

SPORT



Coach Mohammed Salahuddin (R) is the go-to-man for cricketers wishing to sort out those small technical details. Here he is complying with Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal's request to help fine-tune his front-foot drive at the BCB Academy ground yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Tamim's drive echoes thru' secluded Mirpur

SPORTS REPORTER



Tamim Iqbal returned to business a bit earlier than his other teammates after Eid vacation. The Tigers are set to start their preparations for next month's Asia Cup, to be held in the UAE, from August 27 but the prolific left-hander has decided to return early to a Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium that is unusually calm and quiet to fine-tune his batting.

The 29-year-old could have relaxed following his outstanding performances in the recently-concluded ODI and T20I series against the West Indies but for a perfectionist and professional like Tamim, there is always a job in hand, especially as his mantra is: 'outdo yourself'.

At the moment there are no major problems with regards to his batting. Instead he was working to bring back the previous perfection in his drive shot. And the man beside him was none other than his mentor, Mohammad Salahuddin.

"He [Tamim] is simply working on a minor adjustment as he wants to generate more power when he plays drives. It's a shot that Tamim played more commendably early in his career before suddenly losing the force," observed Salahuddin.

"If you saw his straight drive early in his career, then you found it amazing. It was a shot that was Tamim's strength but now days that's not the case. His drive through the off-side also looks fragile. My understanding is that there is a lack of power behind it so I brought it to his attention," he added.

However, Tamim is not the type of player to accept anything without first analysing it himself.

"He will not accept anything without analysing it himself and he found this weakness by watching his last few innings. Tamim also analysed [Virat] Kohli's drive from video clips and became convinced of working on the adjustment. This is a quality that has made Tamim a successful batsman," explained Salahuddin.

The opening batsman did not fire in the Test series against the West Indies but he was named the player-of-the-series in the ODIs after hitting his 10th and 11th ODI centuries in the first and third matches, with a fifty in between. His 44-ball 77 in the second T20I was also remarkable and given his exploits, he could easily have chosen to rest on his laurels.

"But Tamim knows there is no end to improving performances and he also knows that one has to do the work with purpose," concluded Salahuddin.

Booters coming back happy; mixed results elsewhere

SPORTS REPORTER from Jakarta

After reaching the knockout rounds of the Asian Games for the first time and showing a great attitude in the last 16 match against North Korea, it was time for the Bangladesh under-23 football team to leave Jakarta and head home, where they will embark on their SAFF Championship campaign, scheduled to take place in Dhaka from September 4 to 15.

The squad is leaving in three segments. 21 players returned yesterday on two separate flights. However, most of the coaching staff, along with the 11 players who started the game against North Korea, stayed back for recovery and will return at midnight today.

The team had booked a flight after the Qatar match, operating under the assumption that they would lose. However, that historic 1-0 win against Qatar meant that the team had to cancel their booking and subsequently failed to find any remaining flights together.

When contacted, BFF officials in Dhaka said that only the team management in Indonesia could say why they had booked separate flights.

MIXED RESULTS IN ATHLETICS

As the fastest sprinters of Bangladesh have continuously failed to make an impression at international tournaments, the Bangladesh Athletics Federation had decided not to send any sprinters to the last Asian Games. This time however they sent two -- Abu Taleb and Sumi Akter -- for the 400m events instead of sending the fastest sprinters for the 100m and 200m races.

This decision brought mixed results as the male sprinter flopped while the female athlete broke her previous personal best mark.

Abu Taleb clocked 50.97 seconds to finish 27th among 28 competitors in men's 400m in the morning. He was short of his personal best (48.90s) by 2.07 seconds.

India's Muhammed Anas Yahiya clocked 45.63 seconds to become the fastest in the heats. Sri Lanka's Hewa Kumarage took 45.99 seconds to finish third.

Taleb did not have much to say as an excuse to show for his performance. "I never played in an international tournament before," he said. "I'm not very happy as I should have done better than this. I couldn't run well in the last 100 metres."

However, Taleb's compatriot Sumi Akter beat her previous best mark by 0.04 seconds in women's 400m. The lithe 22-year-old clocked 57.16 seconds to finish fourth in her heat and 14th among 18 competitors.

The 22-year-old from Manikganj, who won four gold medals in the recent summer athletics meet at home, was hugged by her coach Sultana Razia as she walked out of the mixed zone with a broad smile.

RECURVE ARCHERS BID ADIEU
Bangladesh's recurve archers failed to get past the first hurdle on the closing day of recurve events.

The men's recurve team, comprised of Ruman Sana, Ibrahim Sheikh and Emdadul Haque Milon, lost against Mongolia by 6-2 set points in the pre-quarterfinals.

The women's recurve team, featuring Beauiry Ray, Nasrin Akter and Ety Khatun, lost against their Japanese counterparts by the same shoreline at the same stage of the competition.

The compound archers will be making their bow in the competition today.

CAGERS GOING HOME TOO

The Bangladesh 3-on-3 basketball team also packed their bags after losing all four of their matches.

They started the competition with two close defeats -- 10-7 points against Kyrgyzstan and 17-13 points against Mongolia on Wednesday. Yesterday's defeats were far more comprehensive though as they lost against Chinese Taipei by 21-8 points before ending the campaign with a 21-7 point defeat to South Korea.

United Korea's first & a record to last

AFP, Jakarta



Iran's Sohrab Moradi set a weightlifting world record that could last forever on Saturday as tearful North and South Korean athletes combined to win a highly symbolic medal at the Asian Games.

Olympic champion Moradi, who served a two-year doping ban from 2013, hoisted a 189kg snatch en route to victory in the men's 94kg class, breaking weightlifting's longest standing world record set in 1999.

Moradi's lift could stay on the record books in perpetuity as after the Games in Indonesia, all the weight classes will change beginning with November's world championships.

"I feel very happy to know that my name will always remain on all the 94kg world records," beamed the Iranian.

Moradi's triumph for the ages came on a day when the Unified Korea team, testament to this year's marked improvement in Korean ties, won an emotional dragon boating bronze medal.

The North and South Korean athletes were in



Iran's Sohrab Moradi broke weightlifting's longest standing world record at the Asian Games yesterday by hoisting a 189kg snatch en route to victory in the men's 94kg class. PHOTO: AFP

tears as they sung "Ariwang", a traditional Korean folk song, to celebrate winning their medal.

Both Korean teams marched together at the opening ceremony and they have also joined



UNITED THEY CELEBRATE: Members of the Unified Korea team celebrate with their bronze medals for the women's canoe 200m traditional boat race at the 2018 Asian Games in Palembang yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

forces in rowing and women's basketball at the regional Olympics.

"I was deeply emotional," said South Korean canoeist Eun Jeong-byun. "We're divided and forbidden from seeing each other but we both know the same song and speak the same language."

Controversy marred the start of the athletics competition when Japanese marathon winner Hiroto Inoue was accused of pushing Bahrain's Elhassan Elabbassi and denying him gold.

Both athletes had complaints rejected by race officials after they made contact during a thrilling sprint finish, which Inoue won by a fraction of a second.

"The number one (leader) pushed me," said Elabbassi. "I would have won."

In tennis, Uzbekistan's world number 75

Denis Istomin beat China's Wu Yibing in three sets to win men's singles gold -- before jumping on a plane for a 27-hour journey to the US Open in New York.

Istomin, 31, came from behind to beat the reigning US Open boys' champion 2-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7/2) in Palembang. He plays his first-round match at the season's final Grand Slam on Monday.

"I think it shows it means a lot to me and to my country. I always represent my country, never lose an opportunity," Istomin said.

Late on day seven, China had extended their lead on the medals table to 71 golds to Japan's 34 and 24 for South Korea.

About 17,000 athletes and officials are taking part in the 18th Asian Games, the biggest sports event in Indonesia's history.

Hockey team face Thailand with eye on top-six finish

ATIQUAN ANAM from Jakarta



Bangladesh will be looking to confirm at least a place in the fifth-sixth position playoff in the hockey event of the Asian Games with a win against lower-ranked Thailand today.

Bangladesh have been participating in the Asian Games' hockey competition since 1978, and their best results so far are four seventh-place finishes. The last time around they finished eighth out of ten teams.

A win today though will see them achieve their target and surpass all their previous achievements by finishing in the top six for the first time and among 12 teams.

The game begins at 3:00pm Bangladesh standard time at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium Hockey Field.

charges began their campaign with a 2-1 win against Oman, which basically sealed the deal. They then thrashed Kazakhstan 6-1 before suffering a 7-1 defeat against Malaysia on Friday.

Thailand on the other hand, lost all three of their games -- 10-0 against both Pakistan and Malaysia and 2-0 against Oman.

The head-to-head count between the two teams also makes Bangladesh the odds-on-favourites. Bangladesh last played against Thailand in the Asian Games back in 1998, when the men in red and green ran out 3-1 winners. They have also met regularly in the AHF Cup -- the second-tier competition in Asia -- where Bangladesh are the three-time defending champions. The most recent meeting between the two sides took place in the Asian Games qualifiers in Oman this March with Bangladesh comfortably winning the encounter 5-0.

Gobinathan Krishnamurthy's

Hence the men in red and green are confident about getting past the Thai challenge for a place in the fifth-sixth place decider.

"I don't ever remember losing against Thailand," team manager Ehsan Rana said yesterday. "We've always beaten them in the AHF Cup or other tournaments. So we just want to go out and win with a big margin and achieve our target of playing for the fifth-sixth position."

The coach reiterated his team's target after the match against Malaysia. "We came here with the target of a top-six finish and that will be achieved if we beat Thailand," Krishnamurthy said.

"All our concentration is on the Thailand match. We will make a record if we beat Thailand, so we are thinking about that match only," the Malaysian added, hinting that the final group game against eight-time champions Pakistan is currently not on the agenda.

PFA boss banned over Messi threat

AFP, Geneva

FIFA on Friday hit the Palestinian Football Association chief with a year-long "match" ban after he called for protests against Lionel Messi over plans for Argentina to play Israel in Jerusalem.

FIFA sanctioned PFA president Jibril Rajoub for breaching codes against "inciting hatred and violence... following media statements he gave calling on football fans to target the Argentinian Football Association and burn jerseys and pictures of Lionel Messi."

Responding to the FIFA statement, Rajoub told AFP that the decision was "unfair" and said he would launch an appeal.

Under the sanction, Rajoub can remain in office as PFA president but has restrictions imposed on his role.



Sprinter Sumi Akter (R) is congratulated by coach Razia Sultana after beating her previous personal best score.

PHOTO: STAR