

Akram or Mahmud? New skipper could be named today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar and his 11-member advisory council will sit for the first time after the country's disastrous World Cup campaign today.

Top of the agenda will be the appointment of a new national skipper following the resignation of Khaled Mashud.

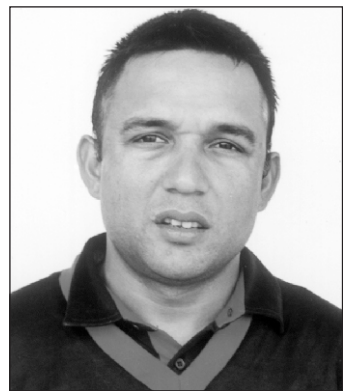
Mashud, who took over from all-rounder Naimur Rahman in November 2001, tendered his resignation on March 25. The 27-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman from Rajshahi had expressed a desire of wanting to quit the hot seat before the team left for South Africa. The Board is expected to accept his resignation.

After leading Bangladesh in 10 Tests and 23 one-day internationals, Mashud recently said he was not enjoying anything off the pitch.

Former skipper Akram Khan, who led Bangladesh from 1996-98 and was instrumental in lifting the ICC Trophy in Malaysia in 1997, is tipped to succeed Mashud.

However, if the Board overlooks the prolific Chittagonian then most likely, the mantle of responsibility will pass on to another veteran campaigner in all-rounder Khaled Mahmud.

"We have to appoint a captain before the next home series.



KHALED MAHMUD

Hopefully it will be done tomorrow," said BCB advisor and chairman cricket committee Mahbubul Anam yesterday adding that Khaled Mashud did not resign from

the captaincy.

"He was appointed until the World Cup and he wrote in his letter he did not wish to be considered for the post again. So it is irrelevant to say that he actually stepped down," said Anam.

Besides, the meeting will discuss matters relating to the holding of the tri-series involving South Africa and India. The tournament begins on April 11.

It will be preceded by a two-Test series between Bangladesh and South Africa.

The meeting will also okay the budget for the tri-series tournament and the Test series. Chief selector Aliul Islam is likely to submit a 15-member list for the one-day competition.

Mahbub revealed that Board would be naming a new team manager since the contract of ASM Faruque ended after the World Cup.

Either former national captain Faruque Ahmed or opener Athar Ali Khan are tipped to get the job according to sources close to the Board.

Anam, however, was unable to

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Bangladesh Cricket Board (Red) captain Akram Khan sweeps during his half-century against BCB (Green) in the second of the Independence Day exhibition matches at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Too Green for Reds

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB Green team beat BCB Red by 46 runs in the second Independence Day exhibition cricket match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Fifties from opener Rashedul Haque and middle-order batsmen Nazimuddin and Tushar Imran helped the Khaled Mahmud-led Green team, who also beat the Reds by 83 runs in the first exhibition match on March 25, piled up a huge 280 for six in the stipulated 50 overs after electing to bat.

Rashed, the right-hander, scored a patient 79 off 126 balls with a six and five boundaries while Nazimuddin, the Chittagong batsman, hammered 80 off 76 balls with two sixes and nine fours. On the other hand, Tushar faced only 40 balls for his 51 that featured one six and five boundaries.

In reply, the Red team were all out for 234 in 44.1 overs with opener Shahriar Hossain and captain Akram Khan scoring highest 52 runs each.

Shahriar, the former Bangladesh opener hit nine boundaries in his quickfire 39-ball knock while Akram played 61 balls for his 52.

Both the exhibition matches

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Waugh's WI worry

Cricket

REUTERS/AFP, Sydney

Australia Test captain Steve Waugh believes the West Indies, led by the brilliant batting of Brian Lara, are on the way to becoming a force again in world cricket.

Waugh, who has played a world record 156 Test matches, will lead the 15-man squad who fly out of Sydney on Monday for the four-Test tour of the Caribbean.

Australia are fresh from a 4-1 Ashes series victory over England and a successful World Cup title defence and are keen to reclaim their ranking as the top Test side from South Africa.

"They (West Indies) are one of the few sides in world cricket which are on the up," Waugh said in an interview with the Australian Associated Press on Friday.

"They went through a tough phase for a few years there.

They've rebounded fairly well and they seem to be more together. (Chairman of selectors) Viv Richards seems to have quite a bit of say in West Indies cricket, which is good for them, and world cricket needs them to come back."

Australia last toured the Caribbean four years ago, Waugh leading the visitors to a 2-2 draw in his first series as captain following the retirement of Mark Taylor.

Lara blasted 546 runs at an average of 91 including a highest score of 213 among his three centuries in the series.

The 33-year-old left-hander holds the world records for the

highest individual score in Test (375) and first-class (501) cricket.

"He was phenomenal last time we were there and, knowing him, he will want to play well against the best side in the world, so he'll definitely fire up," Waugh said.

"They have some very good young players - (Ramnaresh)

Sarwan, (Marlon) Samuels, (Chris) Gayle, (Wavell) Hinds, then you've got (Shivnarine) Chandernaul, Lara, (Carl) Hooper and (Ridley) Jacobs there, so it's an



STEVE WAUGH

excellent batting side.

"This (Jermaine) Lawson looks like a good bowling prospect and then you've got Merv Dillon and we've come across a few other

blokes.

"They're going to be a lot tougher than people give them credit for and we certainly won't be underestimating them."

"The crowds can sometimes be volatile but they really love their cricket and they get enjoyment out of watching it and it really makes you want to play good cricket."

"The wickets are a little bit unpredictable on the last couple of tours and you can't take anything for granted."

stamina and mental strength of the players, with many already on the road for eight months during one of the longest campaigns in Australian cricket history.

Test skipper Waugh and opening batsman Justin Langer are the notable exceptions after they were not included in the Australian one-day squad which thrashed India in the World Cup final in Johannesburg last Sunday.

But the likes of Ricky Ponting, Glenn McGrath, Matthew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist must maintain their intensity for a series which may not be as lopsided as suggested by Australia's crushing 5-0 home win over the Windies in 2000-01.

"Realistically the (World Cup players) haven't had a lot of cricket so I don't think tiredness will be a factor," Waugh said.

"It's more the homesickness factor and being away from Australia. That's the toughest thing to overcome."

"They haven't played a lot of cricket in South Africa and when you've got downtime you tend to think about things more often and that will be the biggest hurdle for the side to get over."

"They're basically going to be overseas for four months straight."

"It's been very continuous and a lot of the guys in the side now have family so the dynamics of the team have changed."

The wives and children of some of the Australian players are expected to travel to the Caribbean for a tour, which begins with a three-day match in Georgetown on April 5 before winding up with seven one-day internationals.

Sultan's decision irks Roy

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) assistant general secretary Badal Roy yesterday condemned the BFF president SA Sultan's decision of holding the Federation's election on April 25.

Roy said during a press conference at a city hotel yesterday afternoon that Sultan made the announcement without taking the consent of the councilors and asked the BFF boss to convene an Annual General Meeting (AGM) first before fixing any date.

Roy also cautioned Sultan of legal consequences if he didn't follow the process.

BFF members Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir, Jahangir Alam, Fazlur Rahman Babul, Shah Alam Chowdhury and some councilors were also present at the briefing.

Roy said that the country's football authority might face the wrath of the game's governing body FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation again if there is no AGM.

"The president had earlier convened an AGM on December 18, 2002. But fearing a strong opposition from the councilors over whether the election would be held with the present or new councilors, he has cancelled the AGM and now he is taking a wrong track," Roy said.

Caddick quits ODIs

Cricket

INTERNET, London

England pace spearhead Andrew Caddick on Friday announced his retirement from one-day international cricket.

The 34-year-old New Zealand-born Somerset seamer believes it is time - after 54 caps - for him to call time on his limited-overs career with England.

Caddick hopes the decision will help prolong his Test career and will also give England's younger pace bowlers the opportunity to establish themselves well in time for the next World Cup, in the Caribbean in 2007.

Having recently returned from England's unsuccessful World Cup campaign in South Africa, Caddick told Sky Sports News: "My age is against me."

"There is no point in continuing. It is time for the youngsters to gain experience and get ready for the next World Cup."

Caddick's retirement from one-dayers follows that of his World Cup and Test captain Nasser Hussain, who took his decision immediately after England's elimination in the pool stages in southern Africa.

Both men have made it clear they intend to continue in Test matches - and in the meantime Caddick is confident he has done the right thing for himself and for England's up-and-coming players.

"In three or four years' time I hope those youngsters will then have gained the experience," he said.

"It's always difficult to make a decision like this, especially when you've had a long career. I'm still

involved in the Test side - but as far as one-day cricket is concerned it's time to call it a day.

Caddick believes one-day cricket is a very different discipline from the five-day game, to which he now intends to devote his international career.

"In one you seem to get blocked a lot and in the other you get smashed around the park," he said.

"You've got to be a more cunning bowler in one-day cricket, whereas in a Test you've got a few days to

ment in a clear transitional phase. Darren Gough still hoping to come back from long-term injury and youngster James Anderson trying to build on a very promising start.

With the captaincy up for grabs too, Caddick nonetheless remains confident he and Hussain are leaving England in good shape.

"There are players in the form of Michael Vaughan and Marcus Trescothick - and there's even talk of Adam Holoake coming in," he said.



ANDREW CADDICK

work things out. One-day cricket is a more cut-throat sort of game."

Caddick's elimination leaves England's pace-bowling depart-

"All three are capable of taking on the captaincy."

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Gillespie feels great

Cricket

REUTERS, Adelaide

Australia's Jason Gillespie bowled 18 deliveries at a net session on

Friday before declaring he had overcome a heel injury and would be fit for the West Indies tour starting next week.

"Everything seemed to go well, it felt good and really positive," the fast bowler told reporters at the

Adelaide Oval. "Clinically my leg is fine now."

"The strength is getting back and just to have a bowl felt really good. I was more than happy with the result."

The 27-year-old withdrew on

March 5 from the World Cup in South Africa after a heel scan showed he had a strained tendon in his right foot.

