



(L-R) French football legend Zinedine Zidane in conversation with President and Chief Adviser of the caretaker government Professor Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban yesterday. Zidane obliges his fans by signing autographs at Grameen Bank's head office while the three-time world footballer-of-the-year enjoys a cultural programme at Hotel Sonargaon.

PHOTOS: PID & STAR



Did U Know?

Douglas Jardine the captain of England in the (in) famous 'Bodyline Series' was born on October 23, 1900 in Bombay in a small place called Malabar Hill.



Sourav Ganguly

(Former India cricket captain)
"If God permits, I'll play the World Cup."



ESPN
Sportscenter India
Live at 8:30 pm

World Cup far away: Yuvraj

CRICINFO, undated

India's middle-order batsman Yuvraj Singh who suffered a knee injury during the recently concluded Champions Trophy, is not worried by news reports that he might miss next year's World Cup in the Caribbean.

"The World Cup is far away," Yuvraj told the media, "and it is too early to say anything about my inclusion either in the team for the Test series in South Africa or the World Cup." Yuvraj had to sit out of what was virtually a Champions Trophy quarterfinal clash against Australia in Mohali after he sustained a cruciate ligament injury while turning sharply during a game of kho-kho, a traditional Indian game, on the eve of the game.

Yuvraj was responding to reports quoting Andrew Leips, former India physiotherapist, in which he said the injury could threaten Yuvraj's chances at the World Cup, considering the recovery time needed for rehabilitation. "Yuvraj is a serious case," Leips said. "He has a ruptured ligament and the nature of his injury is such that it will take around four to five months to heal."

Yuvraj is almost certain to miss India's forthcoming tour to South Africa, starting from November 19, and the focus remains on the World Cup, from March next year. It means that Yuvraj has approximately four months to regain peak

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No TV deal for now



Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board's concerted effort of finding a future TV sponsor came to a grinding halt on Tuesday following a government circular that ordered the board to suspend all the activities relating to selling television rights.

The surprise decision came from the interim caretaker government on a day when the board confirmed that two Indian marketing agents -- Nimbus and ZeeSport -- submitted their bids on Wednesday morning to acquire BCB's Worldwide Marketing Agency Rights (television, internet, etc) for the period of November 1, 2006 to March 31, 2012.

"We have got a letter from the sports ministry where the authorities asked the board to stop all activities regarding the TV deal. I talked with my general secretary and told him to meet with the Advisor and explain the circumstances," BCB president Ali Asghar told the Daily Star Sport over tele-

phone while confirming the suspension order.

Asghar, a former BNP lawmaker, was supposed to evaluate the technical issues with the representatives of the bidding companies before announcing the winning bidder sometimes today.

Although a decision on this sensitive matter that involves a huge amount of money was not unexpected, but Asghar felt that the tender process should go on for the greater interest of cricket.

"I have already told my general secretary to convince the Advisor of the caretaker government that the bidding should continue otherwise we might miss the opportunity to strike a lucrative deal. I think someone gave him (the Advisor of the sports ministry) the wrong impression about the deal," he added.

He however admitted that board made a mistake by not informing the Advisor earlier.

"I think there is nothing shady in the process. So, it could have been wise for us to inform the detail of the bidding to our Advisor. We are also planning even to request him to send one of his representatives to observe the whole process," said Asghar.

He also said that he was busy with his political activities in Khulna and just returned to Dhaka yesterday.

Asghar, who was appointed by the BNP-led government, said that he was ready to quit the hot seat of the most affluent sports federation.

"No doubt it's a very difficult situation for me. I am feeling very uneasy with the job but I have to talk with my party high-ups before taking any decisions. I will meet with my party high-ups tomorrow to decide about the matter and if they ask me to quit the job I will do that," he said.

Asghar however said that it would be suicidal if the bidding process remains suspended for long time.

"Zimbabwe will arrive later this month, so we have no time to waste about this matter. I believe the whole process is transparent and we are going to receive more money than anybody had expected," he said.

It was learnt that the bids went already above the BCB's floor price of \$5 million, four times higher than the first five-year deal with ESPN-STAR Sports.

Prince ignored for Asiad

SPORTS REPORTER

Ariful Haque Prince scored his second Premiership hat-trick yesterday but it turned out to be a sad day for the Mohammedan striker who failed to find a place in the national hockey team for the coming Asian Games.

Prince's scoring spree single-handedly led underdogs Mohammedan to lift the Club Cup title at the start of the season and he has scored 11 goals in eight matches in the league. However, none of the selectors were impressed by his form and excluded him from the squad that will make the trip to Doha next month.

The absence of Prince meant Bangladesh will have to rely on two players -- Russel Mahmud Jimmy and Maksud Alam Habul who have turned attacking midfielders from their original role of strikers.

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation also picked a new captain in Musa Mia who succeeds goalkeeper and his Abahani teammate Rasel Khan Bappi. Habul has been chosen as his deputy.

The 16 players and five standbys have been requested to report to coaches Mahbub Harun and Abdullah Piru and their Pakistani advisor Kamran Ashraf.

SQUAD

Rasel Khan Bappi, Mahbubullah Shakil, Issa Mia, Yamin Hossain, Moshir Rahman Biplab, Mostafizur Rahman Dinar, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Mahbub Ehsan Rana, Musa Mia, Shahidullah Titu, Khondokar Hassan Ahmed, Mosharrar Hossain Kutti, Russel Mahmud Jimmy, Zahidul Islam Rajan, Maksud Alam Habul and Zahid Bin Talib.

Standbys: Zahid Hossain, Tabib-e-Noor, Asaduzzaman Chandan, Mazharul Islam Moksed and Asif-e-Noor.

Sourav, VVS should do more

PTI, Mumbai

Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman need to show more consistency if they hope to regain their place in India's one-day squad, chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar said on Wednesday.

Vengsarkar also said Laxman had to also work on his fitness to be considered for selection in the shorter version of the game.

"Laxman is a fantastic player and I am a huge fan of his. But his fitness for the one-day game is not up to the mark. Laxman and Sourav Ganguly need to show more consistency, but that holds good for everyone," Vengsarkar said while reacting to a question about Ganguly's knock of 118 for East Zone against North Zone in the Duleep Trophy.

Vengsarkar, who was the chief guest at the launch of Polycorn Corporate Twenty-20 Cricket Fest last night, said he was happy that players like Robin Uthappa, Yashpal Singh, Gautam Gambhir and Rohan Gavaskar were also among runs.

Asked about his recent comment that there were no talent emerging from the country, Vengsarkar said he had been misunderstood a bit.

"What I said was that there was no new talent good enough to immediately make it into the Indian team right away. I never said there was no talent," he said.

NCL begins today

Bashar to miss Khulna-Rajshahi clash



Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Captain Habibul Bashar and his deputy Shahriar Nafees will not play the first round due to minor injuries when the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League begins today at three different venues across the country.

Bashar's team Khulna take on defending champions Rajshahi at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium while Nafees's Barisal face Dhaka at the Fatullah Stadium and Chittagong take on Sylhet in the opening four-day fixtures of the country's lone first-class competition.

The Tigers will only be allowed to play the first two rounds before they are off for their final preparation ahead of the five-match one-day series against Zimbabwe, who will arrive in Dhaka on November 23.

"True, the national players have to play the first two rounds as per

BCB's (Bangladesh Cricket Board) directions but we have decided not to play the first round because of injury. I am nursing my tennis elbow which will not make it possible to travel to Rajshahi," informed Bashar, who smashed back-to-back half-centuries to help Acme lift their maiden Corporate Cricket League title.

He, however, said that this year's home and away basis longer-version matches will be very important for them as they are out of Test cricket since last April and will only be back in November next year.

"Now everybody can understand that domestic cricket is very important to rectify the mistakes. I hope players take the competition seriously because there is a lot of room in four-day game to improve performance," he added.

The tournament committee has brought only one change in this year's event as the one-day competition will be held after the completion of the four-day competitions.

"We made the change to fulfil the players' demand. We believe that it will bring excitement, especially in the one-day competition," said Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen, BCB vice-president and chairman of the tournament committee, while addressing a press conference yesterday.

He also informed that sponsor Ispahani has agreed to give Tk 30 lakhs, which is Tk 10 lakhs more than the previous year, out of a total budget of Tk 1.7 crore.

"We also improved the amount of preparation money, daily allowance and travel allowance for the participating teams and players," he added.

The preparation money for each team has been increased to Tk 250,000 from last year's Tk 200,000 while the daily allowance for each player has been raised to Tk 800 from Tk 400 and the travel allowance increased to Tk 500 from Tk 300.

