

## Football takes a young life

SPORTS REPORTER

Omar Sharif will not kick a football any more. The youngster from Narayanganj, whose dream was to grow up as a mature footballer, died of brain haemorrhage in the early hours on Tuesday at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Omar, who represented Barisal DSA, picked a head injury during an aerial challenge in their JFA Cup Under-15 Football Championship qualifying match against the hosts on Sunday at Shariatpur. After a little pitch-side nursing including watering his head and a drink, he resumed the game.

After 15-20 minutes, the 15-year-old who was to sit for the coming SSC examinations, fell and began vomiting once the referee put him outside the pitch, according to his cousin Sunny.

He lost sense on way to the local hospital but the doctors there referred him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was taken on the same night. As his condition got critical, Omar was transferred to the BSMMU where he underwent a surgery.

Although the doctors claimed that it had been a successful operation, Omar breathed his last around 2.30 in the morning.

"When we took him to the Dhaka Medical, the doctors said that there was no treatment for him there. They suggested that we take him to a private hospital after doing CT Scans," Sunny told The Daily Star over phone.

"We did the tests at Popular (Diagnostic Centre) and took him to the PG (BSMMU) where the doctors immediately arranged a surgery. The doctors were hopeful about him although he did not regain sense. Early in the morning, they declare him dead," Sunny added.

Omar's father used to hawk fruits in the streets but has gone jobless after recent drives against street hawkers. Omar, who played at under -13 and -14 levels, also left

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



## Did U Know?

Kumar Sangakkara of Sri Lanka scored 110 runs in the second one-day international against India at the Madhavrao Scindia Cricket Ground in Rajkot on February 11. It was his sixteenth century, second against India.



## Ruud van Nistelrooy

(Real Madrid's Dutch striker) "Beckham was fundamental and we are all very happy for him to be back in the team and to be on the score-sheet."

After David Beckham scored a goal in their league match against Real Sociedad.



### NEO Sports

India v Sri Lanka

Third ODI

Live at 10:00 am

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Live at 9:30 pm

FA Cup

Bolton Wanderers v Arsenal

Live at 2:00 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports

South Africa v Pakistan

Fifth ODI

Live at 6:30 pm

## WORLD CUP TIGERS



HABIBUL BASHAR



SHAHRIAR NAFEEES AHMED



TAMIM IQBAL KHAN



AFTAB AHMED



SHAKIB AL HASAN



MOHAMMAD ASHRAFUL



MUSHFIQUR RAHIM



MOHAMMED RAFIQUE



ABDUR RAZZAK



MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA



SHAHADAT HOSSAIN



TAPASH BAISHYA



SYED RASEL



RAJIN SALEH



JAVED OMER

## Ex-players stunned



SPORTS REPORTER

Several former Bangladesh captains expressed their shock over the exclusion of long-serving wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud from the 15-member World Cup squad that was announced yesterday.

They were also taken aback at the way the Faruque Ahmed-led selection panel took a turn to change their course with the World Cup team selection, especially with the inclusion of Javed Omar and Rajin Saleh.

"Just after his arrival as coach of Bangladesh, (Dav) Whatmore promised that his main target was the 2007 World Cup. If this is his squad, all I can say is that I am sorry. I can't understand what kind of team the selectors have picked for such a big event," said a surprised Akram Khan.

"It was simply out of my imagination. How they dropped a wicketkeeper like Pilot (Khaled Mashud) for such a big tournament

because as a keeper he is still unparalleled. I think everybody can understand how important a keeper's role is in the team," said the burly batsman about his long associate in the national side.

"I am really confused why Javed (Omar) is there and Tushar Imran is out of the side. The selectors have just contradicted their previous policy by selecting this World Cup team," he sighed.

On the other hand, Roquibul Hassan found 'lack of imagination' in the selection of the team and wondered about the inclusion of four openers in a team.

"I'm disappointed by the exclusion of (Khaled) Mashud. Two wicketkeepers could have been there if they have real faith in Mushfiqur Rahim's batting. They simply contradicted by taking (Javed) Omar and (Rajin) Saleh considering their experience when they ignored Mashud," said Roquibul.

"Tamim is the right choice because he is a very exciting batsman and has the ability to capitalise on the early fielding restrictions to

pull off surprise against any big team. But I think it made no sense to include four openers in the team. The selectors actually failed to fulfil the expectations of everybody," he said.

