



Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) and bowling coach Heath Streak will have to chalk out a new plan for a depleted arsenal after the bowling actions of Arafat Sunny and Taskin Ahmed were declared illegal. During a training session in Bangalore yesterday, Streak and Mashrafe were seen conversing, possibly pondering their combination for the Australia match tomorrow.

PHOTO: BCB

ICC's processes raise questions

SPORTS REPORTER



Roughly halfway through a campaign that is still alive with possibilities, the Bangladesh cricket team have suffered a body blow that has left them morally downcast less than two days before the important ICC World Twenty 20 Group 2 clash against Australia tomorrow. Two of the Tigers' first-choice bowlers, Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny, were yesterday suspended with immediate effect after an independent bowling assessment found their actions to be illegal. They were reported by umpires Sundaram Ravi and Rod Tucker during their first qualifying match against the Netherlands on March 9.

Taskin's absence means that an already-struggling bowling unit loses one of their better death-over bowlers, not to mention the fastest. Left-arm spinner Sunny's loss will be no less painful as the bowling strategy shifts from a pace-centric one to a more spin-oriented plan that suits the pitches for this global event.

But it is Taskin's action being deemed illegal that has reportedly distressed the team and the cricketing fraternity back home the most, with there being a general sense of disbelief that the strapping fast bowler's action could be unlawful. Indeed, the ICC press release announcing the suspensions said that while 'Arafat's analysis revealed that the elbow extension for a majority of his deliveries had exceeded the 15 degrees' level of tolerance... not all of Taskin's deliveries were legal'.

The press release did not state the type of

delivery or deliveries that were found to be illegal. Mustafizur Rahman Khan, a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) lawyer claiming on Facebook to have gone through Taskin's Independent Assessment Report, said that it was the bouncer that was said to be problematic.

"With respect to the 9 bouncers he was asked to bowl, they found that 3 were bowled using an illegal bowling action," read Mustafizur's post, which has since gone viral. He continued: "Regulation 2.2.6 provides that '(d)uring the Independent Assessment, the Player shall be required to replicate the specific bowling action for which he/she was reported.'"

The crux of his detailed post was that, as the umpires did not specify the type of delivery, there is a conflict between the regulation and the protocol as such bouncers cannot be taken into account in his assessment, as he has not been reported for bowling a bouncer. According to ESPNcricinfo's ball-by-ball commentary for that match, Taskin in fact did not bowl a bouncer. That calls into question the process behind such an action. Mustafizur concluded that 'since Taskin's stock delivery has been found legal, and only 3 of his 9 bouncers illegal, he can at best be warned and not suspended'.

The details of Taskin's assessment will emerge over the next few days, but it is undeniable that various aspects of this ruling have raised questions. In itself the ICC's effort to eradicate suspect actions is not problematic, and was even lauded when this renewed initiative began nine months before the World Cup in February-March 2015. Then also there were grumbings, notably from Pakistan coach Waqar Younis, about the timing of such a crackdown.

Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha lashed out the day after the duo were reported saying that both players had been playing consistently for the last one-and-a-half years, yet no one had reported them.

The timing of the initial reporting and the eventual ruling yesterday, after Sunny and Taskin had their actions tested in Chennai on March 12 and March 14 respectively, has repeatedly raised eyebrows.

"Both bowlers have played over the last one-and-a-half years and there was no problem. To the naked eye maybe one or two of his [Taskin's] deliveries seemed marginal, but he has been playing regularly for quite some time, and I don't see any change in his action. So why now, during a world event?" said the BCB's game development manager Nazmul Abedin Fahim yesterday.

"It is of course the ICC who have to eradicate this problem [chucking]. But it is also their responsibility that questions about the fairness regarding the process are not raised, and they can do this by being more consistent in the reporting and not just before big tournaments," he added.



PHOTO: BCB

Bangladesh's already difficult task in the ICC World Twenty20 has gotten even more difficult as bowlers Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny were suspended yesterday after the results of their bowling test showed that their deliveries were illegal.

'Aussies unsure about their team'

AL-AMIN from Bangalore



Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha has made it a habit of fronting up to the press when the Tigers are having a rough ride. He used the media platform to take a swipe at the ICC match officials when two of his bowlers -- Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny -- were reported for suspect actions.

He went on the record by saying that 'if they have a concern about my bowlers, I have a concern about their [ICC's] actions as well'.

On Saturday afternoon after an intense three-hour training session at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore, the Sri Lankan apparently tried everything in his power to keep the worst-kept secret close to his chest when asked whether he had any knowledge about the ICC judgment on Taskin and Sunny.

"I haven't heard anything about that," was the short reply from Hathurusingha. It may be true but people will hardly buy that story, especially as Bangladesh team manager Khaled Mahmud confirmed that he had received the ICC reports on Taskin and Sunny immediately after that briefing.

It may be a good way to handle such a pressure situation, but Hathurusingha was true to his words while responding to other issues ahead of Bangladesh's tough match against Australia. Actually his perception about the Aussies in this tournament was quite interesting.

"Australia is a very strong team. But one thing I have noticed this time is that they are not sure of their combination. This is not like Australia. Normally they are sure about their eleven but this time in this tournament they are not sure of it and that's a bit of an advantage [for us] this time", observed Hathurusingha.

"I think this kind of wicket is more batter-friendly and the ball comes off the wicket nicely. This is a high-scoring ground. Normally, 180 is a par score here. It's a good batting wicket," was his

how he pulls up tomorrow. It's down to the physio and whether he gives me the green light."

When asked if he had really missed Mustafizur against Pakistan, he said: "Oh, always you miss a bowler like Mustafizur in any match. I mean, I can't say if he was there it would have been different. But definitely we missed him for all the qualifying games."

But when asked if the liberty Mustafizur is enjoying would also be applicable for all other players, the coach reacted a bit pensively.

"What do you mean by trend? If you send him back you can't have him, that's the rule. So, we had to keep [him] and that's all. That is not a question for me at this stage," he replied a bit acidly.

He also defended left-handed opener Soumya Sarkar vehemently.

"If you judge someone within four innings, who has done so much for the last one and a half years, we are in a very stately situation."

Asked if his batting is mentally up there to chase down a total like 200 he said: "Chasing 200 is always tough. We need to make good decisions and we have to go with a clear mind as you said. We have not done it but one day we will. That's our uncharted territory for us. But that is in our reach. We play five bowlers to keep the opposition to a chaseable target; that's our game plan. But if the opposition gets 200 our job is to fight to get there."

When asked whether he has a real big hitter down the order he retorted with a smile: "Do we have anyone? We would love to have one but I'm happy with what we have."



first reaction to the Chinnaswamy wicket.

Asked how good it would be for him to have players with prior experience of playing on this wicket, he said: "Always it is an advantage if you have some kind of practice on these wickets. Yes, Shakib has played and some other guys have also played. So, that should come in handy."

Regarding the fitness of pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman, Hathurusingha looked confident.

"I think he is fit enough. We will have to make a call tomorrow. He bowled today and we will see

INDIAN RHYTHMS

The autograph-hunter

SPORTS REPORTER from Bangalore

If you enter the M Chinnaswamy Stadium through the iron curtains the first thing that will strike you is a giant metallic image of a batsman on his follow-through after playing a front-foot drive. Beneath that a slogan is carved, justifying the action of a particular Indian batsman. You will immediately understand once you read the words 'commitment, consistency, class'. It is Bangalore's pride Rahul Dravid, with more than 13,000 Test runs and a small matter of 10,889 ODI runs.

But inside the stadium an 18-year-old, who was skirting through the lax security to get the autographs of every Bangladesh player to enrich his already hugely decorated list, refused to consider Dravid as his idol. Pranav Jain prefers Mahendra Singh Dhoni as his unquestionable idol for being what he termed 'the best down-to-earth gentleman he had ever come across'. Pranav already has got more than 600 signed bats that included, according

to him, 'call a name' of any cricketer across the world. He has a dream to float a museum in Bangalore that will be best in the world. The only son of an affluent businessman, Pranav has travelled to many places to obtain the autographs of cricketers. His last visit was in Dubai, where



he had a mission to get the autograph of Shakib Al Hasan.

"I could not get his autograph at that time but had it signed from Kolkata," said a grinning Pranav while enjoying his satisfying day of work with Bangladesh players, who are not frequent visitors to India.

He also made sure to take selfies

with each player after taking his autograph. It's mandatory for him. It was quite a scene when he approached great West Indies pace bowler Curtly Ambrose, who first refused him but immediately called him back after putting the bottles he was carrying on the ground. A graduate in commerce, he is totally devoted to what he is doing. He claims that he meets Dhoni whenever he comes to Bangalore and showed a lot of pictures he had with the Indian captain as proof. He was also eager to have Chandika Hathurusingha's autograph for his knowledge as he was a member of the 1996 World Cup winning Sri Lanka team.

Pranav's big disappointment is that he is yet to get hold of Sanath Jayasuriya but remained very adamant to fulfil it. He was quite an entertainer for the Bangladeshi journalists during that three-hour training session. His earnest request to this reporter was a ticket (he also collects tickets) of the Asia Cup final, more importantly because Dhoni was there.

Tigresses face Windies today

SPORTS REPORTER

When the Bangladesh women's cricket team enter the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai today, they need to show a much-improved batting performance if they want to secure their first win in the World Twenty20 against their West Indian counterparts.

In their two previous matches, the Tigresses were beaten by 72 and 36 runs against India and England respectively. Bangladesh had displayed a better batting performance on way to recording their highest Twenty20 score against England, but the top order must click if the Tigresses are to get success.

A confident captain Jahanara Alam said that her side was ready to defeat the West Indies.

"The West Indies team are not as strong as India or Australia, so we will definitely try to beat them," she said during the pre-match press conference.

"It is a fresh start for us and we have the ability to bounce back well."

West Indies scripted a narrow win against Pakistan and they will expect their middle order to deliver against Bangladesh today.

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

COLD-BLOODED KOHLI

When Mohammed Sami sent back Shikhar Dhawan and Suresh Raina in two consecutive deliveries, Pakistan saw an opportunity to snatch their first ever victory against India in any World Cup. However, at the other end was Virat Kohli -- who had one run off two balls at that point -- and he was having none of it. With an average of 83.60 in T20I chases, it was to be just another day at the office for Kohli. Unperturbed by the chaos around him, Kohli steered India home with an unbeaten 55 off 37 in typically stoic fashion. He caressed seven fours, hit one six and respectfully left Dhoni to smash the winning runs and give India their first win in this World Twenty20.

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SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 118-5 in 18 overs (Sharjeel 17, Shehzad 25, Afridi 8, Akmal 22, Malik 26, Sarfraz 8 not out, Hafeez 5 not out; Jadeja 1-20, Nehra 1-20, Raina 1-4, Pandya 1-25, Bumrah 1-32, Ashwin 3-12)

INDIA: 119 for 4 in 15.5 overs (Sharma 10, Dhawan 6, Kohli 55 not out, Yuvraj 24, Dhoni 13 not out; Amir 1-11, Sami 2-17, Riaz 1-16, Afridi 0-25)

Result: India won by 6 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Virat Kohli.

Toss: India, who chose to field.

Points: India 2, Pakistan 0

Umpires: U Gould (England) and RA Kettleborough (England)