

Ashraful in, Bashar out

Mashrafe deputy, Williams interim coach

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket entered a new era with the naming of Mohammad Ashraful as captain for both one-day and Test teams and pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as his deputy yesterday.

The executive committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) continued with their one captain policy to put an end to Habibul Bashar's three-year stint. He had inherited the post from Khaled Mahmud in January 2004.

"After a lot of debate on the issue, board members decided to start a new era for Bangladesh cricket. Ashraful has been appointed as captain till the end of the Twenty20 World Cup (in September)," said BCB joint-secretary and media committee chairman Reazuddin Al Mamun during a break in the meeting.

In his instant reaction, an excited Ashraful, who made his one-day debut against Zimbabwe in 2001 and played his first Test against Sri Lanka in September the same year, said that there is a big challenge ahead of him.

"I must say Sumon bhai (Habibul Bashar) was the most successful captain of the country. His ability to lead the team both on and off the field with calmness along with coach Dav Whatmore has set a standard for the team, so I have to continue it. It's a big challenge but I am ready for it," said the right-hander, who got the news first through an SMS from Mamun.

"I know if I failed to deliver as a batsman then the captaincy wouldn't mean anything. So I have to lead the team from the front. The most important thing is that the

demand in our cricket has increased day by day," he observed.

The 22-year-old Ashraful, who so far has played 35 Tests and 101 one-day internationals, said that Australia great Steve Waugh and New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming are his idols as captain.

"I like their captaincy because of their aggressiveness. I think there are a lot of things I have to learn as



MOHAMMAD ASHRAFUL

A skipper and I believe I will get support from my teammates and the former cricketers. I proved myself as a captain slightly in the domestic circuit but I am aware that it is a different task for me at the international level," said Ashraful.

Unfortunately it was not possible to get the reaction of Bashar about his successor as he is now in India on a personal visit.

The 22-year-old new captain will have his work cut out with his first assignment in Sri Lanka where he will lead the side in three Tests and as many one-day matches in the island nation over June-July.

Meanwhile, the board's national game development manager

Shaun Williams will work as head coach and Sarwar Imran, who coached the national team to the historic inaugural Test match in 2000, is now the assistant coach.

The most debatable issue in the meeting was whether the board would go for separate captains, a concept which hardly proved right in previous experiments by the other countries.

It was learnt that most of the board members praised Bashar for his successful three-year stint as captain but they were not in favour of giving him another chance to lead the Test side because of his poor performance since the Zimbabwe tour.

The way 34-year-old Bashar handled the team during the recently concluded home series against India frustrated most of the members, especially with his decision to quit the one-day captaincy when they had expected a retirement announcement from Bashar, one of the finest batsmen in the country.

He led Bangladesh 69 times in ODIs to have won 29 matches and captained Bangladesh in 18 Tests where he achieved the only victory against Zimbabwe and drew four games.

Meanwhile, the board has decided to increase the salary of the contracted players by 20 per cent and for the first time, brought the A team and under-19 players under the board's payroll. A-team players will get fifty per cent of what the national members receive while under-19 players will receive twenty-five per cent.



PHOTO: AFP
Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic celebrates her shock victory over French veteran Amelie Mauresmo after French Open third round match at Roland Garros on Saturday. Safarova won the match 6-3, 7-6.

It embarrasses Moody

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Murali, is that it's Australia's nature to show that response in a way of respect and acknowledgement of someone who is pretty special and unique.

"I don't know if I'm right. I hope I'm right because at times I've found it incredibly embarrassing."

Moody, a World Cup winner with Australia in 1999, puts this attitude down to the competition between Murali and Australia's retired champion spinner Shane Warne, who is the world's leading wicket-taker with 708.

Murali is second with 674, but given the amount he bowls and the rate at which he takes his wickets, he is likely to pass Warne within a year.

When Murali tours Australia for two Tests in November, he will still be behind Warne.

"They're protecting their own. Australia has produced the greatest leg-spinner of all time and Australians are very proud of that," Moody said.

"There's that constant comparison between Warne and Murali, but I just think you cannot even begin to try and compare the two."

The newspaper said many

Australians, including most of the national team, had harboured suspicions about Murali's ultra-flexible action, which includes a bent elbow, apparently a birth

Tigers fly to Bangalore tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh players who will represent the Asian teams at the second Afro-Asian Cup will be off to the south Indian city of Bangalore tomorrow.

Murali refused to tour Australia in 2004 because of his treatment by Australians.

Largely on the back of controversy surrounding Murali, the International Cricket Council set up a detailed study of bowling actions, and found that just about every bowler threw the ball to some extent.

It set a limit of 15 degrees for a bowler's elbow movement because it was only when a bowler's arm flexed that far that it became detectable to the naked eye.

Any bowler now reported by umpires for suspect action must be scientifically tested. If found to be outside the 15-degree parameter, the bowler is banned and must have remedial work with experts before being allowed to play again.

Murali replaced Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar in the one-day squad, which will be lead by Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene. The Twenty20 side will be lead by Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik.

Safarova shatters Mauresmo dream

SPORTS REPORTER

AFP, Paris

Amelie Mauresmo's hopes of finally winning her home Grand Slam tournament were left in tatters on Saturday when she lost 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) to Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic in a third round tie.

It was the former world number one's 13th attempt at winning at Roland Garros and once again she came up well short. Mauresmo has yet to make it past the quarterfinals.

The 27-year-old from the Paris suburbs came into the tournament desperately short of match practice having taken two months out to recover from an operation to remove her appendix.