Another former national skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain, however, said that the exclusion of Mashud was pre-planned.

"You just tell me why the team think-tank gave Mushfiqur Rahim a promotion to the top-order in the recently concluded Zimbabwe tour? I think it was to establish the young stumper a place in the team. When you have players like Sakib (Al Hasan) and (Habibul) Bashir in the middle-order, then it made no sense to promote Mushfiqur in the batting order," said an angry Ashraf.

"Is this a proper way to treat a player like Mashud? I think they just forgot about his contribution to the country's cricket. It is not unlikely to see a batsman going through a bad patch. If they have good intention then they could give him enough chances against

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

## Bangladesh U-23s meet HK today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under-23 football team will take on Hong Kong in the second leg of the men's Olympic pre-qualifier in Hong Kong today with no hopes to advance further in the competition.

The match will kick off at 7.30pm Bangladesh time.

Having lost the home match to Hong Kong 3-0 last week, no one would give any chance to Abu Yusuf's boys, who need a 4-0 victory to reach the main qualifying round.

Bangladesh, who reached Hong Kong on Monday night, had their training session yesterday afternoon.

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Sixty teams from six districts will take part in the first-ever Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Challenge Club Cup tournament, said BCB yesterday.

The pilot project undertaken by BCB is an effort to enliven cricket at the district level will begin on February 15 with the Mymensingh leg of the tournament.

In a press conference at the National Sports Council on Tuesday, BCB tournament committee chairman Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen mentioned that the matches will be played with a white ball with teams wearing coloured clothing.

Ten teams from each district will be divided into two groups and the champion of the district will play the final round in Dhaka with the six champions split into two groups.

Prize money for the champions are Tk 40,000 but more importantly, teams of the final round will be provided one lakh taka for food,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## 3RD ODI TODAY Dravid backs Sehwal

PTI, Margao

As pressure builds up on an out-of-form Virender Sehwal to deliver the goods, Indian captain Rahul Dravid on Tuesday sought to motivate the Delhi batsman, saying he was just one innings away from recapturing his form.

Dravid said the whole team was eager to see the swashbuckling batsman find his touch again and it would be good if Sehwal came good in the third one-dayer against Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

"Any day is a right day for Sehwal (to fire). We all hope he will come good and I think he's one innings away from coming good. And if it happens Wednesday it will be great.

"He has been working and practicing hard. He's not far away from playing good cricket," Dravid told reporters on the eve of the match at the Nehru Stadium.

Asked if Sehwal would be sent in to open the innings after being chosen to play in the middle order, Dravid said: "It's an option. We

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar (L) and Virender Sehwag run between wickets during a training session in Goa on Tuesday ahead of the third one-day match against Sri Lanka today.

# Exit Mashud, enter Rahim

Omar, Saleh return from wilderness



SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors came up with a pack of surprises on Tuesday when they announced a 15-member Bangladesh squad for next month's World Cup, raising more questions than answers.

If the exclusion of long-serving wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud was a surprise then the bigger surprise awaited the country: Javed Omar and Rajin Saleh called up from international wilderness.

"It was not an easy task for us to take the decision against a proven campaigner like (Khaled) Mashud when he is still the number one wicketkeeper in the country. After a long discussion, we selected young Mushfiqur Rahim in place of Mashud as we preferred a batsman-wicketkeeper in the team, rather than a keeper who could bat a bit," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed in a volatile press conference yesterday.

"We ignored him (Mashud) on performance grounds as we thought that Mushfiqur was a much

better option as a batsman which he also proved in the just ended Zimbabwe tour."

He defended the exclusion of Mashud which shattered the former national skipper's dream of making third successive World Cup appearance.

Faruque Ahmed-led selection panel took a u-turn from their erstwhile selection policy to maintain the controversy trend of picking up the World Cup squad when they made three changes from the team that played in Tigers' 3-1 series victory against Zimbabwe.

Tushar Imran and Mehrab Hossain were dropped to pave way for in-and-outs Rajin and Javed while left-arm paceman Syed Raseel was recalled to replace seaming all-rounder Mohammad Sharif.

Faruque faced a volley of questions regarding the selection but only offered contradictory replies as they considered Javed and Rajin's experiences as plus point in the showpiece in West Indies, which however was not case for Mashud.

