

School boys on rampage!

SPORTS REPORTER

Happy Times International School authority yesterday complained that coach and players of BCSIR School, their opponents of Saturday's match in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament, had assaulted their cricketers.

During the match, the BCSIR boys used abusive language but Happy Times continued the game at request of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials, according to a press release issued by the Happy Times.

After the match, Happy Times captain, who went to inform of this incident to the rival coach, was attacked by an opposition player which followed a mass assault. Allegedly, the BCSIR students used bats and wickets as weapons.

The unruly boys did not even spare other students and Happy Times coach when they tried to rescue their captain.

Happy Times coach Shamsur Rahman Jeki later filed a general diary at the Mohammadpur Thana.

Although BCB's school cricket project administrator Abu Imam Kawser ensured that he would take necessary steps to look into the incident, the board has yet to take any actions in more than 24 hours.

Five cruise to JFA Cup finals

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka, Khulna, Kishoreganj, Chuadanga and BKSP yesterday booked final round places in the 3rd JFA Cup Under-15 Football Championship as zonal champions.

Tournament's prolific scorer Raju slotted his second hattrick of the qualifiers as Dhaka thrashed hosts Shariatpur 4-1 in yesterday's final to emerge Shariatpur zone winners.

Four-goal Mithun, who scored his first three goals inside five minutes, inspired another host district Khulna to a massive 7-0 defeat of Bagerhat but Kishoreganj's victory was hard-fought at Mymensingh, where they edged Jamalpur 1-0 with a third minute goal by striker Sayeed.

BKSP won comfortably, blanking Tangail 4-0 at Manikganj with Mamun netting twice while second half strikes by Suruj and Khalid enabled Chuadanga to dump hosts Narail out of the competition with a 2-0 victory.

Meanwhile, Comilla moved into the zonal final when the hosts blanked Habiganj 3-0 with Shakil scoring all three goals. The winners will meet Chittagong in tomorrow's zonal final.

Sirajganj also made the final pairing beating Chapainawabganj 2-1 in the tiebreakers after a goalless draw in their home ground. The Naogaon-Sirajganj final is slated for today.

Natore host Gaibandha in the other zonal final today.

Fashionista

FROM PAGE 17

We have to give the guy a moment to get back to his best," said Dunga.

The coach added that 17-year-old Alexandre Pato, already seen as Brazil's great new hope for the future even though he has played only four games for International, did not figure in his immediate plans.

"We have to wait a while," said Dunga. "He has played four games in his career and he hasn't completed any of them.

"He has fantastic talent but we can't rush these things along."

Title up

FROM PAGE 17

To Barcelona in one of the earlier Champions League group stage games ultimately cost the Germans the chance to fight for the continent's most prestigious trophy.

Holders Sevilla face a tricky tie against Steaua Bucharest while upwardly mobile Newcastle have one of the easier tasks left in the competition, that of attempting to overcome Belgians Zulte-Waregem.

Ukraine champions Shakhtar Donetsk are concerned ahead of the visit of Nancy as they are still in their close season break.

"We have not played any official matches since our last Champions League match on December 5," moaned Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu.

Football takes

FROM PAGE 17

behind his mother, a brother and a sister. He was buried at his home town after John prayers yesterday.

A minute's silence was observed before yesterday's matches at different venues to show honour to the youngster.

The Bangladesh Football Federation officials condole the death of Omar and expressed their deep sympathy for the bereaved family. The officials also visited the family members last night.



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lankan cricketers (L-R) Farveez Mahroof, Mahela Jayawardene and Malinga Bandara bat in the nets during a training session in Goa on Tuesday.

Danish surprised, relieved

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Danish Kaneria was surprised and relieved after being included in Pakistan's 15-man World Cup squad but ultimately confident that he could repay the late faith selectors have invested in him.

Kaneria, who last played an ODI for Pakistan against a major opponent in December 2005, was Pakistan's only real shock selection for the squad. "I am very relieved to be honest and very happy," he told Cricinfo. "It is everyone's dream to play the World Cup and was desperate to be involved.

I will only celebrate though if I can help bring back the trophy from the West Indies."

Kaneria's position in the ODI side has been vociferously debated in Pakistan. Ex-players such as Abdul Qadir, Imran Khan and Rashid Latif have backed his inclusion in the ODI side repeatedly. The arguments

have apparently fallen on deaf ears though, as under Inzamamul Haq and Bob Woolmer, Kaneria has managed only seven of his 16 ODIs and hasn't been part of ODI squads in England, the Champions Trophy and series against West Indies and now South Africa.

Inzamam only recently came round to thinking of Kaneria as an option, when during the injury-ravaged tour to South Africa, he admitted to a Pakistan TV channel, that Kaneria was in his mix now.

"I was a little surprised by it I guess," Kaneria admitted. "But I have always maintained the hope that I would be selected sooner or later. I said after coming back from South Africa that I was disappointed but was also determined to get back the captain asks me to."

What has no doubt helped is the work he has put in with his batting and fielding, two skills many thought had held him back. The team management has acknowledged recently that Kaneria's fielding, though still not up to the mark, is nevertheless vastly improved.

"I have worked very hard on my fielding and batting recently but generally I have been working hard on them anyway. Now that I am in the squad, I want to continue to do that."

Having never been a regular part of Pakistan's ODI teams, questions are likely to be asked about how well he can adjust to the demands of a format he has so little experience of. But Kaneria, natu-

rally, remains confident.

"Tests and ODIs are a different ball game and involve different roles at various stages of the game. But I have experience of limited overs cricket with Essex and Karachi in domestic cricket. I did pretty well in the Twenty20 at home recently as well. Leggies have been successful in this format, especially for Pakistan, in the past and ultimately I will play whatever role the captain asks me to."

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protest," recalled the 30-year-old Olonga.

"There was a thought of boycotting the World Cup but that was too drastic because we didn't want to derail the campaign. It meant so much to so many people.

"So to wear black armbands was the most dignified way."

The backlash from the Mugabe regime was immediate.

"It became very uncomfortable to stay in the country," added Olonga.

"There had been many political opponents who had been imprisoned or had become victims of violence if they didn't toe the line. It was suggested that something very unpleasant would happen to me if I stayed," he told the BBC recently.

Olonga was able to make his escape to England once his team's involvement in the 2003 World Cup had come to end with a tame defeat to Kenya in the South African city of Bloemfontein.

Reports suggested that Zimbabwe secret agents had arrived at the ground with the intention of snatching Olonga and spiriting him back across the border to face the wrath of Mugabe.

Olonga now lives peacefully in England, establishing a music career but still active in the game featuring in charity and club games.

Flower also played the last of his 213 one day internationals at the World Cup and like Olonga it was in South Africa in a defeat in East London to Sri Lanka before he made his escape to England.

Despite the dramas, Olonga, has no regrets.

"Andy Flower approached me a few months before the start of the World Cup and touted the idea of a

Since then, the 38-year-old has

kept playing for Essex and South Australia.

Four years on, Flower is still depressed over what's happened to his country.

"The stance that Henry Olonga and I took was against human rights abuses and the lack of democracy, to highlight that Zimbabwe was turning into a police state," said Flower.

"People were being raped, beaten and tortured. I don't like being called a rebel. Our protest had an impact when we did it, but in the practical sense, I don't think it has done anything."

In the West Indies, Zimbabwe's challenge is likely to be put down quickly and ruthlessly having been drawn in a first round group with former champions West Indies and Pakistan.

Mahfuzul Islam of Kazi Nazrul Islam hall was the highest scorer while Saiful Islam of the champions hall was declared best player.

"The domestic structure isn't strong enough to bring through the quality of players to do well on the international stage."

Olonga believes all is not lost, but that there are still plenty of dark days ahead.

"There's no inheritance for young people there, many have left, many have had their youth stolen from them," he says.

"Mugabe was a great showman. Many people thought he supported reconciliation but he showed his true colours with the land invasions."

"But I have a lot of hope for the country. Zimbabwe has great people - just bad leadership."

He said Anil Kumble and S Sreesanth would also not play in the match.

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Star batsman Mohammad Yousuf, all-rounders Shahid Afridi and Abdul Razzaq and paceman Shoaib Akhtar will be playing their third World Cup.

Vice-captain Younis Khan was part of the team in the 2003 event held in South Africa but the rest of the players will be featuring in their first World Cup.

The Pakistan squad will depart for the West Indies on March 1 and will play two warm-up matches, against Canada on March 5 and against South Africa on March 9, both in Trinidad.

"On the slow and low pitches of the West Indies every team has selected a spinner," said Altaf of Kaneria who despite fine Test performances has taken only 12 wickets in 16 one-dayers since his debut six years ago.

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