

SPORT



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Taskin returns to where it all began

SPORTS REPORTER

On this day a year ago Taskin Ahmed made his ODI debut and provided the evidence that he had got the talent to stay at the highest level by taking five wickets against a second-string Indian side at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Since then the tall pacer has gradually established himself as a vital cog in Bangladesh's pace attack. His presence, alongside Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Rubel Hossain, made Bangladesh's bowling attack one of the most exciting in the last World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

A year on, Taskin is going to face India again at the same venue and the bowler himself yesterday said that he was very confident of performing well against a full-strength India side.

"What happened one year ago is now in the past. But that good memory will definitely inspire me and give me confidence, but the reality is that I have to make a fresh start against a full-strength India side," said Taskin.

The 20-year-old right-arm pacer apparently wants to cash in on his consistent 140kph speed to challenge the formidable Indian batting line-up.

"I try to learn from every match and I believe I am improving as a bowler every day. The most important improvement is that I can now consistently bowl at an average speed of 140kph. In addition, I am now trying to bowl as the match requires. I have a desire to bowl a winning spell in the series," said Taskin while talking to reporters after a training session

ahead of tomorrow's first one-day international.

The conditions suited the pace bowlers in last year's series against India, but Taskin was expecting a sporting wicket this time around, like they had got against Pakistan.

"In the last series against Pakistan, the wicket was equally good for batsmen and bowlers and in recent times we are getting better wickets. Previously we emphasised on spin bowlers but now we play with two-three pacers and I think it's good for us," opined Taskin.

The young fast bowler said that while India were one of the best teams in the ODI format, Bangladesh still had a chance of doing something in the series if they could continue their good showings in this format.

"India are one of the best teams, especially their batting is fabulous in the subcontinent. So, we need to bowl in the right areas against them and give our best to get a result. I think we have a good chance in the series because we are also a good side. We are in good form and if we can be consistent in our performances then there is a good chance for us," said a confident Taskin.



On 17 June 2014, Taskin Ahmed (in the foreground) set the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium alight as he claimed five Indian scalps on his debut. With India once again the visitors, Taskin is hungry to reproduce his debut performance, perhaps even better it.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Murali fined

AGENCIES, New Delhi

The departure of India's Test specialist from Bangladesh has coincided with a fine slapped on opener Murali Vijay for not following ICC regulations for logos on bats.

Vijay, who made 150 in the rain-marred one-off Test against Bangladesh, was fined 25 percent of his match fees for having a logo on his bat that exceeded the permissible length of nine inches.

"According to the new ICC rules, length of the sponsors' logo can't be more than nine inches. But it was found that Vijay's bat flouted the rule," a team official told the Hindustan Times.

ICC's objection, according to the team official, was because of an additional logo beneath the main sponsor's logo on Vijay's bat. "Vijay was told that his bat didn't conform to ICC rules and was penalised 25 percent of his match fees. He accepted the decision," the official added.

Vijay's has the SS logo on his bat, below which is an MVJ8 logo. It's noteworthy that the Indian opener used a similar logo on the tour of Australia.

Federer in 2nd round

AFP, Halle

Seven-time champion Roger Federer survived a nervous first round challenge on Monday before prevailing at the ATP Halle Open 7-6 (8/6), 3-6, 7-6 (7/5) over home hope Philipp Kohlschreiber.

The 33-year-old 17-time Grand Slam winner was pushed all the way by the 2011 Halle champion before clinching a second round matchup against either Ernests Gulbis or Sergiy Stakhovskiy after just over two hours on centre-court. Federer has reached the final of the last nine editions of the grasscourt Wimbledon tune-up, winning seven, but was given an almighty scare by the 31-year-old world number 28 who reached the Wimbledon quarter-finals in 2012.

Florian Mayer, Alexander Zverev and Dustin Brown all advanced.

Mayer is now one match away from reaching the Halle quarter-finals for a fifth time.

'We came here to win'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha extended the Tigers' training session yesterday ahead of the first one-day international of the three-match series against India, for some fielding drills and that kept the local journalists waiting for the player of the day who would talk to the media.

While pacer Taskin Ahmed was talking to the media, the Indian players also entered the ground for a training session in the afternoon, and the reporters as usual was not expecting any player from the visiting side to talk to the media, especially after a

press release the previous day mentioned that no formal media activities were planned for the day.

In recent times, it has become a trend for India's team management to issue a press release saying that, "Team India will practise but there will be no media activities". But in a surprise turn of events, Suresh Raina appeared in front of the media yesterday. And the left-hander, who led India in the last series against Bangladesh in June last year, made it clear that they came here to win all three matches against the home side.

"They have played very well. We will look to enjoy the game. We are here to win and we will look to win all three matches," said Raina.

"He bowled really well in the

World Cup. They also have Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, who's been batting really well, and Shakib Al Hasan. They have lots of youngsters and they did really well in the World Cup.

"But if you ask me about our team, we have done really well in one-dayers over the years. We are looking to enjoy each and every game," he continued, when asked about young Taskin's bowling.

He also said that India had done well in ODIs recently and they were looking forward to continuing their good form.

