

Carom team off to New Delhi

SPORTS REPORTER

World number three Bangladesh left for New Delhi yesterday, to take part in the second carom World Cup.

Hafizur Rahman, Humayun Kabir, Mehdi Hasan, Mohammad Ali and Farzana Nasrin are representing Bangladesh, who are the current Asian runners-up.

The tournament begins today and will conclude on November 21 at the Indian capital.

BFF to stage

FROM PAGE 21

A three-member delegation led by Danone Food's director of event and sports marketing Gabriella Colletti visited the BFF Bhaban yesterday afternoon to discuss the issue with the local football high-ups.

The visitors asked the BFF officials to outline a plan by this December to hold a nationwide tournament. The winners or a selected team from the tournament will represent Bangladesh, one of the five teams to participate from Asia-Oceania, in the tourney.

Footballers born between July 1, 1995 and December 31, 1996 would be able to compete.

Danone's project manager Marie Liesse and competition manager Sebastien Hautin, MD of Grameen Danone Foods Imamus Sultan, BFF vice-president Sirajul Islam Bachchu and deputy general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu were also present.

Aussies

FROM PAGE 21

concerned to have that depth of fast bowling talent around the country at the moment.

"You look at Tait, Johnson and Clark who have all started this season off extremely well and are all putting their hands up for selection."

SQUAD

Matthew Hayden, Justin Langer, Ricky Ponting (captain), Damien Martyn, Michael Hussey, Shane Watson, Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne, Brett Lee, Stuart Clark, Mitchell Johnson, Glenn McGrath, Shaun Tait.

Act on their

FROM PAGE 21

Australians fear him. But what I would want from him is consistency.

"The issue for Steve is about not settling for mediocrity: he has got to strive to be the best. He has to perform, not in one Test in five but in three or four in five.

"After he took 11 wickets at Old Trafford this summer, I would have wanted him to work doubly hard, to make even more sacrifices so that he became not just the best in England, but the best in the world.

"I don't know if he has been making those sacrifices. Steve is a rhythm bowler -- he has to go to the nets and bowl for an hour every day of his life. Every day."

Basten satisfied

FROM PAGE 24

and all of the candidates are obviously different types of players."

With several midfield options, Van Basten may choose to focus his attention on a forward line that struggled to create any real chances against the well-organised English defence.

The unpredictable Arjen Robben picked his moments to show his brilliance but in the centre Dirk Kuyt never broke free from the shackles of the experienced John Terry and Rio Ferdinand.

Van der Vaart received compliments from his coach but proved the right wing is not his best position.

"Van der Vaart did well in a position he is not used to playing but found his space between the lines," Van Basten added.

The Netherlands only really threatened in the final 10 minutes when Van Basten brought on target man Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink.

The attacking problems prompted the home crowd to chant for the in-form Ruud van Nistelrooy, who hit four goals for Real Madrid last weekend, but is still absent from the Dutch squad after a disagreement with Van Basten.

There is some homework for the coach to do before they continue their Euro 2008 Group G campaign at home to Romania on March 24 before travelling to Slovenia four days later.

Dutch deny

FROM PAGE 24

then afforded Seedorf the opportunity to send a volley skidding narrowly wide of the England goalkeeper's left-hand post.

Neither of those opportunities were as inviting as the one that Lampard presented to Rooney with a lay-off inside the box 20 minutes from the end.

The Manchester United forward's shot, from barely ten yards out, was uncharacteristically tame however and Stekelenburg was untroubled.

Carrick almost made the game safe for England shortly afterwards, his 30-yard drive grazing the outside of the post. Close but not close enough to deliver a victory McClaren could have done with.

D-day for Panesar, Giles



BBC ONLINE, undated

England are likely to choose between spinners Monty Panesar and Ashley Giles when they reveal their Test side in the final warm-up against South Australia.

Coach Duncan Fletcher has said the team that plays in Adelaide will be the preferred Test line-up.

After Marcus Trescothick went home, batsmen Alastair Cook, Ian Bell and Paul Collingwood are all set to play.

Veteran Jason Gillespie and Shaun Tait, part of Australia's Test squad, lead the home attack in the three-day game.

Adelaide and Brisbane, where the first Test begins on 23 November, are historically different surfaces, with the South Australia venue more of a batting surface.

Brisbane is considered currently the fastest wicket in the country, confirmed by Australia's decision to pick just one spinner in their 13-man Test squad.

As England look likely to go with four pace bowlers, including all-rounder Andrew Flintoff, and a spinner, they must make a straight choice between Panesar and Giles.

Giles has not played Test cricket in a year, having undergone three operations on his hip, but offers a better batting option at eight in the order.

Panesar has taken 32 wickets in 10 Tests since then and is seen as the more attacking option.

England's decision to go with Geraint Jones -- considered a better batsman -- as wicket-keeper over Chris Read makes it more likely Panesar will play.

England have got class bowlers and batsmen so it's just (a question of) how they play in Australian conditions

Collingwood admitted England's decisions on their batting line-up had been made easier by Trescothick's return home.

"I wished it hadn't had been under these circumstances but it looks as though my spot in the team is safe.

"For the last year, myself, Ian Bell and Alastair Cook have been competing for what we thought were only two spots," Collingwood told BBC Sport.

"Now at the last moment, there are enough places available for us all."

A strong South Australia line-up features former Test batsmen Darren Lehmann and Matthew

Elliott, and young star Mark Cosgrove.

Redbacks captain Lehmann is looking forward to seeing his young side, particularly pace bowler Shaun Tait, perform against England.

"We're excited about him -- he bowls at 150kph (93mph) plus and they're not easy to face," he said of Tait.

"England have got class bowlers and batsmen so it's just (a question of) how they play in Australian conditions.

"We haven't had a tour game in Adelaide for years. To play against England and see these young guys will be great fun."

TEAMS

SOUTH AUSTRALIA (from): Darren Lehmann (captain), Matthew Elliott, Cullen Bailey, Cameron Borgas, Mark Cosgrove, Dan Cullen, Shaun Deitz, Callum Ferguson, Jason Gillespie, Daniel Harris, Paul Rofe, Shaun Tait.

ENGLAND (likely): Andrew Flintoff (captain), Andrew Strauss, Alistair Cook, Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood, Geraint Jones, Ashley Giles or Monty Panesar, Steve Harmison, Matthew Hoggard, James Anderson.

Onus on Flintoff: Botham



AFP, London

Former England skipper Ian Botham expects current captain Andrew Flintoff to lead an Ashes backlash following the sudden departure from Australia of Marcus Trescothick.

Somerset opener Trescothick returned home Wednesday after a recurrence of his stress-related illness forced him to quit the Australian tour, and was replaced by Middlesex batsman Ed Joyce.

Trescothick's dramatic u-turn is considered a blow to England's chances.

But Botham is still backing England to retain the Ashes Down

Under, and he expects Flintoff to tell his players to "get stuck in and fill their boots".

"Flintoff will be disappointed, but not disheartened, by the reshuffle," Botham told the Daily Mirror.

"I know he will regard it as a major opportunity for those left on the tour to take the fight to the Aussies.

"He will tell them to forget about what has happened in the first week, to get stuck in and fill their boots.

"One thing he will not tolerate is any pessimism. I get so chuffed off when people respond to setbacks with doom and gloom -- especially in Australia, who will trample all over you if you show any sign of taking a backward step.

"He'll tell them to face the front of

the class and face facts: England hold the Ashes, and if they think positive the Aussies will have to play out of their skins to retrieve them."

Joyce will join the Ashes squad in Adelaide Friday, where England is playing a three-day game against South Australia ahead of the November 23 opening Ashes Test in Brisbane.

Trescothick suffered a stress disorder that forced him to take a complete break to recover during England's India tour last February and the subsequent English summer.

Trescothick, who will be 31 next month, has played 76 Tests for England, scoring 5,825 runs at 43.79 with 14 centuries.

'I know how it feels'



REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan paceman Shabbir Ahmed is confident of making a successful comeback after serving a one-year ban by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for an illegal bowling action.

Shabbir, who has taken 51 wickets in 10 Tests, will fly to Australia on Sunday to undergo final checks on his bowling action, which will then be sent to the ICC for clearance before his ban ends on December 19.

Last year, the 30-year-old became the first bowler to be banned under revised ICC regulations after his action was reported twice in 2005.

"Only I know what it has felt like to be out of international cricket. What really hurt is that the umpires reported me for only one or two deliveries, not my entire spells," Shabbir told Reuters on Thursday.

"I was reported for one or two balls in 33 overs last year against England. It has been very difficult

for me to motivate myself buy I believe I can make another comeback after the ban," he added.

The Pakistan Cricket Board is pinning its hopes on Shabbir's remodelled action being cleared by the ICC as they need the bowler to be available for the tour of South Africa and the World Cup next year.

The board has fast tracked his Tests in Australia after losing key bowlers Shoaib Akhtar (two years) and Mohammad Asif (one year) to doping bans earlier this month.

The duo are appealing the suspensions.

Shabbir had bowled Pakistan to victories in back-to-back Tests over the West Indies in Jamaica in May and than against England at Multan in November before being reported for his action.

Shabbir, who has been reported four times in his career, added that playing league cricket in England and domestic matches at home had helped him correct his action to a large extent.

"I have a slight problem with a round arm action now but there is definite improvement. I have changed my angle. That is why I

am confident the Tests will be successful in Australia and I shouldn't face any further problems," he stated.

Mariners give

FROM PAGE 21

Both Mohammedan and Mariners -- two local giants -- now face the threat of relegation according to bylaws. Both sides cannot play further in the ongoing league also, which means Abahani and Usha, jointly atop the table, will vie for the title deciding match.

After Mohammedan and Mariners boycotted the league in demand of punishment of players of Usha and Abahani, who were engaged in an on-the-field scuffle during their first-leg match, no games have been held due to the blockade. According to its president's directive, the BHF decided to stick to the rules and announced to resume the league.

An executive committee meeting will be held today to discuss the issue.

Dhaka ride on Ashrafal

FROM PAGE 21

Sabbir bagged three for 106 while left-armer Elias Sunny took 2-50.

But Chittagong could not take advantage of their bowling momentum as they slipped to 43 for 4. Skipper Ehsanul Haque then came to rescue with Faisal Hossain as the two battled through the rest of the day for an unbeaten 172-run fifth wicket stand. Faisal batted patiently as he struck a dozen boundaries in his 183-ball stay. He was the more aggressive of the two as he reached his ton late in the day. Ehsanul remained not out on 66, laced by four boundaries.

For Sylhet, left-arm seamer

Rezaul Haque took 2-30 while seamers Taposh and Nazmul took one each.

KHULNA v RAJSHAHI

Junaid Imrose kept on dominating the Khulna attack as Rajshahi seemed to run away with the match as they reached 209 for three in their first innings. But national spinner Abdul Razzag had other ideas as he removed Naem Islam for 59. The in form middle-order batsman struck nine fours and a six in his knock but his dismissal sparked a sudden collapse and within the span of an hour, Rajshahi were bowled out for 265 runs, plenty short of what they were set

for early in the day.

Imrose missed his ton by 12 runs as he battled for three-and-a-half hours, to hit eleven fours and a six.

Razzag, who literally bowled Khulna back into the game, ended with five for 55. He was well supported by fast bowlers Dollar Mahmud (2-61) and Ziaur Rahman (2-65).

Khulna opens then batted steadily and both Sadat and Sajjad added 80, without being dismissed. Sadat struck 55 while Sajjad was on 24. With two days remaining, the match is evenly poised for both sides.

Inzy wants 6-day Tests

AFP, Lahore

Inzamamul Haq Thursday urged the International Cricket Council (ICC) to play six-day Tests during the winter in Pakistan to reduce the impact of bad light and poor weather.

"We lost 15 overs a day because of poor natural light," said the Pakistani captain of the first Test against the West Indies in Lahore, which his side nevertheless won by nine wickets inside four days, finishing Tuesday.

"I think now it is time that we should start playing six-day Test matches in those cities where sun sets early," Inzamam added.

