

Dokic thought of suicide!

AFP, SYDNEY

Australian former tennis star Jelena Dokic revealed on Monday that she came close to taking her own life just a few weeks ago.

The 39-year-old wrote a lengthy message on Instagram, saying she has been suffering with mental illness and nearly resorted to suicide on April 28.

"I almost jumped off my 26th floor balcony and took my own life," she wrote.

"Everything is blurry. Everything is dark. No tone, no picture, nothing makes sense... just tears, sadness, depression, anxiety and pain.

"The last six months have been tough. It's been constant crying everywhere. Will never forget the day, I just wanted the pain and the suffering to stop.

"I pulled myself off the edge, don't even know how I managed to do it."

Haaland feeling at home at City

AFP, MANCHESTER

Erling Haaland believes he will only improve working under Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola after completing his transfer from Borussia Dortmund to the English champions on Monday.

City announced last month they had agreed a deal with the German giants after triggering Haaland's reported £51 million (\$63 million) release clause.

The 21-year-old has now signed a five-year contract to follow in the footsteps of his father Alfie Inge Haaland, who played for City from 2000-2003.

"I was born in England, I've been a City fan my whole life, I know a lot about the club," Haaland told Man City TV. "In the end two things; I feel at home and I think I can develop and get the best out of my game at City."



All-rounder Mosaddek Hossain posted a picture of the Bangladesh players hanging out at the team hotel in Antigua following the three-day practice match against CWI President's XI, which ended in a draw. The first Test between Bangladesh and West Indies will get underway on Thursday.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Will Shakib's captaincy cure Bangladesh's DRS malaise?

NABID YEASIN

Technological advancement has aided all forms of sports worldwide. While the introduction of the Decision Review System (DRS) has seen the rate of errors made in matches drop down significantly and also provided a clarity to players and viewers alike, its effectiveness still depends highly on the refined decision-making from the cricketers out on the field.

And in modern cricket, the three DRS calls allocated in Test cricket to each of the teams go a long way in almost determining the outcome of a game.

Apart from the usual cricketing issues, the one other thing that Bangladesh have struggled with in recent times, especially in Tests, is their inability to make proper use of the DRS.

To put things into perspective, Bangladesh have seen a total of 10 unsuccessful reviews in their recent-most two-Test series against Sri Lanka while getting only six reviews upheld successfully.

In the series before that, away to South Africa, Bangladesh saw a total of 12 unsuccessful reviews against six successful ones in the two-match Test series.

Even in the preceding away Test series against New Zealand in January this year, Bangladesh had 11 reviews turned down while seeing only five reviews being successful. Interestingly, it was in the first Test in Mount Maunganui in which the Tigers clinched a historic eight-wicket victory that they saw a total of eight reviews turned down.

But it is true that only the numbers don't accurately reflect the review

taking precision of a side as not all the unsuccessful reviews were due to a bad call from the Tigers' camp with a number of decisions turned down on umpire's call. Then again, even considering that the numbers aren't a true reflection of Bangladesh's ability to make the right call in going upstairs at opportune moments, a total of 33 unsuccessful reviews against 17 successful ones in last six Tests certainly do not bode well for the Tigers.

In the six Tests played in their last three series, Bangladesh had seen a total of 33 unsuccessful reviews.

During the same period, the Tigers were only able to take 17 successful reviews.

However, not all the unsuccessful reviews were due to a bad call from the Tigers' camp as a number of decisions were turned down on umpire's call.

In fact, there were instances of woeful and, at times, hilarious DRS calls made by Bangladesh. The most glaring blunder made by Mominul Haque's side was probably the one made against the Kiwis during their historic Test win.

In the 37th over of New Zealand's second innings, a loud appeal from bowler Taskin

Ahmed and the fielders were made for an LBW against right-hander Ross Taylor. Even though the umpire had turned it down immediately, Mominul went on to review it with seconds left on the timer only to be embarrassed by the review shown on the big screen. Not only did the ball have any connection with the pad, it was defended with the middle of the bat by the Kiwi batter, which only brought to ears a muffled laughter from the commentary box.

During the first Test against Sri Lanka in Chattogram last month, Bangladesh lost two of their reviews inside the first session of the game.

Not only that Bangladesh regretted taking ill-timed reviews in recent past, there have also been handful of instances when the situation was the other way around. Such was the case in the second Test against South Africa when Mominul decided not to review after umpire had turned down a solid LBW appeal from pacer Khaled Ahmed against Sarel Erwee – who was batting only on 4 at that time.

It is true that the skipper only gets a few seconds before making a DRS call and has to rely heavily on the body language of his troops, still the Tigers, as a team, ought to follow a more judicious approach in making such calls.

With the Mominul-era concluded, it will be interesting to see how Bangladesh do in regards to their DRS calls in the upcoming Test series against the West Indies under the leadership of Shakib Al Hasan, considered one of the 'best thinkers' of the game.

Booters hoping to end on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh were looking forward to ending their Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign on a high ahead of today's third and final group-stage match against hosts Malaysia at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur.

The match will get underway at 7:00pm (Bangladesh Standard time) and be broadcast on T-Sports.

Bangladesh are bottom of the four-team table in their group, with no points to show despite impressing with their never-say-die approach.

Meanwhile second-placed Malaysia, with three points, will hope they can secure a place in the next round with a runners-up finish, although their fate also hinges on the outcome of the day's first match between group leaders Bahrain and third-placed Turkmenistan.

Bangladesh suffered narrow defeats to the group's higher-ranked sides, Bahrain and Turkmenistan, and are expected to face another stiff challenge not only from Malaysia, but also from their huge home crowd.

However, Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera saw the crowd as motivation for his charges.

"Playing in front of 70 or 80 thousand spectators is not only extra motivation for players, it is a player's dream to play in front of such a big crowd in that kind of atmosphere. It is the perfect moment for us to show that we can compete against anyone. It is time to be consistent," the Spaniard told reporters at the pre-match press conference in Malaysia yesterday.



"It is a fantastic opportunity for the boys and will be beautiful day for us to do our best. Show consistency again like we did in the past three matches. I think we deserve more and want to give something to our supporters and go home with something. We believe in ourselves and we will do our best tomorrow."

Responding to a question about whether his side could score against Malaysia, Cabrera said: "Malaysia are going to give everything from the first second and try kill the match in the first 10 minutes. You need full concentration and attention to be able to stop them, hold them and punish them."

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan believes the pressure will be on Malaysia and his teammates are ready to deliver their best.

"Tomorrow [Tuesday] is our last game and everyone is looking forward to it. We want to end with a good result. I think all players are motivated for the match," Jamal said. "It is a big match and the pressure will be on Malaysia because they have to win. Of course, we also need a result but I think we have to run more than Malaysian to get something."

Bangladesh's history against Malaysia is inauspicious, with six defeats in nine matches, although the last two meetings between the teams in 2012 and 2015 ended in draws. Bangladesh's lone win over Malaysia came courtesy of a 2-1 result in the 1982 Asian Games.

The breeding grounds for young cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

School cricket has played a huge role in scouting aspiring cricketers over the years and, following a halt due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the prestigious tournament once again made a positive impact as Shishu Niketon High School clinched the Prime Bank National School Cricket title by beating Meherpur Government High School by 59 runs in the final yesterday.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board's attempt to rekindle school cricket competitions, where youngsters can showcase their talents in a festive environment, was spearheaded by board director and BCB School Cricket Committee chairman Obeid Rashid Nizam. The matches being telecast on TV has only added to the excitement.

Shishu Niketon leg spinner Shaikh Imtiaz Shihab, who was named player of the tournament, starred in the final with a five-wicket haul as Meherpur were bundled out for just 43 runs in chase of a modest of 102 at the Shamsuzzoha Sports Complex in Narayanganj.

Like Shihab, who scalped 33 wickets in 10 games in the tournament, many others have been testament to school cricket's being a source of producing cricketers at the grassroots level.

"School cricket is a regular program under game development activities. The tournament didn't hit the field due to the Covid-19, but it was a regular feature in



Rangpur Shishu Niketon High School players run for joy after beating Meherpur Govt High School by 59 runs in the final of the Prime Bank National School Cricket Competition at the Shamsuzzoha Sports Complex in Narayanganj yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

the past. We previously had around 550 schools participating but this time we reduced it to 348. The reason was to ensure quality," BCB age-level selector and former Bangladesh opener Hannan Sarkar told The Daily Star. "We made sure schools would meet specific criteria to be able to participate so that the standards of the

teams could be ensured."

Selectors will conduct a training camp with 120 cricketers from the school cricket tournament and form a 15-member squad. They are also planning to provide scholarships to the cricketers.

"Shihab was in our national under-15 camp and is part of the set-up. When we

make the shortlist, you will see a majority of our age-group cricketers coming through the process. However, there are some players who somehow miss out or were dropped. Those players got the opportunity to showcase their worth," he said.

Hannan also chimed in on why he

felt that Bangladesh were struggling to produce leg spinners for the senior side despite many leggies coming through the system.

"We announced the under-15 squad recently and included two leg spinners. We have three leg spinners in the under-17 squad and we will have four to five leg spinners in the team in the upcoming under-19 squad. We never had a shortage of leg spinners at the age-level. But I don't want to comment about what happens after that. Honestly, I think maybe clubs don't show interest in playing leg spinners at the competitive level. That is probably one aspect," Hannan said.

There have been instances of players attempting to hide their age to fit into the system, but Hannan said the board ensures proper medical tests to determine age.

"When the medical tests start before the tournament, we have one representative from the board designated to follow procedures. We also have a doctor in the team along with district and divisional coaches. Officials provide papers such as a birth certificate.

"Each individual grows differently so it's quite difficult to determine age perfectly. But we take it that sixty to seventy percent is right. If we have any doubts about a player, we go for bone tests as an authentic and final option," he added.