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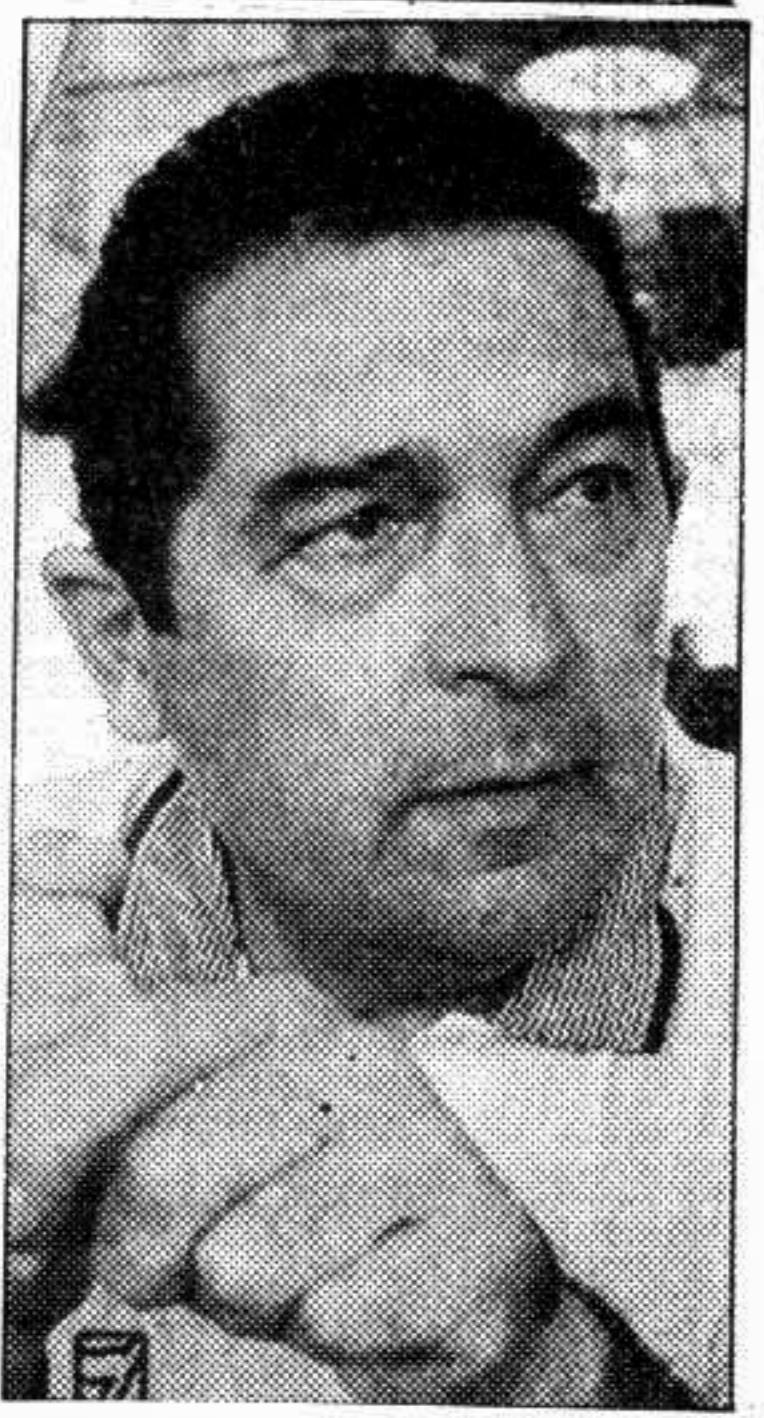
Star Sport

DHAKA THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1999 Email: dssports@bdonline.com

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Column One SPORTS TALK



Test status in year 2000?

From Nizamuddin Ahmed in London

June 23: Bangladesh's chances of gaining Test status over the next two days of meetings of the International Cricket Council (ICC) are 'feeble', but it will certainly be accorded by June 2000, disclosed a reliable source here today.

Test status for Bangladesh goes on trial today at the Lord's at a meeting of the Executive Board of the ICC. Although the issue will be 'finally' decided at ICC's annual general meeting tomorrow, matters are known to be finalised at the more exclusive Executive Board meeting, where Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hossain Chowdhury will argue Bangladesh's Test case. Also attending tomorrow's AGM will be the BCB general secretary Syed Ashraful Haq.

It was learnt today that, barring the reservation of one or two full members, who require perhaps more information, all the others were heavily in favour of granting Test status to Bangladesh now. There was all round compassion and respect for Bangladesh's cause.

BCB members in London wait anxiously for news from the ICC boardroom, which has been known to come up with pleasant surprises. Understandably topping the BCB strategy for long has been gaining Test.

status, as it will be a great boost to this already hugely popular sport that has unbounded potential. Also, a full member does not have to qualify to play in the World Cup.

The BCB has used all its resources in the past year, maintaining the right liaison and visiting relevant people, to evince its Test case. The efforts were geared up after the country earned the One-Day International status in June 1997, following the momentous ICC triumph.

For several years now BCB has been advocating the vast popularity of the game in the country, availability of grounds, large and increasing number of cricketers, performance in international

matches, government and public support, positive role of the media, and its own ability to administer competition at all levels, as justification for Test status. But, its new ace has to be Bangladesh's mammoth victory against Pakistan in the 1999 World Cup.

The only reason for which the ICC may leave the matter in the fridge for another year is the lack of a first class structure in Bangladesh which demands domestic competitions in the longer version of cricket. But, BCB has already started to look into that shortcoming from the last season.

Representatives of the ICC Development Committee visited Bangladesh in the last six months to assess the right of the ICC champions to obtain the much-guarded Test status. If Test status is granted today, the victory against Pakistan will account for influencing much of the votes.

Also on the ICC agenda is the development of the game worldwide. ICC governs cricket in only 53 countries, considerably a smaller domain than football's governing body FIFA, which is truly global.

Apart from the nine Test-playing countries, who are full members, the ICC has 25 associate members, including Bangladesh and 19 affiliates.

Defending the limitation, chief executive Barry Richards says ICC is a genuine world body, not separate countries pulling for themselves. Moreover, it's an expanding body.

Top in the ICC agenda is the globalisation of the game. Almost half of the projected 32 million pounds World Cup profit plus the presumed 8 million pounds from the Wills International Cup held in Dhaka last year, an event to be repeated every two years, will be funnelled for the development of cricket worldwide.

Bangladesh are expected to get part of the windfall. It is this globalisation scheme that may also tip the scale in favour of Bangladesh today.

Saber was re-elected ICC Executive Board member and

Ashraful ICC Cricket Committee Management member in polls held yesterday. Both have been holding the posts for the past two years.

The BCB general secretary has also been elected member of the ICC Trophy Committee, chaired by Kenya's Jimmy Rayani. Other members are: Harilal Shah (Kenya), Stanley Parlman (Israel), Geoff Edward (Canada) and Jorgen Holmen (Denmark).

The ICC 2001 tournament will be held in Canada.

Football resumes today

The Keya Metropolis Premier Division Football League resumes today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, reports UNB.

Brothers Union will take on Rahamatganj MFS in the first match at 4 pm while Federation Cup champions Abahani will face Arambagh KS at 6 pm at the same venue.

Both matches were scheduled to be held yesterday but postponed due to the non-availability of police personnel.

Youth Asia Cup team unveiled BCB's over-aged U-19

Sports Reporter

forth-coming Youth Asia Cup, scheduled to begin in Singapore from July 5.

Although, the board, presently functioning without a selection committee, is yet to make the team list public, the inclusion of a number of players of dubious age is sure to spark widespread resentment among keen followers of the game.

The list surprisingly includes players like Fahim Muntasir Sumit and Sabir.

Khan, two of the four survivors of the Bangladesh Youth team that won the plate title in South Africa in 1997.

Sabbir, the gangling off-spinner, who had a disastrous last season in domestic cricket, is a final year honours student of Jahangirnagar University while Fahim, many feel, is too old to be considered for selection even.

If Sumit (Fahim) is under 19, I'm also under 19," said Nadir Shah, a former national cricketer now in his mid 40s.

Also contentious is the selection of Gulam Murtaza, the reserve wicket keeper of the national team, Rezaul Hoque.

Former national leg-spinner Waheedul Ghani, who was one of the selectors of the controversial World Youth Championship team of 1997, said, "none of the selected players are below the age of 20."

It is not understandable how the board included players like Sabir Khan and Fahim Muntasir for the tournament".

"We are talking about Test status. But our deeds hardly reflect our desire for the ultimate target. I firmly believe it was not in the national interest to pick up over-aged players.

Tournaments of this kind always provides the opportunity of finding budding talents. But I don't understand picking of players who are over-aged and have already played in the national team.

This unhealthy practice not only hinders our progress but also deprives the youth to unearth their talents", said Ghanai adding that they should be an acceptable yardstick to stop the "manipulation" of a vested quarter.

Lamenting on the weird wisdom of his fellow national cricketers Wahid said: "No doubt, we the cricketers are in the selection procedure. But until we think beyond our self-interest, cricket will never prosper."



WELCOME TO MELBOURNE: Australian World Cup winning captain Steve Waugh (L) and his deputy Shane Warne ride in an open-topped vehicle during a ticker-tape parade through the streets of Melbourne after their return from England yesterday.

—AFP photo

Tourists take command



OXFORD, England, June 23 (AFP/Reuters): New Zealand fired a warning shot to England by punishing the British Universities here Tuesday just nine days before the first Test match between the countries.

Skipper Stephen Fleming, opener Matthew Horne and Nathan Astle made centuries as the Kiwis finished the second day on 513 for six — a lead of 282.

Fleming struck 127 from 159 balls which included 20 fours. Horne was dismissed moments later for 133 off 221 deliveries. He hit 17 fours and a one six. The tourists having resumed on 56 for one.

Nathan Astle, who scored only 80 runs in nine World Cup games, boosted the tally with a speedy century.

The batsmen were particularly harsh on compatriot Greg Loderidge, who has already played Test cricket for his country, the leg-spinner finishing with figures of 32.4-1-158-1.

Daniel Vettori followed up his fine bowling figures of five for 80 in the Universities first innings total of 231 with an unbeaten 70.

SCOREBOARD

Second day's scoreboard of the three-day match between New Zealand and British Universities:

BRITISH UNIVERSITIES: First

innings

Roberts c Fleming b McMillan 49

Inraimohammed c Astle b

Doull 12

O'Connor 7.2

Vettori 33

Nash 11

McMillan 9

Walker 9

Hicks 21

Hutton 133

Bowler O M R W

Doull 12 6 21 1

O'Connor 10 80 5

Vettori 11 4 32 0

Nash 9 2 19 2

McMillan 9 2 29 0

Walker 9 2 29 0

Hicks 18

Hutton 20

Bell 12

Driver c Hicks 133

Bell c Loveridge b Hicks 19

Fleming c Loveridge b Hutton 127

Astle c Wilson b Loveridge 100

McMillan b Hutton 1

Nash b Francis 30

Vettori not out 70

Extras: (b-4, lb-8, w-2, nb-19) 33

Total: (For 6 wkt in 130.4 overs) 513

To Bat: Croy, Walker, Doull, O'Connor.

Fall of wkt: 1-52; 2-297; 3-299; 4-312; 5-389; 6-513.

NEW ZEALANDERS: First

innings (overnight 56 for one)

Horne c Driver b Hicks 133

Bell c Loveridge b Hicks 19

Fleming c Loveridge b Hutton 127

Astle c Wilson b Loveridge 100

McMillan b Hutton 1

Nash b Francis 30

Vettori not out 70

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Conquerors come home



MELBOURNE, June 23: Tens of thousands of sports-mad Australian fans crammed into the main street of Melbourne on Wednesday to welcome home their World Cup cricket winners, reports Reuters.

Shredded phone books and yellow cards and streamers rained on to the Australian team, which crushed Pakistan by eight wickets in last Sunday's final at Lord's after being written off early in the limited overs tournament.

Australians were heady with sporting success on Thursday, the parade for their victorious cricketers coming just hours after teen summer qualifier Jelena Dokic crushed world number one tennis player Martina Hingis in the first round at Wimbledon.

The flag-waving Melbourne crowd saved their biggest roars for captain Steve Waugh and hometown hero Shane Warne, the man of the match in the cup final.

The pair brought up the rear of the parade which saw the team driven in open-top sports cars through the heart of Australia's second largest city.

Fans said they never lost hope for the Australians, even when Waugh and his team came close to being knocked out of the tournament in the first round and again later against the talented Pakistanis.

"Of course they were going to win," said fan Jyoti Rahman.

game that has made him a star, reports AFP.

The spinner's future has been the subject of intense media speculation lately, with his retirement being touted.

But in his newspaper column in The Times newspaper in London Tuesday, Warne said he was "thinking more in terms of

retirement", he said.

"I basically made up my mind 10 days ago and until the last week it was probably 50-50". Australian coach Geoff Marsh said he believed Warne needed nothing more than a holiday to revive his spirits.

"The thing with Shane is that he's a famous person. You go out with him and people never leave him alone. People love him," said Marsh.

"There are always people going up to him and eventually it just wears you down. He's been on the road for 120 days. Shane needs to go home."

"His wife has had a son he has never seen. He needs a break," he said.

But Marsh said Warne had proved he was still the world's best spin bowler and "I think he loves the game too much to contemplate not playing."

Captain Steve Waugh said he and other members of the team would not try to influence Warne's decision.

Warne was dropped from the Test team in the West Indies in March and criticised in the early stages of the World Cup for his form but he bounced back with match winning performances in the semi-final against South Africa and the final against Pakistan.

Kournikova, Coetzer cruise

LONDON, June 23: Russian starlet Anna Kournikova and South African Amanda Coetzer marched into the third round of the women's singles on Wednesday at Wimbledon with

comfortable straight sets victories, reports AFP.

There was something of a shock, however, in the men's singles when French Open finalist Andrei Medvedev, the Ukrainian world number 31, went out to 87th-ranked Canadian doubles specialist Daniel Nestor 6-1, 7-5, 6-3.

Pin-up teen Kournikova, the 17th seed, shrugged off spells of inconsistency to move past Venezuela's Maria Alejandra Vento, ranked 104 in the world, 7-5, 6-4 on Court Two.

The glamour girl next faces Ines Gorrochategui of Argentina, who beat Ruxanda Dragomir of Romania 6-2, 6-2.

Coetzer, who has never been past the fourth round, had bowed out in the second round in seven of her last appearances at the All England Club, but this time she had little difficulty</