

# Bashar captain, Ash deputy

**Cricket**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Habibul Bashar was retained as captain and ace batsman Mohammad Ashraful appointed as his deputy for Bangladesh's three-match one-day home series against India this month.

The official announcement came when chief selector Faruque Ahmed declared a 14-member squad yesterday at a press conference. Batsman Rajin Saleh is the only omission from the team that had a successful World Cup campaign last month.

Saleh, who returned home from the Caribbean without playing any match, was dropped from the side as the selectors had to reduce the squad although all-rounder Forhad Reza, who joined the team in West Indies to replace injured pacesman Tapash Baisya, kept his place.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) made a new vice-captain in place of out-of-form opener Shahriar Nafees in a view to replace Bashar in the near future as the 34-year-old most successful Bangladesh captain is all set to quit one-day cricket after the coming

home series.

"Actually the selectors are not part of selecting captain and vice-captain as the board has the sole responsibility. I think right at the moment Ashraful is now in good form that's why he has been given the job. But it doesn't necessarily mean that a vice-captain will

automatically be a captain in future," said Faruque.

BCB vice-president Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen explained the reason behind the change of the vice-captain saying that they are looking to the 2011 World Cup, where Bangladesh is amongst the hosts.



Bangladesh selector Faruque Ahmed (L) announces the Bangladesh team for the India series as retained captain Habibul Bashar looks on at a local hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

"We appointed captain and vice-captain only for the coming series. What we believe is that Ashraful has a long career ahead of him and he is one of our best batsmen that's why we picked him as a vice-captain. The main reason is that the board is looking forward to the 2011 World Cup. But there is nothing for granted because form is very important," said Shaheen.

On the other hand Faruque, who met with his colleagues to finalise the squad yesterday morning, said that his panel preferred to continue with the squad that had an impressive performance in the showpiece event.

"We found no reason for bringing any changes in the team and Rajin was dropped only because we had to reduce the size of the squad," he said.

There was however discussion about in-form batsman Tushar Imran, but the panel failed to reach a unanimous decision about the dashing right-hander.

"He (Tushar) is amongst the best performer at domestic and A team level but he has failed to capitalise on the opportunities he has been given at the highest level. What can I assure you is that he will

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7



PHOTO: AFP

Australia captain Ricky Ponting proudly displays the World Cup trophy at a beach in Bridgetown on Sunday.

## INDIA SERIES AB Bank to sell tickets

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The tickets for the upcoming home series against India will go on sale from May 7 from different branches of the AB Bank Limited.

The commercial bank signed a two-year deal yesterday with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to hold the ticket sponsorship rights for all international Test and ODIs to be played during May 2007 to May 2009 in Bangladesh.

"AB Bank will provide Tk 65 lakh and in return it will get the rights to use their logo in the match tickets, BCB's backdrops, invitations cards, letterheads, scoreboard and two ground boards," said BCB vice-president Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, also chairman of marketing committee, at a press conference yesterday.

The amount looked too poor compared to the last one they had received from the City Bank for the last series against Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Scotland.

"For the first time we had called an open tender to give the right and AB Bank became a highest bidder to get the rights. Earlier we managed the sponsor by personal relationship but the tendering process ensure transparency," explained Tito adding that AB Bank are going to get highest exposure from the deal as they have a plan to arrange triangular series during the period.

"We feel proud to have become a partner of BCB because our team is performing well in the international level," said Kaiser A Chowdhury, president and managing director of AB Bank adding that, in a new dimension tickets can also be purchased online.

Interestingly, BCB has decided to print only 20,000 gallery tickets for the one-day matches at Mirpur and 10,000 for the Chittagong match although there is a huge interest among the cricket lovers with the series.

"What we want to ensure is that the fans can watch the matches in relaxed mood under immense heat. That's why we have decided

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3

## Speed's back against wall

**CRICINFO, undated**

The ICC, under fire from a number of direction for its handling of the World Cup, received a broadside from Niranjan Shah, the Indian board secretary, for becoming "more and more bureaucratic" and costing its members money by "unnecessarily employing so many people".

In an interview with the Sydney Morning Herald, Shah hinted that it was possible that Malcolm Speed, the ICC's chief executive, might face an unprecedented no-confidence motion at the next meeting of the executive board in June.

"It is something we will discuss with our board," Shah said. "Some of it will depend on how other boards are feeling. It is fair to say that there are quite a few things to sort out at the next chief executives' meeting."

While the relationship between the ICC and the Indian board has been frosty, the stinging attacks on

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

# Munna puts Reds atop



**SPORTS REPORTER**

Matiur Munna's first-half strike lifted Muktiyoddha to the top of the B. League table with a hard fought 1-0 win over Arambagh yesterday.

Arambagh, also contenders to become the table-toppers after upsetting Sheikh Russel in the previous round, were undone by the national midfielder's first-time volley in the 38th minute before almost empty stands of the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

After equal exchange of possession, a counter attack inspired by Arman unsettled the rival defence when he found Moni at the right flank. The Reds skipper finally passed the ball to Brahim and the Moroccan's pinpoint square pass across the pitch fell to Munna who made no mistake to glide the ball into the left hand post of Arambagh goalkeeper Mitul.

In a match that could have gone either way, both sides tested the opposition goalies with long-range

shots before Moni's 12th minute overhead pass set Alfaz with the first real chance. But the veteran striker, who did well to beat an offside trap, ran too wide with the ball to lose the advantage against the lone keeper.

Arambagh top-scorer Nicodemus then fluffed the easiest opportunity of the day in the 26th minute. The quick-footed Kenyan forward, who snatched the ball outsmarting three lurking Muktiyoddha backs midway through the rival half, raced into the rival area without any challenge but unbelievably shot the ball over the bar from six yards.

This came just two minutes after Arambagh suffered a huge blow when their Kenyan defender Thomas Biketi was forced off the field due to an injury.

Arambagh were virtually playing with ten men as the management kept the pathetic Tabith Awal, who hardly touched the ball, on the pitch till 44 minutes. Ritu's arrival strengthen their attack after the break and Nicodemus, who has scored five goals so far, hit the sidenetting just after resumption before setting the ball for an overlapping Sharif who blasted over from 20 yards.

Abu Yusuf's boys, who also

created and missed numerous half chances, hit back with a series of raids as the match approached the hour-mark. Alfaz once again got himself into a threatening position with Moni's through ball but the ageing forward's lack of pace gave Arambagh centre-back Akram enough time to run from behind and shield a powerful shot.

Munna then chipped the ball over from the edge of the area while fullback Titu fired a low drive just wide after a superb combined attack.

Arambagh, who stuck to fifth place with 13 points from eight games, worked hard in the last 20 minutes in a bid to reach the top spot for the first time but Titumir made two fine saves at the Reds goal to keep their slim lead intact.

Titumir, who has been playing regularly in absence of injured first choice keeper Aminul from the start of the season, kept out a low curling freekick by Domenic out of his goal before holding a long-range effort by rival captain Zuku on the line.

With five wins in nine games, Muktiyoddha pushed their tally to 18 points and Abahani, who host Khulna Abahani in their eighth game tomorrow, are likely to join

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



Australia wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist scored 149 runs from 104 balls in the World Cup final against Sri Lanka at Kensington Oval in Barbados on April 28. It was his fifteenth ODI century and fifth against Sri Lanka.



### Mahela Jayawardene

(Sri Lanka cricket captain)  
"I am disappointed with the final because this is a lifetime opportunity for you to win a World Cup. We didn't play that well, but obviously it was because of a brilliant knock by (Adam Gilchrist)."



### TEN Sports

**UEFA Champions League**  
Liverpool v Chelsea  
Live at 12:00 am (Wednesday)  
AC Milan v Man United  
Live at 12:00 am (Thursday)

## Sarwan given WI captaincy

**BARBADOS, PTI**

Seasoned middle order batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan has been appointed the new West Indies captain, succeeding Brian Lara who quit international cricket after the World Cup.

According to a CMC report, Sarwan was the unanimous choice during the West Indies Cricket Board's special board meeting yesterday and the chairman of selection panel Gordon Greenidge, Andy Roberts and Clyde Butts recommended his name for the job.

Sarwan served as Lara's deputy in the World Cup and the 26-year-old Guyanese, who is reportedly in Miami, will join the selectors in Antigua to pick the team for the tour of England.

West Indies are scheduled to play four Tests, two Twenty20 Internationals and three One-Day Internationals during the May 12

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

# Captain contemplating quitting one-dayers

**Cricket**

**BISHWAJIT ROY**

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar made it clear yesterday that he is on the verge of calling time on his one-day career.

The 34-year old, country's most successful skipper, informed during a press conference that he will give the official announcement before the home series against India in May.

"I'm thinking about my one-day career because I want to give the young guys more opportunities. I will officially announce my plan before the India tour but I want to convey my decision to my teammates first," said Bashar.

Explaining the reason behind the decision, the middle order batsman said that he has been

thinking about his one-day career only to prolong his Test career.

"It's not that I have had a very poor show with the bat in the World Cup rather I had been thinking before the World Cup. I even talked with some of my colleagues and well-wishers about my plan before leaving the country for the World Cup," he said.

"What I want to concentrate fully on is Test cricket to prolong my career," desired Bashar, who has a very healthy test record with 2838 runs in 42 matches including three hundred at the average of 34.60, a stark contrast with his one-day record (2125 runs in 109 matches at the average of 21.68).

The soft-spoken cricketer was polite enough to admit his poor showing in the shorter version of the game throughout his career.

"I must admit that I have not

batted well in one-day cricket throughout my career. But interestingly I have had very good performances for the preceding year except the World Cup," he said.

Bashar has pinned high hopes on the current team and said that it would be a fantastic one after two years.

"A team is not only made in the field but also outside and the beauty of this team is that we are well-integrated both ways. This side plays as a unit. What I only hope is that the same team will play together at least for the next two years," said Bashar while defending the unchanged squad for the India series.

Bashar's decision of quitting the one-day game paves the way for Mohammad Ashraful to get the hot job.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

# Aussies' 'tour de farce'

**AFP, Sydney**



ICC Cricket World Cup  
WEST INDIES 2007

heads at the bizarre ending to the biggest event in cricket's one-day calendar.

"Victory in tour de farce" trumpeted Sydney's Daily Telegraph, which bemoaned the official bungling that saw the last minutes of the final against Sri Lanka played in near pitch-black darkness.

Confusion over whether the game had finished, which saw Australia celebrate victory for 10 minutes before being asked to play three more overs, had reduced the competition to an "international laughing stock," the paper said.

The criticism did not stop at the

rain-interrupted final played at Bridgetown's Kensington Oval but extended to the entire tournament, which was dismissed as too long and boring.

"The 2007 tournament will go down in cricketing history as being short on organisation and long on duration," The Australian daily sniped in an editorial.

The contest was overshadowed by the murder of Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer after his team was stunned by cricket minnows Ireland, triggering concerns that match-fixing syndicates had again infiltrated the game.

Moreover, the World Cup was "dull and one-sided", with Australia comfortably winning every game they played, leaving outgoing coach John Buchanan to say the difference between the Aussies and the rest was as "between night and day," it said.

Such was the dominance of the Australians in the limited overs game that tail-enders Glenn

McGrath, Nathan Bracken and Shaun Tait never had to bat.

The Sydney Morning Herald, under the headline "Blind led the blind," derided the competition hosted by the West Indies as the "most tedious of tournaments."

The absurdity of the Barbados final, it said, was "in keeping with a tournament that has witnessed everything from the murder of a coach to the erosion of supporter goodwill courtesy of overly officious administrators."

The Australian eleven will nonetheless be afforded the respect of champions on their return, with a public welcome home in Sydney on Thursday to congratulate the team and bid farewell to McGrath, who retired after the final.

In McGrath's home town of Narromine, locals are considering erecting a bronze statue of the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

# 'Lanka can return with heads high'

**AFP, Bridgetown**



ICC Cricket World Cup  
WEST INDIES 2007

losing the World Cup final against Australia here.

"We have made a significant progress as a group in the last couple of years and if we continue to maintain the professionalism there's no reason why Sri Lanka can't compete on a regular basis with teams like Australia," he said.

Australia became the first team on Saturday to win the Cup for a third successive time when they beat Sri Lanka by 53 runs on

Duckworth-Lewis method in the rain-hit final at the Kensington Oval.

"Sri Lanka can walk away from this World Cup feeling very proud of what they have achieved. It was very hard to get to this point," said Moody.

"A lot of hard work had gone into it. I think they had an exceptional World Cup and to find themselves in the final against the best team in the world is a great achievement."

Moody said Sri Lanka's cricket had a bright future although quite a few players were near the end of their one-day careers.

"Sri Lanka has got depth and talent which needs the right opportunity and perseverance.

They play the game with a lot of passion and pride. They play the game hard," he said.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

Muktiyoddha goalscorer Matiur Munna (R) races ahead with the ball as Arambagh defender Ramjan (R) gives chase during their B. League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.