

CCDM puts its foot down

No 'Independence Cup'

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) has decided against holding the proposed tournament involving top six clubs in the middle of the ongoing Premier Division Cricket League.

The CCDM decision on Monday effectively meant that the 14 national cricketers would have to face another testing international assignment with hardly any match practice.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) planned the tournament under the banner of 'Independence Cup' immediately after the end of first round of the Premier League to allow Khaled Mashud's men to have some match practice ahead of the tri-nation tournament and a Test series at home next month.

India and South Africa will be playing in that three-nation event that starts on April 11. South Africa will play two Tests on April 24 and May 1.

Mashud's men have remained cricket-less since returning on

March 5 after a disastrous World Cup campaign in South Africa, where they lost five out of six games.

But Jamil A Sattar, the CCDM secretary for the Premier League, yesterday said that there would be no tournament in the middle of the league.

"I have been instructed by the CCDM chairman (Nurul Kabir Shaheen) to start the super league at the end of first phase on March 22," said Jamil while talking to The Daily Star Sport at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Jamil also said that he was not aware of what happened in a meeting between the BCB officials and top Premier Division clubs last week.

"I'm just following the instruction of my chairman who was present in that meeting," Jamil added.

The CCDM chairman, who left for South Africa last night along with BCB president Ali Asghar and Cricket Committee chairman Mahbubul Anam, however said that clubs were not interested to play a tournament in the middle of the league.

"I have talked with the clubs and

they have not shown any interest. Besides, I personally feel that I was not a wise move to stop the Premier League with the rainy season just round the corner," said Shaheen while talking to this correspondent on Sunday evening.

He also criticised the very concept of arranging a tournament hastily and without a prior discussion with the clubs.

"I think the Board should immediately announce the national team and start the camp since we have no time," Shaheen said.

But MA Kabir, the cricket secretary of Premier League champions Victoria Sporting Club totally disagreed with Shaheen saying all the top clubs agreed to play the tournament.

"After some initial arguments, we finally agreed with Cricket Committee chairman Mahbubul Anam to play the tournament. But when we wanted to know what benefits the clubs will get by playing the tournament, he could not give us any satisfactory reply.

"He said that he would let us know after few days. But until today the BCB has not come forward and we have also reached to a conclusion that the tournament will not be held," Kabir said.



Uzbek Grand Master Marat Dzhumaev makes a move against Bangladesh GM Ziaur Rahman during their tenth round fixture of the sixth United Insurance and United Leasing Grand Masters Chess Tournament at the NSC Chess Room yesterday.

Cricket League holiday

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) has postponed the GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League for two days. Heavy rain prevented no matches to be held yesterday.

The League will resume tomorrow with two matches.

Abahani will take on Indira Road KC at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium while Kalabagan will face Orient SC at the BKSP ground in Savar.

Marat keeps the lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Uzbek GM Marat Dzhumaev maintained his solo lead with eight points after the tenth round games of the sixth United Insurance & United Leasing Grand Masters Chess tournament at the NSC yesterday.

GM Sergey Tiviakov of Netherlands was in the second position with 7.5 points. GM Ziaur Rahman, GM Alexi Barsov of Uzbekistan and GM Alexander Goloshchapov were in the third position with 6.5 points each.

In the 10th round games Dzhumaev beat GM Ziaur Rahman, Tiviakov beat GM Niaz Murshed, Goloshchapov beat GM Jordi Magren Badals of Spain. Barsov drew with IM Neelopal Das of India. FM Sk. Nasir Ahmed beat IM Abdullah Al Rakib and IM Enamul Hossain Razib drew with FM Taibur Rahman Sumon.

BFF polls on April 24

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) elections are likely to be held on April 24. BFF president SA Sultan said yesterday.

"We have called an executive committee meeting on March 24 to announce a date for new presidential and executive committee election," Sultan told The Daily Star Sport yesterday.

"The meeting will announce the date for an annual general meeting that will be followed by the election to elect a 21-member new committee. The election commission will also be formed on March 24. The clubs and other BFF affiliates can send the name of their councilors 15 days before the election committee takes charge," said Sultan.

AIUB-Pepsi Cup cricket

UNB, Dhaka

East West University recorded an exciting two runs win over South East University in the second AIUB-Pepsi Cup inter-private university cricket tournament at Mirpur City Club ground yesterday.

Batting first, East West scored 119 runs for seven in the fixed 20 overs.

In reply, South East managed 117 runs for seven in the stipulated 20.

In the day's other match, Comilla University registered a comfortable 68 runs victory over University Dental College at the Dhanmondi Clubground.

Going to bat first, Comilla piled up a total of 169 runs all out in 19.5 overs.

In reply, University Dental College were dismissed for 101 runs in 19.2 overs.

Waugh stays skipper

Cricket

REUTERS, Melbourne

Steve Waugh, who was last week considering retirement, will lead Australia on their four-Test tour of the West Indies starting later this month, the Australian Cricket Board

(ACB) announced on Monday.

ACB selectors named Test cricket's third-leading run-scorer as skipper of a squad of 15 that is based on the team that beat England 4-1 in the Ashes series which finished in

January. However, one-day captain Ricky Ponting has moved a step closer to replacing 37-year-old Waugh as skipper of both teams with his elevation to Test vice-captain.

"The move certainly isn't a reflection on Adam Gilchrist's performance in that role, because he has been and will continue to be a terrific leader," ACB chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns said in a statement.

"But we feel that it is a logical step, given Ricky's role with the one-day international side, and Adam is fully supportive of the move.

"As for the captaincy, Steve Waugh has signalled his intention (two days ago) to keep playing, and has displayed some outstanding form for New South Wales since the end of the Ashes series."

Australia included leg-spinner Stuart MacGill in place of Shane Warne, who last month was banned for one year for a doping offence.

MacGill, 32, played the last two games of the Ashes series when Australia's leading wicket-taker was unavailable because of a shoulder injury. MacGill has taken 94 wickets in 19 Tests.

Jason Gillespie has been selected but must pass a fitness test after the fast bowler was sent home from the World Cup in southern Africa earlier this month with a heel injury.

The uncapped Ashley Noffke, an Ashes tourist in 2001, was named as a back-up paceman. The 25-year-old right-arm fast bowler took 39 wickets at 22.05 for

Queensland and Australia A in 2002-03.

Left-arm wrist spinner Brad Hogg, who played one Test against India in 1996-97, was also included after impressing the selectors at the World Cup.

Queensland batsman Martin Love, who broke into Australia's side with 95 runs at 47.50 in the fourth and fifth Ashes Tests when Darren Lehmann was injured, was also chosen.

Waugh, who has equalled Allan Border's world record of 156 Tests,

ended more than two months of intense speculation about his playing future by announcing on



STEVE WAUGH

Saturday he was available for the tour.

The 37-year-old's most recent Test was against England in Sydney in January when he made 102. Waugh hit a boundary from the last ball of the second day's play to equal Don Bradman's Australian record of 29 Test hundreds, trailing only former India captains Sunil Gavaskar (34) and Sachin Tendulkar (31).

Dropped from the national one-day side a year ago, the 1999 World Cup-winning skipper has spent the past two months leading New South Wales to the Australian interstate one-day and first-class championship double, scoring two centuries and a double hundred in recent games.

The squad leaves Australia on March 31. The first Test in Guyana starts on April 10.

A separate squad for seven one-day internationals will be announced at a later date, the ACB said.

SQUAD

Steve Waugh (captain), Ricky Ponting (vice-captain), Andy Bichel, Adam Gilchrist, Jason Gillespie (subject to fitness test), Matthew Hayden, Brad Hogg, Justin Langer, Brett Lee, Martin Love, Darren Lehmann, Stuart MacGill, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Ashley Noffke.

ITINERARY

AFP, Sydney

Australia's cricket tour schedule of the West Indies in April-June (date, match, venue):

DATE	OPPONENT	VENUE
5-7	v GCB President's XI	Georgetown
10-14	1st Test	Bourda, Guyana
19-23	2nd Test	Port of Spain
26-28	v UWI Vice Chancellor's XI	Cave Hill, Barbados
MAY		
1-5	3rd Test	Bridgetown, Barbados
9-13	4th Test	St. John's, Antigua
17	1st ODI	Kingston, Jamaica
18	2nd ODI	Kingston, Jamaica
21	3rd ODI	Castries, St. Lucia
24	4th ODI	Port of Spain
25	5th ODI	Port of Spain
30	6th ODI	St. George's

The war-plan

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onslaught before hitting back later. They almost managed that at Centurion, losing Jayasuriya through injury but reaching a cautious 42 without loss in the 10th over. Then Lee and McGrath combined to take four wickets for six runs and finish the game. Chasing 320 to win, there was no way back.

The other Sri Lankan option could be to go back to their high-risk, pinch-hitting roots in an attempt to disrupt the Australians. Aravinda de Silva's cavalier run-a-ball 92, although in a losing cause, might prompt Jayasuriya to try such a tactic early on. De Silva, caution thrown to the wind, hit 27 off Lee in

his final two overs at Centurion, including two sixes and two fours. Jayasuriya is too important to risk in such a venture but Sri Lanka might be willing to sacrifice a pinch-hitter as they did so successfully in winning the trophy in 1996 to try and change the mood. Chaminda Vaas to open?

SRI LANKA BOWLING, AUSTRALIA BATTING

Australia fear Vaas's left-arm seamers and Muttiah Muralitharan's off spin. At Centurion, they were determined not to lose wickets to Vaas while targeting fellow opening bowler Pulasthi Gunaratne. he went

for 27 off four overs before being withdrawn. They then pressured the support bowling of de Silva and Jayasuriya, forcing the Sri Lankans to turn repeatedly to Muralitharan to staunch the run flow. Ponting will hope that Muralitharan's overs will already have been eaten up with the last 10 overs beckoning, opening the way for a big attack. At Centurion, the Australian strategy was so successful that they scored at six an over throughout and did not have to rely on a final 10-over sprint.

Sri Lanka's last significant success against Australia came in the ICC Champions Trophy semifinal in Colombo in September and they

seem certain to follow a similar approach if possible. Gunaratne and Vaas were hit out of the attack by Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden as 42 came off five overs but Jayasuriya managed to slow down the game, his spinners taking the pace off the ball. The next five overs cost 13 runs, with both openers dismissed. De Silva then totally frustrated the world champions by bowling 10 overs, taking one for 16, to throttle the innings. Muralitharan, used in a string of short spells, ended with three wickets for 26. Another slow pitch Centurion did not offer Sri Lanka such a luxury and the tactic could work again.

Get strong mentally

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"The last game against Aussies was atrocious," he said referring to the 96-run defeat handed by Australia in the Super Sixes match at Centurion.

"It wasn't too good and we didn't play very well at all on a wicket that offered some bounce to the fast bowlers of Australia.

"We are not sure whether the St George's pitch will be as fast, although Brett Lee did well in the last game against New Zealand, especially his second spell where he reversed the ball at pace.

"I just somehow feel we got more of a chance than we do in pitches at Johannesburg.

"In Port Elizabeth, potentially we've seen sides struggle to score 209-210. If we can muster up a figure close to 250 it will be very interesting.

"I think the wicket will suit Sri Lanka's style of bowling more than it did at the Centurion," he said.

Sri Lanka would have been ousted from the tournament had India lost their last Super Sixes game to New Zealand. Having survived, Sri Lanka went on to beat Zimbabwe on Saturday to advance to the semifinals.

"It was not the ideal way to get in

to the semifinals in the route that we've taken," Whatmore said.

"But nevertheless, you have objectives and you have goals. Our first goal was to reach the Super Sixes and we did that. The second goal was to make the semifinals. We've done that.

