



CAN I SAY SOMETHING FROM MY EXPERIENCE? Former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud (L) says something to coach Sarwar Imran (R) while present skipper Khaled Mahmud listens during practice at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

TVS Cup Hosts' matches to cost less

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to fix separate ticket rates for the forthcoming TVS Cup tri-nation series to be held between Bangladesh, India and South Africa from April 11 to 20.

There will be six robin league matches with the teams facing each other twice.

In an attempt to encourage more crowd at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, the BCB is reportedly thinking of reducing the ticket price for the four games involving Bangladesh.

According to the plan revealed by a source close to BCB, a Western gallery ticket of the matches involving Bangladesh will cost Taka 40 while the same ticket for India-South Africa games will be Taka 50. Similarly a Eastern Gallery ticket will cost Taka 30 and 40 respectively.

A VIP ticket will be sold for Taka 600 for Bangladesh's matches while it would be Taka 800 for India-South Africa fixtures. For the International gallery the rates would be Taka 150

SEE PAGE 9

Battle of biggies today

National discards asked to play for MSC, Abahani



SPORTS REPORTER

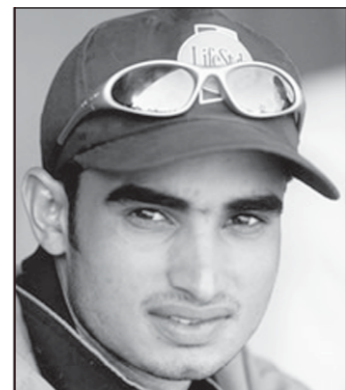
Discarded Bangladesh opener Al-Shahriar and Hannan Sarkar will play for Abahani when the popular Dhamondi outfit take on arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club in a crucial GrameenPhone Premier Cricket Super League match at the BKSP ground in Savar today.

Al-Shahriar and Hannan will have to fill places of opener Mehrab Hossain and middle-order Akram Khan, who have been drafted in the national team for the upcoming tri-nation tournament and the Test series against South Africa, the Board confirmed yesterday.

Another national reject Ehsanul Haque comes in as a cover for Javed Omar in the Mohammedan team.

Al-Shahriar initially refused to play for Abahani but later had to change his mind when the Board weighed in. The stroke-maker is one of the seven cricketers on the Board's payroll.

Victoria Sporting Club, where Al-Shahriar played last year, however tried their best to get the stylish batsman in place of wicketkeeper Mohammad Salim, who is the latest



IMRAN...Abahani recruit

inclusion in the Bangladesh. But the Board turned down Victoria's plea, assuring that Salim would be spared from the national camp when they have Super League schedule.

Despite getting Al-Shahriar and Hannan, Abahani further bolstered their batting strength by flying in Pakistani opener Imran Nazir yesterday.

Imran, the 22-year-old hard-hitting batsman who last played for Pakistan in a Test match against Australia in Sarjah last October, will replace veteran Pakistani Tareq Mahmud in Abahani squad.

Imran have played eight Test matches so far and scored 427 runs with two hundreds. He also appeared in 53 ODIs and collected 1271 runs with one century.

On the other hand, Mohammedan have also flown in Indian all-rounder Sandip Sharma to play him in place of Pakistani leg-spinner Shahed Mahmud. Abahani are currently third in the six-team Super League table with 50 points from 12 matches while Mohammedan are following them with 44 points from 12 matches.

Leaders Victoria Sporting Club have highest 60 points from 13 matches while City Club are in the second position with 56 points from 13 matches.

Aussies seek asylum for Olonga



AFP, Sydney

Australia's main opposition party on Thursday called on the government to grant asylum to Zimbabwean cricketer Henry Olonga so he can emerge from hiding in South Africa.

The pace bowler angered the Zimbabwean government when he and teammate Andy Flower wore black armbands at their country's opening World Cup cricket match to "mourn the death of democracy in our beloved Zimbabwe."

Both players were forced into exile and have retired by default from international play.

Flower is playing out a contract at Essex, England, and will take up a three-year contract with South Australia's Redbacks in September.

But Olonga, 26, remains in hiding in Johannesburg -- fearful he is being hunted by secret police.

Opposition foreign affairs spokesman Kevin Rudd said Australia should not forget Olonga's courage and he appealed for Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to act.

"The World Cup is now over, but it is not time for Australia to forget those



HENRY OLONGA

who were heroes in the World Cup," Rudd told Australian Associated Press.

"Flower after completing his season in English county cricket will head for South Australia -- this is a good thing.

"But Henry Olonga, a black player, has had a different fate. He is currently in hiding in South Africa and as I understand it in radical concern for his life and the well-being of his family.

"I call on Mr. Downer on behalf of the Australian government to organise a sporting scholarship for Henry Olonga to Australia so that he can come here to contribute to Australian cricket and to further his own personal cricketing career.

"I believe that is the right thing for Australia to do."

Rudd said Olonga's life was at greater risk than ever following the victory of Zimbabwe's opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in recent by-elections in Harare.

Olonga's mother lives in Australia where she works as a nurse.

ICC goes tough on slow over rate



REUTERS, London

Teams failing to complete their overs in the allotted time in one-day internationals will no longer be docked overs when they bat second, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Wednesday.

The new ruling, under which players will be fined for slow over rates instead, will be implemented from Thursday's opening Sharjah Cup match between Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

It has come too late, however, for World Cup hosts South Africa.

In the opening game of cricket's showcase event in February, South Africa were left to rue their slow over rate against West Indies. Having been docked an over, they fell short of their winning target by just four

runs.

Teams will still have three-and-a-half hours plus allowances given by the referee to bowl 50 overs, and each member of the bowling team will be fined five per cent of his match fee per lost over.

Penalties will be doubled for the captain of the bowling side.

If the shortfall is more than two overs, the captain will also be charged for deliberate time-wasting. This will result in a disciplinary hearing with a possible fine of between 50 and 100 per cent of his match fee and/or a possible ban for two one-day games.

The rules will also apply in Tests, with the increased penalties coming into effect after five rather than two overs.

The ICC also said match referees will now be allowed to suspend play due to safety and security concerns.

Salim Mashud's understudy

SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors have included Mohammad Salim in the Bangladesh squad for the forthcoming TVS Cup triangular series and the Test series against South Africa as an additional wicketkeeper.

Chief selector Alul Islam confirmed this yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star Sport, Alul said that they had initially decided against an extra wicketkeeper. But after receiving a request from coach Imran Sarwar, they finally selected Salim on Wednesday and the BCB approved the addition yesterday.

"We need another wicketkeeper in the team so that he can play when Khaled Mashud is injured or sick. We selected Salim for that spot because he is in a good touch with both the bat and with the gloves," Alul said.

When asked why they have ignored youngster Anwar Hossain as the second wicketkeeper as he had already played for the country, Alul revealed that Anwar was selected against West Indies last December as a specialist batsman and not as a wicketkeeper.

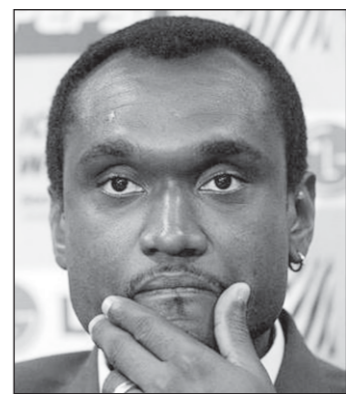
SEE PAGE 9

Hooper keen to play on



INTERNET, London

Carl Hooper says he wants to continue playing for West Indies despite losing



CARL HOOPER

the captaincy to Brian Lara. The 36-year-old was relieved of the

job on Monday because of doubts over his fitness following the West Indies' poor showing in last month's World Cup in South Africa.

Lara, in his second spell at the helm, will now lead the side in home series against Australia and Sri Lanka.

Hooper hit a brilliant unbeaten 130 against Jamaica in a semi-final of the first-class domestic championship.

And he said afterwards: "I still believe that I have the necessary skill and desire to continue playing."

"I am a team player and I believe I can continue to give service to West Indies cricket no matter who is the leader."

"It's not about me being captain, it is about West Indies cricket doing well."

New captain Lara has admitted that he would be delighted to have the veteran in his squad.

"Someone with his experience and talent is always welcome," Lara said.

SEE PAGE 9



With a police officer at right, Justin Langer looks through a window shortly after the arrival of the Australian cricket team at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Guyana on April 2.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Ganga to sit out opener

AFP, St John's

A leg injury has forced Trinidad and Tobago captain Daren Ganga to withdraw from the three-day match between the Caribbean XI and Australia in Guyana starting on Saturday.

Ganga injured a leg during the Caribbean Beer International Challenge semi-final between Barbados and Trinidad et Tobago that ended on Monday at Kensington Oval.

Imran Jan comes into the team and Sylvester Joseph, a former Young West Indies captain, will lead the side.

Former West Indies off-spin bowler Clyde Butts has been named manager-coach.

Australia face West Indies in four Tests and seven limited-overs internationals during the series.

Razaq revives Pakistan



AFP, Sharjah

New-look Pakistan rode on half-centuries from Younis Khan and Abdul Razaq to pile up 278 for 7 from 50 overs against Zimbabwe in the opening match of the four-nation Sharjah Cup here on Thursday.

Younis hit 67 and Razaq a belligerent unbeaten 76 off 53 balls after Pakistan, who elected to take first strike on the slow wicket, were reduced to 69 for four by the 19th over.

Razaq smashed seven sixes and two boundaries as Pakistan hammered 96 runs in the last 10 overs to set Zimbabwe a challenging target of 5.6 runs an over under lights.

Newly-appointed captain Rashid Latif chipped in with 34 during a six-wicket stand of 58 with Younis.

Pakistan took the field without eight

senior players, including veterans Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, who were sacked following a dismal World Cup last month where they were knocked out in the first round.

Pakistan's first outing with the experimental side began disastrously as Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak removed openers Taufiq Umer and debutant Mohammad Hafeez in his first spell.

Naved Latif and Younis Youhana also fell cheaply and it was left to Younis to steer his side out of trouble and set the stage for Razaq's onslaught.

Razaq plundered 24 runs in one over from Sean Ervine, including three sixes, and 23 in the final over bowled by Douglas Hondo.

World Cup semifinalists Sri Lanka and Kenya are the other two teams in the fray in the eight-day tournament, the first international event since the World Cup ended in South Africa on March 23.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the Pakistan innings in

the opening match of the four-nation Sharjah Cup against Zimbabwe on Thursday:

PAKISTAN			
Taufiq Umer	b Streak	16	
Hafeez	c Taibu b Streak	12	
N Latif	b Blignaut	3	
Youhana	c Taibu b Ervine	17	
Younis Khan	c Ervine b Blignaut	67	
Malik	run out	13	
R Latif	run out	34	
Razaq	not out	76	
Samino	not out	11	
Extras	(lb-4, w-24, nb-1)	29	
Total	(For seven wks in 50 overs)	278	
Fall of wickets	1-32, 2-38, 3-50, 4-69, 5-101, 6-159, 7-203.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Streak	10	1	31	2
Blignaut	10	0	50	2
Hondo	10	0	60	0
Ervine	4	0	36	1
Marillier	7	0	43	0
Flower	4	0	27	0
Rennie	5	0	27	0

SEE PAGE 9

Lanka hit by injury crisis

INTERNET, Sharjah

World Cup star Chaminda Vaas will miss Sri Lanka's crucial first Sharjah Cup match against Pakistan on Friday.

Vaas, who took a record 23 wickets at 14.39 during the World Cup, has injured his right landing ankle in practice.

There is also a serious concern over the fitness of his new ball partner, Dilhara Fernando, who was unable to train on Thursday because of a sore back.

"Chaminda (Vaas) is out and Dilhara was unable to bowl this morning," said team manager Ajit Jayasekera.

The management hopes that Vaas will recover in time for Sunday's revenge match against Kenya.

There is an outside chance that Fernando could still play but there is already concern that he has aggravated an old stress fracture.

SEE PAGE 9

Williams in for McGrath



AFP, Sydney

Paceman Brad Williams was called on Thursday as cover for Glenn McGrath on Australia's cricket tour to the West Indies after McGrath returned home to be with his indisposed wife.

McGrath was granted leave to return home after he received medical advice about his English-born wife, Jane, on Wednesday.

Williams, one of the fastest bowlers in cricket, left for the West Indies later Thursday and will link up with the squad in Georgetown, Guyana, on Sunday, the Australian Cricket Board said in a statement.

The ACB said Jane McGrath had been diagnosed with a secondary cancer infection in her hip.

The board's statement said all indications were that with treatment,

she would have a full recovery.

McGrath arrived here late Thursday but left the Sydney airport terminal through a side exit, avoiding waiting media.

The leading paceman's manager Warren Craig said Jane McGrath's condition was related to, but not a



BRAD WILLIAMS

recurrence of, the breast cancer that led her to have a mastectomy in 1997.

"It definitely is not breast cancer," Craig told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"It is linked, however. The condition is basically a derivative of that, but it can be treated. It is serious without being overly serious."

Jane McGrath was not hospitalised and her husband seemed positive and upbeat, said Craig.

"Like any husband who is overseas when their wife gets diagnosed with something, you come home and sort it out and go from there," he said.

Despite the diagnosis, Craig said McGrath had been in a positive mood and the 33-year-old bowler believed he would return to the West Indies.

"When I spoke to him from London he was pretty positive and upbeat and he has sent all his gear onto the West Indies," Craigsaid.

SEE PAGE 9

Kenya eye Windies first class affair



REUTERS, Sharjah

Surprise semi-finalists Kenya can show their World Cup run was no flash in the pan in the four-nation Sharjah Cup which gets under way on Thursday.

The Kenyans are still on a high after their stunning progress to the last four in southern Africa, but Pakistan and Zimbabwe will be hoping to block out the recent criticism as they try to win the first post-Cup tournament with new-look sides.

Although Kenya became the first non-Test playing nation to reach the last four of the World Cup, the country also finds itself in a re-building process after coach Sandeep Patil decided to return home to India.

Kenya could play in the West Indies first-class championship next year as part of their quest to gain Test status.

Since restructuring the home series in 2001, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) has invited foreign sides, including England A, Bangladesh and, this season, India A.

WICB president Wes Hall has had discussions with his Kenya counterpart, but details of any arrangement are yet to be finalised.

Kenya Cricket Association (KCA) chairman Jimmy Rayani told the recent criticism as they the WICB had offered to meet some of the costs of participating.

The East African side has held official one-day international status for the last four years.

But the International Cricket Council does not expect to hand Kenya full Test status until at least 2005.



Khandakar Aminul Islam (R) and Shawkat Hossain Pallab engage in a cerebral warfare during their 8th round game of the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Championship at the NSC chess room yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR