

Tigers under the cosh

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team, now preparing for next month's ICC Champions Trophy in India, had a lengthy training session yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Under the guidance of coach Dav Whatmore, the Tigers went through a seven-hour net and fielding sessions. Batsman Mohammad Ashraf, who joined the camp after returning from England on Monday, took part only in the afternoon fielding session while just-married paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza also resumed training on Tuesday.

But the good news is that injured captain Habibul Bashar took the bat to try out his healing hand with the help of a bowling machine and showed improvement more than expectation.

"Since the camp started on August 29, we had our toughest training today. And it was encouraging for me that I'm recovering well. I batted with the help of a bowling machine and there was no pain in my injured finger. I'm hopeful that I can bat with full strength well before the doctor's deadline," said Bashar.

The 33-year-old skipper sustained an injury in his left metacarpal during the second one-day international against Zimbabwe at Harare.

The national team is likely to play two practice matches on October 24 and 26.

ATF U-14 TENNIS Bad day for local girls

SPORTS REPORTER

All eight Bangladeshi participants crashed out of the girls' singles first round of the Sagufa ATF Under-14 Tennis Series yesterday at the Ramna National Tennis Complex.

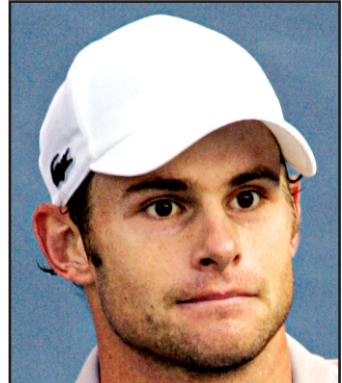
In the boys' singles, only the Bangladeshi players pitted against local opponents reached the second round. They are Rezwana Ahsan, Munna, Hasibul Haque, Omar Faruque Sunny and Shwe U Sheh. In all 13 local boys were eliminated in the 16 first round matches.

The tournament was inaugurated on Monday but the scheduled matches were washed out due to heavy rain on the opening day.



Did U Know?

The first-ever Olympic hockey match was played on October 29, 1908 between Scotland and Germany. Scotland won 4-0



Andy Roddick

(American tennis star)
"It was a high level of tennis. I gave myself a chance and I competed hard. I am disappointed but proud of the two weeks I had here. I am close to the top."
After losing the US Open singles final.



TEN Sports

Hockey World Cup
Korea v Germany
Live at 8:00 pm
South Africa v England
Live at 10:15 pm
UEFA Champions League
Man United v Celtic
Live at 12:00 am (Thursday)

And BCB it remains!



SPORTS REPORTER

The cabinet approval on Monday to rename the country's most affluent sports federation as Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in lieu of the Board of Control for Cricket in Bangladesh (BCCB) evoked more surprise than appreciation among people who are running the show at the moment.

BCB president Ali Asghar said that he was at a loss on Tuesday morning after he came to know about the cabinet decision in the newspapers.

"I can't understand why it happened. We submitted our proposal to the authority (the sports ministry) to name it as Cricket Bangladesh but surprisingly the cabinet approved another one," told Asghar at the Board's corporate office in Gulshan yesterday.

Asghar has been fighting for the last four years against the approved name, which was incidentally proposed and preached by his predecessor Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

"We have worked for the last eight months and if I'm not wrong the ministry prepared a proposal in line with our guidelines. But I don't know what happened when our sports minister actually submitted it to the cabinet," said the BCB boss.

A shocked Asghar, however, said that he was yet to communicate with the State Minister For Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, whose last minute twist has certainly undermined the fact that the cricket authority was not in the good books of the country's sports supremo.

"I am trying to reach our sports minister. I can say about the matter only after I talk with him," said Asghar.

Although it was a bitter pill to swallow for Asghar, the BNP lawmaker from Khulna however said

that they have to obey a decision taken in the highest office of the country.

"But it would have been nice if we could name it as 'Cricket Bangladesh', which has now been endorsed by almost all the other cricket boards. Sri Lanka even changed their name recently. It is a modern concept and I think it would sound nice."

"I don't think there is any scope for us to try again because we have had enough experience with the lengthy (bureaucratic) process," he added.

Interestingly, Asghar led the hate campaign against the just approved 'Bangladesh Cricket Board' after the change of power terming the move as illegal.

His committee had time and again said that there is no scope to change the federation name by ordinance within the existing laws rather by getting a Jatiya Sangsad approval.

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PHOTO: STAR

Abahani official Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun (2nd from L) speaking at a press conference of the Professional Football League clubs at the Arambagh Krira Sangha Club in the city yesterday.

Clubs blast BFF

Demand resignation of PFL committee



SPORTS REPORTER

The clubs to take part in the inaugural Professional Football League (PFL) have accused the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) of being insincere about staging the tournament.

"The way things are going, it seems that the transfer and the league are being delayed because the federation's lack of sincerity," speakers at a press conference told yesterday.

Representatives of the clubs met the reporters at the local club to clarify their position in the recent tug-of-war between BFF and the clubs, which have made the launching of the pro league uncertain.

"We (the clubs) have agreed that we will not take part in the transfer unless we know that the Bangladesh National Stadium is ready for football," said Mohammedan Sporting Club official Mostaqur Rahman.

Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun (Abahani), Mizanuddin Ahmed (Brothers Union), Ataur Rahman (Muktijoddha) and Nurul Alam

Chowdhury (Sheikh Russel KC) also spoke on the occasion.

"There is no alternate home venue for the eight Dhaka teams and we cannot go for the transfer with uncertainty over the league. Because it would be costly to run the camp," Mostaq said.

Disregarding the BFF's promise to compensate for any delays, the clubs demanded (in a written statement) the resignation of the tournament committee unless it withdraws the latest date of transfer, due to start on October 1, by September 15.

"The tournament committee has failed to handle the situation. It also announced the date of transfer and a tentative date in the third week of November to start the league without our consent," he added.

"In our last meeting on September 10, the tournament committee did not show us any proof that the BNS would be ready in time. We had proposed to form a joint committee (federation, National Sports Council and clubs) to inspect the latest condition of the ground but they have ignored our call," said Mizanuddin.

"Actually, we are 100 percent ready for the transfer but the BFF is

not ready. First, the federation officials said they would launch the league on November 7 in presence of French great Zinedine Zidane and AFC president Mohammad Bin Hammam. Suddenly they have deferred the date. They are not sure about anything," complained former national footballer Chunnun. "We will have the transfer as soon as the venue is prepared."

With both parties adamant, it seems that the footballers would be the only losers. The last transfer being in December 2005, they are all set to lose one season and if the start of the league is delayed, the clubs will be benefitted.

Many feel that with the general election looming ahead, the cash-starved clubs are trying to buy time as they do not have the assurance of getting fund from their donors.

It was learnt that the athletics track that will be laid at the BNS, is on its way to Bangladesh from Germany and it is expected that the shipment would reach Chittagong port in mid-October.

An expert of the NSC, which is in charge of renovating the BNS, told

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Javed hattrick lifts Bachelors

UNB, Dhaka

A brilliant hattrick by Mohammed Javed enabled Bachelors Sporting Club to a facile 4-0 victory over Uttara Hockey Club in the Green Delta Metropolis First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Javed's three field goals came in the 10, 28 and 48 minutes while Kabir Hossain sealed the win on the hour from a penalty corner.

In the day's other match, Police AC defeated Combined SC 3-0 with a brace from Rana Das and one from Zia.

9/11 cricket match held

AFP, London

Muslim imams and Christian clergy played each other in a friendly cricket match on Monday in a show of inter-faith unity to mark the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

The Twenty20 match held at Grace Road, home of the 2006 Twenty20 cup winners Leicestershire, was overseen by Jewish and Hindu umpires.

Faith leaders in Leicester, central England, have already taken each other on this year at football — with the imams thrashing the clergy 5-0.

The Right Reverend Tim Stevens, the Bishop of Leicester, said Monday's match was part of efforts to strengthen links between the city's various religious groups.

At 45 percent, Leicester's Christian population is the smallest of any city in England and Wales, according to the 2001 census.

Stevens said it was crucial that the September 11, 2001 terrorist atrocities in New York and Washington, perpetrated by extremists, were marked "in a positive way".

"I am looking forward to playing in this game myself, though that might not necessarily lead to a clergy victory," he added.

In place of an admission fee, spectators were asked to donate to charities supporting relief work in the Middle East.

Freddie to lead Ashes defence



AFP, London

Andrew Flintoff has beaten off competition from Andrew Strauss to captain England in the defence of the Ashes in Australia, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced when naming the squad here Tuesday.

Lancashire all-rounder Flintoff, who will also captain England in next month's Champions Trophy one-day tournament in India, has not played international cricket since the end of the home Sri Lanka Test series in June because of a left ankle injury.

In his absence Strauss led England in a 5-0 one-day series defeat by Sri Lanka, a 3-0 Test series win against Pakistan and a drawn 2-2 one-day campaign against Pakistan concluded Sunday.

Flintoff, 28, and Strauss were vying for the captaincy in the absence of last year's Ashes-winning skipper Michael Vaughan,



Australia batsman Michael Clarke drives the ball on the off-side during the opening match of the DLF Cup against West Indies at the Kinrara Oval in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday.

Aussies see off WI scare



AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Australia returned to international cricket with a bang Tuesday, sparking an embarrassing West Indies batting collapse to win their opening DLF Cup one-dayer here by 78 runs.

Set 280 to win at 5.6 runs an over, the West Indies looked to be cruising with Shivnarine Chanderpaul smashing a majestic 92 before it all went badly wrong.

Making the most of some hapless early bowling from a rusty Australia, the left-hander cracked four sixes and 10 fours, putting together a first wicket partnership of 136 with Chris Gayle (58).

But once he went, the West Indies lost their backbone.

They lost nine wickets for just 29 runs as the Aussies ran riot in their first international since touring Bangladesh in April.

Shane Watson took 4-42 from eight overs while Glenn McGrath, returning from a self-imposed eight-month break to help his wife Jane

fight breast cancer, ended with 1-30 off nine economical overs.

The West Indies had raced to 34-0 off the first eight overs with Chanderpaul in devastating form, hitting Nathan Bracken for 15 in one over then whacking him for 17 in another.

McGrath, 36, took time to settle and find his length, bowling four wides in his first over, and while he did not like what he was doing as he muttered to himself and yelled in frustration.

But he soon found a line and length and took the wicket of Dwayne Bravo.

At the other end Chanderpaul and Gayle were helping themselves to runs all around the Kinrara Oval, first off Bracken, whose five overs cost 43 runs, and then off Mitchell Johnson, who was given a chance ahead of Brett Lee.

Spotted by Dennis Lillee as a 17-year-old, Johnson is touted as Australia's best faster bowling prospect since Lee and while he was smacked around he redeemed himself by finally removing Chanderpaul.

The Guyanese looked set for a century before he top edged a rising delivery to wicketkeeper Brad Haddin, behind the stumps in place of a rested Adam Gilchrist.

Brian Lara came to the crease but lasted just three balls and was back in the pavilion for one.

It gave Australia a sniff of victory and they grabbed it with both hands, reducing the West Indies from 172-2 to 201 all out.

Aggressive half-centuries from Michael Clarke (81) and Australian captain Ricky Ponting (54) had earlier led their team to 279-9 after a shaky start.

Clarke, playing in his 83rd limited overs game, brought up his 18th one-day 50 off 57 balls.

Ponting, who won the toss and opted to bat, hit a brisk 54 at more than a run a ball, striking nine fours in a 97-run partnership with Simon Katich after Phil Jaques had fallen cheaply.

West Indies fast bowler Jerome Taylor took 3-59 with Ian Bradshaw and Dwayne Smith snaring two wickets apiece, for 36 and 41 respectively.

Fidel Edwards chipped in with 1-38 and Dwayne Bravo took the crucial scalp of Clarke.

Australia opted for an experimental team, leaving Matthew Hayden, Michael Hussey, Brad Hogg and Brett Lee out of the side.

The plan was to give an opportunity to Mark Cosgrove, Johnson and Daniel Cullen to prove their worth with the Champions Trophy in India next month and the Ashes series against England in November.

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Argentine Lucas Vila (R) plays the ball ahead of Pakistan's Muhammad Saqlain (L) during their hockey World Cup encounter in Moenchengladbach on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Zim planning Test return

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe coach Kevin Curran has revealed Zimbabwe are planning to return to Test cricket in November 2007, following their withdrawal at the start of this year. Zimbabwe have arrived in South Africa for a three-match ODI series as preparation for the Champions Trophy.

"We will be playing the West Indies at home in November next year," Curran told the Sapa news agency in Johannesburg. "We think that will give us time to develop our very young team, and we also believe that the West Indies would be at the right level of play for our return to Test cricket."

Cricinfo revealed more than a month ago that Zimbabwe's return to the Test arena would be when they met West Indies at that time.

Curran added that tours such as this short trip to Zimbabwe were

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