



HOLD ME IF YOU CAN: Bangladesh's Mohammad Ashraf (R) and Mohammad Rafique share a light moment during their practice session at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium on Sunday.

Tigers look to Kapali

BISHWAJIT ROY from Bogra

Bangladesh pin their hopes on Alok Kapali to show something different against Sri Lanka in the first one-day international at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium here today.

The Tigers made meek surrenders against the islanders in their past 14 limited-overs games but home captain Habibul Bashar and coach Dav Whatmore were looking forward to turn the table on the opposition on home soil this time around.

"We are not worried about our past records against Sri Lanka. We are planning a different strategy for the one-day series where Kapali is one of the main weapons," said Bashar yesterday.

"We played poor cricket in Sri Lanka in our last series but I still believe that this side is capable of doing better and something different this time," hoped the most successful Bangladesh batsman,

who first wants to win the vital toss in the day-night affair.

"When we came here the dew was a factor in the morning and evening sessions but thankfully, it has gradually improved. Whatever, I would like to win the toss because the match would be played under lights," the Bangladesh skipper said.

He was excited with the fact that Sri Lanka were without their champion spinner Muttiah Muralitharan.

"Honestly speaking this is good news for us as Murali is not here. But this time, we are not focusing on any particular bowler. We will try to play our natural game. We have also a plan against devastating batsman Sanath Jayasuriya," said Bashar.

Although Bashar did not elaborate his new game plan, the coach explained why they have included Kapali as an all-rounder. The talented right-handed batsman from Sylhet, who is also a useful leg-spinner, played his last international game against Zimbabwe in Dhaka on January 31.

"He (Kapali) has always been a multi-skill player. He has no assurance to bat at number five like previous occasions but we always feel that in a one-day game, number seven to nine batsmen can play important roles. There is a slight change in our vision with the team and it is that area," said Whatmore.

"We need to keep producing juicy players who are multi-skill and who is ready to make contribution with the bat down the order because in one-day game, you don't need to take ten wickets. It's rather you need to make more runs," he said.

The 22-year-old Kapali, however, said that he was ready to justify his recall.

"I have to pay back. I think it has given me an opportunity to make a fresh start in the national side. I am confident because I have got some runs as well as picking up some wickets in domestic competitions," said an excited Kapali.

Like his captain, Whatmore was also not interested to take the past record in their account ahead of the

new challenge.

"We played badly against them in the last series and the Asia Cup but fact is, most of the teams who go to Sri Lanka don't have good times but for a few exceptions. So I don't think it is a big factor," said the confident Bangladesh coach.

Meanwhile, in spite of their superior past record against the hosts, Sri Lanka think-tank believes that the Tigers have the ability to upset any team.

Their Australian coach Tom Moody said that they cannot take Bangladesh lightly after what Bangladesh did to Australia in England.

"I don't think Bangladesh are weak opponents. Any team who can beat Australia at their full strength are far away from a weak team tag. So we are very much aware of our task," said the towering Moody.

Captain Mahela Jayawardene was eager to see the young guys carry the good show they had against Australia in the VB series.

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Bogra goes crazy but arrangements not satisfactory

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

There is no doubt about a full house in the newly approved Shaheed Chandu Stadium here today during the first international match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

All tickets have been sold out for the historic match for the 20,000-capacity ground, which is all set to stage its maiden one-day international.

But everybody was taken aback the way the authority had taken the preparation ahead of a very special event for the northern district. There was madness to get a ticket in the black market till last night but everybody was frustrated with none available.

"There was much hype and festivity during the Under-19 World Cup matches in 2004 but this is not the case this time. It is unfortunate that there was even no decoration to welcome the guests although we have learnt that the authority has spent huge money," said Tuhin, a transport businessman.

The reporters who came here to cover the matches were also bewildered by the arrangements as they had to wait till late afternoon to perform their duties in the media room.

"They charged Tk 95 for faxing two pages which is absurd. The facilities are not adequate although they had talked much about the preparation," said a reporter.

It was learnt that match referee Alan Hurst expressed his disappointment over the sightscreen and lack of other arrangements although the venue has the most of modern facilities.

"Actually there was mismanagement everywhere and it is because of one man (Siddiq Lemon)," said a district organiser on condition of anonymity.

