

Sultan skating on thin ice

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

SA Sultan appears to lead Bangladesh football into fresh trouble as he is yet to give up his plan to hold elections in the last week of this month without an Extraordinary Congress.

The president of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) announced to hold the election on April 26 after the Parliament approved an amendment to the NSC Act so that president could also be elected along with other members.

But Sultan, who had been in the controversy ever since he was appointed by the government nearly one and a half

year ago, invited another bad news by ignoring the Asian Football Confederation procedure



SA SULTAN

before announcing date for election in the BFF. His assistant general secretary Badal Roy claimed that Sultan was 'walking on a tight rope' by ignoring EGM. He also warned Sultan of a legal threat that might lead to another FIFA ban. FIFA slapped BFF with a temporary suspension in January 2002 after Sultan dissolved elected executive committee.

Though Sultan strongly defended his position saying that he was acting on the FIFA prescription, but a recent letter from the AFC general secretary Peter Vellappan told a different story.

"There have been several representations to the AFC on the procedure for convening the next Congress to elect the office-bearers. After the Extraordinary Congress (EGM) on September 4, 2002 there was

a congress resolution to convene another Extraordinary Congress to approve further amendments to the Statutes. Obviously this was not done therefore it will not be possible for you to convene the Congress on April 26, 2003 to elect the office-bearers," read the letter of the AFC chief forwarded to the BFF president on Friday.

Sultan announced the AGM in December last, only to postpone it later. The BFF boss was alleged to have decided against it fearing that the councillors might oppose his idea of picking new councillors.

But the latest development strongly suggested that Sultan had no options but to comply with the AFC wishes.

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PHOTO: STAR

Two workers roll the pitch of the Bangabandhu National Stadium recently. The big bowl is getting ready to hold a triangular cricket tournament involving India, South Africa and hosts Bangladesh over April 11-21.

Hannan fights back for Abahani

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Discarded national opener Hannan Sarker struck a superb unbeaten century to lead an Abahani fight-back against Mohammedan on the second day of their GrameenPhone Super League clash at the BKSP in Savar yesterday.

Dropped along with two others from the national team after a disappointing campaign in the World Cup, Hannan scored 118 in his first domestic cricket appearance since returning from South Africa last month.

His undefeated knock helped Abahani reach 265-6 at close after their bitter-rivals plundered another 75 runs to their mammoth 390 overnight.

Mohammedan finished their first innings quota on 100 overs with the score on 465-9.

Hannan struck twelve bound aries in his 244-ball vigil at the crease.

But despite the valiant effort from the diminutive right-hander Abahani still needs another 50 runs to avoid follow-on.

While Hannan seized the opportunity to flourish in domestic cricket following a special arrangement by the Board, his more illustrious partner Al-Shahriar continued to



HANNAN SARKER...118 n.o

disappoint.

Al-Shahriar score only five before becoming the victim of experienced paceman Hasibul Hossain.

Abahani's Pakistani recruit Imran Nazir got off to a flashy start, making 31 off 25 balls. The right-hander paid the penalty for showing little respect to the opponent bowlers.

He became one of the three victims of slow left-arter Enamul Hoque.

Tohid made 30 and all-rounder Neeyamur scored 31. But it was only Hannan who showed proper application.

Away at the Fatullah Stadium, Moniruzzaman kept up his good form with the bat.

The unheralded right-hander scored a fine 113 as Uttara Sporting Club posted a fighting 218-9 in 92 overs against defending champions Victoria on the first day of their Super League match.

Monir hammered 18 boundaries and a six in his 166-ball knock. Al-Amin with 41 was the other notable per-

former for Uttara.

Left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam was the wrecker-in-chief for Victoria, finishing with four for 25. Razzak also claimed four wickets giving away 46 runs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the four-day GrameenPhone Premier Cricket Super League match between Abahani Kriira Chakra and Mohammedan Sporting Club at the BKSP ground yesterday:

MOHAMMEDAN: First innings (over-night 390-6 in 90 overs)	Runs
Nafees c Al-Shahriar b Arman	135
Sandeep c Bikash b Suja	82
Afah c Asadullah b Suja	40
Ehsanul c Imran b Suja	22
Minhazul c Nuruzzaman b Arman	6
Naimur c Sajjad b Suja	67
Fahim b Bikash	24
Anwar not out	37
Enamul lbw b Neeyamur	14
Hasibul not out	16

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Saurav still undecided

SAKYASEN MITTRA, from Kolkata

Saurav Ganguly, captain of the Indian cricket team, is yet to make up his mind whether he will finally play in the three-nation tournament in Dhaka beginning on April 11.

Ganguly is suffering from a back injury and does not want to aggravate that by playing in Dhaka. He feels that if he is not fully fit he will be a burden to the side.

Talking on his cell phone from Delhi yesterday, Ganguly said, "I am still not fit so I cannot confirm it now that I am going to Dhaka."

He however explained that if he withdrew, the TVS Cup would lose much of its charm. He said, "I love Bangladesh and we have a huge number of fans there. I love to play at the Bangabandhu Stadium where I have scored quite a few runs. But my back is still bothering me and I am not very sure whether to risk it or not."

The left-hander at the moment is under renowned orthopaedist

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New kids on the Indian block

Cricket

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

What is common among the four new faces of the Indian cricket team for the tri-nation limited-overs tournament in Dhaka?

It is the ambition to do well and prove that they are here to stay at the highest level of international cricket. Gautam Gambhir, the opening batsman from Delhi, Avishkar Salvi, the pace sensation from Bombay, Amit Mishra, the leggie from Haryana state and Abhijit Kale, the middle-order batsman from Maharashtra state made the tour party when five seniors pulled out.

The 21-year-old Gambhir has been waiting for the nod since his double century for Indian Cricket Board

President's Eleven against Zimbabwe two years ago.

Making his debut in domestic first class cricket, the southpaw has scored a number of big innings, some of which displayed his natural stroke-making ability.

He is however unlikely to open the innings in Dhaka with skipper Saurav Ganguly and his deputy Virender Sehwag around.

"I am confident I can handle the pressure no matter whether I bat, at the top or in the middle," he told reporters immediately after Indian team was announced on April 2. All he wants to do is to return the faith of selectors.

The joy of 21-year-old Avishkar Salvi knew no bound when he heard the news of his selection for the Dhaka tournament. "I am overjoyed on learning that I have been selected in the Indian team. To be in the national team is an honour for anyone," he said.

Salvi was however expecting the call after impressive performance in the Caribbean with India A team.

He said the absence of Nehra and Srinath would give him an ideal chance to prove himself.

But with Zaheer Khan and Ajit Agarkar certain to open the Indian bowling, Salvi will operate as a third medium pacer.

Indian cricket experts think that the 21-year-old leg-spinner Amit Mishra could be the successor of veteran Anil Kumble.

He has the ability to bowl googlies and faster ones that often take the batsmen by surprise.

Mishra has been in first class domestic circuit for three years during which time he has taken over 80 wickets. He came out with fine

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NZ's spin mission

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

New Zealand Cricket is likely to send two young spin bowlers to Sri Lanka with the Black Caps tour next week to assist their development.

Concerned at the dearth of quality spin bowlers in the New Zealand game, NZC wants to broaden the experience base of the spinners by exposing them to Sri Lankan conditions where the wickets favour the slower bowlers.

Operations manager John Reid said two promising spinners at first-class level would be selected with Bruce Martin (Northern Districts), Aaron Redmond (Canterbury), and Luke Woodcock (Wellington) in contention.

New Zealand's slim spin stocks were highlighted when Paul Wiseman was recalled for the tour with a bowling average from the past season of 49.1.

Reid said NZC was very concerned about the lack of slow bowling talent not just at first-class level but through most tiers of the game.

He said the two players picked

would be attached to the Black Caps but not part of the official team.

NZC's coaching staff believed the move would be a win-win situation. It gave the Black Caps batsmen more opportunity to play more spinners during net sessions while assisting in the young players development.

"They will learn about conditions overseas and what is required."

The players will be paid for by NZC and it is expected they will return home after the two-test series in early May.

Reid said the idea came from a brainstorming session by coaching staff, had merit and was taken further.

"We have a problem with that area of our game and some times have to take innovative measures to improve it."

He said pitch conditions in New Zealand did not necessarily suit spinners nor were they always bowled enough.

New Zealand's next tour, to India during October, is also a country which favours spin bowlers.

Star gala at Int'l Challenge final

INTERNET, undated

Four of the icons of West Indies whose names have been attached to awards in the Caribbean 2003 Cricket Series will attend the final of the Caribbean International Challenge between Barbados and Jamaica at Kensington Oval, and will present the awards at the end of the match.

Sir Vivian Richards, whose name will be on the Top Caribbean Batsman award; Ambassador Courtney Walsh, after whom the Top Caribbean Bowler award is named; Deryck Murray, who gave his name

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Reefat remains on top

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Reefat bin Sattar extended his all-win record to eight in the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Championship at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Auditorium yesterday.

In the eighth round of the meet Reefat beat Khandaker Aminul Islam.

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Kenya make 225/6

Cricket

AFP, Sharjah

David Obuya hit 57 as World Cup semi-finalists Kenya scored 225 for 6 from 50 overs against Zimbabwe in the Sharjah Cup here on Saturday.

Thomas Odoyo chipped in with 46 and skipper Steve Tikolo made 37 to enable Kenya recover from 55-2 after they elected to take first strike in the day-night international.

Kenya, the first non-Test playing nation to qualify for the semifinals of the World Cup, are playing their first match in the four-nation event which also features Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Zimbabwe, beaten by Pakistan in their opening match, face a modest target of 4.5 runs an over under lights to record their first points in the tournament.

Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak gave his team an early break when he had Kennedy Otieno caught behind in his second over.

Douglas Hondo clean bowled Brijal Patel before David Obuya and Tikolo retrieved the situation by adding 59 for the third wicket.

Left-arm spinner Raymond Price

dismissed both batsmen in the space of three overs, but Odoyo carried Kenya past the 200-mark with good support from Hitesh Modi (27 not out).

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Kenya innings in the Sharjah Cup one-day international against Zimbabwe on Saturday:

KENYA	O	M	R	W
D Obuya c Rennie b Price	57			
K Otieno c Taibu b Streak	0			
B Patel b Hondo	18			
S Tikolo c Marillier b Price	37			
T Odoyo c Marillier b Hondo	46			
M Odumbe c and b Rennie	17			
H Modi not out	27			
P Ongondo not out	10			
Extras: (lb-2, w-11)	13			
Total: (For 6 wks in 50 overs)	225			
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-55, 3-114, 4-131, 5-161				
Bowler				
Streak	10	3	28	1
Blignaut	4	0	27	0
Hondo	8	0	37	2
Price	10	0	36	2
Flower	3	0	20	0
Marillier	6	0	30	0
Rennie	5	0	21	1
Ervine	4	0	24	0

ZIMBABWE: Heath Streak (capt), SEE PAGE 9

Three more elite umpires

Cricket

AFP, London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) elevated three new umpires to its elite panel Friday with Australia duo Darrell Hair and Simon Taufel as well as New Zealand's Billy Bowden all added.

The trio's performances at the recent World Cup in South Africa, won last month by Australia, sealed their rise to the top tier of umpiring.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said: "The ICC has been monitoring the performance of these three umpires on a regular basis, particularly during this World Cup, where each of them has performed with distinction."

And the Australian added: "Darrell Hair is a highly experienced umpire who was close to selection on the original elite panel, while Billy Bowden and Simon Taufel at 40 and 32 respectively, represent the next generation of international umpires."

The ICC aim to reduce the workload on the original eight elite officials who

between them officiated in 133 one-day internationals and 37 Tests during the panel's first year in existence.

Hair caused controversy by no-balling Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan for throwing during the 1995-96 Boxing Day Test at Melbourne.

Subsequently Hair, in his autobiography, described the off-spinner's unorthodox action as "diabolical" and the ensuing controversy did the umpire's cause no good when the

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DARRELL HAIR



BILLY BOWDEN



SIMON TAUFEL



PHOTO: STAR

International Master Abdullah Al-Rakib (R) ponders his next move against Mehdi Hasan Parag during their eighth round game of the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Championship at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Auditorium yesterday.

On the road unknown

Cricket

INTERNET, Pietermaritzburg

In time, Graeme Smith may come to wonder at the favours thrust his way by the United Cricket Board (UCB) of South Africa.

Hurried into the captaincy before his cap has had time to bleach in the sun, Smith is now to be sent on his first assignment, to Bangladesh, without the benefit of a vice-captain.

You don't, of course, want to place too much store on the state of a captain's headwear, but it is fair to say that Smith's cap has a long way to go before it takes on the authority of Steve Waugh's battered, faded, ripped and torn Baggy Green. It is quite probably the case that Australia have chosen Waugh's cap to lead them through their West Indies tour.

If the wearer manages the occa-

sional career-saving century, well, that would just be a bonus.

Waugh and his cap, though, do have a clearly nominated deputy in Ricky Ponting, whose success as the one-day captain has confirmed him as Australia's next Test captain.



GRAEME SMITH

Having dispensed with Shaun Pollock as quickly as was humanly possible to install Smith as captain, the UCB's general council and the national selectors have come up against the uncomfortable fact that, apart from the new incumbent and his immediate predecessor, there's not a great deal of obvious leadership material around.

Of the senior players, Mark Boucher has been widely cited as one of those who failed to rally to Pollock's call to the colours during the World Cup, along with Jacques Kallis.

Makhaya Ntini has taken on some of the functions once performed by Jonty Rhodes as an on-field cheerleader, but while he has now come to terms with his own game, he has still to demonstrate a wider tactical acumen.

And although Herschelle Gibbs is now the one batsman guaranteed an

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Canada's WC wish

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Canada may stage some cricket matches at the 2007 World Cup after its administrators held talks with the West Indies Cricket Board, which is hosting the event.

"I've had informal discussions and indicated an interest," Canada Cricket Association President Geoff Edwards said in an interview. "First we must do some groundwork and see if there is any merit in making a bid. I believe there is."

The 14 Caribbean islands that comprise the WICB, plus Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas are interested in putting on matches at the four-yearly tournament. The International Cricket Council will discuss in June whether the U.S. should also be one of the co-hosts, with

matches possible in Florida or California.

"It will be a unique tournament because so many nations are competing for host status," said Chris Dehring, managing director of the 2007 World Cup. "We are also conscious of the ICC's mandate to spread cricket in North America so we'll be looking at that too."

Hosting games may help the sport develop in Canada, which has 250 organised clubs, 20,000 players and made its second World Cup appearance this year in South Africa. Although it finished sixth in the seven-nation group, the team recorded a surprise win over Bangladesh, one of the 10 elite Test nations.

The SkyDome, home to the Toronto Blue Jays baseball team, would be the most likely venue, Edwards said. The city used to stage an annual one-day cricket series between India and Pakistan.

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