

Taskin yorker fells Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER

A yorker bowled by young Taskin Ahmed during training yesterday resulted in Tamim Iqbal hurting his right ankle.

The blow left the left-hander's ankle swollen and as a result he could not continue batting.

"I'll be observing him for a day. He did not experience severe pain. So we did not have to rush him for an X-ray. We will monitor the swelling. If the pain increases we will take him for an X-ray," said the team's physio, Vibhav Singh.

With no training scheduled today, Tamim will get a much-needed break.

The left-hander has had a hard time with injuries this year. He had earlier missed the ODI series against Sri Lanka due to a stiff neck. That was followed by the opener injuring his wrist during the National Cricket League this year.

The team will leave for the tour of West Indies on the 13th, and according to chief selector Faruque Ahmed there was still time for Tamim to recover if the injury turns out to be more serious than it seems. The selectors have picked four openers for the team.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Opening batsman Tamim Iqbal is in obvious pain as he leaves the practice field after being hit by a Taskin Ahmed yorker in Mirpur yesterday.

Salahuddin urges local coaches to scout talents

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin urged all football coaches of the country to help find budding talents to build up future teams, in exchange for monetary rewards from the game's governing body.

The announcement of the monetary reward came yesterday, a day after the BFF boss delivered an emotional speech to the players of the Asian Games preliminary squad where he urged the players to deliver results at the international level to attract atten-

tion of sponsors and the government in a bid to run the cash-strapped football federation.

"I urge you all (coaches) to send talented booters, between the age 11 - 17, to us wherever you find. I will give you Tk 50,000 to Tk 100,000 for each of the finds if he is finally selected for BFF development programme by our foreign coaches," said Salahuddin at the BFF House during an experience sharing programme between local coaches and sports journalists who travelled to Brazil to cover the FIFA World Cup.

"You all know that national federations across the world do not nurture or groom players, rather it is the responsibility of the clubs. We lack this

practice as our clubs are neither professional nor public. Our practice at the club level is to pick up someone, who is already prepared. But we want to change the practice and groom talented players at the age level with our own responsibility," said the BFF boss.

Salahuddin even promised to give away 15 to 20 percent of the transfer fee to the coach if his find is nurtured and sold by the federation.

The BFF, at present, has no long-term development programme in which the young players can grow up in a professional way. But it is expected that the football's governing body will soon start its much-awaited football academy in Sylhet through a training camp of the U-13 age group.

What's in big names!

It's curtains for the 'best ever' Games

REUTERS, Glasgow



As Glasgow basks in the afterglow of hosting a popular 20th edition of the Commonwealth Games, Scotland's largest city can reflect on a job well done even if the sporting action underwhelmed on a global scale.

Hailed as the best ever Games by Federation president Prince Tunku Imran, Glasgow charmed the 71 participating nations and territories that competed over the course of 11 days.

With approximately 1.2 million tickets sold, Glasgow ensured that athletes from all over the Commonwealth received full and noisy support wherever they competed -- even if there were few show-stopping moments.

After several high-profile withdrawals, notably England's double Olympic champion Mo Farah and Jamaican sprinter Yohan Blake, the hopes of the Games rested on the world's fastest man Usain Bolt.

The towering Jamaican did not disappoint after claiming gold in the

men's 4x100-metre relay but the fanfare he created also highlighted the dearth of world-class talent in Glasgow.

With traditionally powerful sporting nations like the United States, China and Russia not eligible to compete, the Games will always lack true world-class status.

But part of the Games' charm is the fabled stories the diverse range of athletes have, be it Kiribati's first female boxer Taoriba Biniati, Brunei's only athlete in Glasgow -- cyclist Muhammad I'maadi Abd Aziz -- or Norfolk Island badminton player Richard Cribb, who practises on a converted dance floor.

Teenage gymnast Claudia Fragapane will have good reason to always remember these Games -- the tiny 16-year-old, who stands just 4ft 5in tall, became the first Englishwoman in 84 years to win four gold medals at a single Commonwealth edition.

It is these stories that give the Games its own unique identity, drawing it out of the shadow of the Olympics.

The blanket television and radio coverage the Games received across

Britain reflected the popularity it has among the Home Nations, while in cricket-mad India, with the team currently touring England, all of the leading newspapers sent correspondents to Glasgow.

India finished second in the medals tally when they hosted the Games four years back and although expectations were lower than 2010, the Games have been closely followed with high television ratings.

India's sports minister has also regularly made press statements lauding the medal winners, while the federations have announced cash prizes for the athletes.

Jamaican press were out in force too, ensuring extensive coverage of their big-name track athlete Bolt, while the rest of the team did not disappoint with regular appearances on the podium in the sprint races.

Despite breaking the only world record of the Games in the women's 4x100 freestyle, Australian fans left Glasgow a little disappointed after finishing second in the medals table behind arch-rivals England.

They will look to put that right when the Gold Coast stages the next games in 2018.

STREAK eager for pacy pitches

NAIMUL KARIM



With the 2015 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand expected to be a battle between pacers, Bangladesh's plight seems a bit worrisome.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed's decision to include four specialist pacers for the West Indian series clearly shows that the team management, all of a sudden, wants its quick bowlers to be tested and tried before the mega event.

While the move was a much required one the current state of Bangladesh's pace stocks, however, paints a rather morbid picture.

Traditionally pacers have never managed to dominate Bangladesh's domestic circuit and it was an aspect that was highlighted again in the last first-class season.

Of the 227 wickets that were taken by bowlers in the Bangladesh Cricket League this year, pacers bagged just 52.

While the dominance of slow left-armers is not a new phenomenon, that the top five wicket-takers of this year's National Cricket League (NCL) -- the other major domestic first-class competition -- have all been slow left-armers should ring some alarm bells as far as Bangladesh's bowling culture is concerned.

The scenario led a number of senior domestic pacers to criticise the wickets. Mohammad Sharif, captain of NCL champions Dhaka Division, after winning the final, said that Bangladesh 'will never be able to create a good pacer' as long as they do not get good wickets to play on.

Echoing the demands made by players this year, newly-appointed bowling coach Heath Streak has said that the country's first-class cricket is in need of more wickets that 'encourage pace and bounce'.

"First-class cricket, in my opinion, has to have a few more wickets that have a bit more pace and bounce to encourage some of the pacers a bit more. I think that the BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) have got a bit more control on these sort of wickets in first-class cricket as opposed to the Dhaka Premier League (the premier limited-overs club competition) that are privately funded,

"If you look back at all the records the quick bowlers don't get enough bowling. It's

not that they don't want to bowl, it's just that the conditions don't support them," Streak told The Daily Star.

"For the quick bowlers there's not much encouragement. Yes they have to learn to bowl in flat conditions, but that's not how they should play in every game because they won't get much incentive to bowl.

"And that's because the wickets aren't conducive, so we need to change that and get some wickets that have a bit more pace, especially at the venues that allow that. For example in Mirpur the groundsman can make a good bouncy wicket," he added.

While the former Zimbabwe captain admits that it's best for the Tigers to stick to their strength -- spin bowling -- he believes that there needs to be a fine balance between pace and spin for the betterment of the team.

Referring to India's batting collapse against Bangladesh in the last series on seaming tracks that were unfamiliar to both the hosts and the visitors, Streak emphasised the importance of adapting to conditions.

"It's not just for the bowlers but also the batters. There's a technique to play in conditions with the ball swinging and seaming, we also need our batters to get exposed to those conditions."

While the Zimbabwean did list the issues, there was no hint of frustration in him. He was, on the contrary, hopeful of a steady change. "It's something that we have discussed with the board and we will continue to work on; these things don't change overnight, we just need to find a balance between spin and pace," he said.

With the World Cup around the corner the current season would be the ideal time to bring about the change that Streak and several other players have long been yearning for. However, as the Zimbabwean himself put it, it would be impractical to hope for an overnight change.

Will the clubs agree to play in bouncy conditions in the Dhaka Premier League this October? Can a section of the venues be tailor-made to support the pacers this season? Probably not; but with the cricketing world going through a series of administrative changes this year, which includes a two-tier qualifying system for the 2019 World Cup, it may not be a long time before the BCB is compelled to enforce these changes.

41ST CHESS OLYMPIAD

Men keep winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's chess team continued their good show while the women's team suffered a thrashing in the second round of the 41st Chess Olympiad in Tromso, Norway on Sunday. The 55th seeded men's team, who beat Zimbabwe by 3-1 points in the first round, beat 50th seeded Chile by the same margin on Sunday. The men's team shared the lead in the open section along with 35 other teams earning maximum four match points and six game points.

GM Ziaur Rahman and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar won their respective matches while GM Abdullah Al Rakib and GM Niaz Murshed drew their respective boards against Chilean counterparts.

The 58th seeded women's team, meanwhile, lost against 10th seeded Armenia by 0-4 points. The women's team have two match points and four game points.

Indian hockey side due today

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A second sting Indian national hockey team is scheduled to arrive here today to play three practice matches against Bangladesh national hockey team. The three match series is being held as part of Bangladesh's preparation for World Hockey League (Round-1) and Asian Games.

The 18-member Indian hockey team comprises 16 players who have experience of playing international matches, with captain Vickramkanth playing 70 international matches while eight other players having played more than 10 international matches each.

The visiting side will play the three matches on August 6, 8 and 9 at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan where Bangladesh team have been preparing for nearly two months.

"The Indian hockey team consists of national reserve bench players, as the main team have just participated in the Commonwealth Games," said Bangladesh Hockey Federation selector Mamunur Rashid adding that the Bangladesh national team would be benefited with the matches against the Indian side.

Svetlana and Milos triumph

AFP, Washington

Wimbledon semifinalist Milos Raonic captured his sixth ATP title Sunday at the Washington Open, defeating Vasek Pospisil 6-1, 6-4 in the tour's first all-Canadian final.

In his first event since producing his best Grand Slam showing, Raonic took the top prize of 316,400 dollars from the 1.9 million dollars hardcourt event, a warm-up for the US Open starting later this month.

Pospisil, coming off a Wimbledon men's doubles title alongside American Jack Sock, played in his first ATP final after upsetting Czech top seed Tomas Berdych in the third round and playing four sets Saturday after completing a rain-halted quarterfinal and beating Richard Gasquet in the semifinals.

In the WTA final, 29-year-old Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova, a two-time Grand Slam champion, won her first tour title since 2010 at San Diego by defeating Japan's Kurumi Nara 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

Kuznetsova had not reached a final since 2011 until earlier this year in Oerias while Nara, 22, won her first title earlier this year at Rio de Janeiro.

Serena wins at Stanford

AFP, Stanford

World number one Serena Williams climbed out of an early hole to beat third-seeded German Angelique Kerber 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 on Sunday to win the WTA Stanford crown.

The top-seeded American, playing her first tournament since a disappointing Wimbledon campaign in which she was slowed by a virus, got her hardcourt build-up to the US Open off to a good start and will try to carry the momentum into next week's tournament at Montreal.

Williams collected her third Stanford trophy and her fourth title of 2014, after triumphs in Brisbane, Miami and Rome.

But the 17-time Grand Slam champion has struggled in majors this year, failing to make it past the fourth round in the Australian Open, French Open or Wimbledon.

She'll have her last chance of the year to add another major title to her resume at the US Open.

'Up to us to use his suggestions'

SPORTS REPORTER



One cannot expect immediate results after two days of sessions, observed Bangladesh opener Anamul Haque as performance psychologist Phill Jauncey ended his programme with the Tigers yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

As part of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) attempt to rectify the national team's recent bad performances, they hired Jauncey to make sure that no stone was left unturned ahead of the Tigers' tough challenge during the Caribbean tour in August-September.

"He said many things in detail and talked about some particular issues. Now we have to apply all those things in the middle. And it takes time to follow his instructions. It's not like everything will fall into place after getting lessons from him. We need to get used to his teaching gradually," the 21-year old told reporters yesterday when asked about the impact of the two-day course.

The young opener however believed that the sessions will have an impact in their performance if they can keep Jauncey's advice in mind and follow it during the practice sessions.

"It's not like someone has to always say these kinds of things. He gave us something and we will try our best to follow his advice. He will come again if needed. Everything depends on us; but I am sure we will benefit if we follow what he told us during the two-day programme," said Anamul when asked about whether it would be better for them to have Jauncey on a long-term basis.