

Gen Moeen new NSC boss

SPORTS REPORTER

The Caretaker Government yesterday appointed Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed as chairman of the National Sports Council (NSC) and its executive committee.

The government has given the appointment under provision of section-5 of the NSC (Amended) Act 1974, said a press release issued by the Youth and Sports Ministry.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, who held the posts as ex-officio, said the change was necessary.

"So far, the same man used to be in charge of the sports ministry and the NSC. It is contradictory and a wrong," Tapan opined yesterday while attending a reception at the NSC conference room to observe the World Sports Journalists Day.

Former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad was the first army person to become the NSC chairman in 1976, followed by other colleagues.

Since 1991, the sports ministers came to the scene before the latest circular.

Polytan will take care of athletics track at BNS

SPORTS REPORTER

Turf-makers Polytan's technical staff Wolfgang Opitz yesterday ensured that the German company will take care of the swellings of the newly laid athletics track at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The German professional, who arrived Dhaka yesterday from South America en route to Germany, inspected the problems

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Did U Know?

West Indies great Sir Gary Sobers made his Test debut at the age of 17 against England at Kingston in 1953-54. He was primarily selected as a slow left-arm bowler and did the selectors a favour by picking four wickets in the first innings.



Dilip Vengsarkar

(Chief selector of India cricket team) "I think they wanted to give a chance to the youngsters. I got a call from Rahul who said they were opting out of the tournament." After naming the 30-man preliminary squad for the Twenty20 World Championships without superstars Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Sourav Ganguly.



ESPN
Sportscenter India
Live at 8.30pm



B. League
Mohammed Vs Ctg Abahani
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4.30pm



PHOTO: AFP

A RARE BURST OF EMOTION: Swiss world number one Roger Federer exults after winning the first set (7-6) in a tie-break in the Wimbledon final against Spanish Rafael Nadal on Sunday.

Tigers reach Kandy 'Attacked' Rafique wants to skip ODIs



BISHWAJIT ROY from Kandy

The Bangladesh cricket team breathed in fresh air when they reached Kandy yesterday to play the third and final Test starting from July 11.

There were dull days for the Tigers in Colombo following their humiliating defeats in the first two Tests which they lost almost without any fight and the visit to the hill capital of Sri Lanka gave them some much-needed relief to recover from the disappointments.

The Tigers are accommodated in the picturesque Mahaweli Reach Hotel in a quiet and homely atmosphere.

Soon after their arrival, the visitors took part in a swimming session and after that some of the players, including

Habibul Bashar, were in a hurry to get out to the city, which lies at an altitude of 1629 feet above sea level in the centre of the island and surrounded by mountains.

Like Bashar, it was a first visit for many in this world heritage city as Bangladesh are going to play their first Test match in the home city of spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran and Kumar Sangakkara.

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful was one of few in the team like Rajin Saleh who had earlier visited the city as they were part of the Under-19 World Cup side in 2000.

"I didn't play any match here as I was the 12th man in the semifinal against Namibia. Actually I was too young then but now I am the captain of the team," said Ashraful with a smile on his face, as he enhanced his reputation against Sri Lanka by hitting his fourth Test hundred in the second Test at the P Sara Stadium.

However, veteran left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique got an unkind welcome in Kandy as a large number of monkeys were hanging around his windows once he entered his room. "They just attacked me once I entered my room. Hotel authority immediately dispersed them by shooting blanks," said Rafique, who was slightly disturbed by the incident.

Besides the monkey attack, Rafique had the disappointment with his performance in the series in mind. "So far it has been my worst-ever performance in Test cricket. I bowled 35 overs in the last Test without any success," said Rafique who came here seven wickets short of becoming the first Bangladeshi to take 100 Test wickets.

The wily left-arm spinner took only one wicket in the first Test at the P Sara Stadium.

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'Back-up' Gayle delighted



CRICINFO, undated

A delighted Chris Gayle brushed off suggestions that he could permanently take over as West Indies captain following the 2-1 ODI series win over England.

"I am just the back-up captain right now and whenever he [Ramnaresh Sarwan] comes back he will get the same support from the guys. Because we have won the series a lot of people might be saying that Chris should continue as captain but I think Sarwan really deserves his chance. It was unfortunate that he got injured."

Gayle also said that it was a tremendous experience for him to lead the team. Talking about the series win, Gayle said, "I am very, very happy. I have to give thanks to the guys for the support."

"I thought it was a tremendous effort. It means a lot to me, not only because I am the captain; even if I was a player under [Ramnaresh] Sarwan's captaincy it still would have meant a lot to me. You have to give credit to everyone. It's all about the momentum. The vibes on the field was so good and you are just happy and enjoying the moment."

Gayle also mentioned the work that went on behind the scenes. "We did a lot of planning and all the

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PHOTO: AFP

West Indies captain Chris Gayle (bottom C) celebrates with his teammates after defeating England in the one-day international series at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on Saturday.

India shine on Day 1

AFP, Hove

India batsmen Gautam Gambhir, Dinesh Karthik and skipper Rahul Dravid all made fifties against Sussex on the first day of the opening match of the England tour at Hove here Saturday.

