

Tamim ‘felt obstacles in many places’

Tamim Iqbal, through a Facebook video, put forth a shocking revelation yesterday. The country’s best ever opening batter stated that his injury concern was not the underlying factor behind his exclusion from Bangladesh’s World Cup squad. Following are the excerpts of what he said:

You are all aware that I retired for a reason. Then, at the Prime Minister’s request, I returned. I toiled really hard over the last two months to get in shape. Those involved, particularly the physios, would agree that there was not a single session or activity that I was requested to undertake but did not. When the [New Zealand] series approached, I wasn’t happy mentally for whatever happened in the last four-five months. But when I resumed playing, I fielded for 30-35 overs. Fortunately, I was able to bat in the second match. After the game, I felt tremendously confident and mentally satisfied. I had forgotten about what had happened in the previous four or five months. I was excited to compete in the World Cup. You should expect some discomfort after recovering from an injury layoff. The same thing happened to me. I told the physio about how I felt after that game. The three selectors arrived in the dressing room at that point. I must clarify to you that not for once did I ever mention that I can’t play

more than five matches. I am sure even [chief selector Minhajul Abedin] Nannu cleared this yesterday. This lie about the five matches had any contribution for me to not go to the World Cup. I have pain but I don’t have an injury. After a day or two, someone from the top level of the board, who stays very involved with us, called me. He said, you are going to the World Cup. We have to manage you. But do one thing, don’t play the first match against Afghanistan. I said to him that you are talking about something that’s going to happen after

World Cup against Afghanistan]. Afterwards, the incident that happened, I don’t think my injury or this lie about the five matches had any contribution for me to not go to the World Cup. I have pain but I don’t have an injury. After a day or two, someone from the top level of the board, who stays very involved with us, called me. He said, you are going to the World Cup. We have to manage you. But do one thing, don’t play the first match against Afghanistan. I said to him that you are talking about something that’s going to happen after

I have never batted at No. 3 or 4. I have no experience of batting in the middle-order. So, naturally, I didn’t take this conversation well. I felt that I was being forced to face obstacles in many places. I said if you have this mindset, then don’t send me to the World Cup. I don’t want to be in this nastiness. Overall, I think, if you really want me, then you should make me mentally free and happy. I am coming out of a very bad three, four months. It was a tough time for me. Perhaps, if all this was presented to me



One more thing, please keep me in mind, everyone. Don’t forget me.

differently, maybe I would have reacted differently. Perhaps, I would have accepted it. But suddenly someone calls you and says, don’t play, or if they are saying that sending you down the order is the plan, I am not too sure how fair it is. You are seeing a lot of things happening. One story may be an isolated incident, two stories may be a misunderstanding. But if there are seven-eight stories with someone in three-four months, then it is intentional. At the end of the day, I will wish the very best to the fifteen who have gone [to the World Cup]. I hope they will bring success to Bangladesh. One more thing, please keep me in mind, everyone. Don’t forget me.

physio report. That I had pain after the first match and after the second match. They said if I rest for the September 26 ODI and play the second practice match before the first [World Cup] match, I would have had two weeks of rehab and complete ten weeks of overall rehab. So, I would have been in a much better position to play the first match [of the

12 or 13 days. I will be in good condition by then. Why won’t I be playing? He said that if you play, we are planning that you will bat down the order. You have to consider my mindset at that moment. I had played a good innings. I was happy. Now all this talk suddenly. It was hard for me to take. I have been playing for 17 years in the same position.



Veteran batter Mahmudullah Riyad hugs captain Shakib Al Hasan as coach Chandika Hathurusingha and the other players look on at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of Bangladesh team’s departure for Guwahati for the World Cup.

PHOTO: STAR

Tigers want to move on

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh team yesterday departed for India’s Guwahati to play the ICC Cricket World Cup, hoping to put behind the drama that has unfolded back home following the exclusion of veteran opener Tamim Iqbal from the India-bound squad.

BCB’s lateness in announcing the World Cup squad added to the drama, in fact made more room for it while the midnight meeting between coach Chandika Hathurusingha, skipper Shakib Al Hasan and BCB president Nazmul Hassan added more speculation to the already hyped-up atmosphere.

A BCB source told The Daily Star on Tuesday morning, on the very day of the squad announcement that Shakib had communicated to the board that he would not captain the team at the World Cup if there were unfit players in the squad.

Following the squad announcement, where Tamim was dropped, plenty of criticism followed. The team also departed for India on the back of a 2-0 series loss against New Zealand at home.

Team director Khaled Mahmud, prior to the team’s departure for India, told media that what had transpired the day before needed to be left behind.

