

SPORT



'Lessons from 2012 helped me'

Even before making his international debut for Bangladesh there was a lot of expectation on Tamim Iqbal. He has since proved himself and is now going stronger than ever. The country's highest run-getter in all three formats has been in magnificent form in the past three years or so, laying the foundations of many wins. The dashing left-hander speaks about his batting, how he changed his mindset and the legacy he wants to leave for Bangladesh cricket in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin.

The following are some excerpts of the conversation:

TDS: Is Tamim Iqbal going through the best phase of his career?
Tamim Iqbal (TI): Maybe, but I think there is still a lot to offer. No doubt I have been playing well in the last two-three years and scoring a lot of runs. But I still believe that I have a lot more to offer. I am also preparing to carry on with this phase longer and utilise this momentum. There is no end to learning and achieving -- I am a big believer of that.

TDS: What has suddenly changed in your batting? Mindset or technique?
TI: I have always said that technique was never an issue for me; it's all about mindset. I think especially in the last two years my mindset has changed and the belief towards my game has increased a lot. I have started to trust my ability and game. As I said before, my main problem in the past was in converting starts into big scores, but if you look at my last 20-30 innings you will see that the average is better. I am trying to cash in on starts as much as I can; maybe I am not successful all the time but these things are very important for me. You might have bad games in the next four-five matches, but when you get the opportunity and capitalise on it, it helps you personally and it also helps the team.

TDS: Has fatherhood helped Tamim mature?
TI: I don't know about fatherhood... maybe, but I think what helped me most is the 12 years of experience in international cricket. Another thing is the recent success of the Bangladesh team. When you are confident as a team it has a positive impact on your game and the self-belief gets higher when you see another guy playing well.

TDS: There have been huge expectations on you right from childhood, being from a cricketing family. How do you cope with it?
TI: The best thing about my family is that there were no expectations from anyone inside the family. Obviously they all want us to do well but it's not as if there will be a big issue if we don't. We did not feel such pressure from our family, and this environment was created by my father, in which whenever I met my uncle [Akram Khan] or my cousins, we did not feel the difference. Whenever I visit my home in Chittagong I am still the same Tamim who grew up in front of them and whatever I have done or how many hundreds I have scored does not matter. This is very important, but yes,



Compromise reached in time for 'all-important BD tour'

AGENCIES, Melbourne



Australia cricket's long and bitter pay dispute is over, paving the way for the Test tour of Bangladesh to proceed later this month.

Cricket Australia (CA) CEO James Sutherland and the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA) CEO Alistair Nicholson announced the new agreement at a joint press conference in Melbourne on Thursday afternoon. The agreement ends a 10-month negotiation process that became bitter and acrimonious as Cricket Australia sought to dramatically alter the existing pay model by which players shared in the game's revenue.

The players appeared to be the winners in the five-year agreement, worth an estimated A\$500 million (US\$396 million), as they retained the revenue-sharing model they had been fighting for, with women cricketers also included for the first time.

"Today's agreement is the result of sensible compromises by both parties," said CA chief Sutherland, adding that the "core issues" had been worked out.

He said the five-year deal would "restore much certainty to the game of cricket".

"It will allow all players -- state and international -- to be contracted immediately and it will also allow the all-important tour of Bangladesh to proceed as planned," Sutherland explained.

Sutherland described it as a modernised model that gave CA more flexibility in the way the game's revenue is distributed but the Australian Cricketers' Association greeted the agreement as a victory for players.

"The men and women have been rewarded for sticking together and for having the courage of their convictions. They have made history and created a legacy for generations of players to come," ACA boss Nicholson said.

"We fought hard for revenue share because we know it has worked well and will continue to do so. To have retained the revenue sharing model and increased the level we have and ensure that men, women, domestic and international players receive a fair

share is great news for the players and for the game," he continued.

In the end, it was the players who came out on top, with the revenue-sharing model retained.

Under the new deal, they will share up to 30 percent of agreed revenue -- 27.5 percent of forecast revenue streams, and a 2.5 percent performance pool.

In a significant move, the format will also apply to female players in what the ACA said was 'the biggest pay rise in the history of women's sport in Australia'.

Players also won a greater say on scheduling.

"The new memorandum of understanding is a great achievement for the players and the game," said ACA president Greg Dyer.

"Like anything worthwhile, it's been hard to achieve. But what has been agreed is ground-breaking for Australian sport.

"One MOU for men and women, the maintenance of the partnership model, and record investments for grassroots cricket is what we wanted and it's what has been achieved."

Aus resolution brings relief

The pay dispute was an internal issue of Australia cricket. Still, it has been followed with immense interest by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials, players and fans for more than a month. Since the Tigers' fitness camp started on July 10, everyone has been eagerly awaiting for confirmation that Australia will tour as scheduled.

There was anxiety among players and officials, although they always expressed their confidence in a resolution before the Test series that was originally scheduled in 2015 but cancelled on security grounds. Yesterday there was widespread relief as CA (Cricket Australia) and ACA (Australian Cricketers' Association) agreed terms to finally end the player pay dispute, thus ensuring that Australia will arrive in Bangladesh on August 18 to play two Tests against the Tigers. From the BCB officials to players, everybody was excited with the news. Some of their reactions are presented below:



NIZAMUDDIN CHOWDHURY, CEO
"Of course it's great news for Bangladesh cricket. We wanted the dispute to be resolved and it's not only good for Australian cricket but also for world cricket. Since Australia's next FTP (Future Tour Programme) was against Bangladesh, we are very happy and we are ready to welcome the Australian cricket team."

MUSHFIQUR RAHIM

"That's very positive news for world cricket and also for Bangladesh. Being the captain of the Bangladesh Test side, it's a great opportunity for us to play against a top side like Australia and I am happy that they sorted out all the issues and are finally coming. Personally, I have never played a Test against Australia so from that perspective I am looking forward to the series and I think it will be a challenging task for us."



TAMIM IQBAL
"Obviously it's very good news for all of us as this series is going to take place finally and we all were hopeful for this series. It's always a big challenge playing against Australia. Almost all the players in our team are going to play a Test against Australia for the first time. It is also pleasing that the series is finally going to take place since we have been preparing ourselves for this series."

SHAKIB AL HASAN

"Very good because none of us from our current team has the experience of playing a Test against Australia, so it will be a new experience for all of us and everyone is excited I am sure."



MAHMUDULLAH RIYAD
"It's very good news as there have been some confusion in the past few days about whether they would come or not. But finally they are coming to play in Bangladesh; that's a very good news for cricket and also for us. I haven't played a Test against Australia and I guess most of us also did not play against them, so it's going to be a big challenge and we are looking forward to it."



"When you are confident as a team it has a positive impact on your game and the self-belief is higher."

Mehedi awaits debut, Shakib departs

SPORTS REPORTER



Mehedi Hasan is likely to make his Caribbean Premier League (CPL) debut today as his side Trinbago Knight Riders take on St Lucia Stars at the Gros Islet, St Lucia. The match is scheduled to start from 7:00am Bangladesh Standard Time and Sony ESPN will telecast the

match live. Meanwhile, ace Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was scheduled to fly to the Caribbean last night to play for Jamaica Tallawahs after he finally got his passport.

As Australia will come to Bangladesh on August 18 to play two Tests after their pay dispute ended yesterday, both cricketers will return on August 15.

Young off-spinner Mehedi, who left Dhaka on July 27, said that it would be a great opportunity for him to gain valuable T20 experience as he has so far played only one T20I match, besides which he has had some Bangladesh Premier League experience in the last season while the experienced Shakib has already played in the CPL.

Faraaz Challenge Cup goes Green

SPORTS REPORTER



Green University clinched the Walton Inter-University Football Tournament title yesterday, courtesy of a Rubel Islam brace that saw his side notch up a 2-0 win over Fareast University in the final at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium, Kamapalur.

After an entertaining final the champions were handed the Faraaz Challenge Cup, which is adorned with an emblem depicting Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, by Faraaz's mother Simeen Hossain and Ha-meem Group managing director AK Azad.

The 20-university tournament began in the middle of July with the initiative of keeping the youth away from drugs and radicalism by naming the trophy after Faraaz, who sacrificed his life to save his friends during last year's militant attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan.

The final took place amongst a festive mood as the venue took on a new look, banners and festoons which portrayed Faraaz were strewn across the galleries and supporters gathered forming band parties while blowing vuvuzelas to inspire their respective teams.



Green University players celebrate with the Faraaz Challenge Cup after defeating Fareast University in the Walton Inter-University Football Tournament final at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamapalur yesterday. The champions were handed the trophy by special guest Faraaz's mother -- Simeen Hossain (C).

PHOTO: STAR

spectators with their backs reading 'We are Faraaz', who was an ardent Manchester United fan, showed their support.

"I want to thank Sonali Otit Club for arranging such a beautiful football tournament as well as dedicating it to Faraaz. I request the youth involved in this tournament to go forward with the right value which Faraaz showed because it is not a country of terrorists," said special guest Simeen

Hossain, who is also the managing director of Transcom Distribution Co Ltd, during the prize distribution ceremony.

And after honouring Faraaz's braveness, chief guest AK Azad declared that this tournament will continue to be held in the future with the involvement of more universities and will be renamed the Faraaz Challenge Gold Cup.

Twin tons put India in control

AFP, Colombo



Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane hit centuries as India took opening day honours on 344 for 3 at stumps against Sri Lanka in the second Test on Thursday.

Pujara (128) and Rahane (103) put on an unbeaten 211-run partnership for the fourth wicket to thwart Sri Lankan bowlers who struck two crucial blows in the afternoon session in Colombo.

The in-form Pujara registered his 13th Test century in his landmark 50th game as Rahane fired his ninth Test hundred.

The visitors, who lead the three-match series 1-0, wobbled slightly when Lokesh Rahul went for 57 and skipper Virat Kohli followed for 13 soon after lunch.

Rahul, who scored his eighth Test fifty on his return from a viral fever, was run out in a mix-up with Pujara.

Veteran left-arm spinner Ranga Herath sent Kohli trudging back to the pavilion with a tossed-up delivery that got the edge of the captain's bat and went to slip.

Pujara and Rahane ground out the runs to deny Dinesh Chandimal's side any more wickets during the day. Pujara, who scored 153 in the first innings of the opening Test, hit 10 fours and a six at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground. Rahane also tackled the spinners with aplomb, using his feet to great effect during his 168-ball stay at the crease so far.

In the morning session, off-spinner Dilruwan Perera had Shikhar Dhawan trapped lbw for 35 after the tourists elected to bat first.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: First innings 344 for 3 (Dhawan 35, Rahul 57, Pujara 128 not out, Rahane 103 not out; Herath 1-83, Perera 1-68)

you can say there has been expectation from other people because I belong to this family and so far it has been alright but it could have been better.

TDS: As one of the five seniors, have you set a target as a group to set a standard for the future generation?
TI: I think it's not standard; it's the legacy we want to leave for the youngsters because there were many good players before us, maybe there are a few among us and some of them will retire. But it's not possible without a legacy. Supposing all five of us can't do so, but even if two or three can set a proud legacy it will be a huge achievement in the history of Bangladesh cricket.

TDS: What is the biggest challenge ahead for Bangladesh and Tamim?
TI: See, we have come from 10th to the sixth or seventh ranked team now and this journey wasn't easy as we have worked really hard to be here. Let's say we are now in seventh, so moving from seven to five will be three times as difficult as coming to number seven. If you want to go higher in the ranking now it means you have to overtake a higher-ranked team and we understand now that whatever hard work we have done in the past 10 years, we have to do twice as much. If you say I am now among the top 15 or 20 ranked batsman in the world, for me to get into the top 10 will be much more difficult than it was for me to reach here from rank 50.

TDS: How much have you changed after being dropped from the Asia Cup 2012 squad initially, and later your reaction after scoring four consecutive fifties?
TI: I definitely took a lesson from what happened that time; it wasn't in my control. Maybe the way I behaved that time... the same situation came in 2015 as well, and if you noticed there was a difference in my behaviour. I might've got angry and wanted to prove everyone wrong in 2012, but the change in my reaction was the key when a similar situation came in 2015. It is because I thought wrong in 2012 that I was able to think right in 2015. So that change, I think, was the turning point of my career.