Gambhir led the way with 81, Karthik made 76 and Dravid was 57 not out as India ended the first day of four against the English county champions well-placed on 281 for three.

Dravid, dropped early in his innings, had added an unbroken 75 for the fourth wicket with VVS Laxman (37 not out), at the close.

Sussex, as has been common practice for English counties for more than 20 years in matches against touring teams, were without several rested senior players in captain Chris Adams, Zimbabwe batsman Murray Goodwin and Pakistan bowlers Mushtaq Ahmed and Rana Naved.

Karthik and Gambhir put on 129 for the second wicket following the early loss of Wasim Jaffer.

Karthik then had the distinction of becoming Saqlain Mushtaq's

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Nayeemuddin's job all but official

SPORTS REPORTER

Syed Nayeemuddin began his groundwork as the future national football coach unofficially when the Indian mentor witnessed yesterday's B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on selection purpose.

He invited all the local coaches working with the federation including recent past coach Hasanuzzaman Babloo and the ones in charge of age-level teams to watch the game. It was learnt that the former Indian international and national coach, now guiding local club Brothers Union, has been given the green signal by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to prepare for the job.

The BFF officials had a meeting with Nayeemuddin on Saturday and both the parties seemed to be happy with the talks. The official contract will be signed very soon if the BFF agrees to the wily Indian coach's financial requirements for at least next five months.

If signed, Nayeemuddin's most demanding task would be leading Bangladesh to the SAFF Championship in Sri Lanka and Maldives this December.

Reds stay alive



SPORTS REPORTER

Muktijoddha overcame the challenge of ten-man Khulna Abahani yesterday to take temporary lead in the B. League with a 4-2 win at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The home side, who drew 1-1 in their Khulna trip in the first leg, were held by an identical margin at the break with Tajul cancelling Muktijoddha's early lead given by Moni.

The Reds, however, killed the game midway through the second half with Moroccan midfielder Brahimi scoring with a sublime skill just after setting up one for Maruf.

Mamun inspired Khulna's fightback with another superb strike but Brahimi also had a hand in Alfaz's goal that sealed the victory one minute from time to secure Muktijoddha's ninth victory.

Abu Yusuf's boys topped the table with 33 points after 17 games but Abahani and Mohammedan, on 32 and 29 points respectively, both have a couple of matches in hand.

In a bid to brighten their slim title hopes, Muktijoddha mounted early pressure and went ahead in the fifth minute after Alfaz and Brahimi blew close chances.

Borg wishes Federer well

AFP, London



Bjorn Borg will be happy to see Roger Federer keep piling up the records if it means he continues to

grace Centre Court for years to come.

The Swede, who walked away from the sport when he was just 26 after seeing his Wimbledon reign ended by John McEnroe in 1981, hopes that the world number one doesn't suffer the fate that struck him when he fell out of love with the sport.

"Hopefully he will not wake up one day and suddenly realise he is bored with the sport. If that happens, it will become difficult for him," said Borg who is making only his second trip to Wimbledon in 26 years.

"Right now he looks sharp and wants to play for many more years. Everything around him is very correct, but a lot of players understood what I went through when I lost my motivation."

"It came to the point where life in tennis was not fun any more, but still I was young. If that happens, it's difficult to continue."

Borg could see Federer equal his record of five successive Wimbledon titles later Sunday if the Swiss master beats Rafael Nadal for the second year in a row.

The Swede insists he will be more than happy to see the record not only equalled but also bettered.

"Records are not meant to be just challenged," Borg told the Sunday Times.

"They are there to be broken. To win five times in a row at Wimbledon is tough to beat. Pete

Sampras was close: he got four in a row, then it was Roger who beat him to deny the fifth.

"Now I hope and believe he can win six, seven, or even eight times in a row, so long as he keeps the motivation."

Doubles delight for France

INTERNET, undated

French pair Arnaud Clement and Michael Llodra upset champions Bob and Mike Bryan of the United States to become gleeful Wimbledon men's doubles champions on Sunday.

The 10th seeds' 6-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 victory in their maiden grand slam final means they are the first all-French team to win at Wimbledon in 74 years and their delight was evident on Court One.

After throwing rackets and t-shirts into the crowd following their surprise victory, Clement had to borrow a shirt from his brother Bruno to ensure he did not accept his trophy bare-chested.

"Seriously, I have to play a tournament next week in Newport. I have no more rackets now," his partner Llodra joked afterwards.

The top-seeded Bryan twins had been chasing a fifth grand slam title in their 13th final and, having not dropped a set all tournament, they remained on course winning the first set on a tiebreak.

But Clement and Llodra, who were a match point away from being eliminated in the second round, made decisive breaks in the next three sets to cue their celebrations.

Twice an Australian Open doubles champion, Llodra claimed his third grand slam success while Clement, a former Australian Open singles runner-up, took home his first grand slam title.



PHOTO: STAR

NOT YET OFFICIAL: Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin (R), on the verge of taking over the national football team, sits beside local expert Hasanuzzaman Babloo at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to watch yesterday's B. League match.