

Aus call up Kuhnemann for Delhi Test

AFP, Nagpur

Australia called up left-arm spinner Matthew Kuhnemann to bolster the squad ahead of their second match against India, with coach Andrew McDonald saying Sunday he had a "live chance" of making his Test debut in Delhi next Friday.

The tourists suffered an innings and 132-run hammering inside three days of the opener in Nagpur on Saturday to trail the four-match series 1-0.

"He's a live chance to play in the next Test match," McDonald told reporters on what would have been the fourth day of the opener.

Kuhnemann said he was excited to fly to India after he got the news during a Sheffield Shield game in Melbourne.

"Got a phone call yesterday morning when walking out for the warm ups. Was pretty shocked," Kuhnemann said after Queensland's defeat to Victoria.

"I was just lucky enough that my passport was in my bag."



Rangpur Riders batter Shamim Hossain turned up at the right moment as his 51-ball 71 laid the foundation for a successful chase against Fortune Barishal in the Eliminator of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. [Bottom] Rangpur skipper Nurul Hasan Sohan shakes hands with Barishal captain Shakib Al Hasan, who is one of the contenders for the player of the tournament after yet another impactful BPL campaign.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Elusive gold leaves Imranur 'shocked'

SPORTS REPORTER

It took a while for Imranur Rahman to come to terms with reality after the England-born Bangladeshi sprinter reached the touchline during the men's 60 metre event in Asian Indoor Athletics Championship in Kazakhstan on Saturday night.

Imranur, after having clocked 6.59 seconds to leave behind seven superior counterparts from Hong Kong, Japan, Qatar, Oman, China and Pakistan, had first burst into celebration, leaping up into the air, before placing his hands on his forehead in utter disbelief.

"Yes, it was a bit shocking. I didn't expect it. I wasn't the favourite coming into the event," Imranur told The Daily Star over the phone from Kazakhstan yesterday.

Imranur initially stood first in the Heat round before becoming joint-second in the semifinals, based on a photo-finish. Afterwards, the lad from Sheffield became the first Bangladeshi sprinter to win the elusive gold medal at the Asian level.

"It's an amazing feeling [to deliver the first gold medal for Bangladesh]. I didn't expect the gold though. Thanking almighty Allah for such an achievement," said Imranur, who has been managing two jobs in England to run his family alongside bearing his training's expenditure.

"I manage the best way I can. But at times it is tough, but I am trying my best," said the fastest man



'Liverpool fighting to change situation'

AGENCIES

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said that they are fighting to 'change their situation in a better direction' in the Premier League as his side face Everton at home in Monday's Merseyside derby at home.

The Anfield clash arrives with Liverpool languishing in 10th place in the table after a season blighted by poor form and injuries while Everton are battling to avoid relegation.

Klopp realised victory against Everton is paramount, especially after a humbling 3-0 loss to Wolverhampton Wanderers last weekend made it three defeats and just one point from their last four league games.

"It's a time we can show that the club is really special. The boys delivered a lot of great moments in the last few years. We are fighting to change the situation in a better direction," Klopp said on Friday.

Klopp at least had some good news on the injury front with forward Diogo Jota, who suffered a serious calf injury in October, ready to return to action.

"Diogo is the closest, trains now already for two days," Klopp said, although he confirmed that Virgil van Dijk is unlikely to feature despite returning to training and Thiago is doubtful with a hip niggle.

Rangpur get it right, Shakib does not

SPORTS REPORTER

At the business end of the Bangladesh Premier League, decisions did not pay off for Shakib Al Hasan while young Shamim Hossain made the most of the opportunity handed to him as Rangpur Riders ensured second qualifier in expense of Shakib's Barishal, who departed from the tournament in the eliminator on Sunday.

Shamim's door opened with Rahmanullah Gurbaz leaving the BPL and he did not disappoint after Barishal had put on 170 for three. His fast bat speed came to the fore, with some lovely pickup shots over square-leg against Dwaine Pretorius.

A 51-ball 71, laced with four fours and four sixes, signalled an ability behind just being able to hit the ball hard. He took on the likes of Shakib and Mehedi Hasan Miraz early on and that acceleration was vital as he kept the scoreboard ticking to help his side's cause, taking the game deep. Rangpur, in the end, won by just four wickets but the innings was enough to seal victory. Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Barishal coach and a mentor to many of the national team stars, praised the effort. Shamim had been out of the national team contention after a poor outing at the T20 World Cup in UAE and Fahim felt he needed this opportunity to show a different side.

"Unfortunately, he [Shamim] doesn't get to bat at the top order and usually where he bats, he has to bat in a one-dimensional manner and keep hitting. When he gets the opportunity to play this



kind of innings, he will be able to organise himself better and I am very hopeful about him," Fahim said at the post-match presser.

"I always rate him highly not because of his ability to play shots or his aggressive batting, but for his mentality. He has the mentality required in this format," the Barishal coach said.

"Actually, I am a number seven or eight batter and whenever I come on it's not easy to play. When I come on, I try to finish the game which isn't easy," Shamim said about whether there were regrets over not

being able to bat through the innings.

Rangpur's gamble with Shamim worked but Shakib's gamble in not bringing himself at the top order was a surprise and ultimately Barishal's first innings total fell short of what it might have been.

Shakib has been the most fearsome batter in this tournament, scoring 375 runs at an average of over 41 and an immense strike-rate of 174.41. After the platform laid out by Mehedi's 48-ball 69, Shakib sent on Karim Janat in the 14th over and Bhanuka Rajapakse in the 16th over following Mehedi's dismissal. The last seven overs produced just 56 runs and so from 114 for 1, Barishal ended up with just 170 for three.

"Maybe with such a good platform, he felt that if Rajapakse and Janat can go ahead of him and play freely, no matter how much they score, if they score at a good rate, then it will be handy for the side. But I don't think the plan worked," Fahim said on his side coming up short, adding that they should have gotten at least 190.

When asked whether Shakib should have come out and used that platform himself, Fahim agreed. "I think so. Given the way that Shakib had been batting on this wicket and in such scenarios, I don't think there was a better option than Shakib."

"Maybe that's what Shakib will realise now but whatever happened has happened. It's a lesson and even in bowling, we tried to depend on others but later we saw that our local bowlers got us back in the game," Fahim concluded.

'Is it Man City's fault Gerrard slipped?'

AGENCIES

Pep Guardiola reaffirmed that Manchester City's glorious moments will always belong to them, asking if it was the club's fault Steven Gerrard slipped in the 2013-14 season.

City have been accused of over 100 breaches of the Premier League's financial rules between the seasons of 2009-10 and 2017-18.

Speculation has been rife as to the level of punishment the champions might receive should they be found guilty, including points deductions, relegation or the stripping of the titles they won during that time period, including two under Guardiola.

Yet Guardiola has insisted the moments cannot be taken away from City or their fans regardless of the punishment, if indeed there is one, with the manager sarcastically asking the press if it was his club's fault that Liverpool great Gerrard slipped at a vital moment in the 2013-14 title race.

Gerrard fell to the Anfield turf during a clash with Chelsea in April of that season, with Demba Ba going on to score as the Blues triumphed and handed City the chance to go and win their second Premier League title.



"Those moments belong to us. They absolutely belong to us, regardless of the sentence, they belong to us," Guardiola said.

"The goal from Sergio Agüero [in 2012]. I don't know if we are responsible for Steven Gerrard slipping at Anfield. Was that our fault?"

"I have respect for Steven Gerrard – but that moment belongs to us."

"The moments that we lived these years together, the Premier League will decide, but I know what we won and the way we won it."

"I know the effort we put in. If something happened in 2009 or 2010 it is not going to change one second."

Guardiola has full faith in the club's hierarchy.

"What I can say is I am proud of my owners, of my chairman, and the relationship we have had, this time together," he said.

"I have relied on them [and what they told me] a lot in the past, now you can't imagine."

Former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss Guardiola also remains fully committed to City's cause.

"If they want me here I will be here," he continued. "The results are not good, they will put me out because it is a business where you have to win. But if they want me I will not let them down and my players, too."



Real Madrid put on a show at the Prince Moulay Abdallah stadium in Morocco on Saturday, securing a 5-3 win over Al Hilal 5-3 to lift the Club World Cup for a record-extending fifth time. This is Los Blancos' second piece of silverware of the season, after winning the European Super Cup in August.

PHOTO: REUTERS