



Bangladesh Women Sports Association (BWSA) president Rafia Akhter Dolly (2nd from left) speaking at a press conference yesterday in connection with the BWSA athletics competition. —Star photo

Women's athletics today Many districts show interest Sports Reporter



Bangladesh Women Sports Association (BWSA) athletics, sponsored by daily newspaper Aitaj Awaj, will be held at the Sultana Kamal Women Sports Complex today.

Around 150 girls from 33 districts will compete in ten disciplines in the day-long meet.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader will inaugurate the competition at 11 am.

A press conference in connection with the meet was held at the Sultana Kamal Women Sports Complex yesterday with BWSA president Rafia Akhter Dolly in the chair.

African Nations' Cup Mauritius shock Angola

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 1: Mauritius stole the limelight in the latest series of qualifiers for next year's African Nations' Cup by beating Angola 2-0 in Laundia on Sunday, reports Reuters.

It was their first major away win of the competition. Patrick Mboma returned to scoring form to give Cameroon their first win in the qualifying campaign.

The first half goal ensured a 1-0 home win over Mozambique in Yaounde to restore Cameroon's chances of reaching the finals from Group One.

It was the burly striker's first goal since the World Cup finals in France. Mboma, who plays in Italy's Serie A, gave new French coach Pierre Lechantre a perfect start in his home debut.

But victory for Mauritius overshadowed all other performances, including Tunisia's six-goal hammering of Uganda in Tunis on Sunday.

Christopher Perle, who plays Third Division soccer in Germany, and midfielder Jean-Sebastien Bax scored the goals which lifted Mauritius into second place in Group Four.

"We are delighted with the victory. Our team is essentially a group of amateurs but we played like real professionals today," said coach Rajen Dorasami.

The other surprise defeats were for the powerful Ivory Coast team, who lost their 100 per cent record with a 1-0 defeat by Congo in Pointe Noire, and the Democratic Republic of Congo who were defeated by Madagascar.

Maurice Ntounous scored an early goal to elevate the Congolese to top spot in Group Three.

Madagascar beat the former Zaire 3-1 in Antananarivo to inflict the first defeat in the qualifying campaign on the team who finished third in the last finals in Burkina Faso.

Tunisia remain one of only two teams with a 100 per cent record in the qualifiers after hammering the Ugandans in Group Seven.

The goals were shared among six players, including German-based striker Adel Sellimi.

The other side with a perfect record are Ghana who crushed Eritrea 5-0 in the Accra late on Sunday night.

Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia also picked up vital points to comfortably place themselves at the head of their respective groups.

Morocco won 3-2 away against Togo on Sunday. Abdeljilil Hadja scoring a 72nd minute winner, while South Africa came from behind on Saturday to beat Gabon 4-1.

Zambia won their second successive away match, Denis Lotu scoring the only goal against Kenya in Group Six in Nairobi on Sunday.

Ntini's hopes kept alive



PRETORIA, Mar 1 (Reuters/ AFP): Black fast bowler Makhaya Ntini, who was overlooked for South Africa's current tour of New Zealand and also faces a rape charge, has received a chance to win a World Cup place.

Ntini was named Sunday to a South African squad of 19 which must be reduced to a final 15 by the end of March for the limited overs tournament in England starting May 14.

Unorthodox left-arm wrist spinner Paul Adams and off-spinner Pat Symcox also have an opportunity to secure a berth along with the out-of-form Ntini.

Convener of selectors Peter Pollock said: "We will announce the final 15 on the Easter weekend, so there is still some time for Ntini, Adams and Symcox to force their way in."

"Basically, we've gone for experience because the World Cup is a pressure situation."

Adams did not make the provisional 30, but, "He has been bowling a lot better in the last month and it was decided to give him a chance to force his way in," selector Peter Pollock said.

Selectors, under pressure from the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) to avoid all-white teams, also included coloured Herschelle Gibbs.

A surprise selection was off-spinner Symcox, 38, whose form has been disappointing.

Pollock said, "Symcox has been disappointing, but he has a month to do something. Adams has a month to maintain his form and Ntini has a month to give us just cause why he should be at the World Cup."

Two unfamiliar names among the squad of 19 are Nic Potas and Alan Dawson.

Potas has been included as a back-up for first-choice wicket-keeper Mark Boucher. He is also a capable batsman whose highest first-class score is 147 for a South African students XI against England's touring team in 1995-96.

