



LET'S GIVE IT ONE LAST TRY: The Bangladesh team warming up during a practice session recently.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Minnows' Cup final

AFP, Johannesburg

Before the World Cup began, most experts would have said Saturday's Pool B encounter between Bangladesh and Kenya here at the Wanderers was a 'meaningless match'.

It is now anything but.

Kenya's sensational 53-run win over 1996 champions Sri Lanka in Nairobi on Monday catapulted the East Africans to the top of the group table.

Following New Zealand's boycott of its match in Nairobi, Monday's victory left Kenya on 12 points and with a real chance of going through to the SuperSixes.

Collins Obuya, a 21-year-old leg-spinner, was Kenya's hero against Sri Lanka, taking five for 21 at Nairobi Gymkhana and is likely to be a big threat again this weekend.

"He has a lion heart, walks like a lion and has the strength of a lion," said Kenya captain Steve Tikolo of Obuya.

"The boy has come of age, he will definitely go places," said Kenya's former international fast bowler Edward Odumbe.

"I will not be surprised if he does

continue with his form against Bangladesh in Johannesburg on Saturday," Odumbe added.

Adding spice to the encounter is the fact that Bangladesh were promoted ahead of Kenya to be become cricket's 10th Test nation.

Kenya, who many thought had a better claim on cricketing grounds, currently enjoy one-day international status only.

Unfortunately for Kenya, Bangladesh's international record is so poor that the chances of them or indeed anyone else, being welcomed into the elite in the foreseeable future are all but non-existent.

Bangladesh have lost 16 of their 17 Tests, 11 by an innings. Only rain, which denied Zimbabwe a certain away win, prevented a 100 per cent loss record.

The tiny South Asian nation have also been defeated in 28 of their last 30 one-dayers, the other two games being rain-affected washouts.

At this tournament only a downpour against the West Indies in Benoni has prevented five straight defeats.

And their dreadful record prompted Kenya coach Sandeep

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FORM GUIDE
Bangladesh v Kenya



AFP, Johannesburg

Form guide for Kenya and Bangladesh ahead of their World Cup Group B clash at the Wanderers here on Saturday:

Kenya (won 3 lost 6 NR 1)

Feb 24 2003 beat Sri Lanka by 53 runs
Feb 21 2003 beat New Zealand (match forfeited)
Feb 15 2003 beat Canada by 4 wickets
Feb 12 2003 lost to South Africa by 10 wickets
Dec 15 2002 lost to Zimbabwe by 9 wickets
Dec 11 2002 lost to Zimbabwe by 47 runs
Dec 8 2002 No Result
Sept 17 2002 lost to West Indies by 29 runs
Sept 20 2002 lost to South Africa by 176 runs
Sept 5 2002 lost to Australia by 5 wickets

Bangladesh (won 0 lost 8 NR 2)

Feb 26 2003 lost to New Zealand by 7 wickets
Feb 22 2003 lost to South Africa by 10 wickets
Feb 18 2003 v West Indies NR
Feb 14 2003 lost to Sri Lanka by 10 wickets
Feb 11 2003 lost to Canada by 60 runs
Dec 3 2002 lost to West Indies by 86 runs
Dec 2 2002 lost to West Indies by 84 runs
Nov 29 2002 v West Indies NR
Oct 9 2002 lost to South Africa by 7 wickets
Oct 3 2002 lost to South Africa by 168 runs

Nairobi
Nairobi
Cape Town
Potchefstroom
Bulawayo
Kwekwe
Harare
Colombo
Colombo
Nairobi

Kimberley
Bloemfontein
Benoni
Pietermaritzburg
Durban
Dhaka
Dhaka
Chittagong
Kimberley
Potchefstroom



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Khaled Mashud

One last chance to salvage pride

AL-AMIN from Johannesburg

Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud wants to return home in some dignity with a victory over Kenya at the Wanderers on Saturday after a largely forgettable World Cup campaign.

His sentiment was echoed by the other players including former national captain Akram Khan who wants to remember his last World Cup appearance for the right reasons.

Even manager ASM Faruque was bullish in predicting Bangladesh's chances against the East Africans despite the bare fact that Kenya have beaten Bangladesh five times in six meetings and are fresh from a sensational victory over Sri Lanka in their last match.

"We will show that we are a

better team than Kenya in all aspects of the game and I don't see any reason why we can't beat them," said Faruque at the Sandton Hotel on Friday morning.

Mashud too was equally optimistic of a win and dismissed suggestions that Kenya were proving a point or two with their World Cup exploits.

"Kenya have got some good players but we are better as a team. We have proved it by playing good cricket against top sides. I just pray that we play to our potential at least for one day and return home with some amount of pride," said Mashud.

Mashud however pointed out that to do well against Kenya his team's batting had to click.

"Our batting has remained a

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PHOTO: STAR FILE

Steve Tikolo

Olonga frozen for good?

INTERNET, Bulawayo

Zimbabwe fielded an injured bowler in their World Cup Pool A match against Holland on Friday rather than Henry Olonga, according to reports.

Strike bowler Olonga, along with star batsman Andy Flower, wore a black armband in Zimbabwe's opening match to mourn the 'death of democracy' in the country.

He was subsequently dropped for Zimbabwe's next game against India and then prevented from acting as a substitute fielder against Australia.

Now Zimbabwe selected Douglas Hondo to play against

Holland even though he aggravated a groin strain against the Australians because Olonga is the only viable alternative.

The Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) stick rigidly to a policy of fielding three black players in every game and Olonga is the only other black player who could come in for Hondo.

"Henry is already half-thinking that his career is half-over," Flower told The Times newspaper.

"He's very pessimistic about his chances of ever representing Zimbabwe again.

"But we've got to make sure that doesn't happen again. It's appalling that he's not playing against

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African treats

AL-AMIN from Johannesburg

If you are looking for a glimpse of your favourite cricketer, there's no better place to go than the Sandton City Inter-Continental Hotel.

The hotel is home to each of the 14 participating teams in the World Cup when they are in Johannesburg.

But beware. You can see the stars, say hello and take autographs but don't even think of having a chat with them because it's strictly prohibited.

If you are not unlucky, you have every chance of spotting Brian Lara

leisurely walking in the lobby, Andrew Symonds looking for his favourite food at 'Steer restaurant' or Pakistan captain Waqar Younis playing the role of a perfect father while having a light dinner with his wife and son.

Waqar was seen going up and down the elevator to comfort his 3-year-old son, who had just cut his left eyebrows after slipping from a small ladder at the nearby McDonalds restaurant.

The hotel has its unique way of receiving the illustrious guests after every match. People clad in customs of different ethnic groups

will welcome the teams after a game in the same way irrespective of who had won or lost singing the famous Zulu song:- "The sun will not rise until we reach there".

BANGLADESH NOT PADDED UP!

Good batting pads are a must for any batsman even against a slow bowler. An injury on the shin, knee, calf or ankle is very much on the cards if the pad is not perfect, just ask the Bangladeshis.

Left-arm spinner Mohammed

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Quips&Quotes

AFP, Johannesburg

Who's saying what at the World Cup:

"Nothing - Sachin's bank balance is much bigger."

India's Virender Sehwag on what he has in common with opening partner Sachin Tendulkar.

"We are not treating Saturday's match as the resumption of cricketing ties."

Indian Sports Minister Vikram Verma insisting that Saturday's game between

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PHOTO: STAR FILE

Glenn McGrath

Target eight

AFP, Potchefstroom

Australian pace ace Glenn McGrath smashed his way into World Cup history on Thursday and then promised there was more to come against the old enemy England.

The 33-year-old took 7-15 as the world champions crushed Namibia by 256 runs in their Pool A clash at North West Stadium here to record the best bowling figures in the history of the event.

However, he then said he wants to go one better against Nasser Hussain's men when the two sides meet in Port Elizabeth on Sunday.

"I hope I can get eight now against England," said McGrath as he looked ahead to Sunday's match which England have to win if they are to have any hope of joining the Aussies in the Super Six stage.

"But I can't compare this with

any other bowling feat of mine it was just my day.

"Brett Lee was pretty fired up at the other end and I got the benefit," said McGrath whose figures took him to the top of the World Cup charts where he overtook West Indian Winston Davis's 20-year-old record of 7-51.

"Brett did all the hard work with his pace and he really shook them up with the short stuff and I knocked them over.

"My first over was a bit loose but I've been working on a new, shorter run-up, the ball is coming out of the hand well and I have got my rhythm back."

Dean Kotze, the skipper of Namibia, was left shellshocked after they were dismissed for just 45

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History is ours

AFP, Johannesburg

Kenya captain Steve Tikolo believes World Cup history is on the side of his team when they face Bangladesh.

The African side have come out on top in five of the six previous meetings between the sides in the competition and as they prepare to meet in Pool B Saturday, Tikolo is in confident mood.

"It's a big game for us, and history is on our side. We have played them six times in the past and lost only once," he said.

"I hope we can maintain our good record against them this time

because it is really important that we win this one."

The Kenyans know they still have a chance of qualifying for the Super Sixes if they beat the Bangladeshis, and their captain Khaled Mashud has warned that although his side are already out of the tournament they will be going all-out for a win against Kenya.

Bangladesh have lost all of their pool matches so far and Mashud said: "We have not won a game in this World Cup and this is our best chance to record our first win, and

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Flintoff pins hope on 14th

REUTERS, Port Elizabeth

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff is confident the mental scars of 13 successive defeats to Australia will be forgotten when the two sides meet in their final Pool A match on Sunday.

"This is the World Cup and it is a new tournament," Flintoff said.

"It's a massive game for us and, whatever happened in the winter, we will put to one side and we will just focus on Sunday. I've only played against them once in a one-day international so there is no history there."

Following their 82-run defeat by India in a day-night game on Wednesday, England face an anxious few days to find out if a

second successive World Cup campaign is to end at the first-round stage.

Even victory over Australia, which would end a losing streak in one-day cricket spanning four years, may not be enough for England to stay in the competition because results from other matches will have a bearing on the group's final standings.

However England arrived in Port Elizabeth on Thursday with victory over Australia as their chief objective and Flintoff, their leading performer against India, will go into the game in confident mood after his best all-round display in a one-day.

Flintoff took two for 15 from 10

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PHOTO: STAR FILE

Henry Olonga