

BCB places trust on deserving Taskin

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite his injury status, pacer Taskin Ahmed found himself part of the 15-member World Cup squad but also with the vice-captaincy role.

The team management looked at Taskin's leadership of the pace attack in recent times as the motivating factor behind his inclusion. Thus, despite doubt regarding whether he would be fit for the World Cup, with Hasan Mahmud included as a reserve player, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had enough faith that the ace pacer would inspire with his presence and, in turn, will be benefited by being with the side.

Taskin will have an assessment on May 17 after the team reach USA. The BCB medical department too had not given any indications to the management that Taskin had no chance of making a full recovery.

Taskin has led the pace department with fire and passion and his recent performances were a big boost ahead of the World Cup. Given the importance of the pace attack to the Tigers' cause, Taskin making a full recovery is not just hoped for but also somewhat expected.

"After assessing MRI and CT scans, we think that it will take three to four weeks for him to recover. There is an undisplaced fracture," BCB chief physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Taskin also did not incur an injury due to bowling workload, rather it came from a diving effort on the field.

"Naturally, side strain is a bowling injury and it happens on the other side of the bowling arm. But this injury was caused while diving in the field and was incurred on his right side. This could be a good thing as actual bowling side strain injury takes place on the opposite side of the bowling arm," Debashish informed.

Chairman of the selection panel also hinted that Taskin's leadership of the pace unit was an example. The other pacers such as Shoriful Islam and Tanzim Sakib also look up to the right-arm pacer.

"Definitely he's a rising star of a different generation and he is leading a department. He has been playing in the national team in different formats for a while. So that's why perhaps the Bangladesh Cricket Board felt that he was a deserving candidate," Lipu told reporters on Taskin being the vice-captain.

When Taskin goes for an assessment on coming Friday, doctors would be able to assess him physically instead of just seeing scans and reports, something that will reveal the expected recovery time more acutely. Lipu also had a tinge of regret regarding not pushing for Taskin to be rested for the last two T20s, which Shoriful Islam was afforded.

Yet, in handing the vice-captaincy, BCB trusted Taskin's endeavor and process, and it can prove decisive for the targets Tigers have set for themselves.



Taskin Ahmed (vc)



Shakib Al Hasan



Mahmudullah Riyad



Liton Das



Soumya Sarkar



Najmul Shanto (c)



Towhid Hridoy



Tanzid Tamim



Jaker Ali



Rishad Hossain



Mahedi Hasan



Tanvir Islam



Mustafizur Rahman



Shoriful Islam



Tanzim Sakib



Hasan Mahmud



Afif Hossain

TIGERS' CLASS OF 2024

● Rishad Hossain's inclusion means that Bangladesh, for the very first time, will be going into a World Cup with a specialist leg-spinner.

● The Tigers have earlier had the part-time leg-spin of Sabbir Rahman and Alok Kapali in both T20 as well as ODI World Cups.

● Six players – Tanzid Tamim, Towhid Hridoy, Jaker Ali, Tanvir Islam, Rishad and Tanzim Hasan Sakib – are set to take part in their maiden T20 World Cup. Out of them, Tanzid, Hridoy and Tanzim took part in last year's ODI World Cup.

● Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is set to play in his ninth T20 World Cup – the most by any player alongside India skipper Rohit Sharma.

World Cup squad unveiled with reserved expectations

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are stepping on to another T20 World Cup, on the back of a disastrous outing in the 2022 edition in Australia. The make-up of the team will possibly not stir a storm in a teacup, but the expectations from the side was nevertheless questioned in context of the recently concluded series against Zimbabwe where the Tigers may not have been tested to World Cup standards.

Bangladesh won two games in the last World Cup, which also portrays what expectations the team reserves for themselves heading into a major tournament.

Perhaps to keep emotions in check, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto had previously urged all to "not keep the expectations high".

Chairman of selection panel Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu was realistic about the team's chances on the day of the squad announcement.

"Definitely we have expectations from the team and want them to cross the first round and make it to the second round. If we can reach the second round, there will obviously be an effort to go past that round," Lipu told reporters at the press conference yesterday.

"In T20 cricket, our team have not yet reached a level where you can assume that we would make the semifinals. Anything can happen so I feel that what he [Shanto] wanted to say was regarding taking things step by step and competing. He said those things keeping the reality in mind," he added.

The chief selector also acknowledged the fact that there was a difference in



quality between Bangladesh and a team such as South Africa, who the Tigers will face in their second World Cup fixture.

