the pitch had compelled the Tigers to go for their shots. Marshall himself played uncharacteristically aggressively in his 62-ball 41. "They bowled badly; they were bowling half volleys so we punished those deliveries. The wicket is good; after three or four days there will probably be turn."

"We probably lost one wicket too many. If Shakib [Al Hasan] had been there till the end it would have been better," Marshall said when asked about how he gauged Bangladesh's position at the end of the curtailed day.

In line with his judgment of New Zealand's bowling as not of the highest order, he admitted that the Tigers were responsible for some of the wickets that fell. "We threw away our wickets. If at the end of the day we had one centurion, it would have been better. Tamim [Iqbal], Moinul [Haque] and myself all lost opportunities. If Moinul and Tamim batted longer then we would probably have had 350 runs by the end of the day. Now our aim is to reach 400."

Tamim's 95 was in many ways the story of the day. The left-hander survived two early dropped chances and his innings was characterised by a restless desire to keep the scoreboard moving before he guided a lifter from Wagner to gully. "We had

applauded when he hit a ball through the same region for four, but it [Tamim's first century since 2010] was not to be," Marshall added.

Star Kiwi batsman Ross Taylor also did not see much between the sides at the end of the day. "I think with the three wickets that fell in the last session, it definitely gave us the momentum. But there's still a long way to go in this Test match. Bangladesh have scored at over four runs an over and have made the Test a little bit more advanced after only 55 overs," said Taylor, playing his 50th Test match.

"It's probably still pretty evenly poised. The rain has given our fast bowlers an extra break, and hopefully, weather permitting if we can get them seven or eight down before the next new ball, I am sure that whatever the total is we will be satisfied considering Bangladesh won the toss," Taylor replied when asked how the Kiwis will go about their business today.

Judging by the way Bangladesh went about scoring runs yesterday, it will be interesting to see -- if the Kiwis do get the desired outcome of eight wickets before the second new ball -- whether it is caused by good bowling or generous hospitality from Bangladesh.



Shakib Al Hasan has recently developed the habit of throwing his wicket away at a crucial stage. Here the Bangladesh all-rounder desperately looks at the umpire after missing an attempted slog-sweep only to be adjudged leg before in the last over before the Tea break on the opening day of the second Test against New Zealand at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Persistence pays off

NAIMUL KARIM



Al Amin Hossain became the 70th Bangladeshi player to earn a Test cap yesterday when he replaced Robiul Islam for the second Test at Mirpur. Robiul had injured himself weeks before

the series and looked nowhere close to his best in the first Test at Chittagong.

According to the team management, Robiul was not a 100 per cent fit and as a result they decided to give Al Amin his first opportunity. The 23-year-old from Jhenidah received his Test cap from coach Shane Jurgensen yesterday morning in a mini ceremony.

The youngster, who has played 13 first-class matches and taken 45 wickets at an average of 19.36, did not get a chance to take the field yesterday since Bangladesh chose to bat. He was however excited about making the big league.

"It feels really good honestly speaking. I have worked hard to get into the squad and now that I am in the playing eleven my aim is to take as many wickets as possible," Al Amin told The Daily Star.

A medium-pace bowler, Al Amin gets the ball to drift inwards and gets more bounce than usual due to his unique bowling action. His knack of taking wickets consistently was one of the main reasons behind his call-up.

In the National Cricket League season of 2011-12, he picked 39 wickets at an average of 16.53 and also helped his side, Khulna, to emerge winners. This year he was on the money at the Dhaka Premier League where he took 18 wickets in six matches. While the bowler does hope for a good start to his career, the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium has not been his favourite hunting ground -- he has taken only two wickets here as opposed to 22 in Rajshahi and 9 at Fatullah.

It's a statistic that the bowler will want to change when he embarks upon his international career against the Kiwis in the second innings.

BD-NZ SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: Firstinnings				
Tamim c Williamson b Wagner	95			
Anamul c Williamson b Boult	7			
Ayub b Wagner	41			
Mominul c Watling b Anderson	47			
Shakib lbw b Sodhi	20			
Mushfiquar not out	14			
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, w-1)	4			
Total: (For 5 wkts in 54.4 overs)	228			
To bat: Gazi, Rubel, Al Amin, Razzak, Nasir				
Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-90, 3-166, 4-208, 5-228				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Boult	13	1	50	1
Bracewell	10	0	51	0
Wagner	13	3	42	2
Sodhi	11.4	2	38	1
Williamson	4	0	30	0
Anderson	3	0	14	1
NEW ZEALAND: McCullum, Fulton, Rutherford, Williamson, Taylor, Watling, Anderson, Bracewell, Boult, Sodhi, Wagner.				
Toss: Bangladesh.				

