

Blood clot found in Titu's head

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Photojournalist Anurup Titu, injured in police attack at Chittagong Divisional Stadium on April 16 during the Bangladesh-Australia second Test match, underwent a CT scan at Bumrungrad Hospital yesterday.

Titu was admitted at the Bangkok hospital on Wednesday.

Titu's uncle, veteran journalist Tamal Chowdhury, who accompanied him, told over telephone that the scan report showed existence of blood clot in Titu's head.

The physicians, who have prescribed Titu medicines for seven days, said Titu would require surgery if the clot is not removed by this period, according to Tamal.

The Daily Purbokone photographer got critically injured along with 19 other journalists in the brutal police attack on the first day of second Test.

He was first treated at Royal Hospital in Chittagong before being sent to Bangkok for advanced treatment at the initiative of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Tigers to play for pride

SPORTS REPORTER



The excitement is all over, yet Bangladesh have a scope to prove their worth when they meet Australia in the third and final one-day international at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium today.

In spite of only academic interest left in the final battle against the world champions, Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar said that they were not in a position to think about the outcome of the series rather they were focussing on their main objective which is to take every match in same manner.

"There is no stake as we have already lost the series but every game is important for us because we value a win differently," said the Bangladesh skipper yesterday.

There is every chance to see Mohammad Ashraful back in the fold for the final game after the Cardiff hero was rested for the second game following a series of poor showings.

But middle-order batsman Aftab Ahmed and paceman Mashrafe

Bin Mortuza kept the Bangladesh think-tank waiting to select the final eleven.

Aftab missed the second game due to sinusitis and his condition deteriorated yesterday morning. However, medical reports cleared him for the game. Mashrafe, who had both of his knees operated on, suffered a muscle strain during the second match.

"We want to wait till Friday morning to see whether they are fit. There is nothing serious and we are hopeful about their chances to play," informed Bashar.

The Tigers captain, who is now in good form hitting three fifties in a row, said that he was looking forward to seeing his top-order get runs in the match.

"We never give up hope. Yes we lost two one-day matches and our performance in the second game was not satisfactory but still we will try to win. But to do that our top order should click.

"It would be fantastic for us if we can finish the series the way we started it. Anything positive in the series will be helpful for the future. I will definitely require a spirited display from my boys.

"I have said time and again that

we lack consistency. The question is not to win every match rather to show the competitiveness," he added.

Bangladesh won at least one match in recent one-day series at home but Bashar knows that repeating the Cardiff episode, where they had upset Australia, will not be easy.

"You should play your best and capitalise on every chance if you want to snatch a match away from Australia. They will hardly give you a single chance as we have already experienced in the series," he added.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH (from): Habibul Bashar (captain), Khaled Mashud, Javed Omar, Mohammad Rafique, Rajin Saleh, Mohammad Ashraful, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Aftab Ahmed, Tushar Imran, Abdur Razzak, Alok Kapali, Shahriar Nafees, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Raseel.

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Nathan Bracken, Michael Clarke, Dan Cullen, Brad Hogg, Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Simon Katich, Brett Lee, Andrew Symonds, James Hopes, Mark Cosgrove, Brett Dorey.

STANCHART SCHOOL CRICKET

Belayet on cloud nine

SPORTS REPORTER

Kamarpara High School routed Siddiqui's International School by nine wickets in the Standard Chartered National Schools Cricket tournament at the Iqbal Road ground yesterday.

Siddiqui's batted first and were skittled out for just 41 runs. It was a single-handed effort as Belayet Hossain took nine wickets in the innings. It was a truly remarkable effort.

Kamarpara High notched up the target in only four overs.

Kalindi High School won by 263 runs at the Jagannath Hall ground as Tariq scored 156 runs in 67 balls, studded with twelve fours and the same number of sixes, as his school piled 394 runs against Manarat International School.

Islami Adarsha High School also passed the 350-mark at the Uttara Friends' Club ground as they won by 174 runs against Rajdhani High School.

NAT'L SCHOOL SOCCER Ramu Khijari in finals

SPORTS REPORTER

Ramu Khijari Adarsha High School of Cox's Bazar blanked their home town rivals Al-Bayan Institute 2-0 in the zonal final of the bangalink Tiger Trophy National School Football Championship at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

Goals by David Barua, who scored six in the qualifiers, and Chowmin took Ramu Khijari School to the final round of the competition.

Two-goal by Rafiqul inspired Azimuddin High School to outplay

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Nat'l athletics from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 31st National Athletics Championships begin today at the Army Stadium with 29 teams confirming their participation in the two-day meet.

However, the number of teams could be increased, claimed Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) general secretary Ali Imam Tapan at a press conference at the

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PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan cricket legend Wasim Akram shakes hands with an adulating fan during the opening ceremony of a youth academy at the Mohammedan Sporting Club ground on Thursday.

Hardtalk with Akram

In this part of the world Wasim Akram needs no introduction. The legendary former Pakistan all-rounder is currently in Dhaka to commentate on the ongoing series between Bangladesh and Australia. The Daily Star Sport's BISHWAJIT ROY, QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM and MOHAMMAD ISAM had a lively conversation with him at the Sonargaon Hotel lobby where he, sporting an 'Amra Bangladesh' band, spoke about everything from the profligacy of the Bangladesh Cricket Board to Shahid Afridi's retirement from Test cricket. Following is how it all went:

Daily Star Sport (DSS): Having watched the Bangladesh team in close quarters throughout the series and in the ones past, what are your observations?

Wasim Akram (WA): Bangladesh cricket can improve. The talent is very much there. I have been saying this every time in my commentary stint over the last three

months. But your structure is not right. Nobody is interested in first-class cricket. The cricket board should have a camp every summer, find out players from remote areas. Your players should play first-class cricket. If you don't improve in four-day cricket, you will never improve.

DSS: You've been saying this for the past six, seven years...

WA: But nobody listens. They think that they know more about cricket than me. That is the problem in Bangladesh cricket. People who run the cricket think that they know more than cricketers who have played for 21 years at international level. I am sick of giving them advice now. I am as frustrated as any Bangladeshi.

DSS: Why do you think they don't listen?

WA: Because the people who run cricket here are happy. They think of the same level they played at. You have to think big and that can't happen with them as they

never played that big.

DSS: So the first-class structure is also not right?

WA: Listen, England, Pakistan, Australia have been playing first-class cricket for decades. But here it only started a few years ago. It doesn't even happen on time. Your national players don't even play first-class cricket. Nobody has interest to play first-class cricket. Pakistan is playing first-class for 50 years and we don't have much incentive there. We play for the love of the game. If you start first-class now, you will improve in 10 years. It is very simple.

DSS: So, incentives don't matter?

WA: In the beginning it matters, because nowadays it's a professional sport. First-class cricket should be sponsored or the board should pay money to the players. Players will be more motivated

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What to WATCH

BTV & STAR Sports

Bangladesh v Australia

Third ODI

Live at 9:30 am

ESPN

South Africa v New Zealand

2nd Test, Day Two

Live at 2:00 pm

Sportscentre

Live at 9:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v Australia

Third ODI

Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

Champs Trophy launched Mani hopes for a star-studded tourney

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief Ehsan Mani said Thursday he was confident top stars would take part in the Champions Trophy in India later this year.

"I am sure the respective boards will manage their programme in the right way to ensure full participation," Mani said at the launch of the limited-overs tournament.

The ICC president was responding to media reports that England coach Duncan Fletcher and Australian vice-captain Adam Gilchrist wanted some players to be rested to prepare for the subsequent Ashes series in Australia from November 23.

"The Aussies have never won this tournament and I am sure they will be determined to do so this time," said Mani, who also signed the host country agreement for the event with Indian cricket chief Sharad Pawar.

The tournament, featuring all the 10 Test-playing nations, will be held at four venues across India from October 7 to November 5, Mani said.

All matches will be day-night games to be played at the Brabourne stadium in Mumbai, the Sardar Patel stadium in Ahmedabad, the Saiwal Man Singh stadium in Jaipur and the Punjab Cricket Association ground in Mohali.

The tournament begins with a qualifying league in which two former world champions, Sri Lanka and the West Indies, will clash with Bangladesh and Zimbabwe for the two remaining slots in the main event.

The qualifiers will join Australia, South Africa, India, Pakistan, England and New Zealand -- the top six one-day nations on April 1, 2006 -- in the super league to be played in two groups of four teams each.

The top two from each group will enter the semifinals.

"All matches will be day-night encounters because we want a uniformity in the tournament," said

Mani, who also thanked the Indian government for giving special tax exemptions.

"The timing of the event is hugely significant since it comes about six months before the World Cup in the West Indies in March-April.

"It is a chance for players in every side to secure their places. It will give teams the opportunity to develop and test their plans and strategies before the World Cup," he said.

Pawar said India was determined to put up a good show, both on and off the field.

"The Indian cricket board is very excited to be hosting this prestigious event that will bring all the major cricket-playing sides together in India for the first time in 10 years," Pawar said.

"It is a very important event for world cricket and we look forward to working in partnership with the ICC to deliver an exceptional tournament."

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Lara third time captain

Cricket

AFP, Port of Spain

Legendary batsman Brian Lara has been named captain of the West Indies for a third time, it was announced here on Wednesday.



BRIAN LARA

Ken Gordon, president of the West Indies Cricket Board, announced on Wednesday during a news conference at his office in the Trinidad and Tobago capital that Lara would replace fellow left-hander Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

Chanderpaul held the position over the last year in which he could only motivate the side to a solitary Test win and three victories in limited-overs internationals before resigning almost three weeks ago.

The 37-year-old Lara, Test cricket's leading run scorer, disclosed that he was a little reluctant to take the job, since he had resigned himself to supporting a young captain for the remainder of his playing days and helping him to mature into the job.

It took a lot of support from past and present players to cajole him into reconsidering his decision not to accept the position again.

"This decision came following a lot of thought and consideration

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Afridi to play Test cricket

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi has withdrawn his temporary retirement from Test cricket, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Thursday.

Afridi, 26, shocked his team when he announced earlier this month that he was giving up the longer form of the game until after the 2007 World Cup to concentrate on limited-overs cricket.

PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan "has persuaded Shahid Afridi to withdraw his temporary retirement from Test cricket," the board's spokesman Abbas Zaidi said in a statement.

Khan had asked Afridi to review

his decision "in the national interest and had assured him that PCB would be sensitive to the pressures that had led to his earlier decision," the spokesman said.

"Afridi agreed to respond to the PCB chairman's call and dedicated himself to the success of the team."

The decision means Afridi will be available for Pakistan's tour of England in July and August, for the home series against the West Indies in November and also for their tour of South Africa early next year.

Afridi said in mid-April the strain of an excessive cricketing schedule was the main reason behind his decision and that he was not getting enough time to spend with his family.

Former Pakistan cricket legend Imran Khan has said that Afridi's

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Kahn number one in stickers

AFP, Berlin

Oliver Kahn may have lost the Germany goalkeeping position to rival Jens Lehmann, but according to the Panini World Cup sticker album he is still the No. 1.

Bayern Munich star Kahn was left shattered at the beginning of April when Germany coach Jurgen Klinsmann announced that Arsenal's Lehmann would be his first choice keeper at the World Cup from June 9 to July 9 in Germany.

But in the official World Cup edition of the world-famous collectable sticker album Kahn and not Lehmann features as the German goalkeeper.

"We already made up our minds in January," said a spokeswoman for the Italian firm, Birgit Barner.

The publication was approved by the German Football Federation but as a special measure Barner said Panini will be bringing out a Jens Lehmann sticker that can be placed in the album over the place reserved for Kahn.

Thirty five million copies of the album will be released in 110 countries in the next few days.

Simao might miss WC

AFP, Lisbon

Benfica striker Simao Sabrosa is in doubt for this year's World Cup finals after he sprained his left ankle during a Portuguese league match last weekend, sports daily O Jogo reported Thursday.

The 26-year-old Benfica captain picked up the injury during his side's 1-1 draw at Nacional da Madeira on Sunday and will likely miss the last two matches of the Portuguese league season, the paper said citing unnamed club doctors.

His availability will depend on how he reacts to medical treatment for the injury, it added.

Sabrosa missed the 2002 World Cup due to a knee injury but took part in the Euro 2004 finals and has since cemented a place in the national team's starting lineup.

No margin for error for Japan

AFP, Tokyo

Japan coach Zico warned Thursday that the smallest of mistakes could end their dreams of reaching the

BITS AND BOBS

World Cup semi-finals from a tough group led by five-time champions Brazil.

"Brazil are practically guaranteed to be in the second round. I also

consider that Croatia, Australia and Japan each have a 33-percent chance," said the former Brazilian star.

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PHOTO: AFP

The World Cup trophy is on display in Duisburg, western Germany, on Thursday as part of its tour through the country before the World Cup kicks-off on June 9.



PHOTO: AFP

ICC president Ehsan Mani (L) and BCCI head Sharad Pawar pose with the ICC Champions Trophy at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday.