

SPORT

Cricket ball troubles Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER from Incheon

Bangladesh cricketers were visibly irked with the type of cricket ball put into use for the Asian Games Twenty20 cricket event during their training session at the Songdo LNG Baseball Ground yesterday in Incheon.

In line with the recommendation of the Asian Cricket Council Pakistani-made 'Aj' balls will be used in the matches. However, Bangladesh's players are used to playing with Australian-manufactured Kookabura balls, which is also used worldwide for international matches.

Captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was visibly annoyed with the ball and during practice loudly expressed his discomfort to BCB chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

"I can't hold the grip," Mashrafe shouted after delivering his first delivery to Shakib Al Hasan. "It is difficult to grip and quite different from the ball we are used to."

The fielders also had a tough time during training with the likes of Nasir Hossain and Shakib fumbling a few.

Nadir back in local cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Umpire Nadir Shah officiated in his first competitive match on Saturday ever since he was slapped with a 10-year suspension by the Bangladesh Cricket Board in March 2013. Shah was accused of agreeing to doctor decisions in exchange of money in a sting operation conducted by India TV and was found guilty by the BCB.

However, a year after the sentence was announced Shah lodged a mercy plea and the executive committee of the board decided to allow Nadir to stand in domestic matches earlier this year.

"The BCB withdrew the ban in a board meeting that took place after the ICC World Twenty20. We wrote to the ICC's anti-corruption and security unit in March, stating that the board has decided to allow Shah to umpire domestic games. We however did not receive any reply from them," explained Sailab Hossain Tutul, member-secretary of the BCB's umpires committee.

"The board considered his long service for Bangladesh cricket and decided to let him stand in domestic matches. He could have begun umpiring a while back, but he was out of the country," he added.

Meanwhile, Shah expressed his happiness for his return.

"I umpired a match after two years and believe me, despite the heat over there I enjoyed every minute of it. After I was banned, I really tried my best to concentrate on things apart from cricket but that did not work out, so I thank the board for letting me return. Plus it was also a matter of my prestige," said Shah.

Shah stood as umpire in a First Division Twenty20 game between Indira Road Krira Chakra and BKSP.

Dennis sets new world record

AFP, Berlin

Kenyan runner Dennis Kimetto set a new world record in the Berlin Marathon on Sunday, with an unofficial time of 2hr 02min 57sec.

He became the first man to run under 2hr 03min and his time was well inside the previous record of 2:03:23, set over the same course last year by his compatriot Wilson Kipsang.



Superstar Shakib Al Hasan (C) is amused by something while teammates (L-R) Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Ziaur Rahman and Nasir Hossain look on during Bangladesh's training session at Songdo LNG Baseball Ground in Incheon yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Bad day for kabaddi, golf

SPORTS REPORTER from Incheon



Bangladesh's Asian Games kabaddi campaign got off on the wrong foot as both the men and women's teams lost to holders India at the Songdo Global University Gymnasium here yesterday.

While the women's team, who won bronze medal in the previous edition in China in 2010, suffered an 18-29 defeat including "two lona" after trailing the first half 5-22, the men's team followed the footsteps of women and were humiliated 15-30 by India who came into the game after taking part in the newly-introduced Professional Kabaddi League in India.

Though a win over holders India was not expected, Bangladesh's hopes of winning either silver or bronze in both men and women's events depend on today's outcomes against Pakistan and hosts South Korea respectively.

Bangladesh men's team have not beaten Pakistan since 2006 while the women's team confirmed the bronze medal after beating South Korea in the Guangzhou Games.

Meanwhile in golf, Bangladesh's Sajib Ali finished 28th among 80 golfers after playing an overall two under par 286 while Nazim became 36th playing overall five over par 293 at close of the fourth and final round at the Dream Park Country Court. Ismail and Mohammad Sagor became 39th and 53rd playing overall nine over par 297 and 23 over par 311 respectively.

Bangladesh finished tenth in the team event.

Tsung Cheng Pan of Taipei, Kim Namhun of South Korea and An Chun Yu of Taipei finished first, second and third respectively. Tsung played an overall 17 under par 271, Kim played overall 15 under par 273 and Chun Yu played overall 12 under par 276.

BD A lose opener by 17

SPORTS REPORTER



Zimbabwe A won their first match of the tour yesterday when they beat hosts Bangladesh A by 17 runs at Fatullah in the first of three one-dayers.

A century from Regis Chakabva helped the visitors finish on 253 for 6. In reply, the hosts were bowled out for 236 runs in 49.3 overs.

In a match which saw Abul Hasan's return to competitive cricket turn sour -- he suffered from a muscle strain in his back and was taken off the attack after bowling 2.5 overs -- Bangladesh's bowling suffered.

With Hasan out of the picture, captain Marshall Ayub had to employ the likes of Mominul Haque and Mosaddek Hossain to complete the paceman's quota.

Zimbabwe's openers began well and shared a half-century stand. With the specialist bowlers failing to get the required breakthrough, Marshall turned to Mominul, who removed Brian Chari for 35 in the 18th over. On the very next ball, he bowled Joylord Gumbie and all of a sudden the visitors found themselves in a precarious 83 for 2. However, despite the quick wickets, Chakabva kept his cool and scored his first List A century. A balanced knock, Chakabva hit 132 runs off 144 deliveries with 13 fours and three sixes at a strike-rate of 91.67.

While he drove freely against the

pacers, he ensured to get the maximums against the Bangladeshi spinners, who had given the visitors a tough time in the two four-day matches.

Bangladesh's chase began in the worst possible way with the hosts' top-order stumbling to 33 for 3. Shahriar Nafees and Marshall were bowled while Mominul was caught in the eleventh over. Naeem Islam and Soumya Sarker shared a half-century stand to bring the hosts back in the game. However, Soumya departed in the 27th over after scoring 56. Another half-century partnership followed, this time between Naeem and the young Mosaddek. At 155 for 4 in 38 overs, Bangladesh A were still in it, however, Naeem became Tafadzwa Kamungodzi's third victim in the 39th over and that's when things began to fall apart. Nurul Hasan departed in the same over pushing the hosts into deeper waters.

A 30-ball 42 from Elias Sunny at number 8 provided some hope, but unfortunately the departure of both Elias and Mosaddek towards the end left the hosts 17 runs short.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE A: 253 for 6 (Regis 132, Sibanda 52; Mominul 2-47, Zubaer 2-53)

BANGLADESH A: 236 all out in 49.3 overs (Naeem 66, Soumya 56; Kamungozi 4-24)

Result: Zimbabwe A won by 17 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Regis Chakabva.

'A chance to learn'

ANISUR RAHMAN from Incheon



Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha believes that the Asian Games will be a good opportunity for his players to observe the daily routine of 'world-class' athletes and learn from them.

Following a three-hour practice session yesterday, Hathurusingha said, "Staying in the Village and surrounded by so many athletes will certainly help them learn how to prepare for the coming days."

An improper food diet among the players has been an issue that many BCB coaches have had to address in the past and Hathurusingha reckons that the cricketers, by staying at the Village, will know more in this regard. "The players can also take some lessons on the food habits as they will see a lot of world class athletes dining with them," he said.

In the same vein, Bangladesh opener Anamul Haque told reporters that he was looking forward to meeting with the 'superstars' of the different disciplines and know more about their experiences.

"It is really a good feeling as I have found six of my BKSP friends representing Bangladesh in hockey and shooting here. We come to know about different athletes at the Village and see the superstars of different disciplines and share the experience at the dining hall. Things like the kind of diet they need to maintain or the strict routine that they follow, you're bound to learn a lot," said Anamul, who was a member of the team that brought Bangladesh a gold in the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou.

Bangladesh have gone into the Asian Games on the back of a series of defeats this year. Anamul however, believes that the inclusion all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan can help change their fortunes.

"The inclusion of Shakib has helped improve the strength of the team by a huge margin. If we can play our natural game, then we can hope to retain the gold medal," said Anamul.

Meanwhile players from Afghanistan and Hong Kong ensured that the Bangladeshi contingent recall the scars of the upsets that the Tigers went through this year. While Afghanistan beat Bangladesh in the Asia Cup, Hong Kong shocked the Tigers in the first round of the ICC World Twenty20.

"Don't worry, Shapoor [Zardan] has not come," said an Afghanistan player while walking next to the nets at the Songdo LNG Baseball Ground in which the Bangladesh cricketers were practising.

Shapoor has played in Bangladesh's domestic cricket and also took two crucial wickets in the match which Afghanistan won by 32 runs.

On a similar note a player from Hong Kong reminded Bangladeshi journalists of their historic T20 win.

Bangladesh will begin their campaign against a qualifier on October 1 in the quarterfinals. If they win, they are expected to face Sri Lanka in the semifinals. The Lankans, led by Lahiru Thirimanne, have a number of players in the side that helped the Lions win the ICC World T20 this year.

Nadal back to business

Targets Novak's record

AFP, Beijing



Rafael Nadal makes his long-awaited return to action at the China Open this week, where he will be seeking to challenge world number one Novak Djokovic's 100 per cent record in Beijing.

Nadal, who has not competed since Wimbledon after picking up a right wrist injury, makes his comeback at a tournament he has happy memories of from last year, when he reclaimed the top spot after a previous injury layoff.

The Spaniard returned to number one after dominating 2013's hardcourt events and making the final at Beijing's Olympic Park, a game he lost to Djokovic of Serbia.

The current world number three has slipped down the rankings due to his absence from competition, and with Djokovic winning four of the last tournaments he entered in Beijing, the 28-year-old knows he will have a battle on his hands to close the gap on his fiercest rival.

"Novak dominates, you know, almost all the tournaments," said the 2005 China Open winner in Beijing.

"He's always there, semifinals, finals, winning. He's one of the best players that I have ever seen."

"Normally he likes to play here. We'll see what's going on this year."

Nadal said he felt "fine" following his injury and that his motivation was "high" heading into the tournament.

"I just feel the wrist a little bit when I am starting, when I start to play every day, but then it disappears. I'm in good conditions to compete again," he said.

The second seed in Beijing is 1,505 ATP points behind top seed Djokovic, who has a 19-0 record at the China Open.

Swiss tennis legend Roger Federer will not be in Beijing this year, but the last of the 'Big Four' player -- Britain's Andy Murray -- has received a wildcard into the tournament and is the sixth seed.

The world number 11 is currently chasing points to make November's ATP World Tour Finals in London, which features the top eight men's players.

Nadal faces Richard Gasquet in his opening match and has won all his previous 12 meetings with the French world number 21.

Djokovic faces Spaniard Guillermo Garcia Lopez in his opening match, and could meet Murray in a possible semifinal. Czech player Tomas Berdych is seeded third in Nadal's side of the drawer.

Dist Football League from October

SPORTS REPORTER

The District Football Leagues, to be known as Sheikh Kamal Nitol-Tata District Football League, will be held from October to December in 64 districts across the country.

The District Football League Committee chairman Manjur Kader gave the dateline during an exchange of views with the presidents of 64 District Football Associations (DFAs) and seven Divisional Football Associations at the Uttara Club yesterday.

The BFF handed over a cheque of Tk 1,00,000 along with 10 footballs to each of the DFAs. Director of Nitol-Tata Group, major general Abdul Matin, said they would also provide another Tk 100,000 to each of the DFAs.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin informed that the BFF is facing an annual deficit of Tk 30 lakh as it earns around Tk 4.11 crore from FIFA, AFC and other funds against its expenditure of Tk 4.42 crore.

Despite being invited, state minister for youth and sports Biren Sikder, deputy minister Arif Khan Joy along with presidents of four associations -- Dhaka District and Divisional Associations and Chittagong District and Divisional Associations failed to show up to the programme.



PHOTOS: AFP

China's Wei Yongli (L) and Qatar's Femi Ogunodeon their way to winning the women's and men's 100m respectively at the Incheon Asiad Main Stadium in Incheon yesterday.



Femi grabs 100m gold with Asian record

AFP, Incheon



Qatar's Femi Ogunode won the Asian Games men's 100m Sunday in a continental record 9.93 seconds to make a triumphant return following his doping ban.

The Nigerian-born sprinter declared he is aiming for gold at the 2016 Olympics, despite training without a coach for the last four months, and said only wet conditions in Incheon stopped him running even faster.

The victory brings a measure of redemption for the 23-year-old, who only returned to competitive running in January after a two-year suspension for testing positive for banned substance clenbuterol.

Ogunode is one of a host of African athletes who have switched allegiance to run for wealthy Gulf states, mainly Bahrain and Qatar.

China's Wei Yongli won a nail-biting women's 100m final in a photo finish from Chisato Fukushima of Japan. Wei's Chinese teammate Xue Changrui took gold in the men's pole vault.

In the men's 400m, Saudi Arabia's two-time Asian champion Yousef Masrahi set a Games record as he blew the competition away, Bahrain's Abbas Abubaker Abbas a distant second.

Hopes for an Asia-born athlete finally breaking the 100m 10-second barrier sank in the rain, with China's Su Bingtian crossing second in 10.10 and Kei Takase of Japan third in 10.14. Chinese team-mate Zhang Peimeng timed 10.18 in fourth.

Brothers in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union moved into the final of the Airtel U-18 Football Tournament beating Sheikh Russel KC 4-3 in tiebreakers in the first semi-final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The match went into tie-breakers as neither side could score in regulation time or extra time. In the tie-breakers, the All Oranges prevailed scoring four while Sheikh Russel players missed two of their spot kicks.

Brothers Union will play the final on Wednesday against winners of the second semi-final between Mohammedan SC and Team BJMC today. Today's match will be held at the same venue and will start at 5:00pm and will be telecast live on BTV World.

KOOL-BSJA MEDIA CUP Tribune, MyTV joint champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Tribune and MyTV were declared joint winners at the KOOL-BSJA Media Cup football tournament. The final was played at the BFF artificial turf at Motijheel yesterday morning.

At fulltime the teams were tied at 1-1. However, instead of going to the penalties the teams were declared joint winners due to an unfortunate scuffle that began soon after fulltime.

Dhaka Tribune's Reazur Rahman Rohan was declared player of the tournament.