

Zawad eyes 'something big' in next World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-19 opener Zawad Abrar set his sights on next year's World Cup after smashing a brilliant 113 off 115 balls in the fourth Youth ODI against Sri Lanka at the Colombo Cricket Club ground yesterday.

His ton powered Bangladesh to their highest ever total on foreign soil—336 for 8—before the bowlers bundled out the hosts for 190, sealing a massive 146-run win.

"It feels really good to score two hundreds in three matches," said Zawad. "We have a balanced side, and if we play to our potential, we can achieve something big in the World Cup."

The total was Bangladesh's second highest in YODI history, just behind their 340-7 against Sri Lanka in Chattogram in 2019.

With the win, Bangladesh lead the six-match series 3-1.

Rabada reveals failing drug test after leaving IPL

REUTERS

South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada, who returned home from the Indian Premier League (IPL) last month, admitted failing a drug test and apologised for his actions yesterday.

Rabada, second in the world test bowling rankings, said he was serving a "provisional suspension" but gave no other details.

The 29-year-old left the Gujarat Titans a month ago with the IPL franchise saying at the time that he had to deal with an important personal matter. He played the first two matches in this season, taking two wickets before flying back to Johannesburg.

"As has been reported, I recently returned to South Africa from participating in the IPL for personal reasons," Rabada said in a statement.

"This was due to my returning an adverse analytical finding for the use of a recreational drug."

"I am deeply sorry to all those that have let down. I will never take the privilege of playing cricket for granted. This privilege is much larger than me."

"Moving forward, this moment will not define me. I will keep doing what I have always done... playing with passion and devotion to my craft," said Rabada, who is now back in India.

No formal suspension has been announced by either the IPL or the International Cricket Council.



Bangladesh Under-19s
opener Zawad Abrar follows through on a powerful lofted drive en route to his second century, leading his side to a dominant 146-run win over Sri Lanka in the fourth Youth ODI at the Colombo Cricket Club Ground yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

Tamim's misplaced plea and a broken system

ASHFAQ UL ALAM

At the launching event of the newly-formed platform Bangladesh District and Divisional Sports Organisers Association (BDDSOA) yesterday in Dhaka, former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal made a request to the councillors who will cast their votes in the next Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) election.

"I request all of you to only elect those people who have basic cricketing knowledge and have a dream to take Bangladesh cricket to a certain place," Tamim said at the event held at the National Sports Council Auditorium in the capital.

The two qualities Tamim wanted to see in a BCB board director — rudimentary understanding of the game, and a dream to elevate the country's cricket — seem reasonable enough. And for a few decades, the BCB has had plenty of directors who have fulfilled the first condition but failed the latter.

Over the years and even now, many former cricketers have been part of BCB board of directors, which includes Tamim's uncle Akrum Khan, a former national team captain and currently the chairman of three standing committees.

The current president of the board, Faruque Ahmed, is also a former Bangladesh skipper



and is the first former cricketer to ascend to this post.

These cricketer-turned-board officials know the intricacies of the game and in theory should be able to use their insights as former cricketers and sketch out plans to take Bangladesh cricket to the next level.

But unfortunately, that hasn't been the case.

Even with a former cricketer at the helm, the board has thus far remained more focused on off-field issues and the inner struggle for power has seemingly pushed cricket to the background.

The current board officials seemingly don't have the "dream" that Tamim spoke about, and because of that, cricket in Bangladesh is stagnating.

The importance of board officials having the "dream" can be traced in Bangladesh cricket's most defining triumph till now, winning the

1997 ICC Trophy.

After learning that the tournament Malaysia will be played on astro-turfs, something the Bangladesh cricketers had no experience of, the board decided it would import and install it on the ground. But in those days, the BCB did not have the finances to pull it off.

At that time, Raisuddin Ahmed, a key organiser in the nascent days of Bangladesh cricket who breathed his last in 2021, was vice-president of the board. As a top official at Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Raisuddin used his influence to help the board fly in astro-turfs from the UK, free of cost.

The cricketers played two seasons of the Dhaka League on the astro-turf, an experience that gave them an edge at the ICC Trophy, and the rest is history.

The BCB is seemingly missing such long-term thinking even with vast resources at hand and former cricketers working in the board.

Now, if the councillors heed to Tamim's request, set aside personal gains and elect visionaries that want to take the game forward, the BCB, in theory, should change for the better. But unfortunately, things are not that simple.

Tamim made this plea at a platform of district and divisional level organisers, and according to the current BCB constitution, only 10 of the 25 directors would get elected from them.

Meanwhile, 12 directors will be from Dhaka-based clubs and 76 of the 171 voting councillors will also be from the capital, ensuring the monopoly of the said clubs over the country's cricket.

The Faruque-led board had moved to amend this constitution and bring parity, but those attempts got paused indefinitely in January, in the face of protests from the said clubs. Unless the current constitution is amended, the regional cricket organisers can't really bring any notable change in the country's cricket.

So, before urging the regional organisers, Tamim could meet with representatives from the Dhaka clubs, convince them to withdraw their opposition to constitution amendment and help bring meaningful change in the board.

Liton poised for UAE T20I return after recovery

SPORTS REPORTER

Wicketkeeper-batter Liton Das is expected to return to the field through the upcoming two-match T20I series against the UAE as he has made decent recovery with his finger injury.

National team physio Bayyedul Islam Khan confirmed the development to The Daily Star on Saturday, adding that the cricketer is expected to undergo a fitness test next week.

"He underwent an X-ray today. He is in a better condition," informed Bayyedul.

"We had a plan to make him return to the field after one month. As three weeks have already gone, we will now try to start functional work for the progress of his fitness. We will then take a fitness test between May 10-12," he said, adding that he is hopeful Liton will be able to feature in the forthcoming fixture.

"The progress is really good. I'm hopeful that he will be able to catch up."

Liton suffered a finger injury during a practice session with Karachi Kings earlier last month and had to return home without competing in the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL).

In a social media post, Liton said that scans revealed a hairline fracture and recovery will take at least two weeks.

Bangladesh will leave for the UAE on May 14 to play a T20 series against the hosts before they head to Pakistan to play a five-match T20I series between May 25 and June 3. The selectors are expected to name the same team for both series, while Liton is the frontrunner to take up the captaincy, subject to his fitness clearance.

Fakirerpul earn three massive points

SPORTS REPORTER

Young Men's Fakirerpul Club earned three massive points in their bid to avoid relegation after handing bottom-placed Chittagong Abahani a 3-2 defeat in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Shahid Barkat Stadium in Gazipur on Saturday.

Iorian forward Ben Ibrahim Quattara scored a brace as the traditional outfit came back from a goal down to beat the port city side and move to 13 points from 13 matches, 10 clear of Chittagong Abahani and six ahead of Dhaka Wanderers Club, who are second from bottom.

The bottom two sides will go down to Bangladesh Championship League at the end of the season.

Shuvo Raj Bongshi had given the port city side a 33rd-minute lead, but Quattara scored in the next minute before giving his side the lead in the 75th minute. Sayed Hossain Sayem further increased Fakirerpul's lead in stoppage time before Faysal Ahmed reduced the margin for Chittagong Abahani right before the final whistle.

Meanwhile, fourth-placed Rahmatganj MFS and fifth-placed Brothers Union played out a goalless draw in Munshiganj. The draw saw Rahmatganj move to 20 points, followed by Brothers on 19.

Archery coach Frederick targets ranking improvement

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh archery team's head coach Frederick Martin has said he doesn't want to look back, instead he wants to look ahead with the players that they have, to build a good foundation for the future.

Bangladesh has seen an exodus of top archers over the last couple of years, most of them blaming the poor financial future in the sport as well as poor treatment from the federation.

Following the departure of Olympians Ruman Sana and Diya Siddique — both top recurve archers — recurve archer Hakim Ahmed Rubel went to America in search of bread and butter last year. This has created a lack of talent at the top of the sport, which was once regarded as the most promising discipline in the country.

Reflecting on the situation at a press briefing organised to announce the departure of a five-player team for World Cup Archery (Stage 2) in Shanghai, Frederick said: "Of course we have to face the drop-outs. I'm not looking back. I have to look forward. I cannot change the situation. We work with that."



Informing that the country's top compound archer Mohammad Ashikuzzaman is also walking away from the sport due to his job's demands, Frederick said he wants to groom new talents.

"Of course they (the new ones) are very young and may be they are not stable. But we have to work with that and see how we can make our organisation stronger, etc, etc, and boost our pipeline in future to achieve what we want," said Frederick, who has been in charge of the national team for the last seven years.

The five players who will leave for Shanghai today are: Abdur Rahman Alif, Sagon Islam and Ramkrishna Saha in recurve division alongside

Himu Bachhar and Bonna Akter in compound division.

Replying to a query regarding only five players taking part, Frederick said they want to send players who have quality and can compete for medals. He, however, said that the realistic target from this competition, which runs from May 6 to 11, will be to see players move into quarterfinals.

"We want to climb the world ranking. But if you ask more specifics, for me it would be very good if we move into the quarterfinals. Quarterfinals is a good position under top 10 and it opens door for the podium," the German coach added.



Members of Young Pterippus Club, Third Division Qualifying Cricket League champions, celebrate their victory over runners-up Dilkusha Sporting Club in a friendly match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Both teams had earlier confirmed their qualification for next season's Third Division Cricket League from a 60-team qualifying tournament. The qualifying league has been revived by the current committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board following a seven-year hiatus.

PHOTO: BCB