

Ray of hope for Rana

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is expected to withdraw the suspension on Mahbub Ehsan Rana when the executive committee meets on October 23.

"Our president (Air Vice-Marshal Fakhrul Azam) now sympathises for Rana. We hope his life-ban will be lifted in the next executive meeting," said Shamsul Bari, general secretary of BHF.

The BHF had imposed the ban on the Abahani midfielder following his unruly act in the Club Cup tournament final against archrivals Mohammedan on June 26 in 2003 in presence of State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman and the BHF president himself.

Seeing this, Azam took a hard-line against the talented national midfielder, however, he finally changed his mind after Rana accepted the mistake and apologised.

Bari also informed that the federation would allow him two days to take part in the players' transfer for the upcoming Premier Division League once the ban had been withdrawn.

PCB agrees to central contracts

REUTERS, Lahore

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has agreed the terms and conditions of an annual central contract with its senior Test players, chairman Shaharyar Khan said on Saturday.

"We have reached a common ground on the number of players to be given central contracts and on the financial incentives involved in it," Shaharyar told this news agency.

Under the new arrangements players will receive an annual salary plus match fees and winning bonuses.

At present Pakistan Test cricketers are paid while on tour and on a match-by-match basis for home Tests.



Did U Know?

During World War II, the US Navy hired Reuben Fine, a world champion chess player, to calculate the probability of where enemy submarines might surface!

What to WATCH

DD Sports
India vs Australia
Second Test, Day Four
Live at 10:00 am
ESPN
Football Extra
Live at 9:00 am
Primera Liga
Barcelona vs Espanyol
Repeat at 3:30 pm
Real Madrid vs Real Betis
Repeat at 6:00 pm
English Premier Football League
Newcastle United vs Charlton Athletic
Live at 9:00 pm
STAR Sports
Primera Liga
Valencia vs Sevilla
Live at 12:55 am (Monday)

TALK TURKEY

Richie Benaud
(Australian cricket legend)
"It's a great performance by Warney to become the leading wicket-taker but I believe Murali will challenge again."

Nafees gets Test nod

Selectors announce 14-member squad

SPORTS REPORTER



Nafees Iqbal

was called up for the opening Test against New Zealand when the national selectors announced squad yesterday.

The 20-year old right-hander, who has already made his one-day debut against England last October, was the only new face in the 14-member squad for the first Test starting at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Tuesday.

The nephew of the former national captain Akram Khan was excited at his maiden call up in a Test side.

"It is the dream of any cricketer to

SQUAD

Habibul Bashar (captain), Rajin Saleh (vice-captain), Javed Omar Belim, Hannan Sarker, Mohammed Ashraful, Nafees Iqbal, Alok Kapali, Khaled Mashud, Mushfiqur Rahman, Manzurul Islam Rana, Mohammed Rafique, Tapash Baisya, Tareq Aziz Khan and Alamgir Kabir.

Explained that selectors had not

made any major changes from the one that toured West Indies.

"We don't believe in chopping

and changing the squad. Even

though Nafees failed to score in the first innings of the tour match here at

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play in a Test match. So, I want to repay the selectors for their faith in me if I'm picked for the final eleven," said the batsman after the three-day match against the tourists ended as a draw.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed

while announcing the squad

the BKSP, still we believe he has the

potential to produce a big innings," Faruque said.

"Our performances in Zimbabwe

and West Indies was satisfactory

and that's why we are trying to find a

good combination from among

those players who went on the two

tours."

However, the inclusion of

Alamgir Kabir was the real surprise as the 24-year old right-arm pacer's three previous Test appearances have been less than impressive. But Faruque defended his selection.

"We had no choice but to include

him with both pacers Mashrafe and

Talha still nursing injuries. Right now

Alamgir is performing well as he did

with three wickets in the three-day

Test," Faruque told reporters.

Two familiar names -- Opener

Hannan Sarker and all-rounder Alok

Kapli -- received the thumbs-up

from the three-member selection

panel.

Following two consecutive first

ball ducks in West Indies, Hannan

has been overlooked for the Asia

Cup and the ICC Champions

Trophy. But the right-hander's gritty

44 showed that he has been work-

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