

Joty hopes to revive positive vibes

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team skipper Nigar Sultana Joty said she wanted to bring back the positive atmosphere surrounding her team with good performances against India in the five-match T20I series, starting today at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

The series acts as a precursor for the upcoming Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in July followed by the T20 World Cup in Bangladesh.

Joty admitted that her side failed to meet expectations against world champions Australia earlier this month when they lost three T20Is and as many ODIs at home.

However, it was not just the losses but the manner in which they lost that raised questions about the actual improvements the Tigresses were able to make.

The hosts could do little to put up a fight, especially with the bat as they posted 95, 98, and 89 respectively in the three ODIs. In the three T20Is, the Tigresses managed 126, 103, and 78.

"We have played well in the past five-seven months but were pegged back against Australia which is why the expectations people had from us has decreased," Joty told reporters in the



PHOTO: BCB

pre-match press conference.

"We want to earn it back. Our team is not highlighted. It is because of people's love and support of media that we have been able to come here. So, I want to create that vibe again."

The last time Bangladesh and India met, an ill-tempered contest

was on display, with India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur at the centre of it all. The right-handed batter smashed the stumps with the bat after getting dismissed and later called the umpiring in the match "pathetic". The 35-year-old's temper also spilt in the post-match presentation of the ODI series

as well and she taunted the Bangladesh team during the photo shoot, saying "call the umpires too".

Both sides have sidestepped the prior issues this time around and called for focus on the task at hand which is preparing for the upcoming marquee events.

"We are a much more mature team now which is why they take us seriously. India are a good team and have brought a full-strength side; the same side will play the [T20] World Cup. It is a good opportunity for us to be able to play five T20Is against India," Joty said.

"Usually the grounds here are heavy and the wickets are low and slow. That was the only reason we wanted to play here before the [T20] World Cup. We wanted to adjust to the conditions," Harmanpreet told reporters.

"Bangladesh is a very good team. They have improved over the years. I know they're going to give us a very good fight and we are ready for that," she added.

Joty also pointed out that the wickets in Sylhet will aid run-scoring.

"From what we have seen [the nature of the wicket], if you can score 140-150 batting first then it'll be difficult to chase. If we can score more than that, it'll be easier to defend," Joty said.

Choton gets one up on Bapon

SPORTS REPORTER

UCB Women's Football League got underway at the Shaheed Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday as Golam Rabbani Choton, former coach of the national women's team, came up against his elder brother Golam Raihan Bapon.

Amid the sweltering heat, Choton had the last laugh as his side registered a 1-0 win against his brother's team, which boasted a number of players from the national team setup.

Mosammat Sultana scored the only goal of the match in the 37th minute with a left-footed placing shot following a through-pass from her own half.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Football Federation decided to change the schedule of the league after instructions from its president Kazi Salahuddin following heavy criticism over the timing of matches.

The day before the kick-off of the league, BFF's women's wing chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron had informed media that two matches would be held almost every match day - from 9:30am in the morning and 3:45 pm in the afternoon, so that they don't have to use floodlights at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium, which would cost Tk 13,000 per match. However, speaking to reporters during inauguration, Salahuddin said he had instructed his office to change the schedule taking the extreme heat into consideration.

"When I was preparing to come to the field, I realised that it is not possible for people to play football in this weather. At that time, I asked the general secretary how we could do it (arrange matches under floodlights). He said, a big budget will be needed and he will need to talk with NSC. I told him to talk and that I would arrange budget. The games will be played at night," Salahuddin told reporters.



SHORT CORNER

Prime Bank hands scholarships to school cricket's finest 15

Prime Bank, sponsor of Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) school cricket tournament, handed scholarships worth Tk 60,000 to the best 15 players of the 2022-23 season of the Prime Bank National School Cricket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Can't imagine tennis without Nadal: Alcaraz

Carlos Alcaraz admitted Friday that it is impossible to "imagine tennis without Rafa" as he hailed superstar compatriot Rafael Nadal who is closing in on the end of his career. Nadal, a 22-time Grand Slam champion, will be 38 in June and has made just a handful of appearances since January 2023 due mostly to a hip injury.

Liverpool reach agreement for Slot to become new manager: reports

Liverpool reached an agreement with Feyenoord on Friday for Arne Slot to succeed Jurgen Klopp as manager, British media reported. The BBC claimed that the deal is worth up to £9.4 million (10.9 million euros). Slot had said Thursday that he was "confident" of landing the Anfield job.

Arteta receives Wenger's advice on fine margins in title run-in

Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta has been seeking counsel from former manager Arsene Wenger as the club aims to end their 20-year wait for the Premier League title this season, Arteta said ahead of Sunday's trip to Tottenham Hotspur. Wenger, during his 22-year tenure, led Arsenal to three league titles, in 1997-98, 2001-02, and the remarkable "Invincibles" season in 2003-04.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

Watershed turns into Jessy's BAPTISM BY FIRE

SPORTS REPORTER

As Shathira Jakir Jessy crossed the boundary ropes and stepped into the field to officiate the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) match between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Prime Bank Cricket Club in Mirpur on Thursday, she ventured into where no other female umpire of the country had gone before.