Heavy fog rules out an early start to play in Lahore and other Test venues such as Multan and Faisalabad in Pakistan's Punjab province, while bad light curtails play in the evenings.

Last year the Pakistan Cricket Board also urged the ICC to consider six-day Tests in winter here and experimented with orange cricket balls in domestic matches to combat the problem of poor light.

"If we play a six-day Test match with 75 overs a day during the winter season it would be good for cricket and it won't put pressure on the teams," Inzamam said.

"It is difficult to pull crowds in stadiums with shortened days."

Zia, Reefat

FROM PAGE 21

while Rezaul went past Moniruzzaman in their respective encampments.

Chittagong Mohammedan, who won against Faith Chess Club 4-0, are in second place with 39.5 points while defending champions Leonine Chess Club are third with 37 points following their win over Dhaka University is in 3rd position with 37 points.

25 new fed

FROM PAGE 21

Feroz Ahmed (squash and rackets), fisheries and livestock secretary Kamrul Hasan (billiard and snooker), housing and public works acting secretary SM Jafarullah (roller skating), primary and mass education secretary AKM Shamsuddin (bridge), food and disaster management secretary Ehsan Ul Fattah (taekwondo), science and information and communication technology secretary Khan M Ibrahim Hossain (bhashap), shipping secretary Sheikh Enayet Ullah (cycling), IGP Khoda Bakhs Chowdhury (kabaddi) and women and children affairs joint secretary Mushfikat (women's).

Gullit explains

FROM PAGE 24

Gerrard had performed well against his countrymen, Gullit replied: "'No. Because you always have a feeling he can do more. I think he doesn't play in a position he likes or feels comfortable in."

Gullit also revealed the reasoning behind Ruud van Nistelrooy's omission from the Holland squad.

"With Marco van Basten it's final," said Gullit. "I think he [van Nistelrooy] had a conversation with van Basten and van Basten was not happy in the way he played. Therefore, when he had some [squad] injuries, van Basten called him and asked if he could play. He said 'Look, you don't agree with the way I play and you don't agree with my tactical abilities then it's better that you don't pick me."

Cypriots

FROM PAGE 24

flying colours.

A German fan ran on to the pitch at the start of the second half and stole the ball from the centre spot, his countrymen maybe wishing the game never restarted.

Over in Dublin Ireland cruised past San Marino courtesy of a Robbie Keane hatrick, with Andy Reid and Kevin Doyle also getting on the scoresheet.

Despite the lop-sided scoreline and Keane's heroics, it was still a drab end for a drab stadium which is due to be knocked down early next year and replaced with the sort of modern 50,000-seater arena Irish football so desperately needs.

Ireland manager Steve Staunton was pleased enough, though.

"Obviously we'll need to be more clinical against better teams but I thought in the conditions -- we wanted the grass much shorter but with amount of rain we had during the day it was impossible and made pitch a little bit slower than we wanted."

Then turning to the stalemate in Nicosia the Irish boss added: "That's even more pleasing (than his team's performance).

"I always knew there would points won and lost along the way and there'll be more points won and lost along the way. There's a lot to play for, so we won't be giving up the ghost yet."

In Group E England slipped a place to third as a result of Russia's 2-0 win over Macedonia.

Croatia pulled clear at the top with a 4-3 win in Tel Aviv.

In Group A Finland went a point clear of Serbia after a 1-0 win over Armenia, with Portugal placed third after seeing off Kazakhstan 3-0.

Woolmer warns WI



CRICINFO, undated

Bob Woolmer lauded Pakistan's all-round performance in the nine-wicket win over West Indies in Lahore, but warned that the going might not be as smooth in the second Test, due to begin on November 19 at Multan.

Speaking to reporters at the National Cricket Academy at Gaddafi Stadium during a break in practice, Woolmer said, "It was a great team effort, which was important. We batted well and bowled really well, but we can improve in the field, especially our catching. We caught West Indies after they had played a lot of ODI cricket and we have to be aware of that. They will come back hard at us in Multan."

In retrospect, the Test was decided on the first day when Shahid Nazir and Umar Gul shared eight wickets in tumbling out West Indies for a paltry 206. The two ended with 15 of the 20 wickets to fall, proving yet again that any number of first-choice absentee bowlers only means a few more will come to the fore as far as Pakistan

is concerned.

Woolmer acknowledged the plentiful resources Pakistan can fall back on. "We had two key bowlers missing but you know, if we ask 30 bowlers to come down from the country somewhere we will probably find two more to do a similar job. Pakistan has an abundance of riches in medium-fast, fast-medium and swing and seam bowling. Maybe it's something to do with the conditions in Punjab this time of the year.

"Umar Gul was quite special and Shahid Nazir bowled really well. Razyzy (Abdul Razaq) also backed them up well. Danish also bowled well, but really as a unit, they bowled tight lines and in good areas."

Brian Lara's decision to bat first in murky overcast decisions didn't help, though he might not have been aware that he was continuing a poor historical precedent: only three sides batting first at Gaddafi Stadium have triumphed in 37 contests before this one. Woolmer might have known, admitting that Pakistan would have fielded first anyway. "I had a feeling had we won the toss we might have fielded first. The pitch was cold, there was some moisture underneath and it

was foggy and overcast. A difficult decision but yes it was a good toss to lose."

There are worse ways to begin preparations for a World Cup season than a comprehensive Test win but Pakistan travel to South Africa just before the tournament and given their perennial difficulties with bouncy pitches, an easy home win on friendly surfaces might be deceiving. Woolmer is already planning.

"We've asked to go to South Africa earlier so that we can have ten days there to practice and get used to those conditions. The guys will need a break after this series but we are planning to go a little bit earlier," he revealed.

The last time Pakistan travelled to South Africa was in 2002-03, like now, just before a World Cup. Losing the Tests 2-0 and the ODIs 4-1 was hardly ideal for morale and questions have been asked whether it might not be worth postponing the tour. "The ICC has done the itinerary," said Woolmer. "South Africa is a tough team and will give us good competition. The pitches will be different but I think touch matches before we travel to the Caribbean will be good for us and is what we need."

Bread brings luck to Joyce



CRICINFO, undated

Ed Joyce, the Middlesex left-hander who has been summoned into England's Ashes squad to replace Marcus Trescothick, is still trying to take in his call-up but is determined to use the chance to push forward his international career.

Joyce, who has made three ODI and one Twenty20 appearances for England, but has yet to appear in a Test, was preferred to Rob Key and Owais Shah and found out the news as he was buying breakfast.

"It was unbelievable really," Joyce told the Daily Mail on his way to the airport, "I was expecting to be going to Perth and the academy and suddenly it's Adelaide and the Ashes. It was a bit of a surprise alright, but a very nice one. David Graveney gave me a call on Wednesday morning and left a message. I phoned back while I

was on the way to my corner shop to get a loaf of bread. He was in Hong Kong but gave me the news that Marcus unfortunately had to come home and I was the replacement.

"It is terrible news about Marcus. Hopefully this is not the end of his international career because he's such a good player but his going obviously gives me an opportunity. If I get the chance to play, I will try to take it. That's the way these things go in sport."

Joyce had been placed on standby as part of England's Academy squad, who fly out to Perth for a five-week training camp.

"I knew I had as good a chance as the other two guys in contention (Robert Key and Owais Shah), but I think I got the nod because I was batting from No. 3 to No. 5 and opening in the one-dayers so they probably see me as reasonably versatile.

"I'm just going to work really hard and do all the right things and, if I get the chance, hopefully I'll be able

to take it. There is no panic. I have butterflies but I'm still in England so trying to gauge the interest is difficult. I've played in the same Middlesex team as Langer and McGrath and know them all reasonably well. That gives me a bit of an advantage if I do get a chance."

Joyce's selection was slightly unexpected seeing as Key had already taken part in an Ashes tour in 2002-03 and Shah had performed well on debut in India last winter, where he scored 88 at Mumbai. But England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, elaborated on the selection.

"As we already have other players in the squad who have experience of opening the innings we have decided to choose a replacement who will be able to cover a number of different positions within the order," said Graveney. "Ed is a highly promising player who has performed well for Middlesex this season and I am sure he will be delighted to be part of an Ashes squad."

10x3