“The team is going today and I believe the boys will be upbeat. We know we haven’t performed well in the New

Zealand series and many of the main players from both sides didn’t play. But World Cup is a different stage and we are getting some time ahead of the World Cup and we have two practice matches to sort ourselves [before the tournament],” Mahmud told reporters at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

“What has happened, there is nothing to do about it anymore. We have to look forward to tomorrow and that’s the hope we are harbouring,” he said.

“I feel that the dream is certainly alive in the eyes of these 15 [in the squad]. It’s important to fulfil that dream. That’s why not only the cricketers, but everyone, including the support staff, must be aligned together under one thread,” Mahmud added.

With many young players like Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Tanzim Hasan Sakib in the squad, Mahmud urged everyone to keep faith in them.

“Many will say that the young boys are going; youngsters but they have the ability to do well and so they are going there. We have to believe these 15 cricketers selected were selected because they are the best,” he said.

Bangladesh will face Sri Lanka and England respectively on September 29 and October 2 in their two warm-up matches before they travel to Dharamshala for their tournament opener against Afghanistan.

NO COMMENTS FROM BCB

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon did not pick up when The Daily Star repeatedly attempted to contact him over phone to get the board’s response over Tamim Iqbal’s reaction yesterday. However, BCB cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus did respond by saying that he could only make a comment after watching Tamim’s video but he couldn’t be reached over phone afterwards. CEO of BCB Nizamuddin Chowdhury didn’t make a comment on the issue either.

AGENCIES

A rampant Nepal rewrote the T20 international cricket record books at the Asian Games on Wednesday. Nepal smashed a series of records on the opening day of the men’s cricket competition in a 273-run thumping of bewildered part-timers Mongolia.

Nepal bludgeoned 314-3 in 20 overs, beating the previous record of 278-3 by Afghanistan against Ireland in 2019. Teenager Kushal Malla, who played an exceptional knock of 137 in just 50 balls, made the fastest century off 34 balls, suppressing India skipper Rohit Sharma’s 35-ball hundred.

Dipendra Singh Airee hit a scarcely believable eight sixes in an unbeaten 52 off 10 balls. The powerful 23-year-old raced to his fifty off nine balls, another T20 world record and one that should stand in perpetuity because it is mathematically impossible to reach the landmark any quicker. Former Indian batter Yuvraj Singh earlier achieved the record in 12 balls

Nepal’s 26 sixes in the innings was also the best ever.

Boxer Zinnat fails to meet expectations

SPORTS REPORTER FROM HANGZHOU



High expectations for boxer Zinnat Ferdous were dashed yesterday at the Hangzhou Asian Games as she suffered a 5-0 defeat against her Mongolian counterpart Yesugen Oyuntsetseg in the pre-quarterfinals of the 50kg weight category.

Following recent successes on the New York circuit, Zinnat was expected to be the second Bangladesh boxer to win an Asian Games medal; after Mosarraf Hossain delivered the country’s first medal, a bronze, in 1986.

The New York-based boxer, who only began boxing two years ago at the age of 27, promised to come back strong. “This is not the last. I want to continue representing Bangladesh,” a smiling Zinnat told reporters in the mixed zone.

“I know the stage is bigger but Bangladesh is behind me and that is a lot,” said the country’s first expatriate boxer, who also wants to represent Bangladesh in the Olympics.

At the Hangzhou Gymnasium, the well-built Yesugen proved too powerful for Zinnat. The 22-year-old Mongolian boxer has a deep boxing history, having finished fifth twice in the 2022 and 2023 World Champions under 54kg and 52kg categories, respectively.

A defensive strategy in the three-minute first round did not work in favour of Zinnat, who then got off to a good start in the second round. Yesugen, however, came back strong in the latter part of the round to take all five judges’ decisions in her favour and proceeded to wrap up a convincing win following a fairly one-sided affair in the third and final round.

Asked what made the difference in the ring, Zinnat replied, “Usually when someone has a strong start, you have to come back harder but I could not do well and it is all right.”

Djokovic, Bale star in celebrity golf match

AFP, Rome

Novak Djokovic and Gareth Bale played seven holes on the Ryder Cup course during a celebrity match on Wednesday, with the tennis star enjoying the “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity”.

Djokovic and Bale’s team, led by Ryder Cup icon Colin Montgomerie, came out on top in the contest against Corey Pavin’s outfit.

“It’s a great honour, I want to thank the Ryder Cup for giving me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity... it’s a unique experience,” said Djokovic, who won a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title at the US Open earlier this month.

His highlight at the Marco Simone Golf and Country Club was driving through the par-four 16th green.

“The crowd made me do it and I’m really happy they did,” added Djokovic, who played alongside disability golf world number one Kipp Popert.

Former footballer Bale, who was often criticised by fans for playing too much golf while at Real Madrid, won his match alongside Montgomerie against the Scot’s fellow 2010 Ryder Cup captain Pavin and AC Milan attacking great Andriy Shevchenko.