It was the first instance of a female umpire from Bangladesh to officiate a DPL match as an on-field umpire, although Jessy had made her debut as a match official in DPL earlier this season as a fourth umpire.

After debuting as an umpire in 2022, Jessy, a former Bangladesh women's team cricketer, has quickly risen in prominence, leading the wave of female match officials in Bangladesh.

She was named in the ICC development panel of umpires in March this year alongside three other female umpires from Bangladesh. In February this year, she officiated in the ACC Women's Premier Cup in Malaysia.

Given her recent exposure in international cricket and the stamp of approval from the ICC, her getting a chance to stand as an on-field umpire in a DPL game shouldn't have come as a total surprise.

However, both Mohammedan and Prime Bank management had their reservations when they learnt that Jessy would stand as one of the two on-field umpires.

"Yes, they were unhappy that BCB had appointed a female umpire, but the match had to go on," Itekar Ahmed Mithu, chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) umpires' committee, told The Daily Star. "They did not make the complaint to me but did so to CCDM [Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis]," he added.

When asked about this, officials from both Mohammedan and Prime Bank denied lodging any complaints.

"We didn't know that a female umpire had been appointed for the match. We all know that the female

umpires in Bangladesh don't have a lot of experience. We didn't complain, but we expected umpires who regularly officiate in DPL since it's a big game," Prime Bank manager Sikder Abul Kashem told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mohammedan's cricket organiser Tariqul Islam Titu echoed Sikder's statement.

"We felt that this match needed a better umpire, but we didn't make any official complaints," said Sikder.

The match, eventually, did have one controversial decision as Prime Bank's Mushfiqur Rahim was given out caught even though video footage revealed that the catcher, Abu Hider Rony, had seemingly touched the boundary ropes while completing the catch.

But as there are no third umpires in DPL, the on-field umpires depend on the fielder and captain's words, who had vouched that the catch was valid.

Prime Bank weren't happy with the call and showed their displeasure after the game by not honouring the custom of shaking hands with opponents.

Regarding Jessy's performance as an umpire, Prime Bank didn't have any complaints but Sikder informed that Mohammedan, who won the match by 33 runs, were not happy with an LBW call she made against one of their batters and an appeal against a Prime Bank batter that she had turned down.

Jessy, however, was satisfied with the entire experience and considered it a big "achievement".

"Although a dismissal is being talked about, I'm relieved the umpiring itself did not cause any controversy. The match referee was happy and both teams appreciated me. That's a big achievement," she had said post-match. However, Jessy refused to comment on the matter when The Daily Star called her yesterday.

Considering the sweltering heat in Dhaka and the heated situation of the match, it was baptism by fire for Jessy. Deserving or otherwise, this watershed event in country's cricket indicates that similar experiences await other in line.



IPL bowlers 'destroyed' as cricket 'turning into baseball'

STAR SPORTS DESK

Bowlers are looking increasingly helpless in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL), with batting records tumbling every other match and teams inching closer and closer to hitting 300 runs in a T20 game.

Such a batting demolition took place at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Friday, as Punjab Kings pulled off the highest successful chase in men's T20s, chasing down a gargantuan 262-run target set by Kolkata Knight Riders with eight balls to spare.

"Cricket is turning into baseball, isn't it? It was absolutely incredible," winning skipper Sam Curran remarked at the post-match presentation, adding that the change in preparation and mentality of the modern batters is behind such carnage.

"I think the way guys train is obviously huge and they can hit balls for a long period of time. I guess it's the confidence, coaches and the way we've been training. Let's be honest - small grounds with a bit of dew and the ball [gets wet] and sometimes you get a wide call. You think



Delhi Capitals' Australian opener Jake Fraser-McGurk, who has been a revelation in the ongoing Indian Premier League, hit an incredible 27-ball 84 against Mumbai Indians at Arun Jaitley stadium yesterday in a 10-run win for the hosts who scored 257 for four after asked to bat.

PHOTO: AFP

you've got a dot ball, you review it and then it's wide. Then an extra ball," he explained.

The match produced the most sixes (42) in a T20 match, surpassing the 38 sixes hit in both the Sunrisers Hyderabad-Mumbai Indians fixture in Hyderabad last month and the Royal Challengers Bengaluru-Hyderabad game in Bengaluru last week.

"So, yeah, not saying it's a batsman's game but it's showing... I'm sure everyone wants to keep seeing sixes. I think stats is definitely going out of the window," further said the England all rounder.

Earlier this week, Pakistan great Wasim Akram expressed disbelief at seeing bowlers getting repeatedly "destroyed" in IPL.

"Thank God, I'm not playing cricket in this era. I mean they are scoring 270 in 20 overs. It's like 450 or 500 in a 50-over game. If it happened once, it was okay, but this has happened three-four times, which shows how strong the batting is," Akram told Sportskeeda.

"For bowlers, it has become like take money and get destroyed here. I feel for the bowlers in this format," he added.



West Ham United's Michail Antonio celebrates with Mohammed Kudus after scoring their second goal in a 2-2 draw against struggling Liverpool in an English Premier League fixture at the London Stadium yesterday, further denting the visitors' title hopes following a solitary win in their last five league matches.

PHOTO: REUTERS

