

# 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 paceman Tapash Baisya, kept his place.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) made a new vice-captain in place of out-of-form opener Shabir Nafees in a view to replace Bashar in the near future as the 34-year-old most successful Bangladeshi 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.

"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

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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

Bashar captain, Ash deputy

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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 fifth ODI century and fifth against Sri Lanka.

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 opportunity. I will officially announce my plan before the India tour but I want to convey my decision to my team-mates 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 2836 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 his 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.

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Aussies' 'tour de farce'

### SPORTS REPORTER

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 "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 Shantha Tait never had to bat.

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AP

Sydney



They might have walked away with the coveted World Cup trophy, but Australians were Monday shaming their 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.

Such was the dominance of the Australians in the limited overs game that tail-enders Glenn McGrath, Nathan Bracken and Shantha Tait never had to bat.

The criticism did not stop at the

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

"Sri Lanka can walk away from this World Cup feeling very proud about 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.

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

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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)

## What to WATCH

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

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Bridgetown



Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody is confident that his team will be a major force in international cricket despite 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.

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