



PHOTO: STAR

Newly-appointed national cricket coach Dav Whatmore and his wife Katherine were presented with bouquets at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

'Success within two years'



SPORTS REPORTER

Dav Whatmore always thrives on a challenge. So, the chance to become Bangladesh's next foreign coach was one such opportunity he could not pass up.

"It's a very big challenge and if I didn't think I couldn't help I wouldn't be here. My goal is to basically to improve the way Bangladesh play," he said.

The high-profile Sri-Lankan-born Australian was speaking to reporters at the VIP lounge of the Zia International Airport yesterday.

The 49-year-old Whatmore was appointed Bangladesh coach last month after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) sacked former Pakistani Test bowler Mohsin Kamal following a disastrous World Cup in South Africa.

Whatmore is aware of the fact that it will take a lot of hard work to turn things around for Bangladesh, who have not won any match in the last four years.

"We have to try and change that defeatist attitude. Individual improvement and collective improvement are the areas in which I am going to work on. Definitely there are some talented players. But I don't want to say their names right now," he said.

On how he would work with a team like Bangladesh, the master-

mind of Sri Lanka's maiden World Cup triumph in 1996 said he wanted get a first-hand knowledge in every area before setting his course of action.

"It will be in conjunction with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in terms of projecting improvement. Australia is the first tour after I come. After that its Pakistan, England and Zimbabwe. So, it will be an honest appraisal of the way we should be at any given time," the former Australian Test cricketer said.

Asked what role he wanted to play in the selection procedure, Whatmore said that he would discuss it with the Board to find a way.

"That is a matter for me and the BCB to discuss and just ensure which way it's gonna go," he said adding that he wanted to see definite signs of improvement in the team in terms of wins.

"My target is success within two years."

Asked to explain the methods he applied to transform Sri Lanka into world-beaters, Whatmore said that it involved a long-term process.

"It's just a few little things. Not just skills, not just running, not just fitness and not just strength, I used to look after all these."

Whatmore, whose contract with the Sri Lankan Cricket Board was not renewed after the World Cup, will spend five days on a fact-finding mission here before flying home to Colombo.

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Nat'l School Cricket BKSP make 215 for nine

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) slightly had the better of Parzowar High School of Kalindi in their Standard Chartered Bank 21st National School Cricket Championship final that started at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

On the opening day of the two-day match, BKSP scored 215 for nine in the stipulated 80 overs after they were put into bat.

Opener Ruhul Amin topscored with 59 followed by lower order Sirajullah who was not out on 34.

Rahmatullah Mithu of Kalindi was the most successful bowler of the day taking three wickets for 26 runs.

In reply, Kalindi High School were four for one at stumps playing only three overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BKSP: 215 for 9 in 80 overs (Ruhul Amin 59, Siraj 34 n.o., Tariqul 28, Simon 26, Rahmat 3-26)

KALINDI HIGH SCHOOL: 4 for 1 in 3 overs.

Nat'l youth hockey Sylhet beat N'ganj

UNB, Dhaka

Sylhet managed a lone goal victory over Narayanganj in a Group C match of the National Youth Hockey Championship at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Ahmed Nazir netted the all-important goal in the 36th minute.

In the Group D match, Rajshahi got walkover against Narail at the same venue.

Promising four off to Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Four young Bangladeshi cricketers left for Australia yesterday to undertake part a five-week training at the famous Australian Cricket Academy in Adelaide.

Chittagong opener Nazimuddin, Old DOHS left arm spinner Nadif Chowdhury and two BKSP trainees Naim Islam and Gazi Sahagir Hossain Pavel are the four getting the opportunity to train at world's most modern cricket facility.

BKSP's chief coach of cricket to Nazmul Abedin Fahim is accompanying the cricketers who are scheduled to return home on June 20.

Record-breaking Hayden-Langer

AFP, St. John's

Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer scored their fifth double-century opening partnership with 242 for Australia against the West Indies in the fourth Test at the Recreation Ground here on Sunday.

It is the most by an opening pair in Test cricket.

5-Matthew Hayden-Justin Langer (Australia)
4-Gordon Greenidge-Desmond Haynes (West Indies)

3-Mark Taylor-Michael Slater (Australia), Bill Lawry-Bob Simpson (Australia), Graham Gooch-Michael Atherton (England)

Bond in doubt

AFP, Dambulla

Top New Zealand fast bowler Shane Bond is a doubtful starter for the triangular one-day cricket series match against Sri Lanka because of a back strain, manager Jeff Crowe said here Monday.

"He (Bond) is unlikely to play in the match because of a lower back strain," Crowe said ahead of Tuesday's game.

Crowe said the team management had so far not sought a replacement but asked Paul Wiseman to remain as cover for Bond.

Bond, 27, bowled just five overs in Sunday's victory against Pakistan before leaving the field.

New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming said the team would miss the fast bowler against the hosts.

"It's very difficult to replace Bond. If he does not regain fitness, either Andre Adams or Kyle Mills will come in his place," said Fleming.

Bond, who grabbed 2-7 in five overs against Pakistan, has so far taken 51 wickets in 27 one-day internationals.

Akram's parting stroke



SPORTS REPORTER

Akram Khan said yesterday that he had picked the right time to announce his retirement from international cricket.

The former national captain also believed that he was leaving the cricket scene a satisfied man after being in the middle of all the action for the last fifteen years.

"There are a few reasons why I have decided to say goodbye to cricket," said the big man from Chittagong at a press briefing while officially announcing his retirement.

"I'm a firm believer in giving my hundred per cent on the field. But these days I'm feeling the need more than ever to give more time to my family who have stood by me all these years. That's the main reason

for my quitting," said the 34-year-old.

Wearing a black T-shirt and an off-white trouser and with his wife Sabina sitting beside him, Akram hardly showed any emotion during the one hour session with the reporters. However, Sabina and even present national captain Khaled Mahmud, who made a guest appearance at the briefing, couldn't hold back tears during the sombre occasion.

Surprisingly not many fellow cricketers or any Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official were present at the farewell briefing held at the Grand Azad Hotel. Not that it mattered to Akram who felt it unnecessary to convey his decision in writing to the BCB.

"I don't think it was necessary to send a letter to the Board informing them of my retirement decision. Look, when they drop any senior player they do not even bother to discuss the matter with him.

However, I've informed them verbally," said Akram in a direct swipe at Board's style of handling the players.

"It was unfortunate when some senior players including me were dropped without any reason after being called in the 30-men World Cup probables," he said.

The man who changed the face of Bangladesh cricket with a memorable unbeaten 67 against Holland in the 1997 ICC Trophy quarterfinal, that eventually led the nation to qualify for the World Cup, however felt he was leaving at a time when the game in this country is fighting for credibility.

"Our cricket standard has declined over the last two years and it will not improve unless we change the domestic structure," said Akram who played under all the seven foreign coaches of the national team

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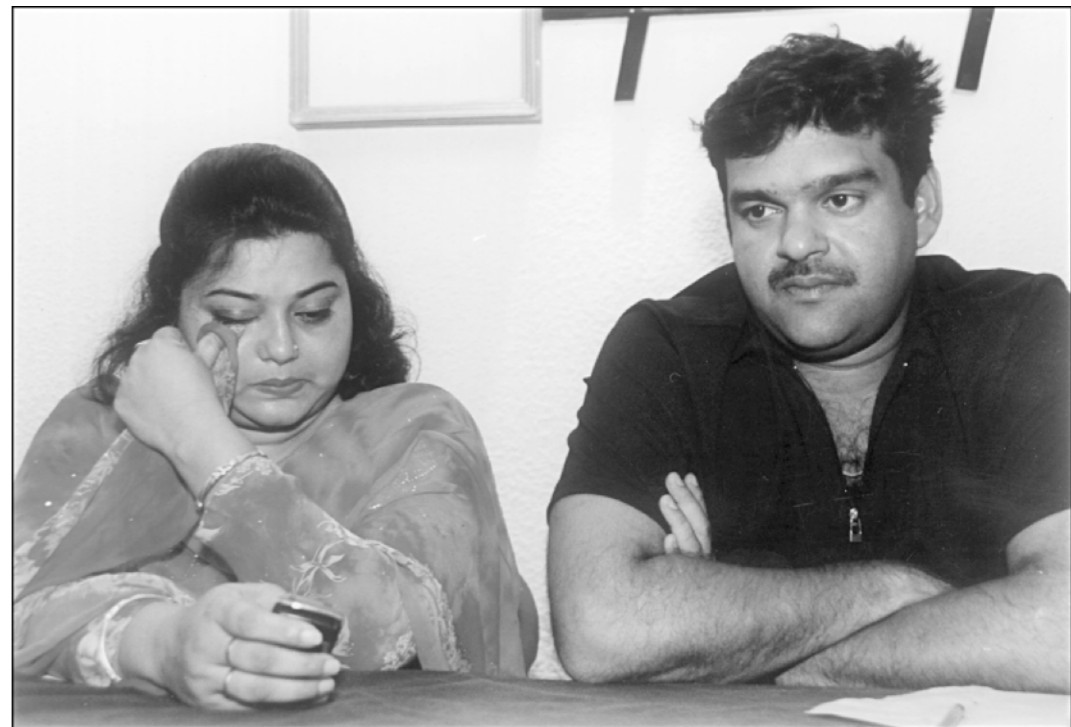


PHOTO: STAR

DON'T CRY FOR AKRAM: The Khans, Akram and Sabina at a press conference at Grand Azad Hotel in the city yesterday. While the former national captain was announcing his retirement from cricket, his spouse failed to hide her tears.

WI up against history



AFP, St. John's

The West Indies have to defy Test cricket history to prevent Australia from capturing an unprecedented Caribbean series clean sweep in the fourth Test here at the Recreation Ground.

Brian Lara's team face the herculean task of scoring 418 runs for an improbable victory or bat out a minimum 203 overs to force a draw against the strongest bowling attack in world cricket.

The Australians were bowled out for 417 on Sunday, losing nine wickets for 175 after a 242-run opening stand between Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer. Both teams scored 240 in the first innings.

against New Zealand in Brisbane in November 2001.

Hayden batted for almost six hours for his 177 his 14th Test hundred and second of the series, while Langer's 161-ball knock finished on 111 when he was caught by Brian Lara off spinner Chris Gayle 45 minutes before lunch.

The little left-hander hit 17 boundaries and a six for his 15th Test hundred and third against the West Indies.

But wickets tumbled regularly once Langer was out as the West Indian bowlers toiled away without their first-innings destroyer Jermaine Lawson, who was off the field all day with a back strain and leaving the majority of the work to Mervyn Dillon and spinner Omari Banks.

After Australia went to lunch at 285 for three, Dillon bowled Darren

Dillon claimed 4-112 off 29 overs to lead the West Indies fightback.

When the opening partnership was broken, skipper Steve Waugh promoted power-hitting Adam Gilchrist to number three in the batting order to up the run-rate, but the move failed when he was out for six.

He edged Banks off the shoulder of wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs into the hands of substitute fielder Marlon Samuels at second slip.

Martin Love looked uncomfortable during his 15-minute stay and was out on the last ball before lunch for two, well caught at leg-slip by Samuels off Banks.

After Australia went to lunch at 285 for three, Dillon bowled Darren

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Did U Know?

John Kelly of Derbyshire achieved a remarkable analysis against Lancashire at Old Trafford on July 5, 1955 and the press gave it some prominence. It read: 0 Overs, 0 Maidens, 4 Runs, 0 Wickets. His first and only delivery was a no-ball, hit for four by Jack Dyson.



Carl Lewis

(Olympic legend)
"It's ridiculous, who cares? I did 18 years of track and field and I've been retired five years, and they're still talking about me, so I guess I still have it."



TEN Sports

Sri Lanka vs New Zealand

Tri Series
Live at 10:00 am

ESPN

Football Focus

Live at 6:30 pm

Sportscentre Hindi

Sport News

Live at 7:30 pm

West Indies vs Australia

Fourth Test, Day Five

Live at 8:00 pm

STAR Sports

Sportline Tonight

Sport News

Live at 8:00 pm

Harsha Online

Cricket Talk Show

Taped Version at 8:30 pm

UEFA Champions League

Inter Milan vs AC Milan

Live at 12:30 am (Wednesday)

SL strangers at home!



AFP, Dambulla

Sri Lanka skipper Marvan Atapattu believes favourable playing conditions have effectively given home advantage to New Zealand ahead of their crucial tri-series one-dayer here Tuesday.

New Zealand have thrived in the overcast weather and seamer-friendly wickets, leaving Atapattu and Sri Lanka facing an uphill struggle against the Kiwis.

A lone one-day international had been played here before this series, with Sri Lanka beating England by five wickets in 2001.

"These conditions are new to us," Atapattu said. "We haven't played here much, but I'm a bit surprised that we have pitches like these here. I think pitches (seamer-friendly) and conditions (overcast weather) here suit New Zealand more than us," said Atapattu.

Sri Lanka failed to cope with the Pakistani pace attack on a lively track in the opening game on Saturday, losing by 79 runs.

Pakistan also met with the same fate on Sunday as they crashed to their lowest total of 116 against

New Zealand before losing the game by seven wickets on a bouncy pitch.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming was beaming after his side adapted to their home from home.

"We seem to be the best suited (to conditions) at the moment," said Fleming.

"We are used to playing on such pitches at home. These are not traditional Sri Lankan tracks. There is no complaints from us, but from spectators' point of view, it's disappointing. It's not ideal batting wicket for one-dayers."

The Sri Lanka captain, however, said the pitch was not the sole reason for his team's dismal batting performance against Pakistan.

"There are no excuses for our poor batting in the first match," said Atapattu. "We know that runs won't come easily on such pitches, but we have to bat positively against New Zealand. It's a must-win game for us."

"Our middle-order batting has been inconsistent for the past six-seven months. Too many batsmen have been going through a lean patch for a long time. It's time every batsman contributed in this match."

Encouraging news for Sri Lanka was that hard-hitting opener

Sanath Jayasuriya was likely to figure in Tuesday's game.

"He should be ok for the match," Atapattu said of Jayasuriya, who is suffering from a bad throat.

"We'd like to see him among runs against New Zealand, but we can't always rely on one batsman. Others should also contribute," he said.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka cricket board has ruled out shifting the second-leg of three matches from rain-hit Colombo to this venue.

Board secretary Jaliya Jayasuriya told a national daily that the hotel where the three teams were staying here was fully booked on days of the matches May 17, 18 and 19.

He said the board would try to host the final here if there was a possibility of rain in Colombo.

The day-night final is scheduled to be played at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on May 23.

TEAMS

NEW ZEALAND (from): Stephen Fleming (captain), Chris Nevin, Lou Vincent, Scott Styris, Chris Cairns

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Mendis questions mental approach

REUTERS, Dambulla

Sri Lanka coach Duleep Mendis has criticised the mental approach of his top order on the eve of Sri Lanka's tri-series match against New Zealand on Tuesday.

Sri Lanka were dismissed for 120 by Pakistan on a seaming pitch over the weekend and Mendis believes his batsmen are making too many excuses for their recurrent failures.

"In the first match we knew it was going to seam and they should have adjusted to it and performed," said the former Sri Lanka captain. "They have played a lot of one-matches and as professional one-day international cricketers there should be no excuses."

"It is time for the top order to take full responsibility for putting up a good score."

Mendis took over from Dav Whatmore after the Sharjah Cup, although he worked with the team as a full-time advisor during the previous six months.

He said he believed that Sri Lanka had the necessary batting talent to be successful in all conditions but added they had to work on their mental approach.

"The talent is there but they have got to sort it out in their heads," he said. "When you are in the middle it's a mental game and they must have a proper strategy."

Marvan Atapattu, Sri Lanka's new one-day captain, agreed with his coach, saying his batsmen lacked commitment.

He also wants the tail to contribute and during the final net practice Muttiah Muralitharan and Prabath Nissanka, the number 10 and 11

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Toshack no more



AFP, Sydney

Ernie Toshack, one of Don Bradman's 1948 Invincibles, has died aged 88.

The Australian Cricket Board on Monday confirmed the passing of Toshack, who played 12 Tests, taking 47 wickets at 21.04 with his left-arm medium pacers.

Toshack played his Tests between 1945 and 1948 and was an integral member of Bradman's Invincibles.

He was described as a player who would have been suitable for the modern limited-overs game because of the persistent accuracy of his deliveries.

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Ernie Toshack (back row, far right) and the rest of the 1948 Invincibles.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia opener Matthew Hayden sweeps during his mammoth 177 in the second innings of the fourth Test against West Indies on the fourth day at Antigua on May 11.