



PHOTO: STAR

THE KHULNA HERO: Asad of Khulna is the toast of his teammates after he guided his side to victory against Dhaka in the final of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Khulna dethrones Dhaka

### Temper, tampering spoils the show

#### Cricket

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Unfancied Khulna completed a fairytale run by lifting the title of the country's lone first-class competition yesterday.

Khulna celebrated their maiden triumph in the four-day competition

when they defeated Dhaka by three wickets in the final of the Ispahani Mirzapore Fourth National League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Set to score 221 on a dramatic final day, the spirited boys from Khulna recovered from a disappointing start to reach 223 for seven in 76.4 overs.

Mohammed Salim and Asadullah Khan led the spectacular recovery operation after the visitors were reduced to 44-4.

Wicketkeeper Salim scored a superb 60 off 93 balls to take the match away from the firm grip of a star-studded Dhaka.

Also the best wicketkeeper of the championship, Salim hammered ten boundaries in his polished knock. He finished the League with 153 runs, highest 17 catches and two stumpings.

Asadullah, who shared 73 runs for the sixth wicket with Salim, then guided his team to victory with an unbeaten 72 off 139 balls. The young right-hander finished the chase in style hitting successive boundaries off occasional bowler Mazharul Huq.

And when a cool and collected Asadullah hit Mazharul down the mid-on boundary for four, the Khulna team burst into celebration leaving a dethroned Dhaka in depths of despair.

It was a totally disappointing day for Dhaka apart from the early morning strikes by their young

paceman Anwar Hosain Monir, who rocked the Khulna top-order with three-wicket burst.

But that success however invited controversy for Dhaka. Umpires Mahabubullah and Akhtaruddin Shaheen found out an attempt of ball-tampering and imposed five-run penalty on Dhaka.

The umpires noticed a big spike mark on the ball in the 29th over and asked for a replacement. As there

of the batting side.

The ball-tampering issue was the first of many unsporting examples set by Dhaka in the match. They not only tried their best to distract the opponent batsmen, but also challenged every decision of the umpires.

Wicketkeeper Sajjad Kadir was the ringleader of the misbehaving Dhaka. At one stage he was seen shouting at Mahabubullah.

Mahabubullah however refused to make any comment after the match. He only said that he had reported the incident to match referee Belayet Hossain Belal.

"I'm going to take the matter seriously. I will have to talk to the umpires first. There are a few unfortunate things I have also noticed," said Belal, adding that there would be a hearing last night before he submitting his recommendations to the League committee.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas gave away prizes among the winners.

Khulna won a cash award of Taka two lakh as champions. Dhaka on the other hand received Taka one lakh.

"We won the title because we worked as a team. I'm very happy to be a part of a team that do not have a star reputation but went all the way to lift the title," said Khulna captain Hasanuzzaman after the

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PHOTO: STAR

The doctored ball. It was no suitable old ball (used for the same number of overs), they opted for a brand new ball with the consent

## India against venue move

#### ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

#### AFP, Johannesburg

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly and his team arrived in South Africa Wednesday, saying they had no reservations about playing games in Zimbabwe and were ready to put the disastrous tour of New Zealand behind them.

Speaking to reporters at Johannesburg International Airport, Ganguly said his team had always enjoyed travelling to Zimbabwe.

"We played there two years ago, and we were very well looked after," he said.

A political furor has broken out over fixtures in South Africa's northern neighbour, with England asking that its February 13 game in Harare be reconsidered.

Meanwhile reports from New Delhi add, India are not in favour of shifting World Cup matches out of Zimbabwe and Kenya, cricket sources said Wednesday, and will definitely object if this is done selectively.

England and New Zealand want their games in Harare and Nairobi respectively moved to South Africa, the primary host of the World Cup from February 8 to March 23, citing security concerns.

The executive board of the International Cricket Council (ICC) is scheduled to host a teleconference on Friday to review the situation that has wrecked the build-up to the event.

India, which wields considerable influence in the executive board despite its row over players' terms, is expected to take a tough stand on

moves to shift venues, sources said. "The ICC has so far resisted attempts to take World Cup matches out of Zimbabwe and Kenya, and we support that stand," Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) sources told AFP.

"Organisers have spent money and effort to host these games, you just can't take them away."

BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya was not available for comment, but sources said any "selective" shift of venues would be vehemently opposed.

Asked about India's recent poor performance in New Zealand where they were drubbed 2-0 in the Test series and lost 5-2 in the one-dayers, Ganguly said the team had just not played well.

"We need to play as a unit, and everyone needs to perform. Our

poor performance in New Zealand has been a good wake-up call," the SAPA news agency quoted him as saying.

He predicted that India would do well in the tournament. "The boys are keen to put their heads down and work together to do well in the World Cup."

Ganguly admitted his team was under enormous pressure at home in India to do well.

"Cricket is huge in India and people expect a lot from us."

Other teams, particularly cup favourite Australia and home-team South Africa will also come under a lot of pressure, so India was not the only team to cope with high

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PHOTO: AFP

India stars Sachin Tendulkar (R) and Sourav Ganguly upon their arrival at the Johannesburg International Airport yesterday.

## Al-Shahriar 177

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Al-Shahriar finally put Bangladesh's batting blues to rest when he blasted 177 in the fifth and final limited-overs match against Namibia at the Wanderers yesterday.

Although the details of the stylish opener's towering knock were not available, it was learnt over telephone that Bangladesh scored 274 before being all out in 47.4 overs.

It was the tourists' highest total in five games in Namibia. But the visitors missed the opportunity to score 300-plus because of a stunning collapse in the last five overs.

Habibul Bashar with 39 was the other notable run-getter in a match where the home team almost overhauled the total.

It was learnt that the home team after being well-placed at 202-3 at the end of 35 overs, fell agonisingly eight runs short. Bangladesh won the series 4-1.

Both teams will head to South Africa on Friday to compete in the eighth ICC World Cup.

## Kottan goes home today

#### UNB, Dhaka

The fate of Bangladesh football coach George Kottan is expected to be settled very shortly.

BFF assistant secretary Badal Roy said yesterday the Austrian is likely to remain as national coach.

"We had positive discussions with him and hopefully should conclude the matter by February 2."

Kottan, the architect of Bangladesh's victory in the third SAFF Championship, will be leaving for home today.

## Ganga Bari Ctg hockey champs

#### CU CORRESPONDENT

Ganga Bari Young Society won the Bangladesh Shipping and Trade Mahanagari Hockey League after beating defending champions Anirban Club 3-2 in sudden death at the Dampara Police lines ground in the port city of Chittagong on Monday.

The play-off match ended 1-1 in normal time exactly the same score as on Sunday when the teams first met. After the match Rafiqul Islam, deputy police commissioner and chairman of the hockey committee, gave away prizes among the winners.

Chittagong Mahanagari Krira Sangstha (CMKS) in association with the Bangladesh Shipping and Trade organised the tournament.

## Sirajganj cricket

#### OUR CORRESPONDENT

Sirajganj Sadar (Green) defeated Tarash Ekadosh by 199 runs in the inter-upazila cricket tournament at the Shaheed Shamsuddin Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Sadar decided to bat first and collected 285 runs all out in 40 overs.

In reply, Tarash were all out for 86 in 29 overs.

Sabuj of Sadar (Green) was declared man-of-the-match.

## US complicates the situation

#### AFP, London

The England players' representative Richard Bevan said on Wednesday the team's World Cup opener in Harare must be moved to South Africa after the United States State Department urged Americans to consider leaving the country.

The US advice came after the England players issued a statement on Monday saying they wanted their match against Zimbabwe in Harare on February 13 moved to main World Cup hosts South Africa on safety grounds.

The State Department said: "Zimbabwe is in the midst of political, economic and humanitarian crises with serious implications for the security situation in the country."

"All US citizens in Zimbabwe are urged to take those measures they deem appropriate to ensure their well being, including consideration of departure."

Current advice issued by the British Foreign Office urges its citizens to exercise caution but has not yet told them to leave Zimbabwe.

Bevan said the American warning provided the International Cricket Council (ICC) with further evidence for moving England's match.

"It is another example of the escalation of the troubles over recent weeks," said Bevan, the managing director of England's Professional Cricketers Association.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

BEGINNING OF AN ERA: Allan Border and his unheralded Australians took the world by storm winning the 1987 Reliance World Cup on the traditionally spinner-friendly pitches in India and Pakistan.

## Premier League starts Feb 1

#### Cricket

#### SPORTS REPORTER

The GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League begins on February 1. Apart from 12 Premier Division clubs the new-look league will also feature an Under-19 Development Squad of Bangladesh

Cricket Board.

The Board team was included so that it could get valuable practice ahead of next year's U-19 World Cup in Dhaka. But the CCDD (Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis) failed to address the issue on what basis would the Development Squad's matches be based.

When asked if points would be counted when other sides played

against the selection, CCDD chairman Shah Nurul Kabir said that they were still working on it.

"We will sit tonight to finalise everything. Hopefully tomorrow you will know the details," he told reporters at a briefing yesterday.

Intekhab Mahmud, the general manager (Marketing) of GrameenPhone, and CCDD secretary Faizur Rahman were also present.

The participation of the development squad, however, will be restricted only to the first round that will be held on one-day format. Top six teams will qualify for the super league that has been designed in three-day match format while the remaining six will play in the relegation league.

Kabir also revealed that the first round of the league would be played with white balls and players would wear coloured uniforms.

"The reason behind including the development squad is to help in their build-up for the Under-19 World Cup."

GrameenPhone has signed a three-year deal worth Taka sixty lakh. The cellular telephone company will sponsor the elite league for the 2003-04 season.

