

Tamim decries docile tracks at home

SPORTS REPORTER from New Delhi

Former Bangladesh skipper Tamim Iqbal suddenly appeared in the press box yesterday at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi, just before the Tigers' second T20I against hosts India at the venue.

Tamim, who has been working as a commentator for Star Sports in the ongoing series, had a chat with the media before his commentary duties as he addressed some questions from the media on specific issues.

The first T20I of the series in Gwalior showed that there was a disparity in batting prowess between the two teams. Tigers' captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said wickets back home were a reason for the gap in skill even if it was not the only reason.

Tamim felt not much had been done about making changes when such complaints came from players.

"Who has taken any initiative? Whether it's the cricket board or management

or players or whoever. So until and unless we don't take that initiative, maybe after two series you will hear the same thing," Tamim said.

There had been speculations about Tamim becoming a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director, but the cricketer clarified that he is not thinking about it at the moment.

"I'm doing commentary now, then I will focus on cricket. I'm not thinking about that right now (director)," he added.

Tamim was asked whether seniors sometimes fail to understand the gravity of retiring in the best way possible, downplaying their own legacy in the process. Mahmudullah Riyad announced on the eve of the second T20I against India that he would be retiring from the format at the end of the series, leading to questions about whether he could have ended his T20I career after the last T20I World Cup and not in an away bilateral series. Earlier on this tour, Shakib Al Hasan also announced his retirement plans.

"Whenever anyone retires, it's not pleasant to hear or talk about that. Since I have spent so much time with them [Shakib and Riyad], of course, I feel bad. Also, I feel proud of both of them for whatever they have achieved," Tamim said.

Tamim himself has not retired from two formats -- Test and ODI. However, he has not donned the red and green jersey since opting out of the ODI World Cup in 2023. Asked how he will focus on cricket before the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League, he said: "I will go from here and have two months which I will use to prepare for BPL."



In an otherwise sordid bowling display, Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed was the only source of smile for skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto during their second T20I against hosts India in Delhi yesterday. Taskin gave away just 16 runs in his four overs, claiming two wickets on a day when the Tigers saw India amass 221 for nine -- the second-highest total by any team against Bangladesh in the format. PHOTO: AFP

Powerplay effort solid but India show T20 prowess again

ABDULLAH AL MEHEDI from New Delhi

The crowd were arriving slowly at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium in the second of three T20Is yesterday, even 15 minutes before the toss. However, as the first innings of India wore on, with the hosts amassing 221 for nine while the Bangladesh spinners were taken to the cleaners, the stadium gradually filled to the rafters.

Before the toss, which the visitors won and chose to bowl in a batting paradise, all three Bangladesh pacers in Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, and Tanzim Sakib lined up on one of the pitches away from the central one that was to be used for the game. Mustafizur and Taskin, in particular, got that away movement to work for them as they warmed up for the game. Sakib, who would make the eleven in place of Shoriful Islam, was looking to hit wicket-keeper Liton Das's gloves hard.

After off-spinner Mehedi Miraz gave away three fours in the first over, the three pacers took on the workload. The trio would keep it tight and, in the process, pick up three wickets in a solid Powerplay effort.

The dangerous Sanju Samson was the first to go, courtesy of some variable bounce early in the wicket, as his punch did not quite clear the infield off a Taskin delivery.

Tanzim showed he can vary his pace to good effect here. After one got whipped off the stumps, he would put in a slower ball just to put some doubt in Abhishek Sharma's mind. But the slower ball was picked and smashed through cover for four. An attempted yorker was dug out next delivery.

- India's total of 221-9 yesterday became the second-highest score against Bangladesh in T20Is, behind the 224-4 posted by South Africa in Potchefstroom in 2017.
- India's batters hit 15 sixes to register the highest number of over-boundaries smashed against Bangladesh in the format, surpassing the 14 sixes recorded by the West Indies in Mirpur back in 2021.
- Bangladesh's spinners recorded their worst economy rate of 14.50 in a T20I encounter (subject to five or more overs bowled), having gone for 116 in eight overs while picking up three wickets.

In the last delivery of the over, however, Sakib showed his white-ball skills: a wobble-seam delivery that pitched at middle and leg and swayed away, at pace. Facing a 147 kph menacing delivery, Abhishek's wild slog looked listless as he managed an inside edge, which left the stumps cartwheeling.

Taskin and Sakib would put in two more tight overs in the Powerplay as II came off those overs. But perhaps the most important detail of the game happened in the fifth over of Sakib, as a rapid short ball saw Nitish Kumar Reddy late on the shot. The ball took the gloves and Liton dropped it, leading to a reprieve for the batter on five.

Mustafizur, possessing back-of-the-hand cutters in his arsenal, dismissed Suryakumar Yadav, who chipped it to mid-off to depart for a 10-ball eight.

The Powerplay ended with India at

45 for three -- a brilliant effort from the quicks to pull back the runs and pick up wickets. However, after the Powerplay, Nitish showed how costly the drop was.

A 108-run stand between Rinku Singh and Nitish in just eight overs showed how good the wicket was. In last year's IPL, five games had seen eight scores of 200 at this ground.

Rinku's 29-ball 53 and Nitish's 34-ball 74, laced with four boundaries and seven sixes, saw India back in the hunt. The home side did not look back, even as all three Bangladesh quicks picked up two wickets each.

Mustafizur, who dismissed Nitish, finished with 36 for two. Taskin was the pick of the bunch, conceding just 16 in his four and bagging two wickets. For Sakib, it was a mixed bag in the end, conceding 50 in four overs after going for only 15 in his first two.

Make or break for Tigresses

SPORTS REPORTER

It's make or break for Bangladesh women's cricket team, who will be facing one-time champions West Indies in an attempt to keep their semifinal hopes alive in their penultimate Group B fixture of the Women's T20 World Cup at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium today.

The match is scheduled to start at 08:00 pm (Bangladesh time) and will be telecast live on Nagorik TV.

The Tigresses, who began their campaign with a 16-run win over Scotland, conceded a 21-run defeat to England in the second match. Although Bangladeshi bowlers have been top-notch in both games so far, there is concern about their batting department, which could only make 119.7 and 97.7.

"It's a visible thing that we need to improve our own batting. I think in crucial times we have failed as a batting unit. I think our bowlers have done their job very nicely in the last two games. But we are struggling with our batting side. We are definitely looking forward to seeing a bit of improvement in the next game," Bangladesh skipper Nigar Sultana Joty said in a pre-match press conference yesterday.

"The last two games were pretty good for us. The



one we lost and the one we won. But we learnt a lot of things and what we should do next. Definitely we want to carry forward those positive stuff in the next game," she added.

Bangladesh, who previously lost all three encounters against West Indies -- all in T20 World Cups, are currently fourth in the Group B points table with two points from two games while West Indies, who have the same points from same number of games, are in third spot with a better net run-rate.

South Africa lead the table with four points from three games while England are in second place in with four points from two games.



South Africa batter Marizanne Kapp drives one through the square during her 24-ball 43 against Scotland in a Group B fixture of the Women's T20 World Cup in Dubai yesterday. Batting first, South Africa posted 166 for five before dismissing Scotland for 86 to register an 80-run victory. PHOTO: ICC

Argentina get Messi boost as Brazil seek 'immediate response'

REUTERS

Brazil goalkeeper Ederson has called on his teammates to respond immediately when they face Chile on Friday morning (6:00am Bangladesh time), as pressure mounts on his side after they slumped to a fourth defeat in their last five CONMEBOL World Cup qualifiers with a shock loss to Paraguay.

The record five-time World Cup winners suffered a 1-0 loss to Paraguay in September and now sit fifth in the CONMEBOL World Cup qualifying standings with 10 points from eight matches.

The 31-year-old Manchester City keeper wants his side to bounce back and regain their fans' confidence.

Brazil also failed to impress at the Copa America, suffering a second straight quarterfinal exit from a major tournament after they lost to Croatia on penalties at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"When you talk about the national team, you want victories and quick answers, but the process takes a long time," Ederson told reporters on Tuesday.

"We know the impatience, the demands, but we have to respond immediately and start winning games to restore the confidence of the best football in the world and bring the fans back."

Brazil are dealing with a lengthy injury list, with first-choice goalkeeper Alisson Becker, winger Vinicius Jr. and centre



backs Eder Militao and Gleison Bremer all sidelined.

"Unfortunately, because of a teammate's injury, I ended up being given the opportunity. I hope to be fit to help the national team," Ederson said.

Meanwhile, Argentina captain Lionel Messi is ready to return to their line-up when they play Venezuela early Friday

morning (that fixture kicking off at 3:00am Bangladesh time), but midfielder Alexis Mac Allister's availability is in doubt, manager Lionel Scaloni said.

Argentina were boosted by the return of Messi for their World Cup qualifiers against Venezuela and Bolivia after the 37-year-old recovered from a right ankle injury, which he picked up during the Copa America final against Colombia in July.

Messi, who plays for Major League Soccer club Inter Miami, had missed their qualifiers against Chile and Colombia.

"Messi is fine. He played several games for his team in recent weeks, after not being in the last call-up, which was what we had agreed because he needed to recover and get more minutes," Scaloni told reporters on Tuesday.

"Leo is training with the squad and is ready to be part of the team to play against Venezuela, who will be a great rival."

Liverpool's Mac Allister was replaced at half time during the club's 1-0 win over Crystal Palace in the Premier League last weekend.

"He (Mac Allister) is training separately. We'll see if he makes it to the first game," Scaloni said.

"For now, he hasn't been able to join us, and well, we'll make the decision if he's part of the squad or on the bench or if he plays on Thursday. But it's difficult for him to make it today."

- England's Joe Root, unbeaten on 176 at the end of Day 3 of their first Test against hosts Pakistan in Multan, became the top run-getter for his country in the format yesterday. Playing his 147th Test, Root has now amassed 12578 runs to surpass Alastair Cook (12472 runs in 161 Tests) to the feat.
- Root is also the highest run-getter in Tests among active players and fifth overall after Sachin Tendulkar, Ricky Ponting, Jaques Kallis, and Rahul Dravid.
- Root, who was already the player with the most Test centuries for England, got to his 35th ton in the format and now remains sixth on the list of most centuries scored. He is the frontrunner in this regard among active players with New Zealand's Kane Williamson next to him with 32 tons.
- Root's 243-run fourth-wicket partnership with Harry Brook is the highest partnership for England for any wickets on Pakistan soil.



PHOTO: REUTERS