



**DELL**

## NSC in Test dilemma

Sports Reporter

The National Sports Council (NSC) might reconsider football's allotment on Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) in the wake of India's acceptance to be the opponents in Bangladesh's maiden Test match in early November, according to reliable sources.

The NSC, who has granted BNS to football up to October 31, might reduce the tenure by fifteen days in order to allow the groundsmen to prepare the outfield within a minimum possible time.

"It's too early to comment on that," said State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader when contacted last night.

He however said that it was a new situation where Bangladeshis would have to play their first Test match in November.

"We have already allotted the stadium to football up to October 31. As it is a different situation now, I shall have to seek help from my higher authority if the first Test has to be played at the BNS in November," Quader added.

"We will have to sit together to solve the matter," he said.

The president of Board of Control for Cricket in India, AC Muttiah, announced on Saturday that they have agreed to play a one-off Test match against Bangladesh in first week of November, before their Test and One-Day series against touring Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe will arrive in India on November 5 and will play the first Test against the hosts at the Firoz Shah Kotla in New Delhi on November 18.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Syed Ashraful Huq said that it would not be possible for them to prepare the ground if they get back the BNS on November 1.



OVER THE MOON! Ecstatic Abahani players and officials after their victory in the Federation Cup final.

— Star photo

## Booters fly to Bangkok today

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Under-16 football team leaves for Thailand today to play a couple of warm-up matches ahead of their 9th Asian Youth Championship campaign.

The final round of the Asian Youth Championship involving ten teams begins in the Danang City of Vietnam from September 3.

Placed in the Group B, Bangladesh will play their first match against Kuwait on September 6.

As a build-up to main event, Bangladesh will play two exhibition matches during their four-day stopover in Bangkok.

Although their opponents in Bangkok are yet to be known, the generous gesture of Thai Football Federation president Worravit Makudi would do a be-up against fancied Iran on world of good to the boys of Pronob Kumar Dey.

Former national player Golam Sarwar Tipu will manage the 25-member team that includes 20 booters. Ironically, Alamin, who led Bangladesh in the Group 4 qualifiers in Jamshedpur, India, has not been included in the team.

Bangladesh beat hosts India in the final group league match in June to advance into the final round for the fourth time in a row. In all, it is their fifth time qualification.

Bangladesh however had a very little success in the final round. This time around they have been pencilled in to a tougher group along with holders Thailand, Kuwait, Oman and Hossain.

Officials: Anwarul Islam (team leader), Mainul Islam (deputy team leader), Golam Sarwar Tipu (manager), Pronob Kumar Dey (coach) and Mahfuzullah Chisti (doctor).

The rank-outsiders will take on Oman on September 8 in their second league match. They will be up against fancied Iran on September 10 before facing defending champions Thailand in

## Missions in Pakistan, SL & Kenya

## England name squads



LONDON, Aug 28: Surrey leg-spinner Ian Salisbury was recalled today to the England Test squad to tour Pakistan and Sri Lanka after a two-year absence, reports Reuters.

Kent wicketkeeper Paul Nixon is the only uncapped player in the 16-man party which also features Yorkshire seamer Matthew Hoggard who made his England debut in the second Test against the West Indies in June.

A 14-man one-day squad, which will also play in the ICC Knock-out tournament in

Kenya, contained no surprises.

"Our decision to announce the touring parties ahead of the last Test match reflects the fact that we have played good cricket this summer and are developing a settled side," chairman of selectors David Graveney said.

Nick Knight is due to undergo keyhole surgery on a knee injury this week but is expected to be fully fit by the time the squad departs for Kenya.

"We did not consider Stephen Harmison for the Test squad as he has been advised to rest this winter in order to recover from injury."

The one-day squad leave for Kenya on September 28 to compete in the Kenya tournament. Test players not included in the one-day squad are scheduled to fly out to Pakistan on October 22.

England will play three one-day internationals and three Tests against Pakistan before returning home for a six-week break over New Year.

They are scheduled to depart for Sri Lanka on January 30 where they will play three Tests followed by three one-dayers.

**TEST SQUAD:** Nasser Hussain (captain), Michael Atherton, Andrew Caddick, Dominic Cork, Andrew Flintoff, Ashley Giles, Darren Gough, Graeme Hick, Matthew Hoggard, Paul Nixon, Ian Salisbury, Alec Stewart, Marcus Trescothick, Graham Thorpe, Michael Vaughan, Craig White.

**ONE-DAY SQUAD:** Hussain (captain), Mark Alleyne, Caddick, Mark Ealham, Flintoff, Giles, Gough, Hick, Nick Knight, Alan Mullally, Stewart, Trescothick, Thorpe, White.

We believe that if the England 'A' team's proposed participation in the Busta Cup goes ahead, this will provide a superb opportunity for our leading young cricketers to test themselves against high-class opposition in the Caribbean," said England's chairman of selectors David Graveney today.

The Busta Cup is a four-day first class competition.

Andrew Flintoff has been chosen as an all-rounder and will be expected to prove his fitness to bowl in Kenya.

**DRU meet gets underway**

Sports Reporter

The Annual Sports Competition 2000 of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) began at its Shegun Bagicha office yesterday.

On the opening day of the nearly two-month long competition, the bridge and table tennis matches were held.

There will be eleven events in the competition.

Masud Ahmed Rumi of BSS won the opening match of table tennis against Mahmudur Rahman Khokon 21-7, 21-12. Rumi also defeated Muktoba Danish of Muktakhantha on his way to reach the semifinal from Group A.

Earlier, DRU president M Anwarul Haq declared the competition open.



Sonali Bank's Hasan (bottom) and Habibullah of Bangladesh Sporting taking tumble after a collision during their Premier Division Hockey League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo

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(Australian tennis star)

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## SPORTS TALK



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## Three cheers for Abahani

Sports Reporter

 Abahani prevailed in the battle of the titans as they edged arch foes Mohammedan Sporting Club 2-1 to lift the 16th Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

In an entertaining final, skipper Iqbal Hossain and veteran midfielder Zakir Hossain scored

for the Dharmondi based powerhouse while ace striker Alfaz pulled one back for Mohammedan.

The victory also marked an unique achievement for Abahani who equalled Mohammedan's tric of championships.

Mohammedan took the first four Federation Cup titles since the tournament's inception in 1980. The two giants of local football both have now won the Cup seven times.

Abahani started the game with more enterprise but the first opportunities came Mohammedan's way.

In the 13th minute Rakib's header off a Matur Munna corner just sailed over the cross piece.

Alfaz mustered a great chance when he shot straight into the hands of Abahani custodian Biplab in the 22nd minute. Seconds later, former national striker Imtiaz Ahmed Naqib saw his header going out of play after kissing the top of the bar.

Mohammedan soon paid the price for their failure to find the mark as Abahani went in front with their first genuine attempt of the match. But Abahani should also consider themselves lucky as a horrendous piece of goalkeeping from Mohammedan's Nizam handed them the lead in the 25th minute.

Nizam was in two minds whether to grip or fist a floating free-kick from Abahani's Ghanaian recruit Kennedy and eventually ended up making a weak clearance which hit the chest of Iqbal and started rolling towards the goal. The national midfielder galloped past Nizam and coolly put it into the net (1-0).

In the second half, Mohammedan coach Hasanuzzaman made an inspiring substitution in the hard working Shoaib in place of the out of sorts Reazul.

That change paid dividends when the fleet-footed playmaker orchestrated the move that resulted in his team's equaliser in the 75th minute.

Shoaib sent in a teasing cross from the right into the Abahani box which deflected off an Abahani defender into the path of the dangerous Alfaz who made no error in finishing off (1-1).

Minutes later, the 25,000 strong crowd at the BNS saw Mohammedan come tantalisingly close to going ahead with Shoaib again in the thick of things. His corner from the right was met by Matur Munna but the ball ricocheted off the left post much to the anguish of the Mohammedan devotees.

As the match was seemingly heading for the sudden death extra time, Zakir sent the Abahani fans into raptures by blasting in a left-footed volley from the top of the box past a hapless Nizam with five minutes of regulation period remaining (2-1).

With their talismanic Alfaz substituted, Mohammedan were in total disarray after conceding the second goal. They could have been punished further had not Don's effort hit the wood-work little before the final whistle.

Home and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim witnessed the final as chief guest and handed over the trophy and a cash award of Taka one lakh to Abahani skipper Iqbal Hossain. Mohammedan received Taka 75,000 in prize money as runner up.

**Yellow cards:** Don (Abahani), Reazul and Faisal (Mohammedan).

## TEAMS

**Abahani:** Biplab, Tito, Nazrul, Ghansha, Partho, Zakir, Iqbal, Sentu, Don, Kennedy and Pavel (Dulal).

**Mohammedan SC:** Nizam, Reazul, Faisal, Ruhul Amin, Jewel Rana, Matur Munna, Rakib, Jahangir, Selim, Nakib and Alfaz (Roman).

**Referee:** Ibrahim Nesar.



LEADING FROM THE FRONT: Abahani captain Iqbal jumps on teammate Kennedy after the former gave his side the lead against Mohammedan in the Federation Cup final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo

**Gloucs' fabulous fourth**



LONDON, Aug 28: Gloucestershire made cricket history when they won a fourth successive Lord's final as they defeated Warwickshire under the Duckworth-Lewis system to lift the NatWest Trophy on Sunday.

With this win, the winners led the first half-10.

Thomas opened the account for Bangalore Sporting in the tenth minute before Rubel doubled the margin twenty minutes into the second session.

Sonali Bank pulled one goal back four minutes later through Farid.

The debut left the bankers glued to their previous collection of four points on completion of their eight first leg games.

Meanwhile, in the First Division League, Bangladesh Railway came from behind to beat Dhaka Wonders a 2-1 defeat.

Wanigantha gave Wonders a 13th minute lead before a double strike from Gregory turned the tide.

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After Alleyne's side became the first team to win both major knockout competitions — the Benson and Hedges Cup and the NatWest — in the same season two years running.

Warwickshire were well ahead of the required scoring rate when play was called off and a total of 101 under the D-L system would have been sufficient.

The rest of the front-line bowling did not make the most of the conditions and Warwickshire spinner Ashley Giles cashed in as he celebrated his England Test recall with his side's top score of 60.

Giles hit five fours in his