



THAT WAS EASY: Humayun Kabir of Bangladesh Navy clears the pole quite comfortably in his gold-medal winning jump in the pole-vault event of the 32nd National Athletics Championship at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Army take command

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Army dominated the 32nd National Athletics Championship securing nine gold, six silver and seven bronze medals on the second day of the three-day meet at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) closely followed the leaders with nine gold, six silver and two bronze medals while Bangladesh Navy a distant third with two gold, one silver and two bronze.

Bangladesh Air Force are in fourth place securing a single gold and three silver while BKSP in the fifth position with one gold, one silver and two bronzes.

Masudul Karim of Bangladesh Army won two gold medals on the second day clinching the top slot in the men's 200-meter sprint (21.7 sec) and men's 110-meter hurdles (14.46 sec).

Other gold winners of the day were Nazmunnahar Beauty of BJMC in the women's 200m sprint, Sathi Parveen of BJMC in the women's high jump, Hanifur Rahman of Army in the men's marathon, Kabirul Islam of BJMC in the men's javelin throw, Jyotsna Afroze of BJMC in the women's discuss throw, Humayun Kabir of Navy in the pole vault, Chaina Khatun of BJMC in the women's 800m run, Salim Miah of Army in the men's 800m run, Anisur Rahman of Army in the 10,000m run, Bangladesh Army in the men's 4x100m relay and BJMC in the women's 4x100m relay.

A total of thirteen events were decided on the second day.

Kumar smells

FROM PAGE 17 "We do care deeply, though, about making sure we are completely ready and properly prepared when each crunch game comes along. The Australia game was not a crunch game.

"The semifinal against New Zealand on April 24 is.

"We rested Muralidaran, Chaminda Vaas and Lasith Malinga in the best interests of the individuals and the team. We had to make sure they were at peak fitness and completely rested when we start on the morning of the 24th in Jamaica.

"All three have minor niggles that benefitted from not playing. We are now confident that they will be in the best possible physical shape they could be for the semifinals. It was a decision we're entirely comfortable with.

"Murali and Vaasy are the lynchpins of our attack. They have been for years and they remain so in this tournament -- albeit with good support from Malinga, Dilhara Fernando and Farveez Maharoor.

"True, Vaas and Murali may have played many games against Australia during their long careers, but Sri Lanka have not played Australia in the last 14 months and only six members of Australia's current team played in that match in Brisbane.

"Giving Australia's batsmen a free look-in was not to our advantage if we meet again."

Ponting chalks

FROM PAGE 20 Ponting explained.

"Our batting has been excellent and it's getting better at the crucial part of this tour. It's a really exciting time and one all the guys in the Australian dressing room are looking forward to."

New Zealand, yet to win the World Cup, play 1996 champions Sri Lanka in Tuesday's first semifinal in Jamaica.

Paul questions resignation



BBC ONLINE, undated

England batsman Paul Collingwood has questioned whether coach Duncan Fletcher was right to stand down.

Fletcher will end his eight-year reign after Saturday's World Cup match against the West Indies in Barbados.

"I am not sure whether the time really was right for him to go," Collingwood told BBC Sport.

"Fletch has continued to change his techniques. He is constantly looking at new ideas. He is a very good coach, who put his heart and soul into the job."

England captain Michael Vaughan said on Friday the time was right for a new voice.

But Collingwood, who has been tipped as a possible future one-day captain of the national side, believes the players have let Fletcher down during the Ashes whitewash and the World Cup.

"Obviously results have not gone our way this winter but our individual performances have been poor," he wrote in his website column.

"Fletch has done everything in his powers for us to perform at a high level. To go out on the note he has is very disappointing -- after so much success he didn't deserve it."

Moore, who has coached the England A side since 2001, takes over from Fletcher on 1 May, with a Test series against West Indies beginning 16 days later.

"I have not worked with Peter Moores before but people who have spent time with him at the National Academy say he is very good so I am looking forward to it," said Collingwood.

"There will probably be a lot more change in store for the team, with a new coach bringing in different ideas. I think the (backroom) personnel will change as well.

"It is up to the experienced players in the squad to make sure we move on in a positive way and help the new coach implement his vision."

Memories

FROM PAGE 17 we must continue the momentum and raise the bar even further.

