

Another PEC meeting held

SPORTS REPORTER

It was yet another routine work when the performance evaluation committee (PEC) of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) talked with the national team management to get the post-mortem report of the just concluded series against India.

The committee headed by BCB vice-president Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen met with outgoing coach Dav Whatmore, chief selector Faruque Ahmed, captain Habibul Bashar and vice-captain Mohammad Ashraful separately to get their explanations behind poor showings in the series, especially in the Tests.

"It was just a routine meeting. The board is not at all dissatisfied with the one-day performance but the Test performance was a real concern for us. What everybody said that the thirteen months' break was one of the main reasons behind the poor showing in Test series. All have suggested to give emphasis on the four-day competition at domestic level," informed Shaheen.

The most controversial issue during the series was the decision of fielding first by the Bangladesh team management in the second Test, which simply backfired.

"They admitted that their plan didn't work," said a satisfied

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Bridge meet from Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

Worldwide Bridge Pairs competition will begin at the Bangladesh Bank Club on Friday. The tournament will start at 3pm and the entry fee for each pair is Tk. 200.

The competition is organised by Bangladesh Bridge Federation.



Did U Know?

The French Open is 110 years old. It first took place in 1891 in the form of a national championship and became international in 1925.



What to WATCH

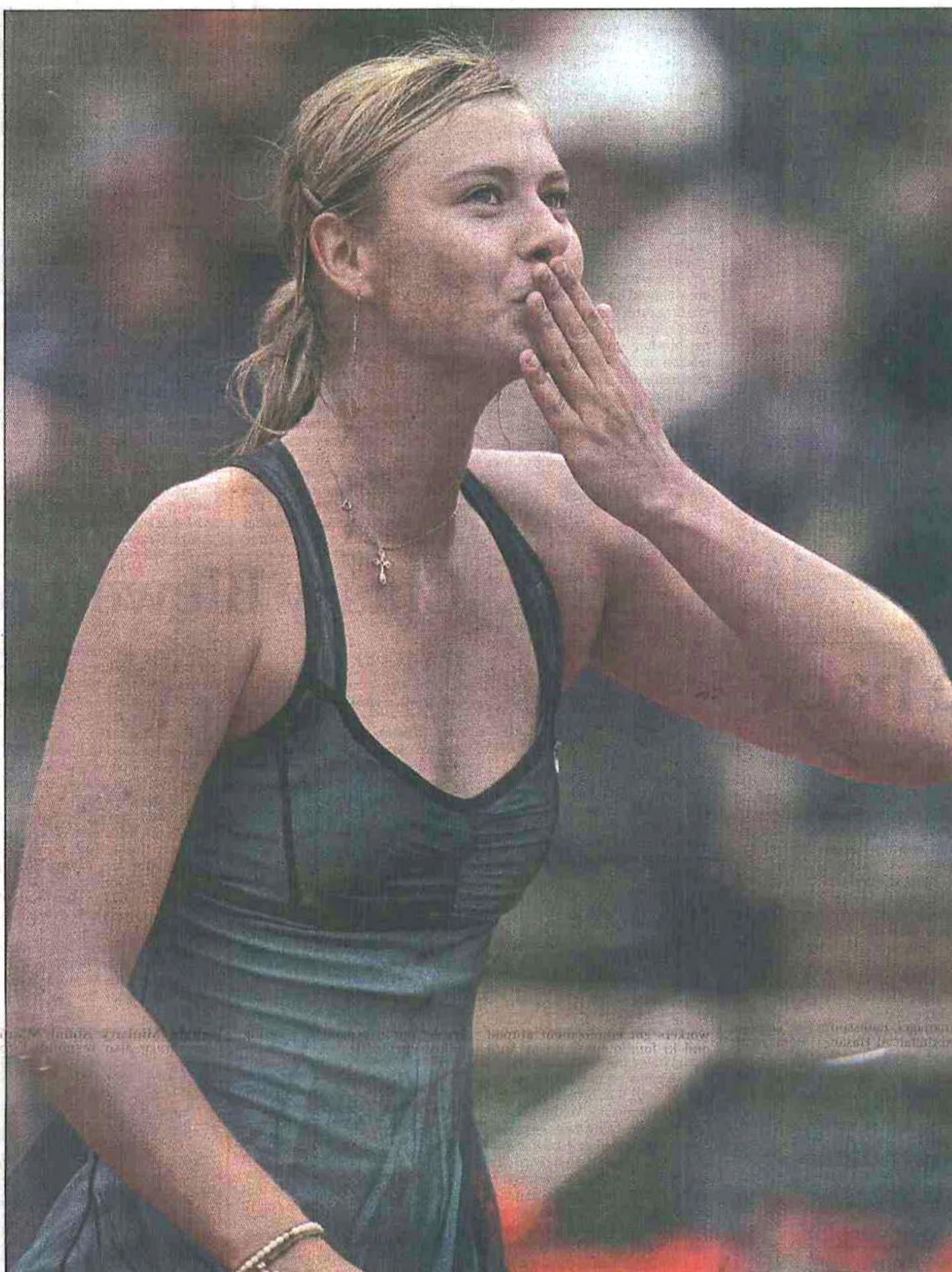
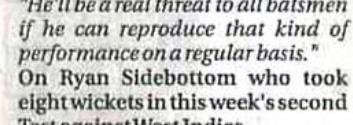


PHOTO: AFP

Russian superstar Maria Sharapova blows a kiss to the crowd after her victory over Frenchwoman Emilie Loit during their first round match of French Open at the Roland Garros in Paris on Wednesday.

Sharapova conquers pain

AFP, Paris



enth seed Ana Ivanovic who blasted past Sweden's Sofia Arvidsson 6-2, 6-0.

Another Russian, ninth seed Anna Chakvetadze, joined them in the second round with a comprehensive 6-2, 6-3 win over Alicia Molik of Australia.

But there was dismay for the 2004 champion Anastasia Myskina, whose recent downward spiral continued with a 6-1, 6-0 hammering at the hands of veteran American Meghann Shaughnessy.

Playing in her first Grand Slam event since turning 20, Sharapova is badly short of match practice having only returned to action in Istanbul last week after two months out to treat the tendonitis pain in her shoulder.

And in Turkey she was gunned down 6-2, 6-4 by French youngster Aravane Rezai at the semifinal stage.

There were straight set wins also for Sharapova's third seeded compatriot and last year's beaten finalist Svetlana Kuznetsova who cruised past another Russian Ekaterina Bychkova 6-0, 6-3 and for rising Serbian youngster and sev-

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'Wish he was Aussie'

Cricket

AFP, London

Michael Vaughan (England cricket captain)

"He'll be a real threat to all batsmen if he can reproduce that kind of performance on a regular basis."

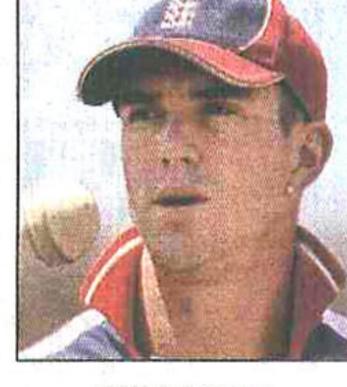
On Ryan Sidebottom who took eight wickets in this week's second Test against West Indies.

DAY'S EVENT
B.League
Muktiyoddha v Ctg. Mohammad (4:30 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Former Australia opening batsman Langer was on the opposite side when Pietersen scored the first of his eight Test hundreds -- 158 at The Oval -- to wrap up a draw that

secured England's 2005 Ashes series win.

And Langer, who retired from Test cricket after Australia's 5-0 Ashes series win earlier this year, was on hand to see Pietersen again



KEVIN PIETERSEN

score 158 in the Adelaide Test of that campaign.

"From an Australian's point of view the greatest compliment we can give an opposition player is that we don't really like him much," Langer, now captain of English county Somerset, wrote in his BBC column.

"And the reason we don't really like Kevin Pietersen is that he displays traits which rub us up the wrong way. He struts a little, he is aggressive in everything he does, he takes on any bowler and he stares you in the eyes with the confidence of a prizefighter."

"We would love to have him in our team, because we love the way he goes about his business. He is an outstanding player in that he backs his ability to the hilt and he makes the game go forward every time he is in the middle."

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Season over for Aminul

SPORTS REPORTER

National football captain Aminul Haque will miss the entire season after the number one goalkeeper of the country was ruled out for the rest of the inaugural professional football league.

But after breaking the veteran Loit in the third game she was given a much-needed confidence boost as the French player needed to take a medical time-out to get treatment for a thigh muscle injury.

On the resumption, Sharapova broke again to move 4-1 up and though dropping her own service two games later she still comfortably took the set 6-3.

Clad in three-quarter-length black leggings to combat the cold, damp conditions, Sharapova was finding that her big-hitting abilities were neutralised by the slow claycourt.

She dropped her serve in the

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More to what meets the eye

Cricket

SHAKIL KASEM

The recently concluded and eminently forgettable Test series has thrown up more questions for Bangladeshi cricket than answers of any kind.

The first question, even after seven years of Test cricket is whether we have what takes to come to terms with life as it is in the rarified atmosphere of this level of the game. For sure, we know how and why we achieved test status, much to the chagrin of the exclusive club of big boys playing the game. The ICC in the year 2000 had a different look to it, and some might even insist uncharitably, vested interest in adding one more Asian name to its meagre roster of Test playing nations. More than a hundred years of Test cricket and only nine nations of the world playing the game? Admittedly, it wasn't quite cricket. But having had the silver spoon thrust down its throat has Bangladesh really tried to fit the bill?

Alas, to paraphrase Henry Miller, so hurtles this spear of query demanding to be caught on the shield of the mind. The answer is not blowing in the wind, indeed the answer is more of these bases covered.

At the moment money should be having in plenty, with more in the pipeline over the next few years. I am certain it is being spent and will certainly continue to be so, in good faith. The question is, are the proper infrastructures being readied? We are already behind the clock on this front, compared to the rest of the countries we are expected to do battle with. Grounds and facilities are at a premium and coupled with the lack of planning cricket at the formative years of a budding cricket is hardly allowing the growth of such individuals to take the game they love to the next level.

Sub standard wickets at almost every level of the game is extracting a heavy price on the abilities of both batsmen and bowlers. Of course there are constraints, but which test playing opposition is going to take such constraints into consideration? The most recent two and half Test is a case in point.

We do seem to have an organised coaching system in place, but to have a pool of players conditioned to the dictates of Test match cricket requires such a system to perform over and beyond the call of duty. We can only wait and watch the grass grow and the coaches to deliver.

The cornerstone of any Test playing country worth its salt, is its domestic cricket. Do we have such a cricket phenomenon as a domestic competition? Erratic schedules, indifferent playing conditions, recalcitrant teams and poor bowling attacks seem to be the order of the day for our domestic format of the longer version of the game. However to explain what just happened earlier in the week? A team that lost twenty wickets in less than a day of Test cricket cannot just be held accountable by itself only. The fact that Bangladesh did not play any Tests for thirteen months should not also be a reason or excuse.

Amul Islam Bulbul batted for nine hours in our inaugural Test. Bangladesh had not played a Test for thirty years until then.

We are underperforming, and this is not coming from a rocket scientist. Nor do we need such a scientist to tell us how to set things right. The problem is time, which has this uncanny habit of running out when we most need it. It is somewhat of a paradox really, Test cricket is a kind of marathon. To be good at it we would need to sprint to catch up with its demands. It would be tempting to blame everything on the players and the captain for our recent and customary debacle. But that would be taking the easy option. As Confucius said, when the finger points at the moon, the fool looks at the finger. The real answer is more of what meets the eye.

(The author is a former national cricketer)

today with revenge on mind following their first leg defeat in Chittagong, confirmed that national number one custodian Aminul will not be available for the rest of the season.

Brothers are sixth but not far by means of points and still can fight back under wily Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin, especially after showing signs of improvement in the latter part of the first leg.

The key would be getting the side stronger and Brothers will get back midfielder Liton, whose ban was lifted by the federation during the two-week mid-season transfer period, which ended last night.

The Oranges are also trying to bring back Ghanaian forward Enock Bentil, who left in the middle of the campaign due to injury. Manager Amer Khan informed that Enock is expected to join the side before their second match on June 10.

Muktiyoddha, who host Chittagong Mohammadian at the Bangabandhu National Stadium

POINTER TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	G	F	G	A	Pts
Mohammedan	10	6	2	2	22	7	20		
Russel	10	5	4	1	12	4	19		
Abahani	10	5	4	1	10	3	19		
Muktiyoddha	10	5	3	2	16	7	18		
Ctg. Mohammedan	10	5	2	3	8	6	17		
Brothers	10	4	3	3	15	10	15		
Arambah	10	4	1	5	9	10	13		
Farashganj	10	2	4	4	8	12	10		
Ctg. Abahani	10	3	0	7	7	9	9		
Rahmatganj	10	0	2	8	5	26	2		

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UNITED LEASING COMPANY LIMITED



Nasir Ahmed (L) and IM Abdullah Al Rakib ponder their next move in the United Leasing and United Insurance 8th Grandmasters Chess tournament at the NSC conference room yesterday.