"We tried lot of combination in the recent past series but couldn't find according to our expectations

and that's why we went for two experienced players. Javed is already proven in opening slot while Rajin can bat at any position. Their recent domestic performance has also encouraged us before taking the decision," he explained.

Believe it or not, Javed almost came from nowhere as he missed all the matches of the Tigers since he made his last appearance in the third one-day of the five-match series in Zimbabwe in July-August while Rajin played his last game against Zimbabwe in the ICC Champions Trophy in India last year.

It was told time and again that the two particular batsmen are not good enough with their limited shots for the shorter version of the games when the Tigers are thinking of victory rather than only playing out the fifty overs. Interestingly the same people expressed their satisfaction over the arrival of left-handed opener Mehrab but Faruque said that the young man could not fulfil their expectation.

"His performance was not too bad but he failed to fulfil our expectation in nine games," Faruque explained.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

FAR FROM CONVINCING: Chief selector Faruque Ahmed (C) makes a point while announcing the Bangladesh squad for next months World Cup in the West Indies at a local hotel yesterday.

## Pakistan keep Akhtar, Asif



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan selectors Tuesday included Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif in their World Cup squad despite warnings that the pace duo could still have banned substances in their systems.

The new-ball pairing tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone in October last year. Akhtar was subsequently banned for two years and Asif for one year in November.

They were reinstated by an appellate committee in December on the grounds that they did not know they had taken the substance, a decision challenged by the World Anti-Doping Agency in the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"Akhtar and Asif are selected subject to clearance in dope tests while Akhtar and Umar Gul need clearance by our medical panel," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) director of operations Salim Altaf told AFP.

Altat denied that Akhtar and Asif's inclusion was a risk.

Pakistani doping expert Danish Zaheer, vice president of the Asian Federation of Sports Medicine, warned last week that Akhtar and

Asif could still have banned substances in their bloodstreams.

Both Asif and Akhtar face life bans in case if they test positive again in pre-World Cup dope tests to be conducted internally on Friday or in random tests during the event in the Caribbean.

"We have secret screening tests and if anyone tests positive then we will cross the bridge when it comes. We have the option of replacement," said Altat, himself a former pacer.

Meanwhile Akhtar is racing for full fitness after the recurrence of a knee injury and is currently in England for treatment and reassessment.

"If after assessment in England Akhtar says he is unfit we will replace him. Gul's MRI scan shows he is progressing well despite

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

### SQUAD

Inzamamul Haq (captain), Younis Khan (vice-captain), Imran Nazir, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Yousuf, Shoaib Malik, Abdul Razzak, Mohammad Asif, Shoaib Akhtar, Umar Gul, Danish Kaneria, Mohammad Hafeez, Shahid Afridi, Navedul Hasan, Rao Iftikhar.

## Simmo, Tait included



AFP, Sydney

Defending champions Australia will take injured all-rounder Andrew Symonds and unpredictable pacer Shaun Tait to next month's cricket World Cup and leave Ashes bowling hero Stuart Clark at home.

Selectors also found room in the 15-man squad for back-up wicketkeeper Brad Haddin, with Adam Gilchrist gaining permission to travel three days later than the rest of the squad as his wife is expecting their third child.

Leg-spinner Cameron White was also overlooked for the Caribbean with selectors relying on wrist-spinner Brad Hogg, complemented

by spin part-timers Michael Clarke and Symonds.

Chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch said Tait was preferred to Clark, believing the South Australian slinger was a more attacking option.

Just over a month ago Clark finished Australia's leading bowler in the 5-0 Ashes Test series win over England with 26 wickets at 17.03.

### SQUAD

Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist (vice-captain), Nathan Bracken, Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hodge, Brad Hogg, Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Brett Lee, Glenn McGrath, Andrew Symonds, Shaun Tait, Shane Watson.

"I don't think we are taking a risk at all," Hilditch said of Tait, who has played just two one-day internationals, taking three wickets at 31.33. In the tri-series Clark captured 10 wickets in six games at 28.90.

"We think he's an exciting addition to the squad, we think it's an attacking move -- we have picked someone who we think can help us win a World Cup.

"Stuart Clark (was) desperately unlucky, but after a very difficult decision time, Shaun Tait's extra pace in the power plays, and particularly at the end of the innings, has seen his well warranted selection."

Symonds' inclusion comes despite the match-winning all-rounder recuperating from surgery

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8