



PHOTO: STAR

THE USUAL SUSPECTS: BCB President Ali Asghar (C) addresses a briefing yesterday flanked by Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud (R) and team manager ASM Faruque.

Asghar plays defensive

SPORTS REPORTER

President of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Ali Asghar is planning some significant changes to overcome the shock that has gripped the country after the sorry performance of the national team in the 2003 World Cup.

Addressing a pensive local press in the first official briefing since Khaled Mashud's men returned from South Africa on March 5 with five defeats in six games, Asghar said that he was thinking about a new coach and a committed set of cricketers to start afresh.

"We are looking for a new coach and have already communicated with different people. But I'm afraid we might not get a coach before the home series against South Africa in April," said Asghar.

When asked if present coach Mohsin Kamal will remain in

charge for the tri-nation one-day tournament starting on April 13 in Dhaka, the BCB president said he was not sure off it.

Kamal's one-year contract with the Board will expire on April 1. The former Pakistan paceman was not available for comments since he decided not to attend the press briefing.

"He is not willing to meet the press at the moment", said Asghar adding that he was also not ruling out the possibilities of appointing a local coach for an interim period.

Asghar also revealed that West Indies legend and ex-Bangladesh coach Gordon Greenidge was one of the candidates he was in contact with.

"We are looking for the best coach for us. Money is not a problem now as it was when I took over a year ago," said Asghar explaining the financial constraint he had

faced when he brought in Kamal and his compatriot Ali Zia apparently at a bargain price.

While Mohsin is destined to face the axe, Asghar also warned that the cricketers who appeared to have lacked commitment in the World Cup would have to face the music too.

"We have already formed a two-member probe committee to find out what went wrong both on and off the field during the World Cup. I can assure you that it would be a fair investigation and the two highly qualified person will disclose their report at a press briefing within a month", said the BCB boss.

But Asghar was forced to defend himself as he faced a volley of questions for controversially appointing

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Lightning stops

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Dynamic pace generated through a gloriously supple action made Allan Donald at his peak the finest fast bowler in the world.

Donald, who announced his retirement from all international cricket at the age of 36 on Saturday, supplied the cutting edge of the South Africa attack after they were re-admitted to international cricket in the early 1990s.

From a relaxed, light-footed run-up, Donald gathered speed, culminating in an athletic leap at the crease and an explosive delivery with high action and cocked wrist.

His extreme pace and blond hair earned him the sobriquet "White Lightning" and for a decade he was both feared and respected by opponents throughout the world.

The story of Allan Donald inevitably reflects his turbulent times.

He was raised in Bloemfontein in the Afrikaans' heartland, around which many of the bloodier battles in the Boer war were fought.

As a youngster he accepted the prevailing wisdom without question that Nelson Mandela was a dangerous terrorist who deserved to be jailed for life and his early sporting ambition was to play rugby for the Springboks.

Realising that he would never emulate his hero, South Africa fly-half Naas Botha, Donald concentrated on cricket, turning to fast bowling after a brief and unlikely flirtation with spin bowling.

Heredity played a part. His mother was a gymnast and his father a good bowler with an action similar to the fearsome Englishman Frank Tyson.

"The ability to bowl fast was just

a natural thing for me," Donald remarked.

Two years' national service during the State of Emergency in the 1980s opened Donald's eyes to the harsh realities of his troubled land. "Compared to all that, bowling to Brian Lara on a flat wicket in exhausting heat is a doddle," he said.

Because of the worldwide sporting boycott, South Africa's sole contact with international cricket in the 1980s came through various rebel tours from England, Australia and West Indies teams composed of players who had either retired from, or were disaffected with, the established order.

Fast-tracked into the national side, Donald played his first 'Test' against Kim Hughes's Australians, coincidentally the last time G r a e m e

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PHOTO: AFP

FALLEN GIANT: Allan Donald holds a press conference in Bloemfontein on Saturday where he announced his retirement from international cricket.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Sanath Jayasuriya

Will Jayasuriya play?

REUTERS/AFP, Johannesburg

Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya is expected to be fit for Monday's crucial World Cup Super Six game against India at The Wanderers on Friday.

Jayasuriya suffered a bruised left forearm and a chipped bone in his left thumb when he was struck by Australia fast bowler Brett Lee in Sri Lanka's defeat to the world champions on Friday.

"I'd be surprised if he wasn't going to play. Personally I'm confident he'll be ready," coach Dav Whatmore told Reuters after a net session on Saturday.

Should Jayasuriya not be fit, Sri Lanka have two contrasting left-handed batsmen who could play in his place, hard-hitting Avishka Gunawardene and the tall youngster Jehan Mubarak, who has

played just four one-day internationals.

"Avishka is an opening batsman and the other guy (Mubarak) is more of a utility player, although he did open for us in a test match here and looked impressive. He's a good boy with potential," Whatmore added.

Meanwhile, a team source said, "The aim is get him (Sanath) ready for the game against Zimbabwe next Saturday.

But the Sri Lankan camp is relieved that Jayasuriya, the team's highest scorer in the tournament so far with 270 runs, was not ruled out for the rest of the World Cup as initially feared.

"His forearm is badly bruised and X-rays revealed a slight fracture," team manager Ajit Jayasekera said.

Jayasuriya himself however said he was looking forward to playing in the crucial match against India.

"Let's see what happens. I would love to play against India but it all depends on my fitness.

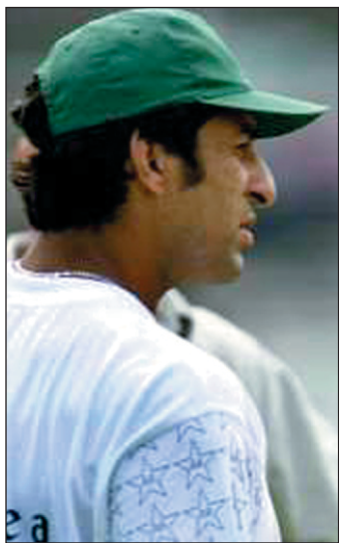
"I always try my best and would have given it a shot against Australia had I been fit. It was disappointing to see from the outside but I was helpless.

"We know the game against India is very vital now. We have had some very good matches against India and hope everything will fall into the right place for us in the second match."

Sri Lanka's loss to Australia means they are now under pressure to win their last two Super Six matches to try and reach the

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Wasim worried



WASIM AKRAM

AFP, Johannesburg

Pace legend Wasim Akram said Saturday he has deep-seated fears for the future of cricket in Pakistan following the disastrous World Cup campaign which ended in the first round.

"We have been losing non-stop since August 2002 and, for the first time in my career, I see a paucity of talent in the country," the 36-year-old said.

"There were times when (captain) Waqar Younis would sit to pick the team in consultation with some of us seniors, and we would be hard put to find 11 players since everyone was going through a lean patch."

In their six games in South Africa, Pakistan lost to Australia, England and India, suffered a washout in Zimbabwe and managed just two wins against Netherlands and

Namibia.

It was the country's worst ever World Cup performance in the 28-year history of the tournament.

In Karachi and Lahore, angry mobs burned effigies of Wasim and Waqar to register their anger with the team after their pitiful performance.

"Home should be the last place one should fear going, but our past experience has led to a situation where everyone is dreading the backlash," he wrote in his syndicated column.

An inquiry into the team's miserable efforts in the World Cup has already been launched with questions asked about infighting amongst the squad.

In Bulawayo, Inzamamul Haq scuffled with Younis Khan and Saeed Anwar in a training session.

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REUTERS, Johannesburg

World Cup coach Richard Pybus said on Saturday he would not be seeking a new deal with Pakistan after the team's World Cup failure.

He also suggested the team might need a home-grown coach to fulfil its potential.

Pybus told Reuters by phone from East London: "I'm not down but it was incredibly frustrating. From a coaching point of view, I was not able to help improve the team's performance as I wanted to."

"Whether it was me or the players. I don't know. I didn't feel the team had moved forward."

"My contract ran out at the end of the World Cup campaign and I'll now take some time to think things over."

