

## Press Conference



LOOKING FORWARD: Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore takes questions from reporters during an open media session at a city hotel yesterday on the eve of the Tigers' departure for the Cricket World Cup in the West Indies.

## Solid reply by Academy

### Cricket

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh National Academy gave a fitting reply in their first innings when they were all out just one run shy of England A's total in the three-day warm-up match at the BKSP yesterday.

The visitors, who decided to declare their first innings on overnight 327 on the second morning, were more dominating as they had lost four wickets on the opening day.

The young local boys, however, matched their more matured rivals in terms of runs scored, thanks to half centuries by Nasiruddin Faruque, skipper Nadir Chowdhury and Sahagir Hossain.

After an initial collapse, the Academy batted for 87 overs to ensure a draw unless a disaster on the final day.

Jahurul Islam was dismissed

with the scoreboard reading four but his opening partner, the exciting Junaid Siddiquee blasted a 22-ball 38 with seven fours during a 50-run opening stand.

The visitors, however, reduced the home side to 54-3 as new ball pair Graham Onions and Stuart Broad, who topped and tailed to be the peak of the attack with 3-99, took a wicket each in successive overs.

Faruque's 58 off 101 balls helped repair the damage during a 64-run stand for the fourth wicket with Nadir, who went on to top score 74.

The hard-hitting Academy captain curbed 74 off 101 balls with help of 13 boundaries but it was rear-guard action from wicketkeeper Sahagir that really put the tourists attack to the test.

Sahagir, who came to the wicket

## Mashud far from maddening crowd

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Distressed over his omission from the World Cup squad, long-serving wicketkeeper Khaled Masud has decided to skip the two four-day Tests against touring England A.

"I don't want to deceive my countrymen playing for Bangladesh. A when I am very upset. I would not be able to play with full commitment at this moment. So I came to Rajshahi to take some rest," Mashud told The Daily Star yesterday.

The frustration drove Masud back to his hometown in Rajshahi with certain captive zeal for bringing himself back on track.

AS soon as he reached his Kumarpara home last afternoon, he jumped out in company of local cricketers to devote in rigorous practice at the Rajshahi Government College ground.

During a break in the practice, the former Bangladesh skipper -- ignored by the selectors who themselves believe Mahsud remains to be the best keeper in the country --

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series defeat as the reigning world champions continue to struggle in a drastic form slump a month out from the World Cup. South Africa now take over as the number one ranked team.

Stung by their 10-wicket loss to New Zealand in the first match of the series on Friday, Australia scored at will from all the New Zealand bowlers with the exception of Shane Bond.

Their 336 for four, with a headline captain's knock of 105 from Mike Hussey, was a record score on the Eden Park pitch, easily eclipsing New Zealand's 304 for five against Sri Lanka 24 years ago.

But it was a short-lived record as Taylor's 117 and an unbeaten 76 from Fulton provided the backbone

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## Double blow for Aussies

### Kiwis clinch series in fantastic fashion

### Cricket

#### AFP, Auckland

Australia were knocked from the world number one spot Sunday when New Zealand smashed a colossal 337 for five to win their one-day cricket international here and clinch the best-of-three series.

Australia set what seemed an imposing target of 336, but Ross Taylor, Peter Fulton and Craig McMillan belted New Zealand to victory with an over to spare.

They now hold an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match Chappell-Hadlee Trophy series.

It was Australia's fourth successive loss and second successive

series defeat as the reigning world champions continue to struggle in a drastic form slump a month out from the World Cup. South Africa now take over as the number one ranked team.

He came to the crease with New Zealand requiring nine an over, and departed with four overs remaining and the target down to a run a ball.

New Zealand's run chase started shakily when captain Stephen Fleming, who is struggling for consistency, fell to Nathan Bracken in the third over for six.

Fellow opener Lou Vincent, who has been enjoying a golden run this summer, saw his luck desert him in the eighth over, also to Bracken and New Zealand were in trouble at 47 for two.

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of the New Zealand innings, before a quick-fire 52 in 30 balls from McMillan provided the final impetus.

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The Games, to be competed among athletes from Bangladesh and West Bengal from February 24-28, will be hosted in Kolkata.

A 228-member Bangladesh team will leave Dhaka on February 22 by road to participate in the eight-event Games.

Manu, who had a meeting with the team managers and Bangladesh Olympic Association officials yesterday, listened to suggestions and asked the athletes to follow the instructions and maintain strict discipline.

#### PREMIER KABADDI

Bangladesh Rifles clinched the Premier Kabaddi League title with a hard-fought 30-25 win over Bangladesh Police in the tiebreakers at the Outer Stadium Kabaddi court.

The winners led the first half 10-7 but the losing side bounced back in the second session to equal the score 22-22 in the regulation time

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## Target Round Two

### Tigers leave Dhaka today

#### SPORTS REPORTER



When almost everything to do with the Tigers is slowly emerging as fresh and new, the next World Cup mission in West Indies is proving to be no exception as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) coined a new idea by arranging an open media session yesterday prior to the departure of the team for the Caribbean.

The new-look Bangladesh team will fly this morning to make their third World Cup appearance -- what the players believe will be an altogether different experience from their previous meets with regards to team aspiration.

And the message that the cricketers left behind was that they are now much more mature, they have not only won against Zimbabwe regularly but have also beat big teams like Australia, India and Sri Lanka, they possess the self-confidence and possess many other positive traits which can make the difference.

"Recently we have become used to winning," declared vice-captain Shahriar Nafees who was key in his side's last year successes.

There remains a bitter memory with the previous meet four years back in South Africa and the controversy over the team selection this time can hardly be adequate preparation, but Habibul Bashar's men have united under one slogan 'our main target is to make a second round berth'.

"To beat a team like India or Sri Lanka is difficult but not impossible" was the common sentiment when all the 15 selected Tigers and coach Dav Whatmore opened up to the

press in a very congested room at a local hotel.

For Bashar, Mohammad Rafique, Mohammad Ashraful, Tapash Baisya and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, the showpiece is nothing new as they played the 2003 meet but it was not case for the rest of the members.

Among the young guns undoubtedly the focus will be on young wicketkeeper Mashfiqur Rahim as the Bogra lad won a dream place ahead of long-serving stumper Khaled Mashud.

"If you take pressure it bothers you but as a professional one should be able to handle this kind of situation. What I believe will be an altogether different experience from their previous meets with regards to team aspiration.

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baby-faced Mashfiqur in response to the much-debated issue.

There was, however, competition within competition for a few players for whom the main target was not the World Cup but a spot in the team which they will aim to achieve through accomplished performances in the build-up games.

"My first target is to get a place in the eleven by showing impressive performance in the build-up games if I get the chance," said Rajin Saleh. Openers Javed Omar, Tamim Iqbal and left-arm paceman Syed Rasel also echoed the same sentiment.

While everybody promised to give their best it was leading paceman Mashrafe who wanted Lady Luck to smile on him this time because he knows how painful it is to come back from this kind of event -- a reminder of the injury he suffered during the 2003 World Cup.

"Luck is very important in this kind of competition," said the Narail Express adding that he would love to contribute as much as possible to make an upset in the meet.

Another question raised was how many were going to end their one-day career after the World Cup. Ace left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, however, confirmed that he was still not thinking about it. "Why not 2011?" said a smiling Rafique, who suddenly announced his retirement after the 1999 World Cup only to change his decision, when asked whether he has any plan to quit ODIs after the meet.

If the meet provided a chance

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## Ispahani to sponsor Tigers

#### SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladeshi cricketers will carry the logo of Mirzapore Tea on their jersey and gear during the coming Cricket World Cup in the West Indies.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials yesterday introduced the new shirt of the team as well as sponsors MM Ispahani Limited at a local hotel.

Ispahani, a regular sponsor of the National Cricket League -- the first-class competition in the country -- has won the rights for US dollars 25,000 (about 17.5 lakh), which is much lower than that of the previous edition four years ago. Mobil had paid the board 40 lakh for the South African trip.

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Mirza Behrouz Ispahani (L) on behalf of sponsors and Bangladesh Cricket Board general secretary Mahbub Ahaman unveil Bangladesh's World Cup shirt at a local hotel yesterday.

# Ad



TAKE THIS AS A TALISMAN: Former national skipper and general secretary of Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh Naimur Rahman (R) hands over souvenirs to his successor and Bangladesh's World Cup captain Habibul Bashar at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

#### LOCAL SNIPS

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Mizanur Rahman Manu, Bangladesh contingent's Chief de Mission for the inaugural Indo-Bangla Games, yesterday urged the team members to uphold the country's image during the five-day event.

The Games, to be competed among athletes from Bangladesh and West Bengal from February 24-28, will be hosted in Kolkata.

A 228-member Bangladesh team will leave Dhaka on February 22 by road to participate in the eight-event Games.

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