

Bermuda to top minnows' field

AFP, Nairobi

Bermuda will be out to shed the tag of being the underdogs in the ICC World Cricket League Division One when they renew rivalry with Kenya in the opening match on Monday.

The Americas Cup champions believe their World Cup preparations are on track after recent losses in the Intercontinental Cup and one-day internationals in Africa and the Caribbean.

"We went to the America's Cup in Toronto as the underdogs and came home as champions," Bermuda team manager Lionel Tannock told AFP.

"Now we are in Kenya for the World Cricket League and we are being labelled the underdogs again. We hope to see the team through to the final."

Bermuda played out to a draw with Kenya in their Intercontinental Cup qualifier in November before losing 3-0 in the one-day internationals played in Mombasa.

The Bermuda Cricket Board has promised a cash bonus of 4,000 dollars to each player if they finish first or second in the tournament, of which the top two teams will qualify for the Twenty-20 World Championships in South Africa later this year.

The Islanders will welcome back their South African-born Saleem Mukudem, who was the most consistent player during the tour of Kenya. The 35-year-old all-rounder has not played since injuring his lower back in South Africa in November.

Kenya, buoyed by a tri-series win in Mombasa earlier this month will however start as favourites to win the tournament which has an added bonus of 250,000 dollars for the winners.

The other competing countries are Holland, Ireland, Scotland and Canada.

Irfan gets

FROM PAGE 17

Robin Uthappa

Fraser, however, said it remained to be seen how much rhythm Pathan would be able to maintain during the match here on Wednesday.

"How he translates this rhythm into practice in the match (on January 31) remains to be seen. India lacks a genuine all rounder and Irfan has the potential to become one," the Australian said.

Muktijoddha

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Chittagong Abahani will meet the press on Wednesday at 3:00 pm at the same venue.

SQUADS

MUKTIJODDHA: Saifur Rahman Moni (captain), Aminul Haque, Titumir Chowdhury, Nur-e-Alam Khan, Rajani Kanta Barman, Hasan Al Mamun, Firoz Mahmud Titu, Deen Mohammad, Matir Munna, Arman Miah, Ajmol Hossain Biddut, Parvez Babu, Arman Aziz, Saiful Islam, Kanchan, Alfaz, Enamul, Al Arman and Umar Faruq Babu.

CTG MOHAMMEDAN: Asif Yusuf (captain), Rashed Chowdhury, ATM Khairul Alam, Samon, Mohammad Sohel, Israfil Hossain, Sanwar Hossain, Mohammad Tareq, Zasimuddin, Mohammad Uzzal, Kazi Imrul Islam, Nur Hossain Daulat, Nurul Azim, Mohammad Zahid, Shah Alam, Razib, Kamara, Saifulah, Mohammad Yusuf, Mohammad Tawhid, Mohammad Anis, Dipu, Saikat and Ripon Khan.

Matrix pleads

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have always paid for my mistakes in the past, but this time I did nothing wrong," concluded Matrix.

Del Vecchio accepted that his reaction could not be defended, although he insisted that he was provoked by his opponent.

"I made a mistake and I apologize for it, but I would like Materazzi to admit that he provoked my reaction," said the Dorian.

"He said that I wanted to hurt Adriano and Julio Cesar, that is not true. If he had spoken to me in a different way I wouldn't have reacted that badly. What I did was wrong, but you should read Materazzi's lips."

McLeish takes

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the unexpected departure of Walter Smith earlier this month.

"I am sure all of Scotland will get behind Alex in support of the national side as we try to build on the improved performances of recent times."

Scotland top Euro 2008 qualifying Group B with nine points from four games and their next fixture is against Georgia on March 24 at Hampden Park.

McLeish was due to be presented at a news conference at Hampden at 1100 GMT on Monday.

His first engagement with the national team will be on Feb. 4, when the Scotland squad starts a three-day gathering at Turnberry Hotel in Ayrshire.



PHOTO: AFP
West Indies coach Bennett King (R) inspects Shivnarine Chanderpaul's bat during a training session in Vadodara yesterday. They will play their fourth and final match against India tomorrow.

Gilchrist wants Hayden

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Australian wicketkeeper-batsman Adam Gilchrist believes Matthew Hayden is the right man to partner him at the top of the order at the upcoming World Cup.

Hayden made the most of three missed chances, two before he reached double figures, to score his first one-day international century in almost two years against New Zealand here on Sunday.

Hayden's 117 against the Black Caps was his first substantial score in the tri-series, having controversially been recalled to the Australian side for the tournament.

Gilchrist believes the century was the turning point for Hayden's endangered one-day career and said he was confident the big left-hander would be his opening partner in the West Indies.

"I fully expect Hayden to go to the World Cup," Gilchrist said here Monday.

"I think he is re-establishing

himself at the top of the order very well and he'll be much better for the innings the other night."

"We started this series well by way of partnerships, and haven't had too many big ones since then, but that is something we will work on."

"It was really pleasing to see Hayden come through with an individual result. Hopefully that will settle him down and keep the concerns away about what that (opening) partnership is going to be."

Gilchrist has opened with the forgotten Simon Katich and the injury-plagued Queensland all-rounder Shane Watson recently, batting with Watson at last year's Champions Trophy.

However, he said he was comfortable with his fellow 35-year-old at the other end.

"It feels like it has worked well when we have played together," he said of Hayden.

"He is terrific to bat with and I think we complement each other pretty well."

Australian captain Ricky Ponting also threw his support behind Hayden.

"It was good to put a big score on the board -- batting is confidence."

Hayden said he never lost belief he could succeed in one-day internationals, despite his extended absence from the team.

"It has been a frustrating few years -- my record doesn't lie," he said.

"When I was dropped I had a very good record."

Jayantha inspires Sonargaon

Kapali 1-12).

SONARGAON: 196-1 in 35.2 overs (Al-Shahriar 16, Mehrab 71 not out, Jayantha 100 not out, extras 9; Sajidul 1-37).

Result: Sonargaon won by nine wickets.

VICTORIA: 262-6 in 50 overs (Imrul 22, Faruque 61, Mustakim 16, Mushfiqur 18, Jaffar 6, Riyad 78, Hasanuzzaman 41 not out, Milon 4 not out, extras 16; M a h m u d u z z a m a n 1-43, Salahuddin 1-23, Rashedul 1-60, Tony 3-47).

KALABAGAN: 179 all out in 46.2 overs (Uttam 0, Nahidul 10, Mahbubul 108, Shahbaz 0, Golam Rahman 12, Salahuddin 19, Kamru 2, Rajib 0, Tony 2,

Rashedul 18, Mahmuduzzaman 0 not out, extras 8; Shuvro 2-28, Riyad 4-26, Sabbir 2-30).

Result: Victoria won by 83 runs.

PARTEX: 240-7 in 50 overs (Aslam 6, Rajin 112 not out, Raibul 21, Rafiqul 6, Tariq 11, Rashed 20, Neeyamu 20, Hasan 21, Rezaul 2 not out, extras 21; Delwar 3-46, Maruf 1-33, Shariful 1-55, Lalmohan 1-32).

PEGASUS: 244-8 in 49.4 overs (Rabiul 3, Moniruzzaman 9, Lalmohan 21, Maruf 42, Shariful 62, Raisul 46, Saif 29, Delwar 0, Jubaier 6 not out, Sajid 2 not out, extras 24; Dipazal 3-34, Rezaul 2-36, Hasan 2-41).

Result: Pegasus won by two wickets.

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