"I don't think we can be too critical."

Whatmore added there was no comparison with the World Cup winning side of 1996.

"The 1996 team was a beauty. It was a really good one. Anyone of the top seven batsmen could score a hundred at any time. Clearly our strength was our batting and we bowled around spin," he said.

"With this particular team, we have some concerns in the middle order. We have a player like Mahela Jayawardene clearly out of form and not playing. He's a very good player.

"But I think we are showing a few signs of coming out of it.

"We can't just pick on a batting team or a bowling team to win a game. I am more interested in getting the players up more psychologically. Not many players in a career would play in a World Cup semifinal."

Go for sledging

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manifested in the body language and occasionally the words of its players.

But Ponting makes no apology about his side's power to intimidate.

"It's psychological, and it's skills-wise," he said.

"I think we can intimidate with our talent as well as we can psychologically. I don't think there are too many sides that match us right down the list as far as talent goes."

The Australian team's theme at the last World Cup, which they won under Steve Waugh, was "no regrets."

Ponting denied his team had extra motivation to defeat Sri Lanka after losing the 1996 World Cup final and last year's Champions Trophy semifinal.

"In this sort of game, it's a high-pressure sort of game, it will be a tough encounter but there won't be anything more than that," the Australian captain said.

"I don't think we regard the Sri Lankans any differently to any other side there has been controversy in a lot of those games, a lot has involved (Muttiah) Muralitharan every time he has toured Australia.

"That's got nothing to do with the teams. It's just hype around the crowds and that sort of stuff. There

is no more niggles or feeling between our two teams."

The last time Australia played a World Cup semifinal, in England four years ago, the game ended in a dramatic tie when South African Lance Klusener was run out attempting the winning run.

Ponting, however, was ready for any eventuality.

"We would like to think we could lift our game up a little bit as we have been able to do in bigger types of contests for a long time now," he said.

"The side has been able to lift themselves and play at almost a different level.

"We have said for the last couple of weeks that we thought the semifinal would be our toughest game. In saying that I think we are ready for it and have been ready for it for a while."

Spinners staring

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by the Australians who have won all their nine matches so far with Hogg chipping in with wickets he has toured Australia.

"I got the opportunity and I have to make the most of it," the 32-year-old said.

ROAD TO SEMIS

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AUSTRALIA

in 41.4 overs; J Gillespie 3-13; and Australia 128-1 in 22.2 overs; A Gilchrist 48, M Hayden 45 not out)

Feb 20: beat the Netherlands by 75 runs (revised target) at Potchefstroom (Australia 170-2 in 36 overs; D Martyn 67; and the Netherlands 122 in 30.2 overs; A Bichel 3-13)

Feb 24: beat Zimbabwe by seven wickets in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe 246-9 in 50 overs; A Flower 62, A Blignaut 54; and Australia 248-3 in 47.3 overs; A Gilchrist 61, D Lehmann 56 not out, D Martyn 50 not out)

Feb 27: beat Namibia by 256 runs at Potchefstroom (Australia 301-6 in 50 overs; M Hayden 88, A Symonds 59, D Lehmann 50 not out; and Namibia 45; G McGrath 7-15)

Mar 2: beat England by two wickets at Port Elizabeth (England 204-8 in 50 overs; A Bichel 7-20; and Australia 208-8 in 49.4 overs; M Bevan 74 not out; A Caddick 4-35)

Mar 7: beat Sri Lanka by 96 runs at Centurion (Australia 319-5 in 50 overs; R Ponting 114, A Gilchrist 99, D Martyn 52; and Sri Lanka 223 in 47.4 overs; A de Silva 92)

Mar 11: beat New Zealand by 96 runs at Port Elizabeth (Australia 208-9 in 50 overs; A Bichel 64, M Bevan 56; S Bond 6-23; and New Zealand 112 in 30.1 overs; B Lee 5-42)

Mar 15: beat Kenya by five wickets at Durban (Kenya 174-8 in 50 overs; S Tikolo 51; B Lee 3-14; and

Australia 178-5 in 31.2 overs; A Gilchrist 67; A Karim 3-7)

SRI LANKA

Vaas 6-25; and Sri Lanka 126-0 in 21.1 overs; M Atapattu 69 not out, S Jayasuriya 55 not out)

Feb 19: beat Canada by nine wickets at Paarl (Canada 36 in 18.4 overs; P Nissanka 4-12; and Sri Lanka 37-1 in 4.4 overs)

Feb 24: lost to Kenya by 53 runs in Nairobi (Kenya 210-9 in 50 overs; K Otieno 60; M Muralitharan 4-28; and Sri Lanka 157 in 45 overs; C Obuya 5-24)

Feb 28: beat West Indies by six runs in Cape Town (Sri Lanka 228-6 in 50 overs; S Jayasuriya 66; and West Indies 222-9 in 50 overs; S Chanderpal 65, C Gayle 55; C Vaas 4-22)

Mar 3: v South Africa. Match tied in Durban (Sri Lanka 268-9 in 50 overs; M Atapattu 124, A de Silva 73; and South Africa 229-6 in 45 overs; H Gibbs 73)

Mar 7: lost to Australia by 96 runs at Centurion (Australia 319-5 in 50 overs; R Ponting 114, A Gilchrist 99, D Martyn 52; and Sri Lanka 223 in 47.4 overs; A de Silva 92)

Mar 10: lost to India by 183 runs in Johannesburg (India 292-6 in 50 overs; S Tendulkar 97, V Sehwag 66; and Sri Lanka 109 in 23 overs; J Srinath 4-35, A Nehra 4-35)

Mar 15: beat Zimbabwe by 74 runs at East London (Sri Lanka 256-5 in 50 overs; M Atapattu 103; and Zimbabwe 182 in 41.5 overs)

A trial by Murali

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don't like the faster type of wickets but we've played in Port Elizabeth better so we'll know the conditions better than they do."

Michael Bevan missed the Kenya game with a lower back strain but is expected to be fit for the crunch game here where he has twice rescued Australia with gritty innings against England and New Zealand.

Andrew Symonds came in on Saturday and Ponting admitted it would be tough deciding between him and Ian Harvey, who also faced Kenya, for the one remaining place in the side.

"We'll have to speak about that and look at the conditions. Ian Harvey has done nothing wrong with the ball and Andrew Symonds has done nothing wrong with the bat," he said.

FORM GUIDE

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Form guide for Australia and Sri Lanka ahead of their World Cup semifinal at St George's Park here on Tuesday.

DATE	OPPONENT	RESULT	VENUE
AUSTRALIA (won 10 lost 0)			
Mar 15 2003	beat Kenya by 5 wickets		Durban
Mar 11 2003	beat New Zealand by 96 runs		Port Elizabeth
Mar 7 2003	beat Sri Lanka by 96 runs		Centurion
Mar 2 2003	beat England by 2 wickets		Port Elizabeth
Feb 27 2003	beat Namibia by 256 runs		Potchefstroom
Feb 24 2003	beat Zimbabwe by 7 wickets		Bulawayo
Feb 20 2003	beat Netherlands by 75 runs		Potchefstroom
Feb 15 2003	beat India by 9 wickets		Centurion
Feb 11 2003	beat Pakistan by 82 runs		Johannesburg
Jan 25 2003	beat England by 5 runs		Melbourne
SRI LANKA (won 5 lost 4 tied 1)			
Mar 15 2003	beat Zimbabwe by 74 runs		East London
Mar 10 2003	lost to India by 183 runs		Wanderers
Mar 7 2003	lost to Australia by 96 runs		Centurion
Mar 3 2003	v South Africa - match tied		Durban
Feb 28 2003	beat West Indies by 6 runs		Cape Town
Feb 24 2003	lost to Kenya by 53 runs		Nairobi
Feb 19 2003	beat Canada by 9 wickets		Paarl