Initially matches will be held in three venues at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Fatullah Cricket Stadium and Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Cricket Board advisor and CCDD chairman Shah Nurul Kabir, MP, addresses a press conference at the BCB office at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Sense of insecurity

#### ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

#### AFP, London

Security fears regarding World Cup hosts Zimbabwe and Kenya will dominate the International Cricket Council's (ICC) executive board teleconference later this week.

On Tuesday the New Zealand cricket authorities said they did not want their team playing its World Cup match against Kenya in Nairobi on February 21.

Their announcement came barely 24 hours after England's players issued a statement saying they wanted their February 13 tournament opener against Zimbabwe in Harare moved from the famine-threatened country to main tournament hosts South Africa.

ICC chiefs had hoped inspection visits to both Zimbabwe and Kenya would allay security fears.

They at least appear to have satisfied reigning world champions Australia whose board confirmed Tuesday they were happy for their match in Zimbabwe to proceed as planned.

"As far as we can gather in the reports that we've had, there's no material change in the conditions that we found when we had the security delegation there in late November," Australian Cricket Board chief executive James Sutherland told ABC radio on Tuesday.

But with the February 8 to March 23 World Cup just days away from starting in South Africa, where the bulk of the tournament's 54 matches are taking place, concerns elsewhere persist.

New Zealand Cricket chief executive Martin Snedden was unequivocal Tuesday: "We have received information which strongly

suggests it is not safe for the New Zealand team to travel to Nairobi for the scheduled match on February 21," Snedden said.

"The information indicates that Kenyan authorities are not capable of providing adequate security."

"I would anticipate that in the light of the information on the table, the ICC's executive board will recognize the risk to player safety and move the games to South Africa."

Kenya, where Sri Lanka are due to play on February 24, has been hit twice by terror attacks linked to the al-Qaeda network, most recently in November 2002 when 11 people were killed in a car bombing attack on a hotel in coastal city Mombasa.

At Friday's ICC executive board teleconference meeting, cricket chiefs delayed a decision on Kenya's ability to host its two World Cup matches but said it was still safe to proceed with the six fixtures scheduled for Zimbabwe.

That was despite fears of growing civil unrest sparked by the repressive policies of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe.

But on Monday, the England players' spokesman Richard Bevan issued a statement saying: "The players urge all parties to move the fixture to South Africa and pay the Zimbabwe Cricket Union appropriate compensation."

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chief executive Tim Lamb insisted they would never send a team into an unsafe environment despite the World Cup points and financial penalties that might ensue.

He also indicated he would try to get England's match moved on the grounds that their players were particularly at risk because of the sensitive, historic ties between Britain and Zimbabwe.

But the ICC could yet delay a decision on both Zimbabwe and Kenya. ICC's Australian chief executive

Malcolm Speed said last week that matches could be moved up until four days before they were due to take place raising the prospect of some "11th hour" decisions.

Responding Monday to the England players' statement, Speed said: "As it currently stands, the ICC board continues to see no reason to move the games."

Commercial and administrative, as well as security, factors are also in play.

In 2000, the ICC signed a seven-year, 550-million-dollar deal with the Rupert Murdoch-owned Global Cricket Corporation (GCC) for the rights to all of its tournaments, including the 2003 and 2007 World Cups.

Speed, a lawyer, is keen to avoid giving the GCC any reason to sue for breach of contract.

And with India and Pakistan, the other two major nations due to play in Zimbabwe, saying they are happy to go ahead, the ICC are also desperate to avoid the issue being used as a pretext for a racial split in world cricket.

## RU cricket

#### OUR CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Banking clinched the inter-department cricket tournament title beating Management by 5 runs at the university stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Finance and Banking batted first and scored 117 all out in 28.5 overs.

Masud Rana made highest 27 runs. Roman claimed 4 wickets for 18.

In reply, Management were all out for 112 in 25.2 overs.

Roman highest scored 32 runs. Mamud, Rento, Alam claimed 2 wickets each.

Professor Faisal Islam Faruki, Vice Chancellor of the university, distributed prizes as chief guest.



## Did U Know?

Katarina Witt of Germany achieved a rare feat in figure skating when she won the World, Olympic and European titles in both 1984 and 1988. The only other figure skaters to have matched this feat were Austria's Karl Schaefer and Norway's Sonja Henie, in both 1932 and 1936.



## TALK TURKEY



## Martina Hingis

(Former World No 1 tennis star) "It is totally possible that I won't play top tennis again, because my feet will not allow it. I wanted to be world number one. And I was for four years."

On her tennis future.



## What to WATCH

#### ESPN

English Premier Football League  
Liverpool vs Arsenal  
Repeat at 8:30 am  
Western Union World Football  
Repeat at 2:00 pm  
Cricket Programming  
Super Selector  
Live at 7:30 pm  
Sportscentre Hindi  
Sport News  
Live at 8:30 pm  
Cricket Programming  
Legends Of Cricket  
Repeat at 10:00 pm

#### STAR Sports

Cricket Programming  
Super Selector