Edenic plans for Sachin

CNN-IBN, Kolkata

With a legacy of its own that stands out among the finest cricket stadiums in the world, the grand old amphitheatre called Eden Gardens is now gearing up for an unforgettable send-off for one of cricket's greatest legends -- Sachin Tendulkar.

Kolkata is already in the grips of Tendulkar fever and the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) is planning to make the master blaster's penultimate Test at the Eden Gardens a grand affair.

But what's interesting is that CAB officials prefer staying tight-lipped about it as they are wary that the Mumbai Cricket Association might spike their ideas when they host the final Test at the Wankhede.

"When Sachin scored 100 centuries, CAB felicitated him with a 100 gold guineas. Subsequently the Mumbai Cricket Association gifted him with a 100 gold coins. Now guineas and coins are the same thing. So we cannot say more now," said Biswarup Dey, treasurer of CAB.

Court orders PCB polls in two weeks

AFP, Islamabad

The turmoil at the top of Pakistani cricket took another turn on Monday as a court ordered elections for the board chairman to be held in two weeks.

The ruling by the Islamabad High Court appears to have scuppered moves by a new Interim Management Committee (IMC) to delay choosing a permanent chairman for the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

Opening woes go on

NAIMUL KARIM



Anamul Haque's wicket yesterday might have gone unnoticed, considering that there were several other talking points in Bangladesh's first innings. Moments such as Tamim Iqbal falling five runs short of his first century in three years or Shakib Al Hasan's overly aggressive batting which led to his downfall, dominated post-day discussions.

But Anamul's fall in the fifth over yesterday -- courtesy of an unnecessary attempted pull shot -- represents a problem that Bangladesh's cricket has been facing for a while now: the inability to form a consistent opening pair.

The last year has seen Bangladesh's batting take considerable strides; they crossed the 500-mark thrice, including a score of 638 against Sri Lanka, but the opening conundrum remains. In the last two years Bangladesh have used six pairs of openers and have seen just two partnerships that cross 50. Nazimuddin, Shahriar Nafees, Imrul Kayes, Jahurul Islam and Junaid Siddique were all given opportuni-

ties alongside Tamim Iqbal at the top, but barely yielded satisfactory results.

Anamul, who was drafted into the Test team against Sri Lanka after a century on his ODI debut against West Indies, is the latest to occupy the troubled position; and going by his statistics, he does not seem to be enjoying it. His first five Test innings has seen him score a total of 42 runs. While he began with a bang in the ODIs, his batting technique and lack of footwork in the Tests have been questioned by many.

But Anamul's records are not too different from the others. Imrul, whose 549 runs as an opener is the highest among the contenders after Tamim, scored at an average of 17.15. Junaid has scored 220 runs at 16.92, Nafees has an average of 26.40 and Nazimuddin has scored 128 runs at an average of 20.83. Jahurul, who opened for Bangladesh against Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, is slightly better off with an average of 33.28.

Tamim, with 2151 runs in 57 innings is Bangladesh's only opener to have shown stability. Former opener Javed Omar is the only other to have scored more than a

thousand runs.

Apart from the batting averages of the players, the total amount of partnership runs among Bangladesh's openers also reflect the poor state of affairs at the top. Tamim and Imrul are the only opening pair to have scored more than a thousand runs at the top. In the 32 innings that they have opened in, they have scored 1229 runs. The pair of Javed Omar and Nafis Iqbal is the next best with 665 runs in 19 innings.

Still new to the Test arena Anamul does have the chance to redeem himself. However, the worrisome aspect is that if the player does go out of favour, the team management is likely to pick someone from the existing group of openers, since there are aren't any obvious performers in the first-class level.

The other option would be to choose someone from a different format such as Shamsur Rahman, who opens for Bangladesh in T20s, but that too could lead to similar results. Either way, the team management would want at least one of the mentioned players to hit form, in order to relieve the team from what seems to be one of the biggest weak links in their game.



Young opener Anamul Haque once again vindicated that he is a suspect against quality pace bowling. Here he trudges back to the dressing room after being undone by a short stuff in the opening morning of the second Test at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR