

Inter-district women's swimming underway

SPORTS REPORTER

Faria Amin won two gold medals on the opening day of two-day Inter-district Women's Swimming Competition, which got underway yesterday at the swimming pool of the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi.

Faria from Meherpur, competing in the 8-10 year age-group, grabbed her first gold in the 50m breast-stroke before winning the 50m freestyle gold.

In 13-14 year age group, Shamsunnahar from Madaripur won gold in 100m backstroke, Akhi Khatun of Jenaidhah grabbed 100m butterfly gold and Sumi Khatun from Meherpur captured gold in 200m individual medley while Sumia Akter Ima from Jessore won the 100m freestyle gold in 11-12 year age-group.

The competition was inaugurated by Inspector General of Police, Hasan Mahmud Khandoker.

Some 180 swimmers from 27 districts, split into three age-groups, are taking part in the meet.

Sports policy soon: Sikder

SPORTS REPORTER

State Minister for Youth and Sports Biren Sikder on Wednesday said that he would announce a sports policy soon --- a long waited demand of the country's sports community that has not been fulfilled by his many predecessors.

"I have already formed a committee to formulate a new sports policy. Hopefully, an announcement will come soon," said the soft-spoken Sikder during an animated discussion with the sports editors of print and electronic media at the NCS conference room.

He however admitted that the biggest obstacle for the development of country's sports is the shortage of funds. But he promised that most of the funds his ministry is getting from the government would be channelled for training and games development purposes instead of building infrastructure, which has been the obsession over the years.

Sikder, who took the unenviable post eight months ago, also said that he would work on two very important suggestions from the floor --- to closely monitor the performances of different district sports associations and to introduce rewards for performers.

SA Rollball c'ships from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel South Asian Rollball (men's and women's) Championships get underway today at two different venues of the capital-- the Abahani ground in Dhanmondi and Mirpur Indoor Stadium.

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal and hosts Bangladesh are taking part in the championships of rollball, which is a combination of handball and skating.

The three-day event is being held in jointly by Bangladesh Roller Skating Federation (BRKF) and Bangladesh Rollball Association (BRA), informed the BRA president Ahmed Asiful Hasan at a press conference yesterday, adding that the estimated budget of Tk 65 lakhs was expected to be provided for the championship by the government.



Faria Amin of Meherpur is on her way to winning 50m breaststroke gold on the opening day of two-day age-group inter-district Women's Swimming Competition at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Booters go down 2-4

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh U-23 football team suffered a 2-4 goal defeat against their Vietnamese counterparts in a practice match ahead of the 17th Asian Games at the Munhak Football Field Auxiliary Pitch in Incheon, South Korea yesterday.

Vietnam, who are 31 places above Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings, seemingly notched up an easy win as they took a 3-0 lead after the hour mark, scoring in the 18th, 25th and 63rd minutes, before Bangladesh pulled two goals back. However, the Southeast Asian nation sealed the

fate of the match by scoring a fourth goal in the last minute of the match.

Bangladesh coach Lodewijk de Kruif fielded Jewel Rana and Hemanta Vincent up front in the starting line-up instead of regular strikers Wahed Ahmed and Taklish Ahmed. Yeamin Munna, Kesto Kumar, Rayhan Hasan and Yeasin Khan were slated behind four midfielders -- Mamunul Islam, Jamal Bhuiyan, Sohel Rana and Yousuf Sifat.

According to the Bangladesh Football Federation press release, Bangladesh could have made the margin 2-1 in the first half had forward Jewel Rana not squandered an easy opportunity in the 45th minute.

After trailing by three goals,

Wahed came off the bench and pulled one goal back in the 70th minute after being set up by Sohel. Another substitute Toklish made it 3-2 in the 75th minute but Vietnam scored the fourth goal in the 90th minute to ensure the victory over Bangladesh, who will play their first match of Asian Games against Afghanistan on September 15.

"The scoreline could have been 6-6 had both sides availed the opportunities they got," De Kruif was quoted as saying by the BFF.

De Kruif claimed that Bangladesh conceded the defeat despite playing good football. However, the defence was a cause for concern due to the

absence of Atiqur Rahman Meshu, who was ruled out of the Asian Games after sustaining an ankle injury during Tuesday's practice session.

"Doctors at the Games Village advised Meshu to take at least one-and-a-half month of rest. The coach wants him to be replaced by forward Mithun Chowdhury," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

Mithun, who has been training with Sheikh Russel KC for the AFC President's Cup scheduled for September 20 to 26 in Colombo, was not drafted in the initial 30-member list that was sent to the Asian Games. However, the BFF is looking into the possibility of including Mithun in place of Meshu.

No quick tech fix for bowlers

REUTERS, Melbourne



The ICC is cautiously optimistic that wearable sensors can provide the technological breakthrough needed to stamp out illegal bowling actions but does not expect them to be ready for trial in matches before mid-2015.

Geoff Allardice, the International Cricket Council's general manager of cricket, told Reuters in an interview on Wednesday that there has been lots of progress in using the technology but stumbling blocks remain to deploying it in matches.

The ICC on Tuesday banned off-spinner Saeed Ajmal, Pakistan's most prolific test wicket-taker among active players, after biomechanic tests found all his deliveries broke the limit for straightening of the elbow joint.

The latest in a string of suspensions for internationals over their bowling actions, Ajmal's ban has fanned fears that 'chucking' is rife at the highest level of the game but it has also been applauded as a timely crackdown on a highly contentious and often elusive problem.

Where umpires have often been reluctant to report their suspicions to match officials, the ICC hopes technology can eliminate subjectivity from the equation, making violations clear-cut through measured, real-time data.

The ICC has been working with Australian researchers to develop wearable "inertial" sensors that can measure bowlers' actions against the permissible limit for over two years.

The programme has reached key milestones and is now in its third and final phase but challenges remain, believes Allardice.

"There's a fair bit of work to do before we're going to be able to use them in a match setting," he said.

"This next stage is probably going to take 18 months to two years. You wouldn't expect it to be trialled in a match setting until mid-2015 at the earliest.

"But the science is encouraging."

The sensors, which are attached to the bowler's upper arm and forearm have reached the point where they can successfully detect the moment when a ball is released in a delivery.

While that much is already useful in analysis, the sensors still lack the capability to measure the arm's straightness during the bowling arc, a key to determining the fine line between a legal action and chucking.

"At this stage we're looking to automatically detect the position of the arm at the release with some software that is receiving the signals from the sensors... and how to capture that without any (competing) information," said Allardice, a former first-class batsman and senior manager at Australia's cricket board.

The mounting of the sensors also has yet to be perfected so the data cannot be compromised to an intolerable extent.

Injury fear for Taskin

SPORTS REPORTER



Pacer Taskin Ahmed's stint at the Asian Games is lurking in danger after a problem with the bowler's right knee recently intensified. The T20 competition at Incheon is scheduled to begin on September 27.

Taskin, who has been managing a tendon injury on his left knee for over a year now, has a set rehabilitation programme that requires him to work on his lower body muscles on a regular basis.

However, his recent issue has to do with his right knee. The pain was in its initial stages during the ODI series against India, which saw the bowler pick up a five-wicket haul in his debut game.

According to the team management, his right knee has been bothering him a bit more than before and as a result the

bowler underwent an MRI yesterday.

Bangladesh's selectors will have a meeting today in order to discuss the issue and further discuss if there are any changes required in Bangladesh's squad for the Asian Games.

Earlier, Shohag Gazi, who has been reported with a suspect action, was replaced by Shakib Al Hasan in the Asian Games squad. The selectors are also expected to have a discussion on Al-Amin Hossain's—who has also been reported for a suspect action-- participation in the Asian Games in the meeting.

Bangladesh are sending their strongest available squad for the Games. Apart from captain Mushfiqur Rahim, who has opted out for his marriage ceremony, the top T20 players of the country will feature in this event.

Mohammad Ashrafuhl led Bangladesh to a Gold in the event in the last Games at Guangzhou, China in 2010.

No appeal for Ajmal

AP, Lahore

The Pakistan Cricket Board has retracted its decision to file an appeal for Saeed Ajmal, who believes he can overturn his suspension for an illegal bowling action on medical grounds.

Ajmal was suspended by the International Cricket Council on Tuesday, and soon after, 80-year-old PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan said in Lahore they will file an appeal. But within hours again, Khan backed down on the appeal.

Nishikori hits a jackpot

AFP, Tokyo



Japanese tennis sensation Kei Nishikori may have lost the US Open final, but he has won a 940,000-dollar special bonus from a sponsor delighted about seeing its brand splashed across screens worldwide.

Fast Retailing and its charismatic President Tadashi Yanai will each give 50 million yen to the 24-year-old tournament runner-up, who lost in straight sets to Croatian giant Marin Cilic.

The casual-clothing firm, which operates the Uniqlo brand, saw a run on shirts worn by Japan's best male

tennis star during the tournament at Flushing Meadows, which feature the cheap-chic brand's logo.

The firm wanted to congratulate the athlete and celebrate his achievement, and to reward him for boosting both Uniqlo's brand image and the morale of its workers, a company spokesman said.

"We wanted to celebrate his historic achievement," he said.

The bonus "was also meant to show our continued support as he aims to be the world's number one," he said.

The bonus comes on top of a runner-up's purse of 1.45 million dollars.

Fast Retailing has been working to make itself a top global brand to rival

the test in Cardiff this month.

So far the bowlers reported for suspect actions, ever since the ICC decided to scrutinise this matter in June, have been found guilty of exceeding the 15 degree level of tolerance as permitted under regulations.

Sri Lankan off-spinner Sachitra Senanayake, who was reported on June 3 was banned on July 12. New Zealand spinner Kane Williamson, who was reported on June 22 was banned on July 23. And most recently, Pakistan off-spinner Saeed Ajmal was banned yesterday.

The banned bowlers can apply for a reassessment after correcting their action as per the laws of the ICC. However, if they fail to pass the test for a second time then the bowler in question will be banned for a year.

With the 50-over World Cup around the corner, it is imperative that both Shohag and Al-Amin pass their tests the first time around.

Meanwhile, the suspension has thrown doubts over Al-Amin's participation in the Asian Games in Korea. Shohag has already been removed, while Al-Amin's participation will be subject to his test date, which is expected to take place either in Wales or Australia.

Tigers look to retain pride

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh reached St Lucia yesterday to play their match on their Caribbean tour. There are few people left who have kept faith in Mushfiqur Rahim's men ahead of the second and final Test, starting from September 13 at the Beausejour Stadium in Gros Islet. Bangladesh need a big turnaround if they want to return home with something to cheer.

But the challenge ahead of the Tigers is not an easy one.

After a dismal one-day series, the team think-tank revealed that their target was to draw the Tests and based their target on a severely depleted bowling attack in the absence of their top spinners, Shakib Al Hasan and Shohag Gazi. The onus was on the batsmen, but what happened in the first Test at St Vincent hardly reflected the steps that many thought Bangladesh would have taken.

With the wrong mind-set, wrong strategy and, above all, the foolhardiness of the batsmen, the first Test cumulated in a 10-wicket defeat for Bangladesh. It would be foolish to try and spin the first Test in a positive light although Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim showed a lot of courage in both the innings against all odds.

According to sources, the Bangladesh team management are expecting different conditions in St Lucia and they may pick three pacers for the second Test. However, the team think-tank, under the guidance of the new head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, should realise what kind of mistakes they made in their team selection in the first Test.

With eight batsmen in the line-up-- a ridiculous decision by itself and playing on a benign surface-- Mushfiqur's decision to field first remains a mystery for any ardent cricket follower.

Hopefully the team management can now understand that no matter how many batsmen are taken in the side, it will not help if the top order fails to use their common sense. Rather than going for the 'half-batsman half-bowler' policy, they must concentrate on how they can bring out the best from their specialist batsmen and even the few specialist bowlers at their disposal. Many thought a new era was ushered in following some bright decisions and ideas from Hathurusingha, but the way the Sri Lankan designed his team for the first Test reminded many of the defensive tactics used by Bangladesh in the early days of their Test career.

Most importantly the think-tank should deeply assess whether there was any point in making a team with four openers and letting a specialist opener bat in the crucial number three position.

The main challenge for the team management ahead of the second Test would be to instill common sense at the top order and make sure they bat effectively.

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