Nine games against county sides in the Friends Provident Trophy will prove equally testing, and there is an Intercontinental Cup Final to contest against Canada, as well as a tri series with the West Indies and Holland.

I hope that Ireland has given you, the viewing public so many special World Cup moments, days that you will remember for as long as we will.

(Andrew White, the Ireland batsman, wrote this article for BBC Radio Five Live).

Super League

FROM PAGE 17 Biman 12 and DOHS 10.

The league was held back for this long, more than 90 days, to wait for the national players but the six top clubs will still be missing their services. Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) had planned in the lines of the Tigers' possible early exit from the showpiece event but the good showing put the league back for a month.

McGrath plans his end

FROM PAGE 20 McGrath's mind games, and he is still playing with his opponents, picking his targets and using the media to plant in their minds that inking of doubt. Atherton was dismissed by McGrath 19 times in Tests and Brian Lara, the batsman he regards slightly ahead of Indian Sachin Tendulkar as the greatest he bowled to, 15 times.

"It definitely worked in my favour. I think it started with Brian Lara. I knocked him over, and all the talk was, McGrath had his bunny. I was always happy to go along with it. After a while it had nothing to do with technique or ability. It was a mental thing. The last time I knocked Athers over I nearly felt sorry for him. The bowled to, 15 times.

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boys give me a hard time for making big statements. They think its outrageous and say, 'How can you set yourself up for that?'. I never thought I was setting myself up. I worked better when there was more pressure on me. It was a way of getting more out of myself. When I said we could win 5-0 I meant it."

While he toyed with his rivals in the papers, he tried to keep his distance from them in real life.

"Sometimes you can get too friendly, and I don't think it helps when you are out in the middle. As a fast bowler, to be successful you've got to have that unknown quality."

McGrath says he has never experienced the kind of self-doubt he provoked in his opponents. And

he has felt nervous on a cricket field only once, when he was preparing to bowl at Lance Klusener in the tense last stages of the 1999 World Cup semifinal against South Africa. Still he recalls feeling in control, and knowing exactly where he wanted the ball to land. As the two countries prepare for another semifinal eight years later, McGrath's reputation for handling such pressure is legendary; South Africa's is not.

There is only one more thing to achieve, and no better place to do it than in Barbados, scene of next Saturday's final where McGrath came of age as a cricketer in 1995.

Fletcher will be

FROM PAGE 20 forward thinking.

"Many thought he needed to be an Englishman to do the job but I don't think I've known anyone care for the England cricket team more than Duncan Fletcher had.

"He's brought a tremendous amount to the team and to me. All the players still have a very high regard for him but good things have to come to an end eventually."

Fletcher, who has a home in Cape Town, could move into first-class cricket, in England, South Africa or Australia, although his former side Glamorgan have already ruled out a return.

Vaughan, who learned of Fletcher's resignation during a two-hour chat on Wednesday evening, said he thought the time had come for a coaching change in the England side.

"Eight years as a coach at international level is a long time and I think he needs a fresh challenge and a fresh start," Vaughan said of Fletcher.

"He is the best I've ever worked with. I'm sure many people around the world will say he is among the top coaches.

"He's always coming up with new ideas; he's very innovative and forward thinking."

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Latif blazes ton

SPORTS REPORTER

A blazing unbeaten hundred by Khalid Latif gave Pakistan Cricket Academy an emphatic six-wicket victory against the Bangladesh Cricket Academy in the first match of the tri-nation series at BKSP yesterday.

The 21-year-old right-hander put the local bowlers to the sword during his 88-ball 100 that contained ten fours and five sixes and associated in a 115-run stand with Babar Naem for the second wicket as the visitors romped to 220-4 in 35.5 overs in reply to the home side's 219 all out.

Left-handed Babar smashed six fours and five sixes on his way to 69 off 46 deliveries. Left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain claimed two wickets for 55 runs in 8.5 overs for the hosts.

Bangladesh Academy rode on Zunaed Siddiqui's 42-ball 53 that featured ten fours to score 219 in 47.3 overs after having decided to bat first.

Mahmudullah Riyad made 31 off 44 balls with the help of three boundaries. Babar captured three wickets for 32 runs and Fawad Alam claimed three for 33 runs.

