

BSWA honours Roquibul, Hannan

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Sports Writers Association (BSWA) yesterday accorded reception to former national cricket captain and sports-writer Roquibul Hassan and veteran journalist Hannan Khan of ATN Bangla.

BSWA accorded the reception to mark the World Sports Journalists Day 2007, which was observed in the country yesterday with enthusiasm.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury was the chief guest at the reception held at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room. Golam Quddus Chowdhury, executive director of Transcom Beverages, was present as special guest.

BSWA president Sarwar Hossain presided over the function while general secretary Aminul Haque Mallick gave the welcome address.

ACA blasts T20 WC

PTI, Melbourne

Australian Cricketers' Association Chief Paul Marsh has criticised the International Cricket Council for premature staging of the Twenty20 World Cup this year, saying the initial focus should be its development at domestic level.

"The administrators need to work out, is Twenty20 serious cricket or is it purely entertainment. The way that it started off, it was very much entertainment," Marsh said.

"All of a sudden, you introduce a world championship (to be played in South Africa in September) like they've done and it legitimises this form of the game," he was quoted as saying by 'The Sydney Telegraph'.

Many countries, including India and Sri Lanka, don't have a domestic Twenty20 tournament yet.

"We couldn't understand how the ICC were putting together a world championship when it had not even formalised what its position was on Twenty20 cricket. Domestically is where the initial focus should be."

Tigers reach

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giving away 138 runs and hardly has any chance to redeem himself as the Kandy wicket is always preferable for the seam bowlers.

"Murali can turn the ball on glass, so the condition doesn't matter to him. But bowlers of our calibre should get some assistance from the wicket which was also not the case in the first two Tests and I think it will be the same here," said Rafique, who expressed his desire to not be considered for the one-day series due to a family commitment.

"I think if our batsmen are able to manage at least 300 runs, then it could have been a different story for the bowlers. Actually the Sri Lankan batsmen played us freely after our poor scores in both the first innings. Another reason is that we played too many one-day games in the last year. We have to work hard to get our basics right in Test cricket," he said while explaining the reasons behind the failure in the series.

"You know Sri Lanka knew everything about our strengths because we played too many Test matches against them," he added.

Rafique also explained his frustration as a batsman coming in later.

"I had to face the new ball in the last two matches but the reality is that I have hardly practiced against the new ball which I think was the main reason behind my batting failure. But what I can assure you is that I have always tried my best," he said.

Venus aiming

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anyone reach balls on a tennis court and she even hit them back harder.

"I can't see a player who can beat her on grass when she plays like this. She's just too good you know."

"When you receive the ball at 120mph you get a shock in the wrist and I'm not used to it."

Despite the disappointment at losing out in her first Grand Slam title, Bartoli said she would leave London with no regrets.

"It is not because of my nerves that I lost this match," she said. "I really played the best that I could play. Considering all the fatigue and that this was my first final, I think I did a pretty good job overall."

Liverpool

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News of the World.

Atletico meanwhile, confirmed their interest in the player early in the week, and also tabled a bid.

"We have made an offer to FC Porto to sign Ricardo Quaresma. At the moment, we are waiting for an answer [from Porto]," Atletico chairman Enrique Cerezo said.

"If they [Porto] don't find it interesting, we will look for other solutions."



PHOTO: STAR

Roquibul Hassan (L) and Hannan Khan (2nd from right) receive mementos from Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury and Golam Quddus Chowdhury respectively at BSWA's reception to mark the World Sports Journalists Day at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Breaking the mould



CRICINFO, undated

Twenty20 cricket would give a lot of people, some of whom would otherwise have never made it, a chance to play international cricket, Kumar Sangakkara said in a recent interview.

His words appeared to be borne out when India announced a squad of 30 probables for September's Twenty20 World Championship. With Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly excusing themselves - and they should be commended for doing so - the job of the selectors became that much easier.

There will be the first time in years that India are going into a tournament of any kind without the big three, and it remains to be seen if this is an indication of the selectors' long-term thinking, or whether it's just an exception for Twenty20 cricket.

The selectors picked a squad heavy on youth, and understandably light on experience.

But the inexperience won't matter a jot, for none of India's cricketers has played much Twenty20 cricket. Dinesh Mongia, with 32 games under his belt, is far and away the most experienced, but he has been overlooked. Murali Kartik, who has played a bit of Twenty20 himself, for Lancashire and Middlesex - only yesterday he picked up 5 for 13, the third-best returns in the short history of this form of the game - also missed out.

It's hard to judge this squad of 30 because so little is known about what they can do at Twenty20 cricket. But it is a major opportunity for some of these young cricketers to get a taste of the big league. It's still some way yet - the selectors have made a good start in picking the 30, but they could easily regress when it comes to pruning down the squad to 15 and leave out many of the really young ones, settling for safety instead.

There are many familiar faces - Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, and Virender Sehwag - but interestingly there are fresh ones too. Yusuf Pathan has made a bit of a name for himself as an offie who can tonk the ball a long distance, and more than mere potential has some performances to back his claims up, and joins his brother Irfan in the squad. Karan Goel the twenty-year-old left-hand bat and offie who scored 26 and took 4 for 13 as Punjab lost to Tamil Nadu in the final of the domestic Twenty20 championship, finds a spot.

Abhishek Jhunjhunwala, although quite a correct batsman, makes it, along with Manoj Tiwary, both from Bengal, and his electric fielding would be a big plus.

Chetweshwar Pujara, another young batsman of promise, though hardly a man you'd pick for Twenty20, is in the squad too, as is Niraj Patel, the industrious left-hand batsman from Gujarat who has scored regularly and played a key role in finishing off limited overs games. Praveen Kumar, the 18-year-old left-hand bat and offie who scored 26 and took 4 for 13 as Punjab lost to Tamil Nadu in the final of the domestic Twenty20 championship, finds a spot.

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While most of the attention has centred on the Twenty20 probables, what with a World Championship around the corner, it should not escape notice that the selectors also picked an A team to tour Kenya. In that squad are some seriously contentious choices, with Arjun Yadav getting a look in despite achieving little in domestic cricket. An opening batsman like M Vijay, who had an excellent debut season, scoring 628 runs at 40-plus will wonder why he misses out, in a squad that has only one regular opener, in Robin Uthappa. This at a time when India have a fairly new opening combination in Tests and are on the look out for openers. Once again, it seems a confused selection, with a wicketkeeper opening, but given what they've done with the national team in the recent past, you'd at least have to say the selectors are consistent.

least in the long-list of 30, is V Devendra, the Twenty20 specialist from Tamil Nadu. His played a crucial part in Tamil Nadu's success in the domestic competition with his fearless hitting at the top of the order and steady medium-price.

Pietersen slips to second place, with Mike Hussey in third, but a strong series for him against India in August came to an end with a loss to the team of the list. Mahendra Singh Dhoni continues his progress up the rankings and is now fifth overall. He has moved past the injured West Indies captain Rammesh Sarwan, who was unable to take any part in the series against England.

Shivnarine Chanderpaul's golden tour has lifted him four places to 13th after a Man-of-the-Series performance of 202 runs, including an unbeaten 116 at Edgbaston, who was unable to take any part in the series against England.

In reply to West Indies imposing total, Prior made one before he was caught by opposing keeper Denesh Ramdin after fending at Powell.

The bowler then had Alastair Cook (18) square-cutting to a boundary point where Dwayne Smith held a fine low catch.

Powell's first ball to Pietersen was a steaming bouncer which flew over Ramdin's head. His next was fuller and Pietersen edged a drive to

Poltyan will take

FROM PAGE 17
of the turf, which was laid in November last year.

"It's not unusual. We've seen similar problems elsewhere," Optiz told reporters during his visit at the venue.

"We will replace the whole training track in mid-August. There are swallows in the middle of the main

track and we need to repair it."

He pointed out that there was nothing wrong in the turf, which is a chemical component.

"I think while pasting the layer beneath it, there was tremendous heat and after laying the turf, it breathed inside. In addition, the monsoon rain here caused the swellings.

"When we repair it, we will make sure it does not happen again," he added.

Strauss to lead England A



APP, Nottingham

Andrew Strauss will captain England Lions, as the country's A team is now known, against India in a three-day tour match at Chelmsford starting on July 13, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced Sunday.

Test opener Strauss, who has led the full England side on several occasions when the likes of Michael Vaughan and Andrew Flintoff have been injured, will captain a team mainly made up of players pushing for international selection.

"We've selected a strong side to ensure the touring team is well and truly tested ahead of the upcoming Test series."

The Lord's match will be the first of three Tests between India and England.

India are currently involved in a four-day match against English county champions Sussex at the south coast side's Hove headquarters.

"I know Andrew is delighted to be captain the side and excited by the prospect of taking a look at India prior to the first Test."

Among those included are Strauss's Middlesex teammate Owais Shah and fast bowler Stuart Broad, both of whom played during

Australia could play Stanford series

CRICINFO, undated

Cricket Australia has confirmed that it would consider a proposal by Allen Stanford to participate in the \$23 million Twenty20 tournament in the West Indies next year. The tournament though is yet to be approved by the ICC, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) or ESPN, which has a broadcast agreement with the ICC.

According to the ICC's Future Tours Programme, Australia need to complete a Test and ODI series in the Caribbean by June 30, 2008. "We're the West Indies Cricket Board to reach an accommodation on a Twenty20 tournament with the ICC and they were in a position to supply us with more specific detail on any Twenty20 tournament, then we'd be happy to consider it," Cricket Australia spokesman Phil Pope was quoted in The Age. "And that would be on the understanding that we need to move on to our next commitment on the Future Tours programme out of the Caribbean by June 30."

The Australian newspaper reported that Stanford had approached Australia last year for a weeklong Twenty20 knockout also involving India, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

Kimi spoils party

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His pace saw him pass Heikki Kovalainen and Ralf Schumacher and then close in on the sixth-place Renault of Giancarlo Fisichella by two-thirds distance.

Employing the same long second stint as Raikkonen paid off for him as he went by the Italian and Nick Heidfeld for fifth at his second stop, and then closed in on the other BMW Sauber of Robert Kubica.

Toro Rosso also suffered a double failure with Scott Speed making contact with Alex Wurz' Williams at Club and breaking his front-left suspension unit and Vitantonio Liuzzi's electronics failing with four laps to go. His pace saw him pass Heikki Kovalainen and Ralf Schumacher and then close in on the sixth-place Renault of Giancarlo Fisichella by two-thirds distance.

Honda employed a one-stop strategy for each one of their drivers and saw Rubens Barrichello and Britain's Jenson Button complete the top ten.

Both drivers benefited from the retirement of the Toyotas, Ralf Schumacher's best race of the year being ruined by suspension failure and Jarno Trulli pulling in complaining that his car was "undriveable."

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DRU cricket begins

SPORTS REPORTER

The Pepsi-DRU six-a-side cricket tournament got underway at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Ex-president of Bangladesh Olympic Association Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman inaugurated the media cricket meet.

On the opening day, Janakantha beat Deshbangla by five wickets, Karatola defeated BD News by 15 runs, Samakal beat Borer Dak by five wickets, Manavzamia crashed to Banglavision by five wickets, Naya Diganta beat Independent by 37 runs, Khabarpatra beat Amader Shomoy by four wickets and New Edge thrashed Jai Jai Din by 24 wickets. Channel i received walk-over against BBC.

Pietersen loses No 1 spot

CRICINFO, undated

Kevin Pietersen has lost his No.1 ranking in one-day internationals after a lean series against West Indies. He made 42 runs at 14 in the three matches and has been replaced on the top spot by Ricky Ponting, even though Australia haven't played since the World Cup.

Pietersen slips to second place, with Mike Hussey in third, but a strong series for him against India in August came to an end with a loss to the team of the list. Mahendra Singh Dhoni continues his progress up the rankings and is now fifth overall. He has moved past the injured West Indies captain Rammesh Sarwan, who was unable to take any part in the series against England.

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