"Not saying we can't beat South Africa but the kind of cricket they are playing as a team and also in their domestic setup, there is a difference when you compare them to us. To reduce that gap, they will have to play below their level or we have to play above ours if you consider reality," Lipu said.

Keeping expectations in balance was pragmatic given the recent form concerns of top-order batters, Liton Das' in particular.

"The lack of form is pretty big and we have to try really hard to improve. We expect that quality is permanent and form is temporary and hope that it remains true in our case too," Lipu said.

He added on Liton, "We have kept faith in Liton despite the form concerns and the coaching staff are working on him, especially on regarding shot

selection."

While they kept faith in Liton, the chief selector also highlighted that combinations were also important, not just form consideration, in the makeup of the side. It was also why Liton got the nod, whereas Anamul Haque Bijoy was in contention for his wicket-keeping traits alongside being an opener.

"We needed three openers, in the middle-order we needed at least five solid batters, and there was a provision for a wicket-keeper among them. We thought of four seamers and after that we discussed a lot regarding why we needed a fourth spinner. In that dialogue it came forward what opponents we were facing and in what condition.

"If we qualify to the second round, we will have to play two more matches at the same venue and in that light, we are hoping that spinners would be the priority," he added on the makeup of the side.

SHORT CORNER

Sri Lanka wait on star quick Pathirana

Sri Lanka are confident key pacer Matheesha Pathirana will be fit for the start of next month's ICC Men's T20 World Cup as the island nation weigh up how many spinners to include in their XI. Pathirana hurt his hamstring during a stint with the Chennai Super Kings in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

Only captains will be permitted to speak to referees at Euro 2024

Captains will be the only ones allowed to speak to the referee and discuss a decision during matches at the upcoming European Championship in a bid to facilitate clearer communication. UEFA's managing director of refereeing Roberto Rosetti said. If any other player is found to approach the referee showing any sign of disrespect or dissent they will be shown a yellow card, Rosetti said.



Mbappe backs Dembele to become Ligue 1's best

Kylian Mbappe has backed winger Ousmane Dembele to be a success at Paris St Germain and fill his boots after he exits the club, as he won his fifth successive Ligue 1 Player of the Year award.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website



Aston Villa's Columbian striker Jhon Duran (L) celebrates scoring a late brace against Liverpool in their crucial English Premier League fixture at Villa Park in Birmingham on Monday. The two goals helped Villa come out with a 3-3 draw and took them closer to a first-ever Champions League qualification.

PHOTO: AFP

Dori, Rakib turn into Abahani's nemesis

SPORTS REPORTER

When Abahani last defeated Bashundhara Kings in the Independence Cup final in 2021, Brazilian striker Dorielton Gomes and local forward Rakib Hossain were the main architects behind the victory, sharing all three goals for the Sky Blues. The same duo turned into Abahani's nemesis on Tuesday as they led Bashundhara Kings to a 3-0 win in the second semifinal of the Federation Cup in Gopalganj.

After scoring Kings' second goal with an assist from Rakib in the 71st minute, Dorielton put his hands in front of his throat and gestured as if he was slaughtering the opposition. The struggling Sky Blues have indeed been put to the sword by the country's new powerhouse – Bashundhara Kings – throughout the season, suffering defeats in all four games and conceding 11 goals to one they scored.

Rakib had earlier also helped Robson Robinho open the account for Kings in the 21st minute while substitute Mohammad Ibrahim killed off the game in the stoppage time by tapping in after Abahani goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel saw an erratic punch on a Robson free-kick fall to him inside the six-yard box.

Kings, who also saw off Abahani in the semifinals of the Independence Cup this season with a 4-0 victory, now stand just a win away from achieving the rare feat of winning a treble – a record only held by Sheikh Russel KC in the 2012-13 season – the only instance in the professional football era in Bangladesh.

Two-time Federation Cup champions Kings, who will take on defending champions Mohammedan in the final on May 22 in Mymensingh, came into the match in an upbeat mood, especially after confirming a record fifth title of Bangladesh Premier League on Saturday. They outplayed Abahani after shrugging off the initial pressure in the high-voltage match.

Abahani started aggressively but their forwards were unable to expose Kings' experienced backline, marshalled by Tapu Barman, Boburbek Yuldashov, Saad Uddin and Bishwanath Ghosh. Abahani defence featuring Rahmat Miah, Riyadul Hasan, Alamgir Molla and Milad Sheikh Soleimani, meanwhile, were unable to stop the sharp forward line of Kings who took advantage of the defensive lapses as the match progressed.

