



PHOTO: AFP
Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (R) and his predecessor Habibul Bashar run between the wickets on the opening day of the three-day practice match against Sri Lanka A at the Colts Ground in Colombo yesterday.



Raul Gonzalez
(Real Madrid captain)
"It's here and it's very deserved. The people who deserve it most are those who believed in us through the bad times. It's a victory and title for a team that's united and together."

After winning the Spanish League title on Sunday.

DAY'S EVENT

B.League
Brothers Union v Arambagh
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:40 pm

Dravid banking on batsmen

AFP, Mumbai

India left for a gruelling tour of England and Ireland on Wednesday with captain Rahul Dravid banking on the experience of his batting line-up to deliver the goods.

"We have experience in the batting department, I am sure that is going to fire," Dravid told reporters Tuesday before the team's departure.

Dravid said that batting experience would balance a rather raw bowling attack.

"Our young bowlers will be helped if the batsmen are able to put a big score on the board," the 34-year-old right-handed batsman said.

But Dravid emphasised there was more to winning than experience.

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England win 3-0



AFP, Chester-Le-Street

Monty Panesar took five wickets, including marathon man Shivnarine Chanderpaul, as England completed a 3-0 series victory against the West Indies with a seven-wicket win in the fourth and final Test at Riverside here Tuesday.

England, set a target of 110 to win, survived a couple of scares before finishing on 111 for three after West Indies quick Daren Powell struck either side of tea on the final day to dismiss Alastair Cook and Andrew Strauss.

Michael Vaughan, the England captain, was 48 not out and Paul Collingwood, who'd scored 128 in the first innings, was five not out after he hit the winning runs on his Durham home ground.

Kevin Pietersen (28) fell shortly before the finish after adding 76 with Vaughan.

Earlier, left-arm spinner Panesar took five for 46, the sixth time he had

taken five or more wickets in a Test innings, in West Indies second innings total of 222.

"I've still got a long way to go but it's been an unbelievable series for me," Panesar told Sky Sports after taking 23 wickets in the four Tests.

"I'm pleased with my performance," he added after what was England's first Test campaign since their 5-0 Ashes thrashing in Australia.

Chanderpaul, who had batted for nearly 18 hours since last being dismissed this series, was the final man out for 70, bowled sweeping against Panesar.

The 32-year-old Guyanese left-hander ended the series with an average of 148.66 but rarely received the support his batting endurance deserved.

"The guys tried a lot," said Chanderpaul. "It wasn't easy, the ball was swinging a lot."

At lunch West Indies were 131 for four, a lead of just 18, with Chanderpaul 32 not out and all-rounder Bravo unbeaten on 19.

Bravo, not a naturally defensive player, decided to take the attack to

England and when Panesar came on, in the seventh over after lunch, he lofted him over his head for four.

But next ball, trying to drive Panesar down the ground, Bravo holed out to Ryan Sidebottom at mid-off.

Bravo's 43 featured nine boundaries and he put on 68 with Chanderpaul. But West Indies were now only 49 in front with five wickets left.

Their position worsened when Marlon Samuels (two) was undone by a sharply-spinning Panesar delivery and edged to Collingwood at first slip.

Panesar struck again when Denesh Ramdin (four) was bowled by a fine delivery that pitched on middle and hit off-stump.

Chanderpaul soldiered on, completing a 127-ball fifty.

It was his fifth successive fifty of the series after he made 74 in the drawn opener at Lord's, 50 and 116 not out in England's 60-run third Test win at Old Trafford and 136 not out in the first innings of this match.

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PHOTO: AFP

England fast bowler Steve Harmison (back row 2nd from R) sprays champagne as his teammates pose with the series trophy after they beat West Indies on the fifth day of the fourth and final Test at the Riverside ground in Chester-Le-Street on Tuesday.

Flying start for Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka got off to a sparkling start in the Salton Pharmaceuticals Ltd. 27th National Hockey Championship when they brushed aside Jaipurhat 7-0 on the opening day.

Abdus Samad Mamun struck twice for Dhaka, who led 5-0 in the first half of yesterday's last match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

In the morning, Rajshahi came back from a goal down to beat Dinajpur 3-1 while BKSP blanked Chittagong Division 2-0 with second half goals.

Bangladesh Hockey Federation president Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman declared the meet open as chief guest.

Tazkia to lead eves' team

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a 14-member national women's cricket team for the ACC Women's Cricket Tournament to be held in Malaysia in July.

Tazkia Akter will lead the team in the eight-team fray. Bangladesh have been placed in Group B along with UAE, Singapore and China while Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand and Nepal comprise Group A.

Bangladesh will launch their campaign by taking on UAE on July 11 and play their remaining group matches against Singapore and China on July 13 and 15 respectively.

The two semifinals are scheduled for July 17 and the final will be held on July 18.

SQUAD

Tazkia Akter (captain), Salma Khatun, Reshma Akter Aduri, Panna Ghosh, Irin Sultana, Shuktara, Ayesha Akhter, Shathira Jaker Jessy, Chamely Khatun, Shamima Akhter Pinky, Tithi Rani Sarker, Papiya Haque Babu, Champa Chakma and Mina Khatun.

STANDBY

Monjila Khatun, Khadija Akhtar China, Fatima Akhtar and Saria Tanjin Sumona.

OFFICIALS

Hamida Begum (manager), Zafrul Ehsan (coach), Parveen Nasima Nahar (trainer) and Farzana Akter Bhuiyan (physio).

Bashar knocks well



SPORTS REPORTER

Habibul Bashar started a demanding tour in a positive note as his unbeaten half-century anchored Bangladesh on the first day of the three-day warm-up game against Sri Lanka A at the Colts Cricket Club in Colombo yesterday.

The immediate past Bangladesh skipper went to the island not only with the missions to rediscover his form but also to rekindle his reputation as a performer after losing captaincy to Mohammad Ashraful. And Bashar capitalised on the first opportunity to get back among runs with an unbeaten 60 to help the tourists finish the day on 183-5.

The 34-year old right-hander shared a 75-run stand for the fourth wicket with his successor Ashraful as the Tigers recovered from a shaky 73-3 after deciding to bat first in the lone practice game ahead of the three-match Test series.

Left-arm spinner Rangana Henth, the most successful bowler with three scalps, had Ashraful caught behind to break the partnership. The new Bangladesh skipper made second team highest 37 off 89 balls that contained six boundaries and an over boundary.

Herath struck again off the next delivery by dismissing left-hander Shakib Al Hasan for a golden duck

but veteran wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud joined Bashar to see through the day's play without any further damage.

Mashud negotiated 53 balls for seven runs while Bashar, who refused to be distracted by falling wickets at the other end, smashed five boundaries in 146 balls.

Opener Shahriar Nafees, for whom this tour is also an acid test to keep his place in the side, looked well set to get back the confidence when the left-hander smashed four quick boundaries before right-arm pacer Dammika Prasad had him caught by Jehan Mubarak. The struggling opener scored 16 off 18 balls.

Rajin Saleh joined Javed Omar to take the team safely into lunch break at 69-1 but two quick dismissals changed the scenario in the second session and Bangladesh then fought for survival as the run rate reduced.

Javed, who made 34 off 88 balls with the help of six boundaries, was run out and Herath had a successful leg before appeal against Rajin, who scored 21 off 80 deliveries by hitting only two fours.

Bangladesh's overall scoring rate for the day was a mere 2.3 mainly because of Prasad and Kaushal Lokuarachchi, who conceded less than one and a half runs per over.

Herath was the pick of the bowlers taking three wickets for 51 in 20 overs.

Bangladesh rested pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and ace

left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique for the game.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the first day of the three-day warm-up match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka A at Colts Cricket Club Ground in Colombo on Wednesday:

BANGLADESH: First innings
Omar run out 34
Nafees c Mubarak b Prasad 16
Saleh lbw b Herath 21
Bashar not out 60
Ashraful c Jayawardene b Herath 37
Shakib c Udawatte b Herath 0
Mashud not out 7
Extras: (b-5, lb-2, nb-1) 8
Total: (For 5 wickets in 79 overs) 183

To bat: Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Sharif, Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Rasel.
Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-70, 3-73, 4-148, 5-148.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Ganagama	11	2	33	0
Welegedara	14	4	36	0
Prasad	12	6	17	1
Herath	20	5	51	3
Lokuarachchi	11	4	14	0
Perera	11	3	25	0

SRI LANKA A: Samaraweera, Vandort, Udawatte, Mubarak, Jayawardene, Kandamby, Perera, Lokuarachchi, Herath, Ganagama, Welegedara, Prasad

Toss: Bangladesh

Umpires: RD Kottahachchi and PG Liyanage

BCCI having tough times



INTERNET, undated

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) finally admitted on Tuesday that Indian cricket is "passing through a difficult phase."

In a two-page letter issued to every member of the Indian team and management, aimed at boosting the confidence on the eve of their departure to Europe, the Board officials made this admission. The letter is basically a list of Dos and Don'ts for the team on their 81-day sojourn to the Old Blighty.

"Indian cricket is passing through a difficult phase after our poor showing in the World Cup, and along with the BCCI, the players

have also gone through some tough time," wrote the Board's chief administrative officer Ratnakar Shetty.

This is a first of sorts, for, post the World Cup, the officialdom have only privately admitted about the same.

The Board officials -- secretary Niranjan Shah and CAO Shetty -- held two closed-door meetings with, first, the entire squad (including the support staff) and then held a discussion only with the support staff. It is at these meetings that the letter was handed over to the squad.

While a major focus of the letter is with regards to Dos and Don'ts, there are some veiled warnings as well. "You are representing the country where all actions of yours will be closely followed and we have

to impress upon all the members of the squad to be disciplined, at times, both on and off the field. Please ensure that all the talks in the dressing room and in team meetings is confidential and always respect this," read the letter, a copy of which is with the TOI.

This diktat from the Board comes after the Chappell experience when there was a feeling that team information was easily accessible to the media. The Board is hoping that there is no repeat of the same in the recent future.

Instances during the World Cup of an alleged fight between India's lead pace bowlers Sreesanth and Zaheer Khan in the dressing room was part of the same 'leak' which enraged the officials.

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PHOTO: STAR

Action from yesterday's National Hockey Championship match between Dhaka and Joypurhat at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

Dav comes to Pakistan



CRICINFO, undated

Former Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore arrives in Pakistan on Wednesday hoping to push further his credentials as the next coach of Pakistan. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will interview Whatmore on Thursday as a potential candidate for the position, the third Australian the board has interviewed this week.

Earlier in the week, Richard Done, the ICC high-performance manager and former New South Wales fast bowler, and Geoff Lawson, former Test cricketer, were also interviewed. Lawson yesterday visited the national team's conditioning camp currently underway in Abbotabad, meeting with senior players and officials.

One of the three will become Pakistan's coach though Zakir Khan, director operations PCB and a member of the three-man commit-

tee to find a coach, stressed again the decision will not be taken in haste.

Khan didn't confirm that an appointment will be made by July 1, the date set by chairman Nasim Ashraf, to announce a new coach to succeed the late Bob Woolmer. "It is premature to give an exact date right now. After the interviews of the three, our committee will compile a report and present our choice to the chairman, who will take it to the ad-hoc committee. Only then will a decision be made," Khan told Cricinfo.

The board has been tight-lipped about its preferences from the three in recent days. Khan said that the interviews had gone well and that all three had excellent qualifications. "They were shortlisted because of their qualifications and on the basis of past achievements."

Until recently, Whatmore was understood to be the board's top choice, the only hitch being his interest in the position of India coach. With that now out of the way, the path appears clear for Whatmore to take over. But

the board is said to be impressed by Done as well, and he would seemingly fit in with some officials' wishes that the new coach be a low-key personality willing to prove himself internationally with Pakistan.

Meanwhile Javed Miandad, former captain and three-time coach, continued his criticism of the board's policy for selecting a coach by pointing out that Lawson had not officially applied for the position.

Miandad disagreed with the board's decision to publicly advertise the vacancy and invite applications arguing that no coach of substance would apply in such a way. Lawson made clear before arriving in Pakistan that the board had contacted him and not the other way round.

Miandad told Dawn, "Now I ask the PCB: where does it stand? Instead of considering the applications of those candidates who have applied for the post, it is contacting those who did not apply."