Shaheen also said that the board

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PHOTO: TIGERCRIKET.COM

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) vice-president and chairman of the tournament committee Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen (C) speaks during the press conference of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League at a local hotel yesterday.

Bon voyage Zidane

SPORTS REPORTER

His arrival was like fresh air that soothed the life of people who could look elsewhere for a brief period -- less than 48 hours -- in the midst of a political stalemate.

Having entertained the Dhaka crowd during a three-day visit, Zinedine Zidane left yesterday night for France with love of the common people and those who came close to him.

The over enthusiasm and the gathering around the soccer legend from the moment of his arrival on Monday night, however, exhausted him so much that he had to cancel two scheduled press meets and confined himself to the haven of his suite at the Hotel Sonargaon.

Zidane, whose main purpose to visit Bangladesh was to inaugurate a food plant of Grameen Danone Foods in invitation of Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Muhammad Yunus, signed a plaque at the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday morning and later called on President

and Chief Adviser Prof Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban. Dr Yunus was present on both occasions.

The plaque will be later set at the yoghurt plant in Bogra.

After the opening ceremony, Zidane and Franck Riboud, Chairman and CEO of Danone Foods, formally announced that Bangladesh will take part in the Danone Nations Cup 2006, a football tournament for children of 10-12 years, in France.

The former French international and Golden Ball winner at the 2006 FIFA World Cup is an ambassador of the event. With 32 teams participating, it is the biggest football event for kids and brings children from all over the world together, giving them the chance to believe in their dreams while taking part in their development and helping them to grow. Like the previous three years, Zidane will be present at the final at the Stade Gerland in Lyon.

While paying a courtesy call on Prof Iajuddin Ahmed in the afternoon, the football maestro said that

he would love to return to Bangladesh including the United Nations, of which he is a goodwill ambassador, to extend cooperation in different development programmes.

Youth and Sports Ministry advisor CM Shafi Sami was also present.

During the meeting, the President invited one of the greatest footballers of the world as an observer during the next general election, saying that "now there is only one job before us: to make the upcoming general election fair and neutral."

The President and Chief Adviser also hoped that Zidane's visit would help develop the standard of football in the country.

Expressing his gratitude to the President for giving him the opportunity of the courtesy call, thrice FIFA Footballer of the Year Zidane said: "I'm overwhelmed with the warm hospitality given by the people of Bangladesh and I'll come here again if I get the opportunity."



PHOTO: STAR

Former Indian hockey superstar Dhanraj Pillay in action during his club Abahani's Green Delta Premier League encounter against Usha Krira Chakra at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Advantage Abahani

League finale abandoned



Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

The first-leg finale of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League was abandoned yesterday after 58 minutes due to crowd violence and inadequate light with Abahani leading 1-0 against league leaders and defending champions Usha Krira Chakra.

The remaining 12 minutes of the match will be played today according to the bylaws. The match will resume at 2.45pm.

Forward Russell Mahmud Jimmy slammed the only goal of the match after a barren first half at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium, brightening hopes of Abahani to bounce back in the title

race ahead of the Super Five, which is due to start tomorrow.

At the start of the match, Usha were leading the table on 21 points with Abahani three points adrift after seven rounds.

And Abahani were on course to end the first leg on par when former Indian international Dhanraj Pillay in association with his compatriot Prakash Chalke inspired Jimmy to separate the two sides in the 41st minute.

Pillay, playing his first match of the league on his return to Dhaka after four years, picked Prakash at the right flank with a long ball and the latter sent a powerful cross inside the box. Jimmy, well guarded by Tabib-e-Noor, shrugged off his marker and unleashed a rocketing drive that brushed the pads of Zahid and went in through the goal-

keeper's legs.

Usha looked the better side in the first half but it was Abahani who got clear-cut chances. However, Prakash mishit his chance in the sixth minute while an excellent one-to-one by Pillay and Jimmy went down the drains as Prakash and Musa Mia both wasted their chances to finish the move.

In the second half, Pillay set Prakash at the face of the goal but the forward failed to control the ball.

Usha's only clear attempt on goal came minutes before the play was stopped for the day when Kamal drove high during a penalty corner only to see national custodian Bappi thwart it.

The game came to a premature end following a scuffle when Abahani midfielder Khokon hit

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