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DHAKA THURSDAY JANUARY 2, 2020, POUISH 18, 1426 BS

## SPORT



Sylhet Thunder coach Herschelle Gibbs (2nd from R), who has had trouble communicating with local players, oversees the team's practice session at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday, ahead of their BBPL match against Cumilla Warriors today.

PHOTO: STAR

## Language a problem for Gibbs

Sylhet Thunder coach frustrated by communication issues

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) moves to Sylhet from today after the completion of the second Dhaka phase on December 31, 2019. It will however not be a happy homecoming for hosts Sylhet Thunder as they have no hope of making it to the play-offs after only registering one win in eight games.

Other than some occasional sparks from Andre Fletcher, Johnshon Charles and Mohammad Mithun, the overall performance of the side has been below par. Sylhet Thunder coach Herschelle Gibbs explained why the team might have been suffering. According to the South African, it is the language barrier that has caused a lot of problems throughout the

tournament.

"About local players, a lot of them don't understand English. So, it is difficult for me to make points all the time. It is frustrating," said Gibbs yesterday in Sylhet.

However, Gibbs is not the only South African on coaching duty with Bangladeshi players. There are in total four South Africans currently working in the Bangladesh national team management with head coach Russell Domingo, batting coach Neil McKenzie, fielding coach Ryan Cook and physio Julian Calefato all from South Africa.

Gibbs also wondered how McKenzie managed to communicate with local players.

"I would love to be able to speak to them [players] like this, like I am speaking to you now and that they can say they understand every word. Unfortunately, that's

I would love to be able to speak to them [players] like this, like I am speaking to you now and that they can say they understand every word. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

HERSCHELLE GIBBS  
SYLHET THUNDER COACH

not the case. I am not sure what Neil McKenzie is saying (smiles). He is from South Africa and I am also from there. He [McKenzie] is also helping them to understand

what he is trying to do. But I know McKenzie is a good coach and the players will learn a lot from him. But I don't know how much he is actually getting across. Maybe I have to, you know, get a new language before I come here," said Gibbs.

A frustrated Gibbs also gave an example of his troubles while communicating with players in the BBPL.

"When I talk to them, I can see that they are listening but they are not really syncing in. I think the understanding of the game needs to be improved. I will give you an example. The other day Rubel Mia was batting and he was on 14 off 28 deliveries. I walked on to the field during the time-out and I said to him, 'what is happening, you got 14 off 28 balls?' and in reply he just shook his head," said Gibbs.



Australia coach Justin Langer (R) talks with captain Tim Paine during practice.

## 'Hope he plays as long as he can'

REUTERS, Sydney



Tim Paine will be Australia's captain for the foreseeable future and there is no reason why he would not lead the team in next year's inaugural World Test Championship final if they qualify, coach Justin Langer said on Wednesday.

Paine was seen by many as a placeholder when he became Australia's 46th Test captain in 2018 after the 45th, Steve Smith, was banned for 12 months for his part in the Newlands ball-tampering scandal.

Selected for his demeanour as much as for his batting and wicketkeeping skills, Paine was at the helm when Australia lost a first home series to India, but has since overseen the retention of the Ashes in England and two series triumphs.

Langer gave the idea of a leadership change short shrift ahead of the third Test against New Zealand on Wednesday.

"Truth is there's been conjecture from outside but there's never been one millisecond of conjecture within our team," he told reporters at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

"He's almost our most important player because he's a very good leader, his captaincy's been excellent, he's the best wicketkeeper in the world, he's as fit as anyone in the group.

"If he believed he could bat as well as we think he can, then we'll see results like we did in the last Test."

Forty points from a victory in the third Test, which starts at the SCG on Friday, would help second-placed Australia close the gap on top-ranked India in the nine-team table.

Langer said he thought there was every chance Paine would lead the team out at Lord's in 18 months' time should they remain in the top two and qualify for the title-decider.

"I hope he plays as long as he possibly can because his leadership's been brilliant," Langer added.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## ICC delegation due later in January

SPORTS REPORTER

A two-member International Cricket Council delegation comprising CEO Manu Sawhney and head of finance and commercial affairs Ehsan Mani is expected to visit Bangladesh later this month on a routine visit, informed Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday.

Sawhney, who was appointed as the fifth ICC CEO in April last year, is expected to exchange views with BCB.

"The delegates are expected to discuss about the tender process and commercial rights of upcoming ICC events after 2023. It's a routine visit from the ICC," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

## Mathews recalled

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka recalled former skipper Angelo Mathews to the T20 squad on Wednesday after a 16-month absence from the shortest form of the game for the upcoming India tour.

The cricket board said Mathews, 32, will be in the squad led by Lasith Malinga to play three matches in India.

The squad will leave Sri Lanka on Thursday, the board said in a statement.

Mathews played his last T20 international against South Africa in August 2018 when he led Sri Lanka to a three-wicket victory but failed to impress at the crease.



## WORLD ARCHERY AWARD

## Sana, Frederick in shortlist

SPORTS REPORTER



Ruman Sana, who led the gold rush as the Red and Greens clinched all 10 team and individual archery events in the 13th South Asian Games, has been nominated for the 2019 Athlete of the Year award by the sport's governing body, the World Archery Federation. Bangladesh coach Martin Frederick also made the shortlist for the coach of the year award.

Sana achieved many an accolade in this calendar year. The 24-year-old from Khulna started the year with a silver medal in the 3rd ISSF World Ranking Championship in Dhaka in February before winning a bronze medal in World Archery Championship in Netherlands in June, securing a quota place for next year's Olympics. He added a gold medal to his growing cabinet in the Asia Cup (Stage-3) in Philippines in September before the three-gold haul in Pokhara.

It was a perfect end to a year that had started on a high and ended even higher. Sana has been listed as a nominee for the Recurve Men and Breakthrough



RUMAN SANA

category. The awards will be decided by a combination of public and expert panel votes.

Sana is currently ranked 10th in the world in recurve individual men's category while Bangladesh men's recurve team are ranked 14th.

## Domingo ready to go to Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER



Uncertainty has surrounded Bangladesh's scheduled tour of Pakistan later this month. While the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was confident and adamant about hosting

all three scheduled T20Is and two Tests, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said that they would prefer a short tour but that too depended on whether the board could form a good team for the tour as a number of players and coaching staff were unwilling to travel to Pakistan.

However, Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo made his stance regarding travelling to Pakistan clear yesterday.

"I think some guys [in the team management] are not keen to go. But if we have to, then I am going," Domingo told Cricbuzz yesterday.

The Bangladesh coaching staff comprises four South Africans -- Domingo,

batting consultant Neil McKenzie, fielding coach Ryan Cook and newly appointed physiotherapist Julian Calefato. The other members are New Zealand's Daniel Vettori, the spin consultant, Indian analyst Shrinivas Chandrasekaran and strength and conditioning coach Mario Villavarayan from Sri Lanka.

While the Bangladesh head coach said he had no issue travelling to Pakistan, a final decision regarding the tour is still pending.

BCB President Nazmul Hassan had earlier said that talks were still ongoing with players as the board prepares to form the T20 squad. Bangladesh are unwilling to play the Test series in Pakistan at the moment and also asked the PCB to consider moving the two Tests to a neutral venue. Meanwhile, the PCB had made it clear that Pakistan would not be shifting the Test venue.

However, Hassan also said that there were no doubts about the security system in Pakistan.

## NZ look to salvage pride in smoky Sydney

AFP, Sydney



Smoke haze could come into play as New Zealand look to salvage some pride from their miserable tour of Australia in the third and final Test in Sydney this week.

With bushfires raging across New South Wales state, day two of the match on Saturday shapes up as the biggest challenge with temperatures forecast to soar and smoggy conditions expected.

The issue of smoke is a difficult one for officials, who currently rely on a mix of air quality guidelines from the International Cricket Council, state governments and the Australian Institute of Sport.

But there are inconsistencies on what is considered "unsafe", with Cricket Australia and the players' association currently working to develop better protocols around

visibility and air quality.

It follows a Big Bash League match in Canberra being abandoned this month because of toxic bushfire haze.

Currently, it is up to the umpires to decide whether conditions are safe, without any formal framework for that decision.

With the first two Tests at Perth and Melbourne ending in heavy defeats inside four days, New Zealand will need all the help they can get.

Coach Gary Stead admitted the Black Caps were "beaten up by Australia again" in their 247-run Melbourne thrashing and they have had to go back to the drawing board.

"We've got to find some areas where we can keep chipping away, make improvements and put Australia under pressure for longer," he said.

"When you get put under pressure for the periods Australia have put us under, then you have to question what

we're doing.

"Australia have three bowlers at 145 kph and a spinner (Nathan Lyon) that's taken over 300 Test wickets so you're always up against it. You don't get a reprieve and that's the hard thing for us."

The bright spot from Melbourne was makeshift opener Tom Blundell's gritty second innings century and he is set to retain the role alongside Tom Latham in Sydney.

But there is doubt over skipper Kane Williamson, who has had a poor tour.

The New Zealand Herald reported that he missed training Wednesday with flu-like symptoms, with batsman Henry Nicholls suffering similar problems.

Jeet Raval is the only specialist batsman waiting in the wings, but he has been out of form and was dropped for Melbourne.

## SHORT CORNER

## Archer may miss 2nd Test

England paceman Jofra Archer may miss out on second Test against South Africa after skipping bowling practice at Newlands on Wednesday.

Archer, who took six wickets in the first Test defeat at Pretoria including 5-102 in the second innings, did bat in the nets and took part in fielding drills but a sore right elbow kept him from bowling.

A decision on the 24-year-old would have to be made just before the start of the Test on Friday.

-- REUTERS

## Naseem withdrawn from U-19 WC squad

One month after announcing the team for the ICC U-19 World Cup 2020, the Pakistan Cricket Board has withdrawn 16-year-old fast bowler Naseem Shah, on the grounds of him having already made his senior

team debut in November last year.

At 16 years and 279 days, Shah became the youngest Test cricketer to make his debut on Australian soil, when he was picked in the Pakistan XI for the first Test in Brisbane. He has since played two more Tests and picked up a five-for



in his last, the second Test against Sri Lanka in Karachi, which Pakistan won by 263 runs to clinch the series, becoming the youngest Test cricketer to snare a five-for in the process.

-- ICC

## Lyon against 4-day Tests concept

Australia off-spinner Nathan Lyon says he is totally against the idea of tinkering with the duration of five-day Test matches and hopes the proposal to shorten the game's longest format is not even considered by administrators.

The International Cricket Council (ICC), the world governing body of the sport, is set to reflect on the idea of making Test matches four-day affairs to free up a crammed international calendar and reduce player workload.

Australia have said they will seriously consider the concept, while England will back making it mandatory from 2023.

The cash-rich Indian board (BCCI) are yet to declare their stance on the matter.

-- REUTERS