



PHOTO: STAR

WOULD THAT HAVE GONE FOR A SIX? Bangladesh batsman Mohammed Ashraf follows the path of the ball after hitting it during nets at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

MSC plunder Abahani



SPORTS REPORTER

Nafees Iqbal blasted a superb ton to put Mohammedan Sporting Club on course for an imposing first innings total on the first day of their GrameenPhone Premier Division Super League match against Abahani at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday.

Nafees, the right handed Chittagong opener made 135 as Mohammedan, electing to bat after winning the toss, scored 390 for six at stumps with ten more of their allotted 100 overs in their hands.

Nafees hit four sixes and 14 boundaries in his 290 minutes vigil at the crease.

Together with Indian recruit Sandeep Sharma, Nafees gave Mohammedan a brilliant start with a 134-run opening stand.

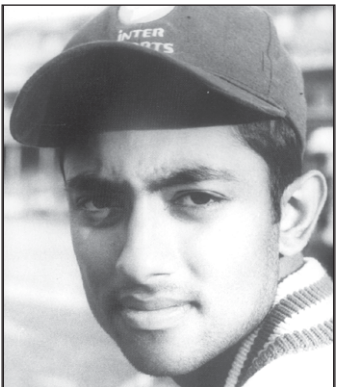
The partnership was broken when Sandeep, the right handed Punjab batsman, who had a wonderful series in South Africa with the Indian A team last year, was out for 82.

Sandeep, in his very first appearance in the Dhaka league, impressed all hammering three sixes and eleven boundaries in his 141-minute knock.

Among others middle order Naimur Rahman was batting on a run-a-ball 52 while one-down Aftab added 40.

Naimur, the former national skipper hit two sixes and four fours.

With their inspirational captain



NAFEES IQBAL ...135

Akram Khan missing with national duty, Abahani looked rather ordinary on the field yesterday.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the first day of the four-day GrameenPhone Premier Cricket Super League clash between Abahani and Mohammedan Sporting Club at the BKSP ground yesterday:

MOHAMMEDAN SC

Nafees c Al-Shahriar b Arman	135
Sandeep c Bikash b Suja	82
Aftab c Asadullah b Suja	40
Ehsanul c Imran b Suja	22
Minhazul c Nuruzzaman b Arman	6
Naimur batting	52
Fahim b Bikash	24
Anwar batting	14
Extras: (b-8, lb-4, nb-1, w-2)	15
Total: (For 6 wickets in 90 overs)	390
Fall of wickets: 1-134, 2-219, 3-273, 4-297, 5-302, 6-360.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Neeyamur	9	1	37	0
Bikash	13	1	64	1
Suja	38	6	142	3
Arman	18	1	80	2
Imran	12	0	55	0



MICHAEL CLARKE

Clarke in for Martyn



AFP, Sydney

Exciting young batsman Michael Clarke was on Friday named as a replacement for injured Damien Martyn in the Australian cricket team touring the Caribbean.

Martyn was earlier Friday ruled out of the tour because of a fractured finger. The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) said Clarke 22, would depart for the Caribbean over the weekend and link up with team, now in Guyana.

The World Cup winners' first match is a three-day game against a President's XI in Georgetown, starting on Saturday.

Martyn fractured his right index finger while fielding against Kenya on March 15 during the World Cup in southern Africa.

Clarke, who plays for New South Wales, made his one-day international debut for Australia against England in Adelaide in January and played for Australia A against South Africa A in

Brisbane on Friday.

Chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns said Clarke deserved his selection on his form throughout the last season.

"Michael has certainly been in the minds of selectors for some time and the opportunity has now become available to elevate him into the Test squad," Hohns said in an ACB statement.

"He is a young enthusiastic player who will add some spark and versatility to the team.

"We regard Michael as a promising player for the future and the tour will be a tremendous learning experience for him.

"The West Indies is a tough tour to undertake first-up in your career with difficult conditions and surroundings, but the knowledge he will gain will put him in good stead for future tours and build his grounding as a quality player."

Clarke was the fifth-highest first-class run scorer in Australia last

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Sangakkara shines



AFP, Sharjah

Kumar Sangakkara hit a maiden one-day century as Sri Lanka recovered to post 223 for 6 from 50 overs against Pakistan in the Sharjah Cup here on Friday.

The left-hander overcame his modest form at the World Cup, where Sri Lanka reached the semifinals, to make an unbeaten 100 off 111 balls and beat back a spirited display in the field by the new-look Pakistanis.

Sri Lanka, electing to bat first in the day-night game, slumped to 166 for 6 before Sangakkara and recalled veteran Kumar Dharmasena put on 57 for the undefeated seventh wicket.

Sangakkara, playing his 86th one-day, reached his century off the penultimate ball of the innings while Dharmasena remained unbeaten on 23.

Pakistan, who defeated Zimbabwe in Thursday's opener of the four-nation event, are rebuilding under new captain Rashid Latif after sacking eight top stars following the first round exit in the World Cup.

Their latest new ball attack of Mohammad Sami and Umar Gul

removed the dangerous Sri Lankan opening pair of Marvan Atapattu and Sanath Jayasuriya cheaply.

Gul, who claimed two wickets on his debut on Thursday, bowled Atapattu for 13 with a ball that swung in sharply.

Jayasuriya made 27 when he drove Sami uppishly to cover where Mohammad Hafeez took a waist-high catch and reduced Sri Lanka to 44-2.

Avishka Gunawardena helped Sangakkara carry the score to 84 when he was beaten by a direct hit by Sami from mid-off.

Sri Lanka moved to a promising 166-4 in the 42nd over when Rana Hasan swung the game around with two wickets off successive balls.

Both Hashan Tillekeratne and Prasanna Jayawardena failed to negotiate the reverse swing which Hasan generated and were yorked, but Dharmasena denied the bowler a hat-trick.

Sangakkara hit nine boundaries as Sri Lanka set Pakistan a victory target of 4.5 runs an over under lights.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the Sharjah Cup one-day international between Pakistan and Sri Lanka here on Friday:

SRI LANKA	
Atapattu b Gul	13
Jayasuriya c Hafeez b Sami	27

Gunawardena run out	17
Sangakkara not out	100
Mubarakst Latif b Malik	20
Tillekeratne b Hasan	11
ayawardena b Hasan	0
Extras: (lb-5, w-5, nb-2)	23
Total: (For six wickets in 50 overs)	12

Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-44, 3-84, 4-126, 5-166, 6-166

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sami	10	2	36	1
Gul	9	0	47	1
Hafeez	5	0	26	0
Hasan	10	0	55	2
Razzaq	6	0	18	0
Malik	10	0	36	1

Toss: Sri Lanka

PAKISTAN: Rashid Latif (capt), Yousuf Youhana, Taufeeq Umer, Mohammad Hafeez, Younis Khan, Faisal Iqbal, Abdul Razzaq, Rana Naveedul Hasan, Shoaib Malik, Mohamamd Sami, Umar Gul.

Umpires: Kevan Barbour (ZIM) and Billy Doctrove (WIS)

TV umpire: Avi Jayaprakash (IND)

Match referee: Ahmed Ebrahim (ZIM)



PHOTO: INTERNET

CARIBBEAN SMILE: Some children wave to the Australian cricket team during their practice session on Guyana's popular Sea Wall in Georgetown on April 3.

Wasim Hants fan



AFP, London

Pakistani great Wasim Akram said Thursday the attitude of Hampshire had been a key factor in his signing for the southern English county.

Fast-bowling all-rounder Wasim, 36, who at the World Cup became the first player in history to take 500 one-day international wickets, said: "I was impressed by the enthusiasm and ideas shown by Hampshire and am delighted to join such a progressive county."

And Hampshire manager Paul Terry believes Wasim's experience will be of immense value in helping the county bounce back to the first division of the County Championship following last season's relegation.

"We hope his experience will rub off on our youngsters," former Hampshire and England opening batsman Terry said.

"He is a world-class player - and we have the big-name signing we were looking for."

Wasim has flown to St Lucia for a tournament on the Caribbean island but is due to join up with the rest of the Hampshire squad on April 9.

Once a mainstay of the Lancashire attack, Wasim became one of Hampshire's overseas players - Australia batsman Simon Katich is the other - after his fast bowling international team-mate Shoaib Akhtar pulled out due to international commitments.

The 'Rawalpindi Express' only became a Hampshire target after Australia leg-spinner Shane Warne, who was due to captain the Rose Bowl-based club this season, was banned for a year following a positive drugs test in February.

Now that Hampshire stalwart and former England middle-order batsman Robin Smith has resigned the county captaincy, Wasim could even find himself leading his new side.

Bond named NZ player of year

INTERNET, Undated

Fast bowler Shane Bond scooped the pool at New Zealand Cricket's awards dinner on Thursday.

Bond won three awards in just his second season of international cricket, including player of the year honours.

The Canterbury paceman also won the award for first-class bowling and the Walter Hadlee Trophy for one-day international bowling.

The former policeman was the fourth different winner of the top award in the past four years after Chris Cairns in 1999-2000, Mark Richardson in 2000-01 and Nathan Astle last year.

Bond spearheaded the attack in New Zealand's inaugural Test series victory in West Indies last July.

And he was the Black Caps' star performer in the World Cup, where he claimed 17 wickets and a national record six for 23 against eventual champions Australia.

Bond played just six first-class matches in the past year - four of them Tests against West Indies and India - taking 30 wickets at an average of 20.

In 17 one-day internationals, he took 28 wickets at 22.07 runs.

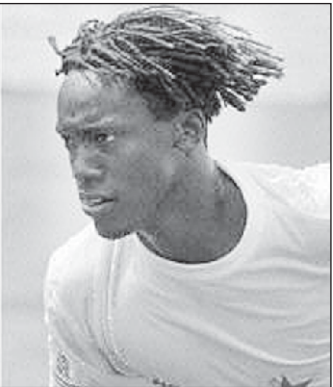
No regrets



REUTERS, Melbourne

Zimbabwe fast bowler Henry Olonga has said he has no regrets about his protests during the recent World Cup and added he hoped to return home when the political climate had changed.

Olonga and team mate Andy Flower



HENRY OLONGA

wore black armbands and wristbands "to mourn the death of democracy" in Zimbabwe's first two Cup matches in February in Zimbabwe before being asked to stop by the international cricket authorities.

"Having received a few threatening emails towards the end of the World Cup...I just felt it probably wasn't a good idea for me to go back to Zimbabwe," Olonga said in an interview aired on Australia television on Friday.

"I don't believe if you stand up for something that is right, that you can (have) regret...I'm just suffering the consequences at the moment," added the cricketer who was described as hiding in a secret location in South Africa.

"I don't think in a year, possibly, that the world can tolerate the type of leadership that we see in Zimbabwe. Six million people may be faced with starvation.

"I will try and get a work permit and see where I can fit and when things come right, I'll go back."

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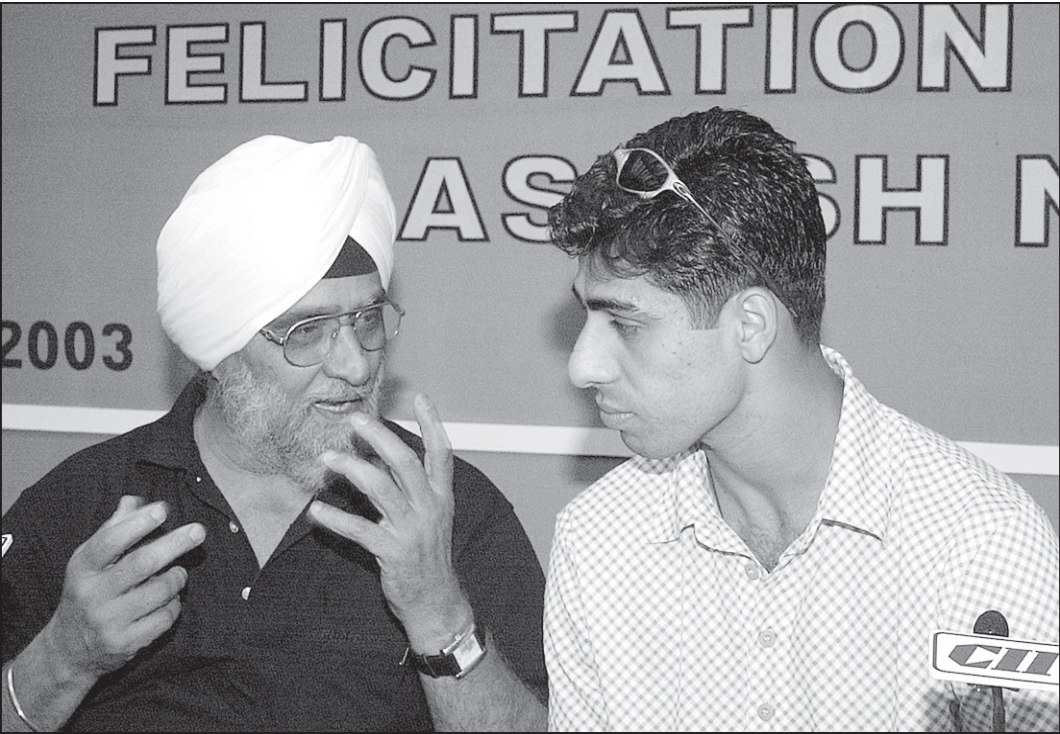


PHOTO: AFP

Indian spin legend Bishen Singh Bedi (L) talks to paceman Ashish Nehra during a felicitation ceremony at the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) at New Delhi yesterday. Nehra received a CII Felicitation award for his performance in the recently concluded World Cup.