"It's a great tour and a great place to play cricket."

Gillespie said of the forthcoming four-test series.

"The sun is on your back all the time and in your downtime you can head down to the beach and just relax."

"The West Indies at home are a very tough side and you know you have to play very good cricket to win."

A key member of Australia's attack, Gillespie had taken eight wickets at an average of 12.25 in four matches at this year's World Cup before he suffered yet another injury blow.

The tall South Australian has missed out on consecutive World Cup triumphs after injury also ruled him out of the 1999 tournament.

Gillespie's career has been repeatedly stalled by injuries, most spectacularly when he collided with captain Steve Waugh while fielding in a test match in Sri Lanka in 1999, breaking his leg while Waugh suffered a broken nose.

"Injuries are part and parcel of being a fast bowler," said Gillespie, who has taken 146 wickets at 26.12 in 39 tests.

"A few years back when I broke my leg I certainly changed my whole training regime and it seemed to have worked."

"I have had the odd injury here and there but nothing overly significant, sprains and strains."

O'Connor bids NZ goodbye

Cricket

INTERNET, Christchurch

It is not yet an epidemic but the loss of medium-fast swing bowler Shayne O'Connor to retirement is another blow for New Zealand cricket's depth of resources.

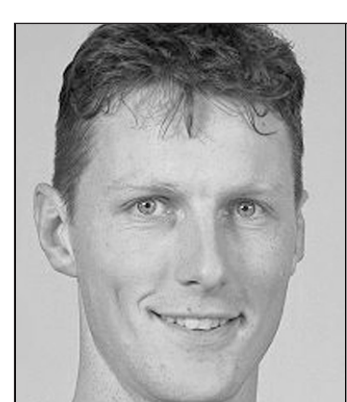
O'Connor, 29, announced on Friday that he was withdrawing from international and first-class cricket to settle into a business venture in Alexandra in Central Otago.

The news comes after O'Connor finished third on the New Zealand domestic wicket-taking list this year with 42 wickets at a cost of 18.71 runs. He had been a key performer for the improved Otago side which finished third in the State Championship.

It is ironic that the players' strike of October was aimed at keeping players in the game longer, yet in the last 12 months, New Zealand has lost experienced players like Adam Parore, Chris Drum and now O'Connor who all had, potentially, many years of cricket left in them.

Their loss was not only felt in New Zealand's international options, but also on the first-class scene. O'Connor was regarded in many quarters as a certainty to make the New Zealand team to tour Sri Lanka in April which is to be announced next week.

In his 19-Test career he took 53 wickets at 32.52 and in 38 one-day internationals he took 46 wickets at



SHAYNE O'CONNOR

30.34. He played 72 first-class matches and took 275 wickets at 23.70, including 16 five-wicket bags and two 10-wicket bags.

He first captured the public's imagination during a tour of Australia in 1997/98 when he bowled Steve Waugh for 96 at the WACA in the second Test.

"It could have slipped past his bat as a full toss, but it turned into a yorker. People said, 'Gee, what a great ball' and it grabbed some attention which was great for me," he said.

O'Connor had spent the summers of 2000/01 and 2001/02

recovering from a knee injury after probably the finest form of his brief international career in Africa in late-2000.

As New Zealand's bowling attack succumbed to injury, O'Connor bore an increasing workload. He was bowling faster as the result of some refinements to his technique, but no sooner was he back in New Zealand than he broke down and suffered for the remainder of the summer.

O'Connor said the African tour had been the best of his tours.

"I learnt how to play international cricket and fitted in fully with the New Zealand team. I was satisfied that I was accepted as a real international bowling option instead of giving me the ball and wondering what I was going to do today."

"The tour was long, and very hard. I think if we had had a full-strength side we could have pushed South Africa but we struck them two months into the tour and were already tired whereas they were fresh and playing at home and much better off."

"The programme we had was an injustice to the team. We were on tour for four months," he said.

A recall for last summer's tour of Australia came to grief during the first Test at Brisbane and he missed out on being awarded a New

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Nat'l Chess Zia pulls out

UNB, Dhaka

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman lost his second successive game in the final phase of the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Championship at the NSC chess room yesterday.

After losing to Mohammed Monjur Alam, Zia withdrew his name from the championship due to illness.

In the day's other matches, Grand Master Niaz Musher beat Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon, FM Nasir Ahmed beat FM Faibur Rahman Sumon, Mohammed Javed beat FM Rezaul Haq, IM Enamul Hossain Rajib drew with IM Abdullah Al Rakib, IM Reefat bin Sattar drew with Mehedi Hasan Parag who participated in place of ailing Syed Ejaz Hossain.

Steve Waugh medal

AFP, Sydney

Steve Waugh on Friday added another first to his long list of accomplishments when he won the award bearing his own name as the New South Wales Cricketer of the Year.

The NSW and Australian Test captain polled 213 votes from his teammates to win the inaugural Steve Waugh Medal ahead of fellow batsman Simon Katich (206) and Michael Clarke (157).

Waugh's exclusion from the World Cup winning Australian

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JASON GILLESPIE