Like the Test match, rain can also play foul in the ODI series, but Raina said the weather is something which is beyond their control.



India's ODI skipper MS Dhoni (R) had his first practice session yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

PHOTO: STAR

'Know answer for Herath'

Pak-SL first Test starts today

THE DAWN



Pakistan's woes against left-arm spin are well documented now but captain Misbahul Haq believes his team may have finally found an answer to arch-nemesis Rangana Herath's mystery.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka begin a three-match battle starting with the first Test on Wednesday, the spin-friendly conditions at Galle giving Herath all the confidence he needs against his favourite side.

Lanka since 2006. Misbah, who turned 41 last month, hopes to rectify that record and build on a commendable 2-0 win over Australia in the United Arab Emirates last year, followed by a 1-0 triumph in Bangladesh this May.

"We have an answer for Herath this time as everybody is working hard on how to defend him," Misbah said.

"In the past we really played him well except in the last series in Sri Lanka... sometimes bowler takes the edge, or sometimes batsman.

"But we are looking on a plan on how to handle him and how we should apply ourselves against him. We only struggled because he got a good hold of the conditions and it's important for us to play him well to get a better result. The more we play

him well, more we have a chance to do better against them," the Pakistan skipper said of the 37-year-old left-arm spinner.

Herath has picked up 88 wickets in only 17 matches against Pakistan, making him the third most successful bowler against the team. He needs only three more wickets to surpass Shane Warne, and only 12 more wickets to become the first bowler in the world to pick up 100 wickets in Tests against Pakistan.

Misbah said though the two teams were well aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses now, Pakistan would leave any baggage at the door.

"Our ultimate goal is to win and improve our performances and I have best players with me to achieve the target."

WICB, WIPA call truce

PTI, St John's

The West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) and the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA) have finally resolved their dispute over the international players' payments structure after a period of mediation.

The resolution was reached between WICB and WIPA during a formal mediation session, which ran for five days in Barbados before the start of Australia's tour of West Indies.

The session took into consideration the quantity of sponsorship received by the WICB to be passed on to the national players.

A clear schedule of payments to players has also been drawn-up and minor amendments have been made to the memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

The outcome was achieved with the assistance of a panel that included representatives of the ICC and the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations.

Nadal's early exit from Queen's

AFP, London

Rafael Nadal suffered a shock first round exit from the Wimbledon warm-up event at Queen's Club as the Spanish star was beaten 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-4 by unheralded Ukrainian Alexandr Dolgoplov on Tuesday.

Nadal's dismal defeat against the world number 79 is the latest in a growing list of lacklustre performances in a troubled 2015 campaign for the former world number one.

The 14-time Grand Slam winner was beaten at the French Open for only the second time in his glittering career when Novak Djokovic won their quarter-final clash in Paris.

As a result, Nadal's ranking has plunged to 10th -- his lowest position for a decade -- and to add insult to injury he will now head to Wimbledon, which gets underway later this month, with renewed questions about a decline that hit another low with this setback in west London.

It was the second time this year Nadal had lost to an opponent outside the top 50 after his January defeat to world number 127 Michael Berrer.

INA NUTSHELL

Teen shines on county debut

Teenager Matt Carter enjoyed the most successful debut by an off-spinner in the English County Championship for 77 years when he took seven for 56 to bowl Nottinghamshire into a strong position in their First Division match away to Somerset on Monday.

Somerset were well-placed at 112 for two in reply to Nottinghamshire's first innings 410 when 19-year-old Carter started to make inroads from the River End at Taunton.

He took seven wickets in just 12 overs at a cost of 45 runs as Somerset were dismissed for 200.

Carter's figures were the best by a spinner on Championship debut since Australian Jack Walsh took seven for 46 for Leicestershire against Northamptonshire in 1938.

"My first ball was a nervous one, but the lads were talking to me and after my first over was finished I felt a lot more confident," said Carter.

"It's always nice to see a ball turn, especially on day two, and that is a bonus for me because my height allows me to get extra bounce.

Pink ball ready

Kookaburra, the manufacturer of cricket's new pink ball, declared the ball is Test match ready, if the inaugural day-night contest goes ahead in Australia in November.

Cricket Australia (CA) hopes to stage the first day-night Test against New Zealand later this year.

Kookaburra managing director Brett Elliot said he had been pleased with the results of extensive testing. Elliot said the pink ball had been tested by CA, the England and Wales Cricket Board and the Marylebone Cricket Club.

There have been some concerns from batsmen and bowlers about the visibility of the ball during the dusk period, particularly when it began to scuff up, while spectators and even state coaches said they had struggled to see the ball race along the field at night.

Sachin meets his idol

Former Indian batting legend Sachin Tendulkar, an Idol for many cricketers across the world, got excited when he bumped into his childhood star Boris Becker.

The 'Master Blaster' was so overwhelmed after meeting Becker that he couldn't stop himself from sharing the news via his Twitter account.



Tendulkar shared his picture with the tennis great and Tweeted: Guess what? Bumped into a tennis superstar who I admired and grew up watching!!! What a lovely man @TheBorisBecker.

Compiled By Star Sport Desk