Despite that she led 3-0 in both sets, but was incapable of maintaining her form allowing the 20-year-old Safarova to claw her way back on each occasion.

Mauresmo needed to take a medical time-out in the first set, but she seemed to be playing unhindered after that and it was simply

that she was unable to reproduce the form that brought her the Wimbledon and Australian Open crowns last year.

She held firm until the tie-break but was too tentative allowing the 25th seeded Safarova, who had also beaten her at the Australian Open in January, to dominate the rallies from the baseline.

From 3-3, the Czech player took total control winning four points in a row to go through to play Anna Chakvetadze of Russia, who defeated Japan's Ai Sugiyama 6-4, 6-4, for a place in the last eight.

"I am disappointed because in both sets I led 3-0, but just could not push home my advantage," Mauresmo said.

"My preparations for the tournament were not great and I had no great expectations going into it. There was no miracle."

Safarova said that she had felt nervous and "a little bit scared" at the start.

"But then I settled down and just started to play my game."

There were problems also for Russian glamour girl Maria Sharapova who looked ill at ease before seeing off the challenge of

unheralded young compatriot Alla Kudryavtseva.

Sharapova won easily enough in the end 6-1, 6-4, but she had to come back from 1-4 down in the second set after her suspect serve once again let her down.

The 20-year-old second seed had two months on the sidelines to recover from a severe bout of tendonitis in her right shoulder that required a cortisone injection and only returned to action at the Istanbul Cup last week.

She says the injury is still bothering her and it showed at times in a wobbly second set in which her serve was broken three times by her unheralded 19-year-old opponent.

Sharapova broke back in the sixth game however and from there she re-discovered her timing and put the match away by winning five games in a row.

She next plays the experienced Patty Schnyder of Switzerland who struggled to beat Italian newcomer Karin Knapp 6-1, 4-6, 7-5.

"I can't expect a lot from my shoulder this week," Sharapova said. "At times I still feel it during the match."

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Did U Know?

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Former Sri Lankan cricket coach Tom Moody says he is embarrassed by the derogatory reaction and constant harassment directed by Australian crowds towards Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralidaran.

Muralidaran's ultra-flexible bowling action has come under its heaviest scrutiny in Australia, where he has been called for throwing on two tours, prompting him to boycott Sri Lanka's 2004 tour here.

Even Australian Prime Minister John Howard joined in by labelling him a "chucker."

But Moody, who resigned after a successful stint as Sri Lanka coach to take up a coaching role with Western Australia, claims Murali's bowling action is more legal than those of some other international cricketers.

"As an Australian when I have been with the Sri Lankan team in Australia, or playing against them in the World Cup, it's the only situation we find in the whole of the cricketing world where we have this disgraceful slant on a cricketer," Moody told Saturday's the Australian newspaper.

"My take on it, and I hope I'm right, and I've shared this with

It's not a murder?

AFP, London

Jamaican police are set to announce that Pakistan cricket coach Bob Woolmer was not murdered, but died of natural causes, a British newspaper said Saturday, citing a source close to the inquiry.

The Daily Mail said Jamaican detectives would announce at a press conference next week that they are no longer treating the death as murder and instead believe he died of heart failure brought on by chronic ill health and possibly diabetes.

Woolmer's death sent shockwaves beyond the world of sport during the cricket World Cup.

Detectives launched a murder investigation after an autopsy indicated that the former England Test player had been strangled.

The 58-year-old Briton was found dead in his Kingston hotel room on March 18, the day after cricketing powers Pakistan crashed out of the World Cup in an shock defeat to minnows Ireland.

A myriad of different possible explanations for his death have appeared in the world's press -- including the theory that he died from natural causes.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Daren Ganga

(West Indies vice-captain)

"Captaincy is a very big challenge. I did not really think about it while being vice-captain but these things happen in cricket and it's an opportunity for me to lead the guys."

After he got the chance to skipper the Caribbeans against England after injury forced regular captain Ramnaresh Sarwan out of the remainder of the Test

Rahmatganj win at last

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj registered their first win in the B League when they defeated Arambagh Krira Sangha 2-1 in the second-leg match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The first phase match between the two sides ended in a goal-less draw.

With the win, Rahmatganj secured five points while Arambagh remained at 13 points, both having played eleven matches.

Nigerian forward Nche Francis and substitute Mohammad Mamun scored a goal each for the winners while Ugandan recruit Kobuye Domenic netted the lone goal for Arambagh.

After a dismal performance in the first phase, a new look Rahmatganj took to the field, as they included four Nigerian players in their playing eleven.

Francis put them ahead in the 17th minute with a right-footed angular shot from the right side of the after receiving the ball from countryman Adeyinka.

Then it was time for Arambagh

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Players, PCB at odds

Cricket

PTI, Karachi

after a meeting with the board Chairman next week," the Pakistan skipper said.

Nagmi said the players -- including Malik, Mohammad Yousuf, Shahid Afridi, Mohammad Asif and Salman Butt -- supported the idea of having performance-based contracts apart from getting a uniform monthly retainer.

However, Malik said while the players agreed that it was a good idea to reward individual performances in the new contracts, seniority should also be taken into consideration.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan cricket authorities have warned the players that they could face stiff penalties, including match bans, if they speak to the media without prior permission from the team management.

A member of the Pakistan side said they had been told verbally by board officials that it was off limits for every player, including captain Shoaib Malik, to speak to the media without getting clearance from the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR
Action from yesterday's B. League encounter between Rahmatganj and Arambagh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.



DAY'S EVENT

B.League

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Time: 4:30 pm



STAR Sports

French Open

Fourth Round

Live from 3:00 pm