Pakistan keep Under-19 WC

AFP, Colombo

Fast bowler Anwar Ali grabbed three wickets in his opening over as Pakistan retained the under-19 cricket World Cup with a sensational 38-run win over India in the final here on Sunday.

The talented pacesman finished with 5-35 off nine incisive overs as Pakistan defended their small total of 109 by bundling India out for a meagre 71 in the day-night match.

Pakistan, who won the Cup in Bangladesh two years ago, became the first team to defend the title.

None of the top-order Indian batsmen could read Ali, who swung the ball in at a lively pace to trap in-form opener Cheteshwar Pujara leg-before and then rattled the stumps of Rohit Sharma and Mayank Tehlan in his first over.

Ali was brilliantly supported by left-arm seamer Jamshed Ahmed, who bagged two wickets in his first two overs to reduce India to 9-6 in just 3.2 overs.

India could never recover from the horror start despite a fighting 39-run stand for the eighth wicket between Piyush Chawla (25 not out) and Pinal Shah (16), the only two batsmen to reach double-figures in a dismal performance.

Fast bowler Akhtar Ayub claimed the last three Indian wickets to spark celebrations in the Pakistani camp.

India, unbeaten and untested in the tournament before this match, were let down by batsmen after their spinners Piyush Chawla and Ravi Jadeja had done a commendable

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The fighter's last bout

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Bogra

People of Bogra will witness two small pieces of history when the otherwise sleepy town across the mighty Jamuna river stages its first-ever one-day international cricket match today.

The 50-overs-a-side contest between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium will also see a Bangladeshi cricketer saying goodbye to international cricket from the ground.

A colourful chapter will come to an end when former captain Khaled Mahmud walks into the middle to play his last international game, his 77th appearance in a

career spanning over 10 years. Mahmud announced his retirement at an emotion-choked press conference here on Sunday.

It was expected that the 'born fighter' would call it day after the selectors had included him in the 12-man squad for the first match.

However, there was confusion when chief selector Faruque Ahmed told the press that Mahmud was very much with the team and the player had yet to inform the board officially about his desire.

But Mahmud immediately requested the board to arrange a press conference to bury any confusion surrounding his retirement.

"I think it is a great honour to quit international cricket from the ground. There is no such example in our country so I think I am very

fortunate," said the 34-year-old all-rounder, who had earlier announced his retirement in late 2003 after the home series against England but was persuaded to reverse his decision shortly afterwards.

"I was excited when English newspapers headlined me as a fighter and the Bengali ones called me Laraku Sujan (his nickname). I must say it is the best achievement in my career. That's why there is nothing better than to finish the game on a high note," said Mahmud, who also played 12 Tests.

"My colleagues wanted me to stay but I think it is the right time to go. Now they are pumped up to make the occasion a memorable one and I can also assure you that I will put the emotional factor aside as a professional," he added.

Coach Dav Whatmore also said that his charges were ready to give Mahmud a memorable departure.

"Everybody hopes that the team will finish the game on a high to give Mahmud a rousing farewell. I am pleased the boys 'chacha' (as he is called by his close ones) is going out because there are lot of bitter memories even for renowned players," said the Australian, who got Mahmud as captain when he took over as Bangladesh coach at a very difficult time.

"What impressed me most about him is not only his natural power of motivating the young players on the field but also in the dressing room. I hope he will have an active role in cricket in a different capacity. I also want to see him continue his domestic career," he added.

Mahmud was in tears when he said that it was really a difficult decision.

"It is not easy to say goodbye to cricket but I have played enough and I am satisfied with whatever I have achieved. The age is also a major factor as I am turning 35. I believe that it is time to make way for the upcoming young talents. I firmly believe that we will see a different Bangladesh soon," he explained.

Mahmud said that he would love to be remembered as a player and captain of the national team.

"To represent the country is always something special for a player. But I must say captaining Bangladesh was the most memorable one in my whole career," said Mahmud, who recalled his match-winning performance against Pakistan in 1999 World Cup and the Multan Test against the same opposition as unforgettable events.

He also said that although the word 'chacha' speaks of an aged man, he loves it most.

"I don't mind people calling me 'chacha' because everybody uses it affectionately. Cricketer Halim Shah

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TIME TO SAY BYE: Khaled Mahmud can't keep his tears hidden during a press conference to announce his retirement in Bogra on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

FACTFILE

Full name: Khaled Mahmud													
Born: July 26, 1971, Dhaka													
Current age: 34 years 208 days													
Major teams: Bangladesh, Dhaka Division, Dhaka Metropolis													
Also known as: Sujan													
Batting style: Right-hand bat													
Bowling style: Right-arm medium													
BATTING AND FIELDING													
	M	I	NO	RUNS	HS	AVE	SR	100	50	4S	6S	CT	ST
Tests	12	23	1	266	45	12.09	58.46	0	0	30	3	2	0
ODIs	76	71	3	955	50	14.04	68.26	0	1	86	6	17	0
BOWLING													
	M	B	R	W	BBI	BBM	AVE	ECON	SR	4	5	10	
Tests	12	1620	832	13	4/37	7/105	64.00	3.08	124.61	1	0	0	
ODIs	76	3373	2850	67	4/19	4/194	2.53	5.06	50.34	1	0	0	
Test debut: Bangladesh v Zimbabwe at Dhaka - Nov 8-12, 2001.													
Last Test: Bangladesh v England at Chittagong - Oct 29-Nov 1, 2003.													
ODI debut: Bangladesh v India at Dhaka - Jan 10, 1998.													

Dravid crosses 9,000-run mark

REUTERS, Karachi

India captain Rahul Dravid became the fourth Indian and eighth batsman to score over 9,000 runs in one-day internationals on Sunday.

He achieved the feat in the third over of the Indian innings in the fifth and final one-dayer against Pakistan, driving Mohammad Sami to the cover boundary.

Dravid needed just two runs to reach the milestone.

Dravid joined compatriots Sachin Tendulkar, who leads the all-time highest aggregate with 14,146 runs at 44.20 from 362 matches, Sourav Ganguly and

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Marauding Yuvraj, Dhoni Invincible India widen the gap to 4-1

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Yuvraj Singh and Mahendra Dhoni powered India to another comfortable eight-wicket win over Pakistan in the fifth and final one-day international here on Sunday to clinch the series 4-1.

Yuvraj hit an unbeaten 107 while Dhoni smashed a 46-ball 77 not out to help the tourists to their fourth successive win. They successfully chased the 287-run target with 3.1 overs to spare.

Pakistan, beat India in the preceding three-Test series 1-0 and won the first match at Peshawar by seven runs.

Yuvraj, 24, added 72 runs for the second wicket with skipper Rahul Dravid (50) after India lost Gautam Gambhir (38) to Rao Iftikhar in the 15th over.

Dravid fell in the 31st over which allowed Dhoni to once again demolish the hapless Pakistan attack during a breezy 146-run stand with Yuvraj which came off just 99 balls.

Yuvraj, who finished the series as the top run-getter from both sides with 344 runs in five matches, hit 15 boundaries during his 93-ball knock and Dhoni continued his liking for Pakistan attack, hitting four sixes and six fours.

Dhoni hit pacesman Mohammad Sami for two towering sixes and then took a single to complete the win.

India rested their star batsman Sachin Tendulkar and pace spearhead Irfan Pathan.

Dravid praised his team for not letting up in the dead match.

"We had won the series before today's match, but the boys showed their professionalism today and restricted them to 286 and it's a good result for us.

"We were confident that our batting was clicking and we could chase," Dravid said. "The goal was to win the series 4-1 and we are learning constantly about the way we are chasing targets and I think the confidence was the key."

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq said the series had been demanding.

"It was a tough series for us. We were outclassed by India. We now need to learn from our mistakes quickly," Inzamam said.

Pakistan's total was built around Younis Khan's unbeaten knock of 74 and a fighting 67 by Mohammad Yousuf who shared a fifth wicket stand of 95 after Dravid

won his third consecutive toss and put Pakistan in.

Paceman Sri Sreesanth, who finished with a career-best 4-58, removed the home team's top order by dismissing Imran Farhat (24), Kamran Akmal (25) and Shoaib Malik (12) in his first five overs.

The 24-year-old fast bowler derailed Pakistan who got off to a solid start of 62 by the 11th over before losing three wickets in the space of just 15 runs.

Yousuf added 38 runs with skipper Inzamam for the fifth wicket before off-spinning all-rounder Rameez Power trapped Inzamam in front of the wicket for seven runs.

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Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
First ODI
Live at 1:15 pm
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 5:00 pm

STAR Sports
India vs Pakistan
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What's On
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Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra

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