

Koly narrowly misses out on history

SPORTS REPORTER

Unheralded shooter Kamrun Koly narrowly missed out on qualifying for the final of the women's 10m Air Rifle event in the ISSF World Championships, falling short by just 0.9 points to finish 14th among 135 shooters in Cairo yesterday.

The 21-year-old -- whose previous best score was 622.9 during the Changwon World Cup in South Korea earlier this year -- recorded the all-time best score by a Bangladeshi shooter in the qualification round of the 10m Air Rifle event at this event, finishing with 629.2 out of 654.

Chinese shooter Yu Zhang was the eighth and final shooter to qualify for the eight-shooter final with a score of 630 in the competition, which features the best shooters in the world and also offers quota spots for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Koly, the Bangladesh Navy shooter, got off to a brilliant start and impressed in the first four series, each of which comprise 10 shots. Barring the first series when she made 104, Koly scored more than 105 out of 109 in each of the three following series (106.3, 105.1 and 105.4).

Those performances saw her in the fourth position overall at the conclusion of the fourth series.

But the slightest dip in her scores in the final two series proved costly. She secured 104.1 and 104.3 points, which meant she fell narrowly short of becoming the first Bangladeshi to qualify for the final of the ISSF World Championships.

Koly would have entered the final had she scored just a single point more in either of the last two series, but she had to settle for 629.2, ruling that one point even more after five shooters finished above her by virtue of decimal points.

Earlier in the day, young shooter Sajida Haque scored a career-best 627.5 to finish 36th while Nafisa Tabasum bettered her previous score and made 621.6 to finish 94th among the 135 shooters.

In the men's 10m air rifle event, Rabbi Hasan Munna and Mohamed Ali almost kept their Baku World Cup performance intact, finishing 55th and 80th respectively out of 114 shooters. Munna scored 624.4 while Ali got 620.4.



Against the backdrop of a picturesque tea garden in Sylhet, the captains of the two Women's Asia Cup finalists -- India's Harmanpreet Kaur and Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu -- pose with the trophy on Friday ahead of the all-important final at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium today. India will look to reaffirm their dominance and win the continental championship for the record seventh time while Sri Lanka will hope to follow in the footsteps of their Men's team in order to clinch the Asia Cup title for the first time. PHOTO: BCB

Soumya, Shoriful make WC squad as Tigers head to Australia

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The form of a few players had raised concerns as Bangladesh gear up for the T20I World Cup in Australia, which starts tomorrow although the Tigers will not play until October 24, and with reports of imminent changes to the World Cup squad, chief selector Minhajul Abedin spoke yesterday noon about that aspect before flying for Australia.

Late yesterday, the cut-off date for any final changes, the BCB announced that Soumya Sarkar and Shoriful Islam had replaced Sabbir Rahman and Mohammad Saifuddin in the World Cup squad.

Although the team management have run several experiments recently to fine-tune their combinations, the performances of Sabbir, Saifuddin, Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mustafizur Rahman had been of concern.

Sabbir and Mehedi Hasan Miraz opened the innings starting with the Asia Cup match against Sri Lanka but the opening combination was changed quite a few times during the tri-nation series in New Zealand.

Sabbir appeared in the first game of the tri-nation series against Pakistan but was dropped for the rest of the tournament. Shanto and Soumya Sarkar were tried in the opening slots as Mehedi also made way following the second game in the series.

Sabbir, who scored just 31 runs

in four matches since his return to the national team, visibly underperformed. Although the chief selector talked to the media before the changes were announced, he said the responsibility of settling into the side lay with the players first and foremost.

"We had a plan from before the Asia Cup about which player would be played where. From that regard, we discussed using Sabbir at the top. You

BANGLADESH SQUAD

Shakib Al Hasan (c), Najmul Hossain Shanto, Soumya Sarkar, Liton Das, Afif Hossain, Yasir Ali, Mosaddek Hossain, Nurul Hasan Sohan (wk/vc), Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam, Nasum Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain.

also have to look at the player, not just the team management and selectors. Players have the most responsibility because they are the ones out on the field. In the T20 format, there is no scope to blink. Concentration and self-assessment are very important. If a player can't prepare himself of his own accord, it's very difficult to settle [in the team]," Minhajul said.

Soumya has not looked very settled either in his two matches so

far, struggling with the pace. But technical consultant Sridharan Sriram had backed his intent a day before and yesterday Soumya replaced Sabbir. There was no clarity on how much the team management could judge from his performances as was indicated in Minhajul's words.

"It's not good to judge a player based on two matches. But given the situation, it's difficult to focus on someone in a big way. We have to ensure we play well and that our approach is positive."

Meanwhile, Saifuddin had leaked runs with the ball and Shoriful, despite initially being a stand-by, impressed just enough.

Minhajul highlighted that Saifuddin's performances were "disappointing" and that his injury situation was still a worry. "All the players are being monitored and the team management is working hard to make them fit. Among the pool of pacers that we have, Shoriful is one of the best," Minhajul said.

Both Sabbir and Saifuddin will now return to Bangladesh from New Zealand while the World Cup squad head to Auckland from Christchurch this morning before flying to Brisbane.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan will attend the captains' meet for photoshoots in Melbourne before joining the side in Brisbane tomorrow. As Minhajul had wished, a settled squad will now begin the World Cup grind in Australia.

James, Kante could miss World Cup

AFP, LONDON

Chelsea manager Graham Potter confirmed that Reece James and N'Golo Kante will see specialists in the coming days which could determine their chances of going to the World Cup next month.

England right-back James limped off with a knee injury during the Blues 2-0 win against AC Milan in midweek with reports in the English media suggesting the 22-year-old faces a race against time to be fit for Qatar.

"He's due to see a specialist over the weekend. Until we get that information there is not too much more I can add unfortunately," said Potter on James, who had established himself as first-choice for Gareth Southgate at right wing-back for England.

Kante has not featured since August and has suffered a setback in his return from a hamstring injury. The midfielder was vital to France's success in Russia four years ago and would be a big miss for Didier Deschamps's side.

"He's due to see a consultant at the weekend. It's a setback, it's not good news, but I can't give you anything more at this stage," added Potter.



Shami replaces injured Bumrah

AFP, New Delhi

Indian red ball specialist Mohammad Shami will replace injured pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah for the looming T20 World Cup in Australia, the country's cricket board said on Friday.

Bumrah was ruled out with a back injury earlier this month, a big blow to cricket powerhouse India's chances in the marquee tournament.

Standby seamer Mohammed Shami has played only 17 international matches in the shortest format and was last month ruled out of the T20 series against Australia at home after coming down with Covid.

"Shami has reached Australia and will link up with the squad in Brisbane ahead of the warm-up matches," the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said.

India face hosts Australia and New Zealand in practice matches next week before their World Cup campaign begins in Melbourne against arch-rivals Pakistan on October 23.

The side have failed to win a world title since their 2013 Champions Trophy triumph and their bowling attack has lacked steam in the final overs in recent matches.

Rohit Sharma's men will also have to make do without top all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who is out with a knee injury.

Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur will serve as reserve players, the BCCI said.

Zaman in for Qadir

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan included top-order batter Fakhar Zaman in their 15-man squad for the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia on Friday, replacing spinner Usman Qadir after he suffered a thumb injury.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said 32-year-old Zaman is recovering from a knee injury.

"Pakistan have made one change in their squad for the T20 World Cup Australia with Zaman included in the squad while Qadir will be in the travelling reserves," said a PCB statement.

Zaman was initially picked as a reserve, while Qadir was in the 15-man squad.

Qadir has yet to recover from a thumb injury picked up last month, and will not be available for selection before October 22, the PCB added.

All 16 teams can make changes to their squads until October 15, after which they need the approval of the World Cup's technical committee.

Zaman suffered a knee injury during last month's Asia Cup held in the United Arab Emirates.

"Zaman will be available for selection in the two warm-up matches against England (17 October) and Afghanistan (19 October)," the PCB said.

Earlier this week, Pakistan received a boost to their World Cup chances when pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi was declared fit to play after recovering from a knee injury.

Pakistan is in Group Two of the Super 12 stage, and will play their first match against India in Melbourne on October 23.

South Africa, Bangladesh and two qualifying teams will join them in Group Two.

Title holders Australia, England, Afghanistan, New Zealand and two qualifying teams are in Group One.

The first round of the tournament begins on Sunday.



Pakistan beat New Zealand by five wickets in the final of a T20I tri-series in Christchurch on Friday, giving themselves a timely boost ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup in Australia.

PHOTO: AFP

"I just backed myself when I came on yesterday and today, all the preparation in the nets meant I had a clear mind. I have been batting in the middle order in club cricket, which helps a lot, and I was very happy to fulfil the team's expectations in me."

Pakistan batter Mohammad Nawaz, who was adjudged player of the match for his all-round performance.

"It was a great game, Pakistan are a strong side and all credit to the way they turned the game's momentum. There was a lot of good in it [his 59-run knock], but it was frustrating not to get over the line."

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson.