

SPORT

'No space for Ashraf now'

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf's five-year ban from international cricket for involvement in match-fixing and spot-fixing during the 2013 Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) will officially come to an end today. The cricketer will be eligible to take part in the BPL in the upcoming season and is also available for selection to the national team.

However, according to chief selector Minhajul Abedin, it will not be easy for Ashraf to return to the national team anytime soon.

"He [Ashraf] has not been in the international circuit for a long time now. So he now has to play all the formats in domestic cricket and will also have to prove his fitness for international cricket - that is very important. His suspension will be lifted and he will get to play all the formats. Maybe after a year we will get to know his state," Minhajul told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

According to Minhajul, age is not a factor for the 34-year-old if he is fit enough for international cricket, but at the same time added that Ashraf has to come through a proper system and will have to prove his worth.

"To be honest he does not have a space [in the national pipeline] at this point. He is not attached with the system -- of playing in HP, A team -- so he is far from the national team right now. You need to give a player time to go through the journey and achieve the level," he said.

Ashraf however has already been playing domestic 50-over and four-day leagues since August 13, 2016. He smashed five centuries in the Dhaka Premier League for Kalabagan Krira Chakra last season.

But the right-hander was unable to shine in the first class competitions since returning from his suspension and struck just one century.

In a video message on Saturday, Ashraf informed that he has worked on his fitness during this period and lost nine kilograms over the past two months. The cricketer also

said that he is eyeing the 2019 ICC World Cup in England and will do whatever it requires to make a comeback to the Bangladesh team.

"I have been waiting for this day for the past five-and-a-half years, although I have played first-class and List A matches in the last two years. Thanks to the almighty that finally this day came and I will be eligible for the national team and also able to play the BPL.

"Obviously I have dreamed of returning to the national team over the past five years and I also had a good domestic season last year especially in the Dhaka Premier League. As the World Cup is approaching I dream of making a comeback and I will try to perform in all domestic tournaments to make it possible," said Ashraf.

However, if Minhajul's statement that the selectors will know his state after a year and



MOHAMMAD ASHRAF

the World Cup starting in June holds true, it presumably rules Ashraf out of the World Cup, for which the squad will have to be named at least a month in advance.

The BPL's anti-corruption tribunal had banned Ashraf for eight years and fined him Tk10 lakh in June 2014. Three months later the BCB's disciplinary committee reduced his ban to five years, with the last two of those years suspended subject to his participation in the BCB or ICC's anti-corruption education and training programme.



England pacer Stuart Broad ran through the Indian middle order as the top-ranked Test nation fell to a second straight defeat on the fourth day of the second Test at Lord's yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India obliterated at Lord's

AFF, London



James Anderson and Stuart Broad shared eight wickets before Chris Woakes completed a brilliant return to international duty with the final blow as England thrashed India by an innings and 159 runs in the second Test at Lord's on Sunday.

India, the world's top-ranked Test side, failed to cope with overcast and swing-friendly conditions in both their innings.

They were dismissed for 130 on Sunday, having been skittled out for just 107 first-time around.

Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker, finished with innings figures of four for 23 as he became the first bowler to take 100 Test wickets at Lord's. Allied to a first-innings return of five for 20, that meant Anderson finished with a match haul of nine for 43.

"I am not very proud of the way we played," said India captain Virat Kohli. "England deserved to win; we deserved to lose."

Victory left England 2-0 up in this five-match series after their 31-run win in the first Test at Edgbaston last week. Only once have a side come from 2-0 down to win a five-match Test series, when a Don Bradman inspired Australia

recovered to beat England in 1936/37.

This match was a personal triumph for Woakes, who was recalled by England in place of Ben Stokes because of his fellow pace-bowling all-rounder's ongoing trial for affray. Woakes's 137 not out, his maiden Test century, was the cornerstone of England's 396 for seven declared.

He also shared an England record sixth-wicket stand against India of 189 with Jonny Bairstow (93). That partnership helped England recover from a top-order collapse that saw them slump to 89 for four at lunch on the third day.

Man-of-the-match Woakes also had overall figures of four for 43.

His century saw Woakes become just the fourth cricketer after England's Gubby Allen and Ian Botham and Australia's Keith Miller to have scored a century and taken 10 or more wickets in a Test at Lord's, with the Warwickshire star returning match figures of 11 for 102 at the 'home of cricket' against Pakistan two years ago.

Sunday's humid and cloudy conditions were ideal for 36-year-old Lancashire swing bowler Anderson, who has now taken 553 Test wickets.

That left Anderson, fifth in the all-time Test standings, just 10 wickets behind Glenn McGrath's tally of 563 -- the most by any pacer at this level, with the top three places all

belonging to spinners.

Having bowled opener Murali Vijay for nought in the first innings, it was not long before Anderson had him caught behind for a second duck -- his 100th wicket in 23 Tests at Lord's.

Vijay's fellow opener KL Rahul fell for 10 when lbw to Anderson after playing across the line.

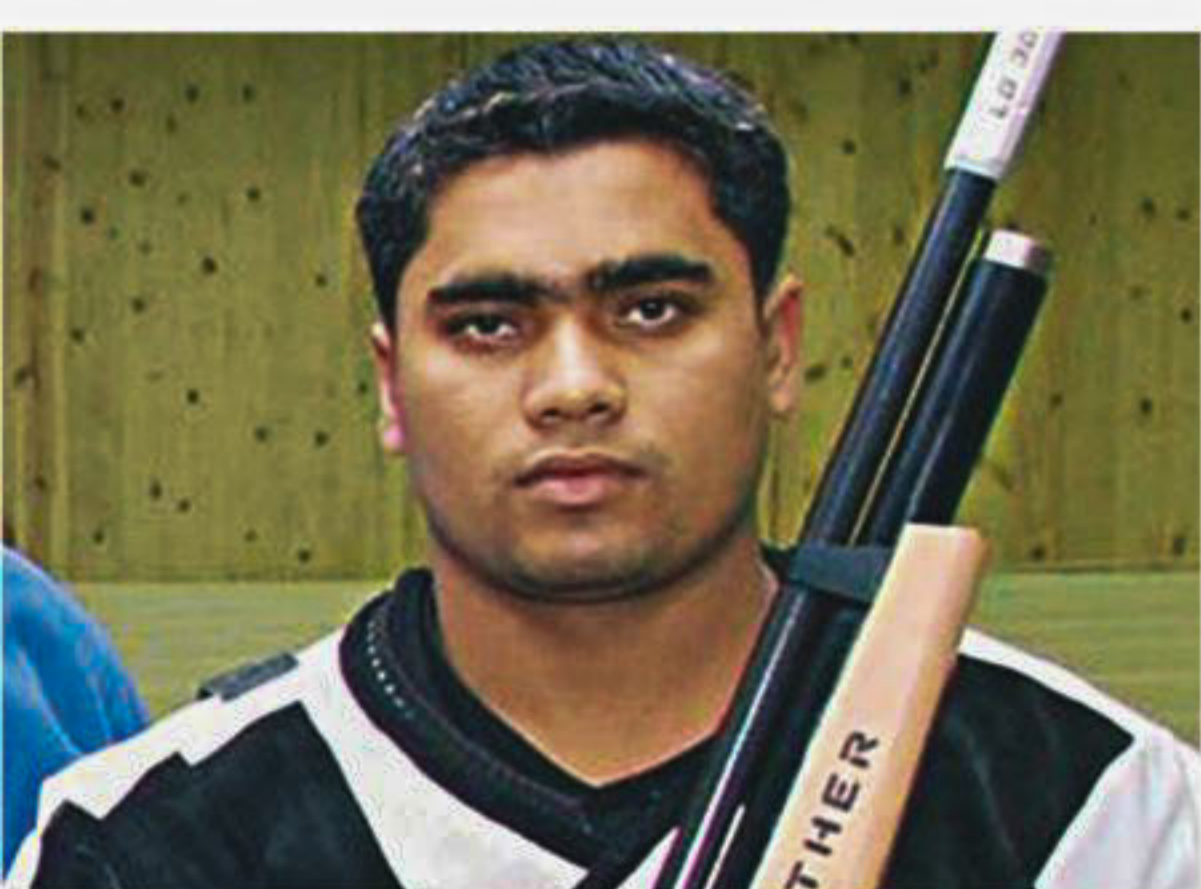
India were 17 for two when rain forced an early lunch, with Anderson having then taken two for eight in five overs. After lunch, Rahane (13) was well caught by Keaton Jennings at third slip off Broad.

Rahane's exit brought in Kohli, the world's top-ranked batsman coming in at number five rather than his usual number four position because of a stiff back. But Kohli could only watch as Broad's superb late inswinger knocked over off stump to bowl Cheteshwar Pujara for 17.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 107 all out
ENGLAND: First Innings 396 for 7 decl (Woakes 137 not out, Bairstow 93, Curran 40; Shami 96-3, Pandya 3-66)
INDIA: Second innings 130 all out (Ashwin 33 not out; Anderson 4-23, Broad 4-44, Woakes 2-24)
Result: England won by an innings and 159 runs and lead five-match series 2-0.
Player-of-the-match: Chris Woakes.

Confident shooters gunning for finals



ABDULLAH HEL BAKI



SHAKIL AHMED

SPORTS REPORTER



Success in the XXI Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast and the steady improvement in training has given the shooters hopes of bettering their previous performances in the upcoming Asian Games, which is set to get underway on August 18 in Jakarta.

Kabaddi had been the lone medal-producing discipline for Bangladesh before cricket was introduced at the Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010, where Bangladesh bagged its first gold medal in the history of the Asian Games through cricket. In the following edition in Incheon, Bangladesh won silver and bronze medals in women's and men's cricket events respectively.

This time around however the cricket event has been dropped and Bangladesh's hopes lie on the shooters, who have never won a medal from the Asian Games, as the Bangladesh Shooting Sports Federation has been conducting long-term training since December 2016 under foreign coaches with a vision to win at least one medal in the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

The shooters have also been improving gradually and that was reflected in April's Commonwealth Games, where two silver medals were won by shooters. They now face

another test, with silver medallists Abdullah Hel Baki and Shakil Ahmed garnering the most attention of the 18-member shooting contingent leaving here tonight.

Baki narrowly missed a gold medal in the Commonwealth Games after scoring 244.7 in the 10m air rifle final event, just 0.3 less than Australian gold medallist Dane Sampson. Meanwhile Shakil won the silver medal in the 50m air pistol event with a score of 220.5, 6.7 points less than the ultimate gold winner.

"I am going to the Asian Games with a bit more of confidence, which is unlike my mindset compared to the other Games I took part. I had always been confident whenever I took part in any Games but never thought of winning a medal, but I won in my debut appearances," Shakil told The Daily Star on Saturday.

"This time around I am at my peak. In training I have been scoring 575 to 586, which is a total that can take any shooter past the qualification round and into the eight-man final event in Olympics. My target is to transform my performance in practice to the Asian Games."

The confident 22-year-old, who is going to take part in the Asian Games for the first time after getting success in his debut appearance in the SA Games and Commonwealth Games, added: "I don't know whether I can win a medal

from the Asian Games but if I can hit my practice score, I can tell you that other shooters will have to fight against me to take the medals home."

Abdullah Hel Baki is a proven campaigner, who won back-to-back silver medals in the 10m air rifle event of the Commonwealth Games, but he has never qualified for the finals of the Asian Games in his previous two attempts. However, the 28-year-old shooter is hopeful of making it to the eight-man final round.

"I hit 625 in the weekend trial on Thursday and if I can manage 620 to 622, then I have a chance to qualify for the final round, which is my target," said Baki, who has been suffering from a toothache for a few days.

"No one can say about the medal because there are a lot of things, including luck, that are at play. If I can do my job and luck favours me, then something can happen," said Baki, who added that he regretted not taking part in a single international competition since the completion of the Commonwealth Games.

"The standard of shooting in the Asian Games is almost equal to the Olympic Games and Asia's top shooters are coming into the Games after playing the World Cup. However, we didn't get any opportunity to compete ahead of the Asian Games," said the shooter from Gazipur.

A boyhood dream: Woakes

PTI, London

England all-rounder Chris Woakes felt "incredible" after realising his childhood dream of scoring a Test hundred at the 'Home Of Cricket'.

"That feeling of raising your bat to a standing ovation at Lord's is a bit of a boyhood dream. But it's an incredible feeling," a visibly elated Woakes told mediapersons after the end of the third day's play.

Woakes had recently become a father and said that his teammates had asked him to do a "baby celebration" but it all became a bit of blur once he achieved the coveted landmark.

"The lads did ask me actually where the baby celebration was, but for some reason, that wasn't really on my mind. I didn't really have any ideas of how I was going to celebrate, and didn't really know how to but I'm obviously just delighted. It's still a bit of a blur. It seems to go so fast 30 seconds of raising your bat feels literally like a blink of the eye," Woakes said.

He admitted that he was a bit nervous as he approached the three-figure mark but Jonny Bairstow was a calming influence on him.

"I was probably getting a little bit nervous in the 90s. All of a sudden, you start thinking of three-figures, start wafting at things outside off-stump, which I hadn't been doing. Jonny (Bairstow) came down and had a word, which settled me."

Stokes now enjoys the rare honour of having his name on three different Honours' Board at the Lord's. He has now completed a treble of five-for, 10-for and century at the hallowed ground.

6-star Dananjaya crushes Proteas

REUTERS, Colombo



Sri Lanka's Akila Dananjaya spun a web around South Africa's batsmen with a six-wicket haul to help the hosts to a commanding 178-run victory in the fifth and final one-day international on Sunday.

Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews struck a run-a-ball 97 to anchor his side to an imposing 299 for eight after the hosts won the toss and opted to bat.

South Africa, who had won the first three matches of the series, appeared clueless against off-spinner Dananjaya's bag of tricks and were bundled out for 121 under 25 overs.

The 24-year-old took 6-29 to register his best bowling figures in one-dayers and helped Sri Lanka finish the series with a respectable 3-2 result.

South Africa's stand-in skipper Quinton de Kock, leading the side for the injured Faf du Plessis, was the only batsman to provide some resistance for the touring side with a stroke-filled 54.

Mathews hit 11 fours and a six in his knock as Sri Lanka scored 93 off their final 10 overs to set South Africa a 300-run target.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 299 for 8 in 50 overs (Dickwell 43, Mendis 38, Mathews 97 not out, De Silva 30, Shanaka 21; Mulder 2-59, Phehlukwayo 2-60)
SOUTH AFRICA: 121 all out in 24.4 overs (De Kock 54, Markram 20; Dananjaya 6-29, Kumara 2-34)
Result: Sri Lanka won by 178 runs.

Mahmudullah fails but St Kitts sail

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudullah Riyad was dismissed after scoring 16 runs in his first game for St Kitts and Nevis Patriots in a Caribbean Premier League encounter against Trinbago Knight Riders at the Port of Spain on Saturday.

Coming in at number six in the 16th over, Mahmudullah struck a six and a boundary off Sunil Narine's bowling before the right-hander was ultimately dismissed in the same over on 16 runs off ten deliveries. Despite the loss, St Kitts eventually posted a huge total of 203 for 7 after electing to bat and won the match by 42 runs.

In their chase, Trinbago ended up scoring 161 for 8 in 20 overs with Mahmudullah conceding five runs from a single over as his side returned to winning ways.



With the series gone, Sri Lanka off-spinner Akila Dananjaya's (R) six wickets brought some consolation as it drove the hosts to a 178-run win over South Africa in the fifth and final ODI in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP