

SPORT

Taskin hoping for good tune-up

SPORTS REPORTER

They say cricket is a funny game and the current situation of the Bangladesh team perhaps best depicts that phrase. Here is a team that has grown up playing on subcontinental conditions and yet, a few days before their Test tour of India, they are working on readjusting to conditions similar to their own.

They are compelled to do this because they had been busy playing in bouncy pitches over the last two months due to their series in New Zealand.

The conditions in New Zealand and in Hyderabad will be completely different and the players know that quite well. It was an aspect that Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed stressed upon while speaking to reporters following Bangladesh's training session at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium. It is a reason why the visitors are hoping to utilise the two-day warm-up game against India A, set to begin today at the Gymkhana Ground in Hyderabad, to the fullest.

"Tomorrow's match is going to be very important. The pitches in New Zealand and here are completely different. When we bowled length deliveries in New Zealand, the keeper would get a good carry. Here, the ball is a little slow. The warm-up game will give us a lot of help. Hopefully we can use it well," said Taskin.

"Wickets in the subcontinent tend to be a lot flatter with a bit of turn. The fast bowlers will have to adjust the length of the ball and we also have to use more variations here. I hope we can execute well," he added.

Despite the change in conditions, Taskin believes that the visitors can do well.

"It feels really good to play in India. India's the best team in the world and this series is a good opportunity for youngsters

like me and for Bangladesh to show to the world that we can do well," said Taskin.

Taskin's last experience in India was not too good. He was here during the ICC World Twenty20 and was reported for his bowling action. He was reminded of that during the press conference yesterday and was asked if the corrective measures that he had taken affected his speed.

To that he replied: "No. I bowled quicker than before in New Zealand this time. I have worked hard and I am confident that I have no problem [with my bowling action]. A legend like Courtney Walsh, who is in our team, also said that I am fine. I went and I had given a test in Brisbane and the maximum degree was seven and the average was three."

Furthermore, he was also asked if he felt that the rivalry between India and Bangladesh was the most sought-after in the subcontinent at the moment. It was a notion he denied.

"No, I don't believe in this. The social media makes this kind of stuff, but as a team, we don't believe in this," he explained.

There are three other pacers in the team aside from Taskin and the 21-year-old believes that he has not managed to seal his spot in the playing eleven as yet.

"There are lots of fast bowlers in Bangladesh and there is good potential. We are going to miss Mustafizur [Rahman]. Bowling with him would have been more enjoyable. It's pretty challenging at the moment. Our pace bowling sector is getting tougher and tougher."

"If I get selected, I hope I can put in an inspiring performance for my team," he concluded.

Aside from working on their skills, the Bangladesh national team also worked hard on their fielding. According to Taskin, they performed a number of new drills under assistant coach Richard Halsall.



Bangladesh Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (L) enjoys a light moment with his two 'green' pace bowlers Kamrul Islam Rabbi (C) and Taskin Ahmed at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

BLIND WORLD T20 Bangladesh beat Aussies

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh blind cricket team secured a massive result as they defeated their Australian counterparts by nine runs in the 2nd T20 World Cup Cricket Tournament for the Blind in New Delhi yesterday.

The Australians won the toss and elected to bowl first, but that proved to be a costly mistake as Abdul Malek (78) and Mohsin Hosen Joy (81) punished the Australian bowlers and put on a 171-run opening stand in 15.2 overs.

They both departed shortly after, but Bangladesh reached 210.

The Australians got a brilliant start as well, with opener Stephen Leo Palmer hitting a 61-ball 109. Matthew James Cameron and Lindsay David Heaven chipped in with scores of 31.

However, after Stephen was run out in the 18th over of the match, the Australian innings took a sharp tumble.

They went on to lose two more wickets and succumbed to the narrow defeat.

The win sees Bangladesh remain third in the standings, although they have consolidated their position with fifteen points; the same number as leaders Pakistan and second-placed India.

Australia are in fourth on 12 points, but have a game in hand.

The top four teams will advance to the semifinals.

Bolt leads All-Stars to win

AFP, Melbourne



The world's fastest man Usain Bolt led his Bolt All-Stars to victory on the opening night of the inaugural Nitro Athletics teams event in Melbourne on Saturday.

The world record holder for the 100m and 200m sprints led the Bolt All Stars -- including athletes from Jamaica, the USA and Kenya -- against teams representing Australia, England, New Zealand, Japan and China.

The 30-year-old Jamaican sprint star ran in the final event on the programme, the 4x100m mixed relay, featuring two male and two female athletes from each team, as did fellow Jamaican Olympic gold medallist Asafa Powell.

With their captain running the unfamiliar second leg, handing over to American Jenna Prandini, the Bolt All Stars won that race to notch up their fourth outright win of the night and finish with a total of 1080 points.

"It was just a wonderful night. I was just enjoying myself from the start to the end," Bolt said. "Everybody was just having fun. Everybody was trying to support their teammates -- going over to the long jump, to the javelin -- that's something we're not really used to."

The Australian team won three of the 12 events to sit second with 1050 points. The two teams finished equal first in two other events while Australia's Kurtis Marschall also tied for first place with China's Xue Changrui in the men's pole vault.

"At the start [of the night] I was a little bit worried. We started kinda slow and I was talking so much smack that everyone was looking at me like

'you're losing,'" Bolt said.

"But we won at the end, so that's the key thing and I'm very happy with how everything turned out."

The winner of gold medals in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay at the past three Olympics, Bolt said he had never run a competitive race in February before, and was impressed with the locals.

"They came out ready. Most people aren't really at the level that they want because it's February, but you guys were ready and that's what we want, competition. So it's fun and it was loud, so it was good."



Usain Bolt (C) led his team, the Bolt All-Stars, to a 4x100m mixed relay win on the opening night of the inaugural Nitro Athletics series at the Lakeside Stadium in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Junaed ton powers North

SPORTS REPORTER



Unbeaten centurion Junaed Siddique was the main attraction in the batsman dominated first day of the second round matches of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) played at two venues yesterday.

At the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, BCB North Zone, riding on Junaed's unbeaten 172, accumulated 327 runs for the loss of four wickets against Walton Central Zone while Prime Bank South Zone finished the first day on 376 for six at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium against Islami Bank East, who felt the absence of their key pacer Abu Jayed as he joined the national team in Hyderabad.

Sent in to bat first, North Zone lost opener Nazmul Hossain in the second over but Junaed joined Jahurul Islam to repair the early damage and the pair added 98 runs for the second wicket. Jahurul and Naeem Islam were dismissed in quick succession and then Nasir Hossain joined Junaed to put up a 108-

run fourth wicket partnership before Nasir was gone for 55.

Left-handed Junaed remained unbeaten on a 276-ball 172, a knock that contained 19 boundaries, while Dhiman Ghosh remained not out on 51.

At Sylhet, South Zone rode on three half-centuries from Anamul Haque, Tushar Imran and Ziaur Rahman to dictate terms on the opening day.

Pacer Ebadat Hossain gave East Zone an early breakthrough when he trapped Fazle Mahmud in front in the very first over of the day but Anamul and Shahriar Nafees (27) steadied the ship, sharing 66 runs for the second wicket before a 108-run third-wicket partnership between Anamul and Tushar gave the team a solid lead.

Anamul struck 12 fours and two sixes during his 116-ball 89 while Tushar made 62

off 123 balls that featured eight boundaries. Mohammad Mithun (47) and Mosaddek Hossain (39) were the other notable scorers besides the unbeaten Ziaur Rahman, who remained at the crease on 55 along with Shohag Gazi, who scored 42.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE V ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE	BCB NORTH ZONE V WALTON CENTRAL ZONE
Prime Bank South Zone: 376 for 6 (Anamul 89, Tushar 62, Ziaur 55 not out, Mithun 47; Ebadat 3-85, Tasamul 1-13)	BCB North Zone: 327 for 4 (Junaed 172 not out, Nasir 55, Dhiman 51 not out; Shahidul 2-72)

Daring Dolly dies at 72

SPORTS REPORTER

Versatile sportsperson Dolly Catherine Cruz breathed her last at her Tejuri Bazar residence due to old-age complications. She was 72.

Dolly was a notable athlete in numerous disciplines such as athletics, cycling, hockey, volleyball, badminton, kabaddi, handball, swimming and cricket. Dolly, a confirmed bachelorette, was awarded the national sports award in 1982 for her illustrious athletic career.

She had won more than 50 gold medals in athletics from 1956 to 1990 while also grabbing a few gold medals in other disciplines. Dolly was an employee of Adamjee Jute Mills from which she participated in the national meets.

After retiring from sports she emerged as an organizer, becoming the vice president in Bangladesh Women's Sports Association (BWSA) and Bangladesh Cycling Federation.

She was also the women's affair secretary of Bangladesh Christian Association (BCA).

"Dolly Apa was one of pioneers in women's sports as she came into sports defying different social barriers in the 1950s and set examples for the next generation. She was an inspirational woman to those of us who came into sports in the 1970s," said BSWA general secretary Qumrunnahar Dana. "Though she has been suffering from gastric ulcer for a long time, she had been acting as a judge to different disciplines organised by women's association."

"Dolly Apa was the first of many things such as she was the captain of first women's hockey team formed in 1979 while she was also a key member of the first women's cricket team formed in 1983," recalled Dana as the body of the deceased was taken to the Women's Sports Complex to be paid the final tributes.



TELECOM CORPORATE CRICKET BTRC beat TRNB

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission defeated Telecom Reporter's Network of Bangladesh (TRNB) in the opening match of the country's first Telecom Corporate Cricket Tournament yesterday.

TNRB batted first in the 20-over-a-side affair and they reached 118 for the loss of six wickets at the end of their allotted overs. After the exchange, BTRC easily overcame the target, taking just 12 overs to do so.

Nationwide Telecommunication Transmission Network service provider Fiber@Home Limited organized the event, which will see ten of the top telecom providers of the country participate.

Law maker AKM Rahmatullah inaugurated the event at the Gulshan Youth Club ground.

Other participating teams are Posts and Telecommunications Division, ICT Division, Grameenphone, Robi, Banglalink, Internet Service Providers Association, Summit Communications Limited and the host Fiber@Home.

ICC moving away from Big Three formula

STAR SPORT DESK



The International Cricket Council (ICC) Board has agreed in principle to constitutional and financial

changes that will effectively dismantle the Big Three formula imposed upon the governing body of cricket in 2014. The three-day meeting that concluded yesterday also agreed in principle regarding further progress on future international cricket structures adopted in the CEC meeting on Friday.

The ICC has decided to work on 'a revised financial distribution ensuring a more equitable distribution of revenues and a revised constitution to reflect 'good governance'.

The meeting also decided to consider Ireland and Afghanistan

as 'potential Full Members' subject to both meeting the standard criteria. It has also agreed in principle to have two types of membership -- full member and associate member with all members to be entitled to attend the AGM.

Regarding the structure of cricket, the ICC media release said: "Progress was made around the future structures of bilateral international cricket with a preferred model identified by the Member Chief Executives for all three formats of the sport. This framework will now be used to build a more detailed model that incorporates scheduling and accommodates existing agreements to present to the ICC Board for full consideration in April."

This includes: "A nine-team Test league that will run over a two-year cycle while the remaining three Test

teams to be guaranteed a consistent and confirmed schedule of Test matches against all other teams and a 13-team ODI league run over a three-year period leading into qualification for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023. A scheduling summit will now be held in March before a detailed proposal is put to the ICC Board in April," read the ICC release regarding the new structure of cricket.

However, according to Crincinfo the financial model received preliminary approval despite the Board of Control for Cricket in India having voted against it. Sri Lanka Cricket also voted against the new revenue distribution model while Zimbabwe Cricket abstained; all other boards were in favour of the new deal.