Pakistan, the 1999 finalists and ranked among the main teams likely to challenge Australia, were knocked out of the first round of

the tournament.

Pybus, born in England but based in South Africa where he made his name as a coach with Border, has had several stints in charge of Pakistan dating back to the 1999 World Cup.

"Maybe the team needs a Pakistani coach," he said.

Pakistan, however, have had a string of their own former Test players in charge in recent years, including Mushtaq Mohammad, Javed Miandad and Intikhab Alam, without achieving consistent success.

Pybus is preparing a report for the Pakistan Cricket Board on the World Cup campaign.

Pybus said the team had not played good cricket "for quite some time" but that poor form has been

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RICHARD PYBUS

De Silva's desire

INTERNET, Centurion

Aravinda de Silva said he was bidding to bow out of the sport with a bang after scoring a superb 92 in Sri Lanka's defeat to Australia.

The 37-year-old offered the only real resistance with the bat, during his 94-ball innings, as his side slumped to a big defeat against the current world champions.

De Silva hit nine fours and four sixes and afterwards confessed it was something of a swansong.

He said: "This is probably my last tour. I think I'm giving it a go

with the best of my ability."

The Sri Lankans were let down by some inconsistent bowling and some dire fielding.

And afterwards de Silva added: "I'm a bit disappointed with the team's performance. We let them post a big score batting first."

"Chasing that was always going to be tough. But I tried to push the scoring rate a bit at the stage I came in."

"And I thought I'd take the strike and take my chances against the quick bowlers."

Pat no more a Protea selector

AFP, Johannesburg

Former South Africa Test player Pat Symcox on Saturday resigned as a national team selector, the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) announced.

In a letter to the UCBSA, Symcox said his decision was made due to a conflict of interests between his position as a selector and his position as a TV commentator and journalist.

"Symmo has played a huge role on the selection panel and he still has a lot to contribute and give to South African cricket. I will miss him," said Omar Henry, the national selection convenor.

Symcox's resignation came just a few hours after fast bowler Allan Donald decided to quit international cricket following South Africa's failure to qualify for the Super Sixes of the World Cup.

Quips&Quotes

AFP, Johannesburg

Who's saying what at the World Cup:

"Obviously you don't want to see anybody getting seriously injured, but it's the World Cup and if it's going to stop him scoring runs, then we'll bowl there."

Australia skipper Ricky Ponting defending the tactic of targeting Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya who retired hurt after being hit on the forearm by Brett Lee in their Super Six match.

"You never know. If a team bats or bowls well at the start, they could put the Aussies under pressure. But it was not our day today."

Jayasuriya on whether or not the defending champions can be beaten.

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Ricky hits target

AFP/REUTERS, Centurion

Australian captain Ricky Ponting admitted on Friday his team had targeted his Sri Lankan counterpart Sanath Jayasuriya in the World Cup Super Sixes match here on Friday.

And Australia's ruthlessness was best illustrated by the way they targeted Jayasuriya, Brett Lee subjecting him to a hostile over that badly bruised his left forearm and chipped his left thumb.

Jayasuriya retired hurt on one after being hit by a 150kph delivery as the reigning champions booked their place in the semifinals with a 96-run demolition of the Lankans at the SuperSport Park.

Lanka, replying to Australia's imposing 319-5, were shot out for 223 after Lee sent Jayasuriya to hospital with bruising and then wrecked the top order with three wickets to make it 48-4.

"Obviously you don't want to see anybody getting seriously

injured and hopefully he isn't," said Ponting. "But it's a World Cup and we are trying to bowl him wide, the batsman is least likely to score."

"If that happens to be at the body, then we are at the body, and we are not going to bowl him wide, full ones that he can smack through cover."

"We knew Jayasuriya is weak in this area and when you bowl him on his body he tends to wriggle."

"We're not going to go out there and bowl him wide ones because he's going to smack us over cover or point every time that's a weakness in his game and we've picked upon that off late."

"That is one main things in our approach target the weakness of the opponents and we did the same against Sri Lanka."

Australia, who carried forward a maximum 12 points after winning all six preliminary round matches.

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PHOTO: STAR FILE

Ricky Ponting