

## SL Academy strengthen position

SPORTS REPORTER

Sri Lanka Academy consolidated their position in the first four-day match against Bangladesh Academy on the second day when the visitors came up with a solid batting display.

Having bowled out the home side for 260 in the first innings, the Lankans reached 190 for two at stumps at the Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Opener Ian Daniel, who shared two significant partnerships, was batting on 76, made off 199 balls with help of seven fours and a six.

Daniel added 94 for the opening wicket before losing Paranawithana (55) and shared further 55 with Wijesinghe (37) for the second wicket.

Earlier, Bangladesh Academy were bundled out adding 33 runs in 24 overs to their overnight 227-7. Wicketkeeper Sahagir Hossain made 32 while Komasar and Mohamed each grabbed three wickets.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



## Did U Know?

The UEFA Champions League was inaugurated in 1955 under the name of European Cup as a competition for the winners of the European national football leagues. The move took place after much persuasion from Gabriel Hanot, editor of French newspaper L'Equipe.



### John Howard

(Australia Prime Minister)  
"The wonderful Glenn McGrath... really has been an ornament to Australian cricket for many years. He is the greatest fast bowler of his generation and many would say he ranks with the very greatest that the game has seen."

## What to WATCH

### ESPN

- Azlan Shah Cup Hockey**  
Australia v India  
Live at 2:00 pm
- English Premier Football League**  
Man City v Man United  
Live at 5:40 pm  
Fulham v Liverpool  
Live at 7:55 pm
- STAR Sports**
- Azlan Shah Cup Hockey**  
Korea v Canada  
Live at 4:00 pm  
Malaysia v Pakistan  
Live at 6:00 pm
- English Premier Football League**  
West Ham v Bolton Wanderers  
Live at 7:55 pm  
Aston Villa v Sheffield United  
Live at 10:10 pm
- Primera Liga**  
Real Sociedad v Barcelona  
Live at 12:30 am (Sunday)  
Deportivo v Valencia  
Live at 2:00 am (Sunday)



### B.League

- Sk Russel v Muktijoddha (4:00pm)  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



Bangladesh speedster Shahadat Hossain (R) runs in as coach Dav Whatmore (C) looks on during a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Spotlight on fielding

BISHWAJIT ROY



The most commonly shouted word regarding the Bangladesh cricket team is undoubtedly 'consistency'. It is now a matter of common consensus that the Tigers excel in all departments only on their day, a fact evidenced by their show in their successful World Cup campaign in the Caribbean.

Inconsistent batting is still a big headache for the team, a huge contrast to the bowling, but as an improving side what many hanker after is that Bangladesh should at least emerge as a consistent fielding side, an essential component for shorter-version success.

Undoubtedly the injection of new blood in the squad as well as the hard work by the experts saw a much-improved fielding side than in the last few years but still there are miles to go to achieve a high standard, like the Sri Lankans.

"We improved our fielding a lot but still there were ups and downs in this area. This is an area in which we can easily achieve the highest standard. We seem to lose the rhythm once opponents dominate the proceeding but it is something that should not happen. I think there exists a lack of mental toughness," admitted captain Habibul Bashar, who himself has his critics

when it comes to the fielding department.

A high standard effort will be needed if Bashar's men want to repeat their World Cup success against India during this month's three-match one-day series where the bowlers are set to get very little assistance from the expected batting paradise pitches.

But can Bangladesh come out with their best under the immense heat? "Just look at the boys who charged up they are in the training under such an immense heat," was the reply of Bashar.

Admitting the ups and downs fielding coach Mohammed Salahuddin, who has been working hard with the guys for last one and half years, however said that he has found lot of improvement in the World Cup after a fragile effort in Zimbabwe last year.

"I must say we are yet to reap the total result of our hard-work but I am not overall dissatisfied by the effort in the World Cup because we were not too bad except in the match against Ireland," said Salahuddin.

"I think you will see a much better side in the coming series. There is immense heat but I think it was more or less the same in West Indies. Another advantage is our fielders struggled a bit in the big grounds in West Indies which is not the case this time," he added.

The effort against England also made the young coach happy as it has given him the belief that the boys finally understand that they

should excel in fielding as much as possible regardless of the conditions of the match.

"We are inconsistent because we fail to concentrate on every match but they did something different in that particular game which is really a good sign for the side," he said.

Salahuddin also explained reason behind the lack of a complete fielding side like his dream one -- Sri Lanka.

"There are some good fielders and some are not up to the mark because of their age. Speed is very important to become a good fielder but you can only achieve it if you have a satisfactory level of fitness. You can only ensure that a single would not be a double if you have the speed," Salahuddin opined.

But the improvement of Shahriar Nafees, Syed Rasel and Shahadat Hossain has satisfied him most.

"Atfab, Shakib, Mashrafe and Ashraf all are very good fielders by nature. But what surprised me was the effort of Tamim in the World Cup because he had no reputation as a good fielder in the domestic circuit. Shahriar Nafees and Rasel also improved a lot. I think we are now shaping up to be a very good fielding side," he said.

"But we still have a long way to go to be regarded as a standard fielding side," observed Salahuddin, who is little bit concerned over the slip fielding for the Test series.

## Australia to scrap Zim tour

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

The Australian government signalled Friday that it is likely to call on the country's world champion cricketers to cancel a planned tour of Zimbabwe this year.

Prime Minister John Howard, a strong critic of the regime of President Robert Mugabe, said the government would pay fines of up to 1.6 million US dollars which could be imposed by the International Cricket Council.

Australia, who wrapped up a third successive World Cup victory in the Caribbean last week, are due to play three one-day internationals in the troubled southern African nation in September.

Howard told reporters he and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer would discuss the tour

with Cricket Australia "because the situation in Zimbabwe has deteriorated very badly".

He said players should be consulted on the issue but the government would make the final decision on whether the tour should proceed.

"In the end, foreign policy decisions have got to be taken by governments and the situation in Zimbabwe is quite unacceptable," he said.

"We would indemnify Cricket Australia for any compensation it might have to pay to the international body. It would not be fair to visit the cost of a foreign policy decision on a sporting body."

Mugabe's regime has drawn international criticism over its brutal crushing of dissent last month as the country spirals into economic meltdown, with inflation running at more than 2,000 percent.

Australian captain Ricky Ponting, speaking Thursday before Howard's remarks, raised the possibility of some players boycotting the tour if it went ahead.

"There are some issues there and every individual player will be asked what their own views on that are, and they'll have a chance to make up their own mind what they want to do," he told The Australian newspaper.

Zimbabwe's most outspoken cleric, Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo Pius Ncube, is visiting Australia as a guest of the government and has made clear his support for a tour boycott.

"Whenever there is a touring sporting team there is a lot of focus on it to show there is nothing wrong with Zimbabwe," he told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"My encouragement would be let's boycott and not go there, so

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Rahmatganj end losing streak

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj earned their first point in a couple of months when they held Farashganj 0-0 in yesterday's old-Dhaka derby at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Rahmatganj's first point came in the second round in mid-March when they drew goalless with Arambagh, which followed a six-match losing streak in the B. League.

Injury-plagued Rahmatganj, who have already sacked coach Mohammed Motalieb, still remained bottom of the table with two points after nine games.

Farashganj on the other hand, pushed their collection to 10 points also after nine matches with two wins and four draws.

Meanwhile, Muktijoddha will look forward to go into the second

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## BCB's reception to Tigers today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will accord a reception to the national cricket team this evening at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel for their successful mission in the just concluded World Cup in the West Indies.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury will be the chief guest at the function, which also features a cultural show.

Habibul Bashar's men had fulfilled their target by reaching the second round of the competition for the first time after beating India and Bermuda in the preliminary round and then they stunned the then number one team South Africa in the Super Eights.

The success also came as a financial boost for the players as BCB had earlier announced additional bonuses for wins in the World Cup.

Meanwhile, the new salary structure for the national cricketers will be announced today as the players' last contract expired on March 31.

## Bangladesh arrange tour to NZ

CRICINFO, undated

Bangladesh will tour New Zealand in December and January for two Tests and three one-day internationals, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has said.

"New Zealand have agreed to play against us after seeing our performances in the World Cup," Mahub Anam, the BCB general secretary, told Reuters. "In return New Zealand will visit Bangladesh in October next year."

Anam also said that Sri Lanka confirmed three Tests against Bangladesh at home in June.

Both series will be in addition to the ICC's Future Tours Programme.

## BCCI softens stance

Cricket

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA from Kolkata

The Indian cricket board today softened its stand on the issue of contracts signing of the Bangladesh-bound Indian cricketers, saying it was not necessary that they should do so before leaving for Dhaka on Monday.

"They can sign the contracts after returning from the tour of Bangladesh," said BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah.

Asked if there was a deadline for the players to sign the contract, he said "no, there is no deadline".

"I don't have a feedback from the players yet. I am going to Kolkata on Sunday and will talk to the players and hear their concerns if there are any," he said.

Shah felt if players have some reservations then it would not be possible for them to sign the contracts before they leave for Dhaka.

Shah had said from London, a couple of days ago while returning from the World Cup final in West Indies, that the players will have to sign the contracts before going to Bangladesh.

As per the clauses of the contracts, the players will get only five lakh rupees as flat retainer fees irrespective of their seniority, a far

cry from the Rs 20-50 lakh they were earning till September last year.

They are also entitled to a bonus for victories in matches and series separately but the players are totally unhappy over these figures.

Sources said the players not only have doubts about some of the clauses incorporated in the contracts but also are peeved at the flat retainer amount proposed by the BCCI.

The players found it difficult to sign the 38-page contract before the tour of Bangladesh as they wanted their lawyers and agents to have a look at the documents.

The players would get Rs 1.5 and Rs 2.5 lakh each respectively as

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

## Pigeon's great finish

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

After 14 years spearheading the national team, it will take Glenn McGrath more than a three-day journey home to get used to retirement.

Fresh off the plane and almost blinking in the Sydney sunshine, McGrath yesterday contemplated the first day of life as an international. It will, he admitted, take a while to get his head around the change.

McGrath finished the World Cup with an almost obscene quantity of statistics backing his entry

into the game's highest annals.

But yesterday it was, as always, all about the team, even one of which he is now officially no longer part.

"No, it's not really sunk in yet," he said at the SCG, contemplating his retirement. "I don't feel any differently now but maybe next time the guys play or head off on a tour."

"Maybe if I spend a bit of time at home and think about it, but at the moment it feels like just another day."

McGrath had been promised the final over of his final match by his captain Ricky Ponting, only for the force of bad light and incompetent umpires to conspire against

the dream send-off. But there was plenty else in the tournament to leave Pigeon a happy man.

"I think I had the fairytale finish with being awarded player of the series, that was pretty special," he said. "But it's more about the team than the individual. It's the way we played in the whole tournament, dominant from start to finish."

"At the World Cup we played exactly as we wanted our game plans and execution were second to none."

"A big word used in the tournament was freedom all our batsmen and bowlers played with freedom out in the middle. Ten teams we bowled out from the 13 matches

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



Sabrina Sultana (L) shoots for gold in the 50m air rifle three position event while Tripti Dutta is also in action during the 21st National Shooting Championships at the National Shooting Range yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Former India captain Sourav Ganguly is in his delivery stride during a practice session on the third day of the five-day conditioning camp at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Cup injured?

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Barbadian officials have yet to confirm how long it will take to replenish their rum stocks but, judging by the appearance of Australia's cricketers upon their arrival in Sydney on Thursday, it will be some time yet.

Weary from two days celebrating their World Cup triumph in Barbados and jaded from the 44-hour flight home -- which included a day-long "luncheon" in London -- Ricky Ponting's men battled through a series of official duties after touching down about 5.30am.

First came a news conference. Then a breakfast with the Prime Minister at the SCG. Then an autograph-signing session and more interviews. Then a public reception in Martin Place before a lunchtime crowd of 10,000. And then, mercifully, sleep, from which they are

unlikely to rouse until the start of next season.

"I don't think it's a secret: at the end of a long, hard tour, I enjoy having a drink," said the all-rounder Andrew Symonds, whose sunglasses remained firmly adhered to his face for much of the day. "I think we deserved it."

Indeed. After a third consecutive World Cup victory, which followed a frenetic Ashes summer, Australia's cricketers could be forgiven a celebratory ale or two (or more) -- particularly considering the occasion also marked the end of Glenn McGrath's highly decorated career, and that of the team's coach, John Buchanan.

McGrath was in high spirits, regaling reporters with tales of the Caribbean and his plans for life after cricket. Chief among those is spending more time with his family, which has endured in recent years the battles with cancer of his wife, Jane.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Sachin switches back to heavy bat

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA from Kolkata

India's batting star Sachin Tendulkar could switch back to using a heavy bat during the tour of Bangladesh.

This is indicated by the fact that Tendulkar on Thursday asked a leading sports goods shop here to get him a heavy bat weighing 2.85 pound as against the 2.74 pound bat that he has been using for over a year since his tennis elbow injury suffered earlier apparently due to use of the heavier bat.

The owner of the Kolkata sports goods shop Somnath Dasgupta said three heavier bats have arrived for Tendulkar from the north Indian city of Meerut and already delivered to the batsman. The Little Master has preferred a heavy bat since his younger days but opted for a lighter one after the problem of tennis elbow.

Tendulkar, who had sprained his ankle during the nets two days back, returned to the practice session with other members of the Indian team for Bangladesh the very next day.