Sri Lanka Academy is the other team in the competition.

SCORES IN BRIEF

**Bangladesh Academy:** 219 all out in 47.3 overs (Sadat 20, Zunaed 53, Nadif 27, Riyad 31, extras 27: Babar 3-32, Fawad 3-33).

**Pakistan Academy:** 220-4 in 35.5 overs (Manzoor 14, Babar 69, Khalid 100 not out, Adnan 18 not out, extras 4; Mosharraf 2-55). **Result:** Pakistan Academy won by six wickets.

Transcom Cup golf ends

SPORTS REPORTER

The two-day long Transcom Cup Golf Tournament 2007, one of the prestigious tournaments sponsored by Transcom Electronics Limited, concluded at the Kurmitola Golf Club on Friday.

A total of 395 golfers took part in the meet.

Chief of Air Staff, Bangladesh Air Force Air Vice Marshal S M Ziaur Rahman inaugurated the tournament and later he distributed prizes as chief guest. Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army and vice president of Kurmitola Golf Club Major General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan and Latifur Rahman, Chairman and Managing Director of Transcom Electronics Limited were also present in the occasion.

A large number of participants including high civil and military officials with their spouses and members of the Transcom Electronics Limited attended the function.

THE WINNERS

**Senior winner nine hole:** Brigadier General Masud Ali Khan (Retd); **Runner-up nine hole:** Major General Monirul Islam; **Winner nine hole:** Colonel Shahid Abbas Chowdhury (Retd); **Longest drive (Hole No 7):** Min Gu Cho; **Nearest to pin (Hole No 8):** M Monowarul Islam (BGCC); **Front nine winner:** Sheikh Farid Ahmed (Manik); **Back nine winner:** K J Youn; **2nd Runner-up:** J H Yang; **Ladies best gross:** C D Hwang; **2nd Best gross:** Shawkat-uz-Zaman; **Runner-up:** Shahriar Nasir Khan; **Best gross:** Sadiq Qudus; **Junior winner:** Master Swad Mahfuz; **Senior winner:** Major General M Kamal Uddin (Retd); **Ladies winner:** Fatema Matiur (SGC); **Winner:** Nasir Md Khan.

'20 Tests to break players'

CRICINFO, undated

Ricky Ponting is convinced "something will give" next year when Australia face a crammed playing itinerary that is expected to include a record-breaking 20 Tests.

Australia's home schedule for 2007-08 was announced this week and Ponting is concerned about the impact of the load on his teams.

"Something will give, there is no doubt about that," Ponting said in The Australian. "Something will give somewhere along the line. Our boys have aired their opinions quite a lot over the last few years about the workload on the players.

"I totally understand how hard it is to try to fit the programming in to keep everybody happy. It's hard work. We are professional cricketers now. We have to learn how to deal with that."

The squad will get the winter off before heading to South Africa in September for the Twenty20 world championship followed by a possible tour of Zimbabwe and a one-day trip to India. Sri Lanka and India are Australia's opponents at home and then series against West Indies, Bangladesh and Pakistan are planned before New Zealand and South Africa visit.

"The more cricket you play, I am not entirely sure it becomes as enjoyable for the spectators all the time as well," Ponting said.

Pollock pegging away

AFP, Bridgetown



South Africa fast bowler Shaun Pollock may not have a five-wicket haul in the ongoing World Cup, but is

silently setting up his team's victories with his discipline.

He has so far grabbed seven wickets in nine matches, but his captain Graeme Smith is not complaining because the paceman has been doing with the new ball what is expected of him.

Pollock creates pressure with his probing line and length and his teammates exploit it when batsmen try to take liberties against them in a bid to step up the run-rate.

Pacemen Andre Nel, Andrew Hall and Charl Langeveldt each had a five-wicket haul, but Pollock is the most economical of all as he has conceded just 3.54 runs in an over.

Pollock has had two expensive wicketless matches in the tournament when he gave away 83 runs in 10 overs against defending champions Australia and 46 in eight against Sri Lanka, but soon bounced back.

He will be keen to settle a score or two with Australia in the semi-

final at St Lucia on April 25, especially after having done well in his last five Super Eights games.

Pollock has shed much of his pace of late, but not the ability to test batsmen with subtle variations. He is the most difficult bowler to score off in the powerplays with fielding restrictions.

The 33-year-old has plenty of reasons to deliver this time.

Pollock was the captain of the South African side, which failed to qualify for the Super Six stage at home in the 2003 World Cup and this will be last chance to be part of the Cup-winning squad.

The fast bowler believes his team can win the Cup for the first time since making their debut in 1992.

"I believe we have the ability. If we get it right on the day, we have shown we can beat anyone," he said recently.

"I believe there is something special about this one. And it will be extra special for me because it will be my last one."

Pollock lost his captaincy after his team's doomed Cup campaign at home, but it turned to be a blessing in disguise as he has been performing with freedom in recent years.

Many captains have faded away from the scene after their teams' failures in the World Cup,

five-wicket success against the same opponents in the World Cup in West Indies.

"This is a very crucial time for our cricket after a bright performance in the World Cup, so we must put a check on our emotion. We should understand one thing that the expectation is high with the series against India and that's why we have to give a second thought before leaving out a proven skipper (Bashar)" said Aminul, who however raised questions about the capability of the six-member committee.

"As a captain Bashar was successful except for the Ireland match, but he has totally failed as a batsman. But tell me how many batsmen in the team were successful in the tournament? We must take one thing in our consideration that a coach like Whatmore is no more with us and that's why it is a risk to make the side unstable right at the moment," he added.

Federer, Nadal on collision course



AFP, Monte Carlo

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal both extended record runs on Friday to move a win away from a possible repeat finals clash at the Monte Carlo Masters.

Federer distinguished himself as a 30-million-dollar man in tennis winning his 500th match to coast into the semifinals over David Ferrer 6-4, 6-0.

It was the top seed's sixth victory without defeat against a man who can offer little to turn the tide.

Rafael Nadal, winner of the last two editions, hammered Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany 6-2, 6-3 to reach 65 consecutive clay court victories. The German saved five match points before falling.

The Spaniard who owns a pair of Roland Garros trophies has not been beaten on clay since April, 2005. He stopped Federer for the title here in 2006.

"Every match I play is difficult now," said Nadal. "All players want to beat the number 2. It was another

tough one today but I'm looking forward to the semi-finals."

Nadal will Saturday face Czech tenth seed Tomas Berdych, who woke up to sweep the last dozen games as he overhauled Sweden's Robin Soderling 5-7, 6-3, 6-0.

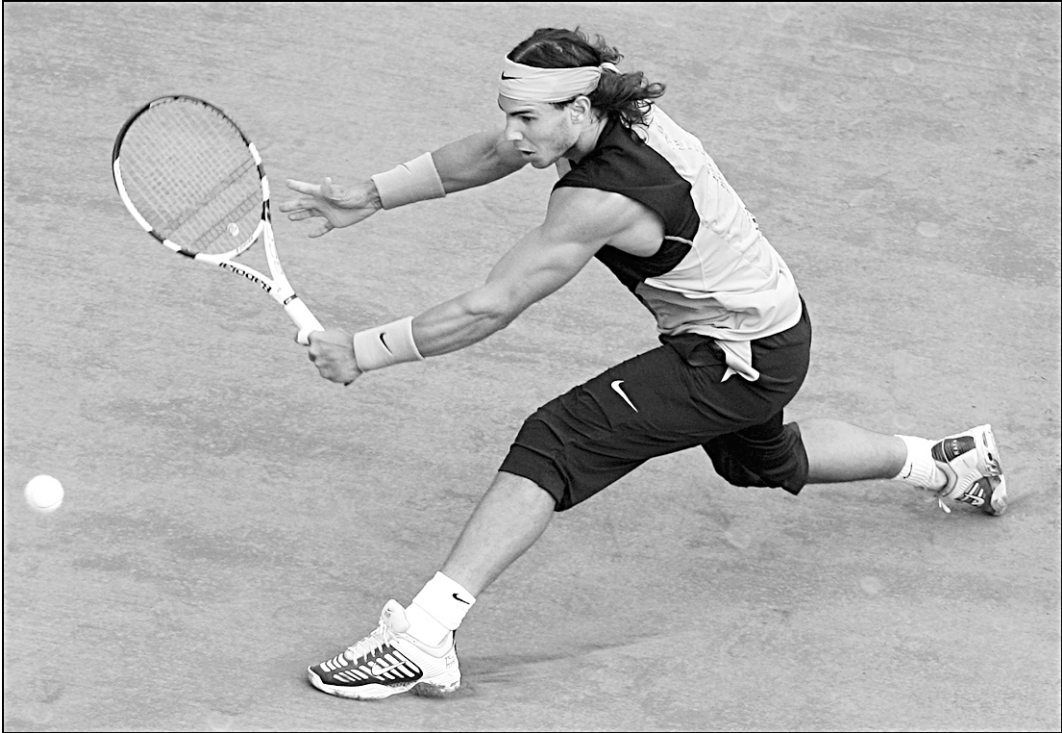
"It's step by step," Berdych said of his recovery. "The start wasn't so good, but then things changed. I'm really happy that I can sit here and trying to prepare for tomorrow's semi-finals."