Dawson is a right-arm medium-fast bowler with the ability to swing the ball who was Western Province's leading wicket-taker in the 1997-98 domestic season, and led them to victory in the country's one-day competition.

Pollock said the squad offered nine all-rounders for the final selection, most of whom were currently touring New Zealand.

"You will find that all the great sides have built their strength around all-rounders and there is no exceptions here," Pollock said.

SQUAD Hansie Cronje (captain), Shaun Pollock (vice captain), Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Daryll Cullinan, Jonty Rhodes, Lance Klusener, Nicky Boje, Mark Boucher, Allan Donald, Alan Dawson, Steve Elworthy, Daie Benkenstein, Derek Crookes, Pat Symcox, Nic Potas, Paul Adams and Makhaya Ntini.

Pallabi Club and Chandpur Pioneer Club won their respective matches in the Lotus-Kamal Third Division cricket at different city venues yesterday, reports UNB.

At the Uttara Friends Club ground, Pallabi Club outplayed Gacha Union by six wickets.

Gacha Union: 127 for all in 30.2 overs (Tofazzal 30, Mukul 16, Yousuf 16, extras 22; Sumit 4/16 and Sajal 3/30).

Pallabi Club: 131 for 4 wickets in 24.4 overs (Sumit 55 (n.o), Masum 26, Shovro 25, extras 17; Faruque 2/41).

At the Mohakhali T&T ground, Chandpur Pioneer Club beat Bahi Bahi Sporting Club by 2 wickets.

Bahi Bahi SC: 204 for 7 wickets in 35 overs (Emon 106, Mamun 52, extras 21; Jamil 3/34).

Chandpur Pioneer: 206 for 8 wickets in 35 overs (Sharif 47, Anwar 35, Himu 19 (n.o) extras 40; Sanjoy 2/11, Mainul 2/16 and Mamun 2/28).

Calcutta school team on Dhaka tour

Bangladesh experience a joy despite defeats



A 20-member under-15 school team from Calcutta, India, are now in the capital to play a series of friendly matches against local junior selects.

The Nava Nalanda High School team arrived in Dhaka on February 26 following an invitation by Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). The side consists of 15 cricketers and five officials. Diesel Power Services, an engineering firm, is providing hospitality to the visitors.

The boys from Calcutta have played two matches already. In the first game held on February 28, they lost to Cricket Coaching School (CCS) by 48 runs at the Kalabagan Club ground.

Batting first on the astro turf wicket, the CCS batsmen plundered a huge 246 for six off the stipulated 40 overs, thanks to some swashbuckling stroke play from Emon (117 from 103 balls, 16 fours, three sixes) and Anwar (83 off 75 deliveries, 10 fours, three sixes).

New-ball operator Dibya Bishnu was the pick of the Nalanda bowlers and claimed two wickets giving away just 22 runs from seven economical overs. Fellow opening bowler Avishek Sarkar and Salkat Ghosh evenly shared the other

four wickets. In reply, Nalanda were all out for 198. Arjan Majumder blasted two sixes in his top score of 31 net while Ayan Chatterjee (30), Avishek Datta (27) and Debanjan Guha (26) were the other notable scorers. Arafat of CCS took two for 45.

In their second match, Nalanda High School conceded an eight-wicket defeat at the hands of Kalindi Krira Chakra at Kalindi's ground in Keranibazar yesterday.

Nalanda batted first on a dicey pitch and could manage only 122 before being bundled out.

Kalindi's Robin and Rana captured three wickets each. Avishek Paul scored the highest 29 while openers Avishek Datta and Deep Chatterjee contributed 19 and 17 respectively for Nalanda.

Opener Robin hammered 41 and Babu remained unbeaten on 49 as Kalindi raced to their winning target.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nalanda's coach Malay Banerjee said that his boys were enjoying the Bangladesh experience despite the defeats.

"The boys are very excited to be here," said the former Ranji Trophy cricketer.

"I think cricket is growing at a tremendous pace in Bangladesh as was evident from the way school boys here are playing. Nalanda School competes regularly in inter-school tournaments in West Bengal and have been making steady progress.

The visitors play their last match against Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan (BKSP) on Mar 3 before leaving for home.



Jamaican ace Merlene Ottey (R) finishes ahead of Endurance Ojokolo of Nigeria to win the women's 60-metre gold at the IAAF Indoor Championships in Sindelfingen, Germany on February 28. Ottey took 7.05 seconds. —AFP photo

WC heartbreak for Slater, Blewett

MELBOURNE, Mar 1 (AFP/ Internet): Leg-spinner Stuart MacGill was a notable inclusion while fellow West Indian tourists Michael Slater and Greg Blewett were left out of Australia's preliminary national squad of 19 players announced Monday for this year's World Cup in England.

MacGill, one of the heroes of Australia's 3-1 Ashes Test home series with this summer over England, has said he wanted to be tried at international level in limited-overs cricket and was confident he could succeed.

The squad will be trimmed to 15 players on March 24 after the domestic Sheffield Shield final.

Victorian Ian Harvey, man of the match in Sunday's domestic one-day final win here over New South Wales, was hopeful he would make the final cut despite not having played in the senior Australian one-day side since last summer.

"I've played pretty well this year, I've been a bit more consistent, especially in my batting, and I know it (the squad) is going to be cut again," he said.

But hopefully I can be in the final 15.

Two of Harvey's teammates from Sunday's win, Damien Fleming and Paul Reffel, were also named in the squad.

"They still have to lose four of the 19, I'd be very happy if I made the squad," Reffel said.

Fellow Victorian Shane Warne, another touring in the Caribbean, will be deputy in England to new Test captain Steve Waugh.

SQUAD Steve Waugh (captain), Shane Warne (vice captain), Michael Beyer, Adam Dale, Damien Fleming, Adam Gilchrist, Jason Gillespie, Ian Harvey, Brendon Julian, Stuart Law, Shane Lee, Darren Lehmann, Stuart MacGill, Glenn McGrath, Damien Martyn, Ricky Ponting, Paul Reffel, Mark Waugh, Brad Young.

WC odds

LONDON, Mar 1 (Reuters): Australia and South Africa are 3-1 joint favourites to win this year's cricket World Cup, according to London Bookmakers William Hill.

England and Pakistan are quoted at 5-1 and defending champions Sri Lanka 6-1.

Full odds: 3-1 Australia, South Africa 5-1 England, Pakistan 6-1 Sri Lanka 8-1 India 9-1 West Indies 20-1 New Zealand 66-1 Zimbabwe 500-1 Bangladesh, Kenya, Scotland

Walsh, Ambrose fit for first Test

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad, Mar 1 (Reuters/ Internet): Veteran pace bowlers Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose have been declared fit for the first Test against Australia starting on Friday.

Steve Camacho, chief executive officer of the West Indies Cricket Board, said the pair was "available for selection".

"We have been in contact with both players and that has to be positive news."

Walsh and Ambrose, West Indies' most experienced bowlers, had been doubtful starters for the first match of the four-Test series in Port-of-Spain because of injuries picked up on the recent tour of South Africa.

West Indies will be without two of their leading batsmen, Carl Hooper and Shivanarine Chanderpaul, for Friday's Test. Chanderpaul has a shoulder injury and Hooper has been unable to leave Adelaide because his son is ill.

"In Chanderpaul's case we are looking at him being available for the second Test," said Camacho. "As for Hooper, he has been excused for the first Test. We are not certain when he will be available in this series."

West Indies' squad for the first Test was being announced later on Monday.

Napoli fan loses eye

BERGAMO, Italy, Mar 1: A 27-year-old Napoli fan lost an eye here on Sunday after being hit in the face by a bottle thrown through the windscreen of his car by rival supporters, reports AFP.

The car, with its two occupants, was stopped near the stadium and surrounded by a group of local Atlanta "ultras" before the kick-off of a Serie B match between the two sides.

Michele Aloca was rushed to hospital after being hit by the bottle but surgery failed to save his left eye.

A 25-year-old Atlanta fan arrested with a police record was later arrested on charges of grievous bodily harm and is due to be interviewed by an investigating magistrate here on Monday.

In a separate incident on Sunday, a group of about 100 Napoli fans being escorted by police from the railway station to the ground were hit by stones thrown by a group of Atlanta fans.

Police arrested a number of the assailants, and later released them.

FBI chief's caution

SYDNEY, Mar 1: United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) chief Louis Freeh says Sydney's 2000 Olympic Games could be the target of an attack by Islamic terrorist Osama Bin Laden, reports AP.

Freeh, who has been in Australia giving advice on law and order issues, made his comments on Channel Nine television Monday.

Atherton in, Hussain out



LONDON, Mar 1 (Reuters/ Internet): Mike Atherton was recalled to the England one-day squad on Monday for the World Cup opening at Lord's on May 14 in a team heavy on experience but light on flair.

Atherton, who has an impressive one-day record in England, has not represented his country in the one-day arena for two years and endured a torrid time against Glenn McGrath in the recent Ashes series.

The former England skipper also suffers from a long-standing back problem and, along with Graham Thorpe and Ian Austin, faces a fitness test before May 2.

Surrey left-hander Thorpe, England's most reliable bats-

man in any form of cricket, flew home early from the Australian tour with a back injury while Austin has undergone a knee operation.

Michael Atherton's record in this country is outstanding.

England chairman of selectors David Graveney told a news conference at Lord's.

"And Graham Thorpe has been missed in the middle order in both one-day and Test cricket."

Nasser Hussain was the notable omission in the 15-man squad. The Essex captain, lost his place to allow Thorpe, who has not played a competitive match since being sent home.

The generously-built Austin, a reliable all-rounder with Lancashire but at 32 hardly a bright young prospect for the new millennium, is one of five all-rounders included in the final squad of 15.

Vince Wells, 33, is rewarded for some gritty performances during England's disappointing one-day series in Australia and Adam Holoake, who has lost his spot as England's one-day captain, has clung on to his place.

Mark Ealham, whose limitations at Test level were again exposed in Australia, has also won selection, with the selectors opting for Robert Croft as the only specialist spinner.

"Graeme Hick will be the second spinner in the squad," Graveney confirmed.

In one concession to youth, 21-year-old Andrew Flintoff has been rewarded for some promising performances on the England A side's current tour of Zimbabwe and South Africa.

"Andrew has great talent with both bat and ball and he's worked hard to improve his fitness," Graveney said. "He's a young talent who gives us an exciting option."

There is also a recall for Angus Fraser, who is rewarded for his accuracy and ability to move the ball on pitches likely to favour seamers in the early part of the English summer.

Graveney conceded that England's recent one-day form had

been disappointing, especially the six defeats in their last seven matches in the triangular series in Australia this year.

"It's fair to say that Adam Holoake and Mark Ealham will be disappointed with their contributions with the bat," he said.

"We blew up in too many run chases but I believe this squad can win the World Cup."

If any member of the England squad is subsequently injured, before or during the World Cup, a replacement can be called up from outside the nominated 15 players providing officials are satisfied the injury is sufficient to withdraw from the tournament.

SQUAD

Alec Stewart (captain), Mike Atherton, Ian Austin, Robert

Croft, Mark Ealham, Neil Fairbrother, Andrew Flintoff, Angus Fraser, Darren Gough, Graeme Hick, Adam Holoake, Nick Knight, Alan Mullally, Graham Thorpe and Vince Wells.

have expired by then, and Canada's Dick Pound would take control. In 2000, Anita DeFrantz of the United States would be next in line.

Regardless of whether Samaranch makes it to the end of his term, there is no obvious long-term heir.

Pounding contenders are executive board members Pound, Gosper, DeFrantz, Jacques Rogge of Belgium and Thomas Bach of Germany.

South Korean board member Kim Un-young was a serious presidential hopeful but he is among those under investigation in the Salt Lake scandal. Even if Kim escapes without expulsion, his chances have been severely hurt, if not killed.

Pound, who has been the IOC's chief negotiator of TV and sponsorship deals, has been put in a difficult position as head of the commission investigating ethical misconduct of members in the Salt Lake case.

While some feel Pound's stock has risen, several members say his presidential chances have been compromised. By giving Pound the high-profile job of prosecuting IOC members, Samaranch may have unwittingly or unwittingly — ruined his ambitions.

Gosper, head of the IOC's press commission, has become increasingly active as Australia prepares to stage the 2000 Games, but his age — 65, nine years older than Pound — is a disadvantage.

DeFrantz, the first woman to reach the IOC vice-presidency, is a prominent advocate for athletes' rights and the advancement of women. But some members believe it's too early for DeFrantz, only 46, to be considered a serious candidate.

In a strong position is Rogge, an orthopedic surgeon who has made a rapid rise to the IOC's inner circle. Rogge holds influential roles as head of the European Olympic Committees, and as the IOC's point man for the Sydney Olympics and the 2004 Athens Games.

Fully, an IOC member since 1995, has not been a major player. But he's a favorite of Samaranch, has name recognition and has not been dragged into the scandal or internal politics. Whether he has the desire to be president is unclear.

The name of Britain's Princess Anne also has come up.

Samaranch: Better than the rest?



LONDON, Mar 1 (AP): With the Olympics mired in crisis, IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch appears more determined than ever to stay in office.

But the questions remain: Can he hold on? For how long? Who might succeed him? The answers to all three are anyone's guess.

As the International Olympic Committee prepares for a watershed meeting March 17-18 to deal with its worst corruption scandal, no obvious successor to Samaranch has emerged from among a half-dozen leading candidates.

Samaranch has come under tremendous pressure since the scandal broke late last year over cash and other inducements received by IOC members from Salt Lake City and other Olympic bidders. Calls for his resignation have mounted.

Still, Samaranch appears to have widespread support from his main constituency — the IOC members from whom he will seek a vote of confidence next month.

Recent interview with a cross section of IOC members elicited the same general response: Samaranch is the only one who can lead the committee out of the crisis and he should see through his final term until 2001.

With no obvious successor in place, Olympic officials say Samaranch's departure could trigger a vicious internal battle that would only drag the IOC deeper into crisis.

"This is not the time to be debating your leadership," said Australian executive board member Kevan Gosper. "It's the time to rally around your leadership. If the ship's in a storm, you don't throw the captain overboard."

At the IOC's marble headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, a sort of siege mentality has set in. Samaranch has stopped doing interviews and made no public appearances or statements in recent weeks.

But Samaranch has kept busy, conferring with his aides and IOC members, laying the groundwork for the March session, the most crucial meeting in his 19 years as president.

Aides say Samaranch, who appeared tired and disheartened

month ago, is more upbeat and more determined to fight on and save his legacy.

The outcome of the March meeting should help determine Samaranch's fate.

If the IOC fails to expel members and push through major reforms, Samaranch's position will become untenable. Even if Samaranch comes out stronger and the crisis dies down, his future remains a mat-

ter of conjecture.

There is speculation he might decide to step down in calmer circumstances before the end of his term, possibly after next year's Sydney Olympics.

The timing of any early departure is crucial and could be part of the reckoning to determine a successor.

Under the Olympic Charter, if the IOC president leaves before the end of his mandate, the first vice president — there are four VPs — takes over until an election at the next general assembly.

So, if Samaranch were to resign in March, Pal Schmitt of Hungary would step in as president, pending an election at the IOC session in June.

If Samaranch waited until June, Schmitt's VP term will

end in September.

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Aides say Samaranch, who appeared tired and disheartened

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 40 Pulls beans LB's 1 Fido's behind 2 Ethereal beagles 3 Speaker of 21 Clumsy craft 4 Despairing lore 23 Happy, e.g. 5 Lean-to Charles, e.g. 24 Busy wife 6 Work with noodles 25 Night light 7 Merchant ship 26 Drive the getaway car? 8 Over-indulge 27 Georgia city 9 Those Fair' herb 32 Scarborough 10 cooperate 33 Porridge 11 — good deed 34 Girl in a Slinger story 12 Spill the 19 One of 35 Non-Gentle 13 Wapiti 14 — stick "Great" quintet 15 Seed covering 16 Tills or Torme 17 Mc. Korbut 18 Percy — Shelley 19 Undeniably 20 Set down 21 Chateau-briand cut 22 Knightwear 23 Spill the 19 One of 24 Spill the 19 One of 25 Spill the 19 One of 26 Spill the 19 One of 27 Spill the 19 One of 28 Spill the 19 One of 29 Spill the 19 One of 30 Spill the 19 One of 31 Spill the 19 One of 32 Spill the 19 One of 33 Spill the 19 One of 34 Spill the 19 One of 35 Spill the 19 One of 36 Spill the 19 One of 37 Spill the 19 One of



CRYPTOQUIP B W M T E Q B U B M U V C N K Z H H E Q B T U U C Q Z H H M F U V B U E M F Z W Q F Z F B H H K N Z U Q Yesterday's Cryptiquip: PERHAPS, IN THE BE-GINNING, THE WOODPECKER WAS KNOWN AS A KNOCKINGBIRD. Today's Cryptiquip clue: E equals B The Cryptiquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.