



Faruque firm on Bashar

SPORTS REPORTER

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed has poured cold water into speculations of an immediate change in one-day captaincy by saying that it would be unwise to unstable the team ahead of next month's home series against India.

He took guard for the most successful Bangladesh captain, Habibul Bashar, while talking to the media at the Zia International Airport yesterday on arrival of the team from the World Cup.

"Habib (Habibul Bashar) deserves a little bit more than the way he has been treated now," responded Faruque, who also accompanied the team as technical manager, when he was asked to comment on the board's latest views on one-day team selection.

The board had said that their decision would depend on whether the selectors pick Bashar or not.

"For the last three years, Bashar has led the team well and I must

SEE PAGE 22 COL 2



Did U Know?

In cricket, asking rate means the runs required per over for a team to win, mostly relevant in the one-day version of the game.



Mahela Jayawardene

(Sri Lanka cricket skipper)
"Tom Moody definitely has pushed me to the limits. He's not happy when I'm cruising. He's not happy with anyone cruising. He has pushed me and I have found out I can push myself as well."



B.League
Ctg Abahani v Rahmatganj
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:00 pm



SMILE ALL AROUND: A combo of photos shows (TOP LEFT) garlanded Sakib Al Hasan (L), Abdur Razzak (2nd from L), Mohammad Ashraful (C), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (2nd from R) and Tamim Iqbal pose for photographs. (TOP RIGHT) Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar is being received by former national captains. (ABOVE RIGHT) Opening batsman Javed Omar cradles his newborn son as Ashraful smiles. (ABOVE LEFT) A tired looking Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore takes questions from the media. All the photos were taken at the Zia International Airport yesterday upon the Tigers' arrival from the World Cup in the West Indies.

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

Tigers home, set new target

BISHWAJIT ROY



On a tranquil morning, the Bangladesh cricket team landed at the Zia International Airport yesterday. But there were no shortage of noise or excitement as former national skippers, board officials, family of the players and a large number of media persons received the country's World Cup heroes.

Everyone was happy because the Tigers have kept their promise by making it to the mega events second round for the first time including wins against heavyweights like India and South Africa but what delighted captain Habibul

Bashar most was the 'respect' they have earned from the tournament.

"We are not overall satisfied with the performance but at the same time it was not too bad. We won some good matches and achieved our goal by reaching the second round but there were frustrating performances in some matches as well. What makes me proud in the end is that we have returned home with some respect," said Bashar while talking to reporters at the ZIA lounge.

"It's a big, big achievement to earn respect from the opponents in such an important tournament," he repeated with emotion.

The 34-year old captain, the most successful in the history of the country, also said that they showed the world that they have the ability to beat any team in the world on their day.

"We proved in the tournament that if we can play to our potential then it is not impossible to beat any team. It's another achievement," he said.

But he admitted that they have yet to attain the standard as a team from where they can claim that they can win matches on a regular basis.

"Still we are a developing side. Yes, we have the potential to win matches against the big opponents but that doesn't mean we have reached a standard as a team to consistently win."

It would have been a much better return for the right-hander if he had made some contribution with bat or could avoid the loss to ICC associate members Ireland, which dented their pride. He also lamented over his side's inconsistent fielding performance.

"Personally I am not happy

because of my poor batting. The other thing that is really frustrating for us is the defeat to the Irish. Not only me, but if the overall batting of the team was a little more consistent, then we could have put on a much better show.

"But I am not hopeless with my batting because it was only a tournament, though a big one. I failed to deliver but my performance in the last year wasn't that bad. It was just a bad tournament and that's why I am looking forward to the next assignment," said Bashar adding that he has yet to think about his one-day career although whispers of his quitting from the shorter version of the game.

The Bangladesh captain also disclosed his side's target in the

SEE PAGE 22 COL 1

Australia fire into final McGrath, Tait choke Proteas

AFP, Gros Islet



a crushing seven-wicket win over South Africa here on Wednesday.

South Africa were dismissed for 149, their lowest-ever Cup total as Tait finished with 4-39 while man-of-the-match McGrath took 3-18.

Australia then raced to the target with more than 18 overs to spare despite losing Adam Gilchrist and skipper Ricky Ponting early in the innings.

They will now meet Sri Lanka at Barbados on Saturday, a repeat of the 1996 Cup final at Lahore when the islanders beat Mark Taylor's Australians by seven wickets.

Australia are now unbeaten in their last 28 Cup matches and are aiming to become the first team in tournament history to complete a hat-trick of titles.

They were the champions in 1999, where they also beat South Africa in a group game before the famous semifinal tie against the same opposition put them into the Lord's final.

Australia were also champions in 2003 in South Africa.

"We lost a huge toss, but full credit to bowlers who executed the gameplans very well," said Ponting.

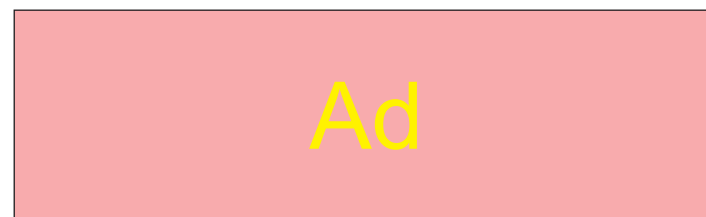
"McGrath has been in a great form and he's now the tournament's leading wicket-taker. It's a fantastic feeling and a good day for Australia. Our top order has done very well and I hope they do it again in the last

match." South Africa captain Graeme Smith admitted his side had been outclassed.

"We were beaten by a better

side. We had our ups and downs in the tournament, but didn't play to our best today (Wednesday)," he said.

SEE PAGE 22 COL 6



TRALIA v SOUTH AFRICA SCOREBO

Scoreboard of the second semifinal of the World Cup between Australia and South Africa at the Beausejour Cricket Ground in Gros Islet, St Lucia on Wednesday:

SOUTH AFRICA	R	B	4s	6s
Graeme Smith b Nathan Bracken	2	5	0	0
AB de Villiers c Adam Gilchrist b Shaun Tait	15	34	3	0
Jacques Kallis b Glenn McGrath	5	9	1	0
Herschelle Gibbs c Adam Gilchrist b Shaun Tait	39	49	6	0
Ashwell Prince c Adam Gilchrist b Glenn McGrath	0	2	0	0
Mark Boucher c Matthew Hayden b Glenn McGrath	0	1	0	0
Justin Kemp not out	49	91	4	1
Andrew Hall c Adam Gilchrist b Shaun Tait	3	8	0	0
Shaun Pollock caught & bowled Brad Hogg	5	13	1	0
Andre Nel c Michael Clarke b Shaun Tait	8	41	1	0
Charl Langeveldt b Shane Watson	6	10	1	0
Extras: (leg byes-4, wides-13)	17			
Total: (All out in 43.5 overs)	149			

Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Smith), 2-12 (Kallis), 3-26 (de Villiers), 4-27 (Prince), 5-27 (Boucher), 6-87 (Gibbs), 7-93 (Hall), 8-103 (Pollock), 9-130 (Nel), 10-149 (Langeveldt)

SEE PAGE 22 COL 6



B.LEAGUE Minnows meet today

SPORTS REPORTER

The B. League enters the ninth week today with bottom-table sides Rahmatganj and Chittagong Abahani pitted against each other at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

There would be no so-called big matches in the round but a rapidly improving Arambagh, who put an end to Sheikh Russel's unbeaten streak on Wednesday, could pose a challenge for title contenders Muktijoddha in an interesting Dhaka derby on May 1.

Tomorrow, struggling Brothers

SEE PAGE 22 COL 5

Dav, tired and out!

SPORTS REPORTER



After two months and seven days in the Caribbean, it took a 40-hour journey for Habibul Bashar's men to return home. Understandably there were signs of fatigue on the faces of the Bangladesh team members who touched down in Dhaka early morning yesterday.

Everybody was in a hurry to leave the Zia International Airport but it was only possible after they fulfilled the demands of the media men.

The cricketers, however, were kind enough to meet the press but it was not the case for outgoing coach Dav Whatmore, under whom Bangladesh have improved their record and enhanced the reputation in world cricket.

Annoyed by the over enthusiastic media, especially the overwhelming microphones that surrounded him, the Sri Lankan-born Australian coach gave answers in the shortest possible way.

"Very good, very good," was his reply when he was asked about his feelings of wins over New Zealand (warm-up game), India and South Africa.

"We didn't play well," was the answer to a question of what was the reason behind his team's failure

SEE PAGE 22 COL 6