Berdych lifted a Masters Series title last November, winning in Paris. He owns an ATP clay trophy from Palermo as well as three at the lower level.

Federer takes on Spain's two-time champion Juan Carlos Ferrero, who defeated France's Richard Gasquet 5-7, 7-5, 6-2 and goes sporting a 3-6 deficit in the series.

Federer, 25, is only the second active player with 500 match wins, trailing Spain's Carlos Moya, aged 30, who has 516.

"David's an excellent grinder and baseline player, and if he plays very well it's so hard to beat him," said the modest Swiss.



Rafael Nadal of Spain slides on the clay to make a return against German opponent Philipp Kohlschreiber during a Monte Carlo Masters Series match in Monaco on Saturday.

but Pollock is one of the few skipers who are still enjoying the game as players.

The ongoing tournament has already seen the retirements of Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq and his West Indian counterpart Brian Lara following their teams' failures to qualify for the semifinals.

But Pollock, the first South African to bag 400 Test wickets, and Sri Lankan Sanath Jayasuriya are the two who led their sides in 2003 but are still playing here as players and deliverer.

The South African paceman, whose father and uncle also represented the country with distinction, entered the World Cup in excellent form as he was named man of the match against Pakistan in a home one-day series.

Pollock made his Test debut against England in 1995 and played his maiden one-day international the following year, forming a formidable partnership with fast bowler Allan Donald.

He is not only a quality paceman, but also an effective batsman down the order having scored more than 3,000 runs in both Tests and one-dayers.

Pollock has so far taken 416 wickets in Tests and 380 in the shorter version of the game.

WOOLMER MURDER CASE

'Suspect identified'

CRICINFO, undated

The investigations into the murder of Bob Woolmer, the late Pakistan coach, are reported to have reached a significant breakthrough with a likely suspect being identified through footage from the hotel security camera. According to a report in the UK-based The Independent, detectives from Scotland Yard and a team of 30 officers studied the digitally-enhanced footage and the suspect was understood to be a male, though police were unable to confirm his identity.

"The cleaned-up images from London show at least one individual of considerable interest to the inquiry," a source close to the investigation told the paper. "The time of the footage and its location mean that this individual must be considered a suspect. Further work is being done on statements given by individuals to look at any inconsistencies. It is good progress."

Woolmer was found dead in his hotel room in Jamaica on March 18, a day after Pakistan's loss to Ireland, and though the cause of death was determined, the authorities had struggled to develop lasting leads in the murder case. There was speculation that Woolmer may have been poisoned first before being strangled, as a toxicology report stated that samples taken from his blood, stomach and urine had shown the presence of a foreign substance.

An inquest into the murder was scheduled for April 23 but had to be postponed owing to 'significant developments' into the case. Twenty witnesses were due to provide evidence but a statement from the Jamaican justice ministry on Thursday said the hearing would be postponed following advice from the coroner.

Lara exit saddens

FROM PAGE 20 because he is a tremendous ambassador for the game."

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming, another lefty, added: "I heard him (Lara) say he wanted to be an entertainer; he was all that and more.

"He was a player who created interest in New Zealand and around the world -- so he brought more players to the game.

"For a left-hander he was inspirational to watch and play against."