

Urge to build nat'l team in proper manner

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a seminar in the city on Friday emphasised on building the Bangladesh cricket team in a proper manner in addition to preparing for co-hosting the World Cup Cricket 2011 in Bangladesh.

Country's renowned cricket personalities spoke at the seminar on "World Cup Cricket: 2011 and what we need to do" organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) at its VIP auditorium.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Mahbubul Anam was the chief guest at the seminar, chaired by DRU president M Shafiqul Karim. Sports journalist Mustafa Mamun presented the keynote paper.

BCB vice president Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen, ex-BCB vice-president Raisuddin Ahmed and ex general secretary Aminul Huq Moni, former national skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain, Mubashar Hossain and Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury among others spoke on the topic.



Zimbabwe all-rounder Gary Brent is having a go at the bowlers in their first practice session at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on Friday.

PHOTO: STAR

Spin worry for Zim

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's experienced spin attack seems to be the only worrying factor for Zimbabwe but the visiting skipper Prosper Utseya said they have taken adequate preparation this time to deal with it during the one-day series.

The promising off-spinner had vowed after their 101-run defeat against the Habibul Bashar's men in the ICC Champions Trophy in India that they would prove their worth against the hosts' left-arm spinners in the tour of Bangladesh.

"I wouldn't say the conditions would be a problem because most of the guys have been here before and are quite used to the conditions. We were in India and it's almost similar. The only thing is that there are some spinners we are really worried about," said the 21-year old Utseya at a press conference at a local hotel yesterday.

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"Like I said we have done our home work on how we are going to attack Bangladesh and we have had special attention on how we can handle the left-arm spinners. We used some left-arm spinners during the net sessions at home," he added.

The southern African side arrived in the capital on Thursday to play a Twenty20 international and a five-match one-day series.

Rather than focusing on the outcome of the series the Zimbabweans want to play good cricket although they stunned the Tigers at home by winning 3-2.

"Obviously we will be looking to play some good cricket and we can't really foresee or we can't control how we play. We just want to play the way we play cricket, if we can do that we will hopefully come up on top. We can't really say we have come here to win will all five games."

Coach Kevin Curran expected a tough challenge for Zimbabwe. "Bangladesh are probably

favourites. But as the captain said, it is difficult to predict because Bangladesh are a very competitive team. The bottom line is that they are tough and ever improving side. It will be a difficult challenge for us. Before we start the series, we have warm-up match, a Twenty20 game which will help the guys to get acclimatised," said Curran.

"We play against Bangladesh a lot, we know what are their strengths. You can have good or bad games. In India we did not play well. It can happen in cricket. I have got some talented players and some match winners. I am looking to make them upbeat. If they remain that, it would be a competitive series," he added.

The Zimbabweans, who had their first training session at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday, will play a practice game tomorrow at the BKSP against Habibul Bashar-led BCB President XI.

Shastri questions seniors

PTI, Durban

Former Indian captain Ravi Shastri has questioned the team selection as well as the commitment of senior players after India's "gutless" showing against South Africa in the second one-dayer at Kingsmead.

"There was no fight from any of the batsmen -- not even from the ones who have vast amounts of experience. It's time for something to happen. I believe the selections were not right," Shastri said.

India was skittled out of 91 in reply to South Africa's 248 for 8 suffering a huge 157-run defeat.

The former all-rounder, commenting during the series for a television channel here, said the selectors should have opted for Gautam Gambhir, who has been making runs consistently in the domestic cricket, in place of Wasim Jaffer.

"Gambhir is the form man. I could not understand why he was not in the squad for this trip. I'm afraid I believe if this team does not show any character as this tour progresses then it will be heading for disaster," he was quoted as saying by local daily 'Daily News'.

He said the team would have to show some character if they want to salvage some pride in the ongoing series.

"If they have to salvage anything from this tour the Indians will have to start showing some character or this is going to end in a disgrace. It was a gutless showing. I've never seen anything like this before," Shastri said.

Vengsarkar on a mission!

REUTERS, New Delhi

The Indian cricket board asked chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar on Friday to travel to South Africa amid stinging criticism following the team's bad start to the tour.

South Africa crushed India by 157 runs in the second one-day international on Wednesday after skittling them for 91 on a bouncy Durban pitch to extend the tourists' poor batting in the last few months.

"Vengsarkar will join the team before the Test series," the board's chief administrative officer, Ratnakar Shetty, told Reuters.

Shetty said there was no reason to panic due to the loss, which has renewed attacks on coach Greg Chappell by sections of the Indian media.

"There is panic only in the media and public," he said. "We are a democracy and anybody can talk anything."

India reeled off a string of one-day victories until mid-2006 under Chappell, who was praised for ushering in changes and backing youngsters.

However, the team has struggled since they were upset 4-1 in West Indies in May. They also failed to reach the semifinals of the recent ICC Champions Trophy at home after faring poorly in a preceding tri-series in Malaysia.

South Africa lead the five-match one-day series 1-0 with the third game to be played in Cape Town on Sunday. The three-Test series starts at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on Dec. 15.

Australia take charge

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Glenn McGrath hit back at his ageist critics with two wickets in two balls to have England on the rack after the second day of the first Ashes Test at the Gabba here Friday.

The 13-year Test paceman, who turns 37 next February, removed openers Andrew Strauss (12) and Alastair Cook (11) with successive deliveries to send a shiver through the tourists after they had sweltered for 11-1/2 hours in the field in Australia's massive 602 for nine declared.

It was Australia's highest score against England in Australia for 60 years, since Don Bradman's team scored 645 in 1946.

Australia had 17 overs at the weary Englishmen and got their rewards to have the tourists at 53 for three in reply and 350 runs from the follow-on target with three days of predicted fine weather left to play.

"We've definitely got a lot of momentum now, and the confidence is with us," McGrath said after the day's play.

"But you only have to look back at the (2005) first Test at Lord's where we had momentum, we had confidence and we won that Test quite convincingly and England turned it around next Test.

"We'll be trying to drive it home tomorrow. A lot of times in Australia, when we go one up, there's not too

many series we lose. We won't be taking it easy for the rest of this Test or the series."

England captain Andrew Flintoff countered: "We're not deflated, it's the first two days of the Ashes series."

"Tomorrow we have to come out and bat well, we need to put together some partnerships. There's a lot character in the side and we're looking to the challenge of this series. We just have to get better."

Ian Bell was not out 13, with big batting hope Kevin Pietersen on six.

McGrath, Test cricket's third-greatest wicket-taker, took his tally to 544 victims to put the early skids under England, who have endured a nightmare start to the defence of the Ashes they took off the Australians in England last year.

Strauss played a dreadful pull shot and skied to deep backward square, where Mike Hussey avoided colliding with Brett Lee to take a great running catch.

But Lee caught Hussey's spikes, cutting his left knee, leaving blood on his creams and he left the ground for treatment, which didn't require stitches.

Cook, promoted to opener following the departure home of Marcus Trescothick, was out next ball when he edged to Shane Warne at first slip to leave the tourists reeling at 28 for two in the sixth over.

Stuart Clark took the third wicket, having Paul Collingwood caught behind for five in the 11th over.

Ricky Ponting was out for four runs short of his fifth Test double-century as Australia batted on relentlessly to just beyond 600 before he called a halt at 4:00pm (0600 GMT) to have a crack at the England top order.

The Australian skipper, who dominated the England attack for his ninth century in his past 12 Tests, was trapped leg before wicket off seamer Matthew Hoggard for 196.

He faced 319 balls in 463 minutes, with 24 boundaries.

It was Ponting's highest score against England, bettering his 156 in last year's third Old Trafford Test.

Ponting is now the sixth highest run-getter in Test cricket with 8,988 runs at 59.13 in his 106th Test.

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Did U Know?

Mohammad Ashraf now holds the record for the highest first-class individual score with his 263 against Chittagong on November 23.



John Terry

(Chelsea Captain)

"I am a little bit disappointed to lose. I am disappointed but pleased we played so well and upset we got nothing from it. But no one can accuse of us not trying to win the game, they can look at the teamsheet. Thankfully we are through."

After their defeat against Werder Bremen in the Champions League match on Wednesday.

What to WATCH

ESPN

Australia v England
First Ashes Test, Day Four
Live at 6:00 am (Sunday)

English Premiership
Liverpool v Manchester City
Live at 8:55 pm

Primera Liga
Barcelona v Villarreal
00:55 am (Sunday)

Star Sports

English Premiership
Bolton Wanderers v Arsenal
Live at 11:10 pm

Zee Sports

Serie A
Chievo v Udinese
Live at 11:00 pm

AC Milan v Messina
Live at 1:30 am (Sunday)

Niaz loses too

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Niaz Murshed tasted his first defeat in the Commonwealth Chess Championship as he lost the fourth round board against local boy Arghyadip Das in Mumbai on Thursday.

The other Bangladeshi GM, Ziaur Rahman, who lost in the third round, shared points with Lalith Babu of India.

Both the players secured 2.5 points each after four rounds.

Dhaka romp to big win

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka put the icing on the cake of a memorable match for Mohammad Ashraf as they crushed hosts Chittagong in the Ispahani Mirzapore 8th National Cricket League third round by an innings and 126 runs on the final day at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Trailing by 127 runs with five second-innings wickets in hand, Chittagong yielded in their quest for survival, being bowled out for 206. Mosharraf Rubel and Mahmudullah Riyad shared the remaining scalps as Dhaka headed the table with 16 points, with Rajshahi following them two points behind.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Barisal won their first match when they trounced Khulna by 137 runs. Set 301 to win, Khulna failed miserably in their chase as they were bowled out for 163 in their second innings late in the day.

Rajshahi completed their dominance at home when they handed Sylhet a seven-wicket defeat at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium. Chasing a meagre 130 to win, the hosts completed the formalities with Anisur Rahman hitting an unbeaten 63.

CHITTAGONG v DHAKA

After a record-breaking Day 3 when Ashraf set the country's highest first-class individual score with a magnificent 263, Dhaka needed to pick five wickets and had the entire day at their disposal.

Overnight 16, Chittagong middle-order batsman Nazimuddin stuck around for nearly 90 minutes to score 45. Barring Nazim and tallenders Raihanuddin Arafat and Tareq Aziz's more-than-an-hour resistance, it was a day that belonged to left-amer Rubel.

He picked up skipper Ehsanul Haque who came in at number seven and Nazimuddin, both caught by wicketkeeper Anwar Hossain. Later he added Arafat to his tally.

Dhiman Ghosh was run out but after Nazim's departure, it was Tareq and Arafat who added 53 runs for the ninth wicket. Tareq struck six boundaries in his 39 before falling to Mahmudullah Riyad while Arafat scored 14.

Man-of-the-match on second consecutive occasions, Ashraf who was involved in a 420-run record partnership with middle-order batsman Marshall Ayub, has bright chances of earning a recall to the national side for the opening matches of the Zimbabwe series.

Table toppers Dhaka now travel to Rajshahi for fourth round encounter starting November 27.

BARISAL v KHULNA

Middle order batsman Abul Bashar could not harness Barisal's tail as they were bowled out for 229 in

their second innings. Bashar, who added six to his overnight 27, was caught at slip by Manzarul Islam off all-rounder Ziaur Rahman.

Ziaur took the final wicket of Mukhtar Ali, taking his tally to three for 16 while Dollar Mahmud, who also took two on the day, finished with three wickets as well.

With an entire day remaining, Khulna fell to the guile of off-spinner Ali Arman Rajan. He took the vital wickets of Nazmus Sadat, Manzarul and Mohammad Salim.

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India's Virender Sehwag jokes during a training session at Newlands Cricket Stadium on Friday ahead of their Sunday's ODI against South Africa in Cape Town.

PHOTO: AFP



Australian paceman Glenn McGrath appeals successfully against England opener Alastair Cook on the second day of the first Ashes Test in Brisbane on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Skipper backs Harmison

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

England captain Andrew Flintoff defended paceman Steve Harmison Friday after the misfiring strike bowler continued to self-destruct in the Ashes opener at Brisbane's Gabba.

After being ridiculed by both the Australian crowds and the English press for his farcical performance in the first day's play, Harmison continued to spray the ball around on the second day.

He conceded 123 runs for one wicket in Australia's first innings, with his first ball a wide that was greeted with howls of derision by the Gabba crowd.

It was painfully similar to the ball he opened the series with a day earlier, a wide that carried to Flintoff at second slip and was dubbed the

"bawl of the century" by London's Sun newspaper.

Rather than regrouping overnight, Harmison sent down a total of four wides Friday and the England camp will have a massive job restoring his confidence for the rest of the series.

Flintoff, who hauled Harmison out of the attack after just two overs on the first day and waited until the seventh over to use him Friday, was left struggling for positives.

"He got better throughout the innings, when it's not going well it does knock your confidence a little bit and Harmy's just striving to get back to his best," Flintoff told reporters.

He admitted Harmison, a dominant figure in England's Ashes triumph last year, could not find his bowling rhythm.

"It's not through the lack of trying or effort," the England captain said. "He's just struggling for a bit for his rhythm in this game."

Even veteran Australian paceman Glenn McGrath, a relentless competitor who delights in beating the opposition, had some sympathy for his English counterpart.

"I feel for Harmy, his radar wasn't quite switched on," McGrath said. "We'll see how he goes, he's got a fairly big fight to get back there."

Former Australian paceman Damien Fleming said the lanky Durham quick's situation was "sad".

"There's some mental issues here. He's not confident," Fleming said while commenting on the game on national radio.

Harmison set the scene for England's victory last year by hitting Ricky Ponting in the grille of his helmet with a delivery and the Australian captain said Thursday the home side had been heartened by his poor show at the Gabba.