

Hamer on shortlist

SPORTS REPORTER

Australian coach John Hamer was included in the list of probables to coach Bangladesh alongside Dave Houghton and Jamie Siddons, it was revealed during a board meeting yesterday.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Mahbub Anam said that the three coaches are due in the capital at the end of this month for their interviews. During the first week of August, BCB will decide on their choice.

65-year-old Hamer is currently the senior coach of the Commonwealth Bank Cricket Academy, a job he has held since 2003.

During the meeting it was also revealed that a three-member committee consisting of ASM Faruque, Afzalur Rahman Sinha and general secretary Mahbub will suggest to the board on the new selection committee as the contract of the existing chief selector Faruque Ahmed and Athar Ali Khan end on July 31. The board will appoint a new selection committee, also on the first week of August.

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Monirul, Sabura reign at Shitalakhy

UNB, Dhaka

Mohammad Monirul Islam of Rajshahi Alampir Swimming Club and Sabura Katun of Kushtia Sagarkhali Swimming Club emerged champions in the Koya Cosmetics 9th National Long Distance Swimming competition held in the Shitalakhy River yesterday.

Celebrated national swimmer Karar Samedul Islam of Bangladesh Navy finished second while Zakirullah of Bangladesh Air Force was third in the men's event.

Montaz Shirin and Lovely Katun of Bangladesh Ansar finished second and third respectively in the women's competition.

Bangladesh Swimming Federation president and Navy chief Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam was the chief guest during the competition.

The daylong competition began from the BWTA VIP terminal in Narayanganj and concluded at the Munshiganj Launch Ghat of the Dhaleswari River.



UMBRELLA FEST: (above) Rain could not deter the Mohammedan faithful from showing up at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday to watch their win against Brothers Union. (R) Mohammedan's Nigerian striker Emeka heads the ball during the B.League match against Brothers Union.



Handball semis today

UNB, Dhaka

Holders BJMC, Bangladesh Ansar & VDP, Dhaka and Faridpur moved into the semifinals of the Basic Bank 18th National Women's Handball Championship after they won their respective matches at the Dhamondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

In the semifinals today, Ansar & VDP meet Dhaka while BJMC face Faridpur at 3:30pm at the same venue.

In the day's first match yesterday, Faridpur defeated Magura 10-6 after dominating the first half 5-2. Rosy scored five times for the winners.

In the second match, Ansar & VDP dumped Madaripur 21-5 after cruising in the first half 10-3. Rum scored six goals for Ansar & VDP.

In another match, BJMC outplayed Rajshahi 19-4 with Dalia scoring eight times.

In the day's last match, hosts Dhaka beat Panchagarh 13-9 with Akherun contributing 12 goals.

Speed to quit ICC

BBC ONLINE, undated

Malcolm Speed is to step down from his position as chief executive of the International Cricket Council in June.

Cricket's world governing body says Speed, 58, will not seek an extension of his deal when it expires in 2008.

"He made a decision ages ago that he was not going to seek renewal of his contract," said an ICC spokesman.

"It has long been Malcolm's intention to retire at 60 and his current contract takes him a couple of months short of his 60th birthday."

Speed headed the Australian cricket board prior to succeeding Dave Richards as the figurehead of the ICC.

During Speed's reign the ICC departed Lord's, the body's home for almost a century, to move to Dubai in 2005.

Recently he came under fire for the seemingly never-ending World Cup and was at the centre of the Darrell Hair affair last summer following the forfeited Test between England and Pakistan at the Brit Oval.

PCB agrees on T20 tie

BBC ONLINE, undated

Pakistan have agreed to play a special Twenty20 match against India to raise money for a cricket academy to be named after their late coach, Bob Woolmer.

He was planning to build the academy in South Africa to help develop the game at grassroots level.

And his widow, Gill, wants the project to go ahead despite his death during the World Cup earlier this year.

She hopes the match will be staged either in India or England, but no date has yet been fixed.

A statement issued by the Pakistan Cricket Board said they "fully supported" the idea.

"The PCB has already communicated to Gill Woolmer its commitment to play this match and will certainly opt for any venue that the host board agrees upon be it ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) or BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India)."

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A fatal illness!

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

Has Mohammad Ashraful ever learnt from his mistakes? The answer is no. And especially after the batting icon of Bangladesh got himself out in the first one-day international against Sri Lanka at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo on Friday, the sentiment has grown even louder.

Will this talented yet highly erratic right-hander ever learn from his mistakes? If you are optimistic then you are putting your money for a lost cause since the past record hardly speaks in his favour.

He went for an ambitious hook shot against Dilhara Fernando when it was absolutely unnecessary in the first ODI that Bangladesh surrendered meekly after a bright start. It was however not for the first time in the tour he gifted his wicket.

Take for instance Ashraful's first innings of the tour. The 23-year-old Bangladesh captain threw away his wicket in almost identical fashion against the same bowler a mistimed pull shot and an easy catch at backward square leg.

"I will not make the same mistake," Ashraful promised after his first blunder of the tour and many felt that the burden of captaincy

would make him more responsible in shot selection.

But he hardly kept his word save his unbeaten 129 in the second innings of the second Test at the same venue.

However, his comical display on Friday has bordered beyond any logic at a stage when Bangladesh snuffed an opportunity to pull off a victory against the world's second-ranked side.

It was acceptable when Tushar Imran, playing his first match after a long time, was out leg before or out-of-form Shakib Al-Hasan was caught behind for a duck. But it was inexplicable how a captain, with the experience of more than 100 ODIs under his belt played such a rash shot when the occasion demanded him to re-build the innings with opener Shahriar Nafees against an attack that lacked the necessary bite in the absence of two front line bowlers Muttiah Muralidaran and Chaminda Vaas.

A team like Bangladesh seldom gets the chance to restrict an imposing Sri Lankan batting to 234 and then score 45 runs for no loss inside 11 overs. But Ashraful's one stroke of madness coupled with the injudicious shuffle of the batting order eventually spoiled the brilliant effort of the bowlers.

The captain in question accepted it.

'Applaud Murali'

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Andrew Symonds on Saturday urged Australian cricket fans not to taunt Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralidaran if he passes Shane Warne's Test wicket world record while touring Down Under this year.

Australian crowds have regularly abused Murali since he was twice called for throwing, with even Prime Minister John Howard labelling him a chucker.

There are fears the harassment, which led to the spinner boycotting a tour Down Under in 2004, will intensify if he eclipses Shane Warne's 708 Test wicket haul on Australian soil later this year.

Australian all-rounder

Symonds, Muralidaran's former teammate at English county side Lancashire, said he would be embarrassed if the Australian crowds failed to acknowledge his achievement.

"I just hope the beer drinkers in the sun don't give him a hard time and late one afternoon if he breaks the record they start on him," Symonds told Australian Associated Press.

"I hope that doesn't happen, I hope people can stand up and actually applaud him for what he is - a legend."

Muralidaran has 700 Test wickets and is likely to overtake Warne's 708 in one of the two Tests between Sri Lanka and home side Australia in November.

Symonds said if Murali snared the record, he did not want the

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Australian crowd to sour the moment.

"Definitely it would be embarrassing for us as a team if they didn't (applaud him)," Symonds told AAP.

"We respect him for his skills and for what he has done and I think it would be rude, straight out rude, if they didn't sort of respect him and give him the pat on the back he deserves."

Controversy over the bowler's action exploded publicly on Boxing Day 1995 when Australian umpire Darrell Hair called Murali seven times for throwing, creating a furore.

He was subsequently called during a one-day series in Australia, which almost prompted

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Anderson hits India hard

Cricket

AFP, London

James Anderson took a Test-best five for 42 as England took charge of the first Test against India at Lord's here Saturday.

Anderson, playing his first Test since January's final Ashes clash in Sydney and his first at home since 2004, led the way as India were bowled out for 201 to give England a first-innings lead of 97.

Left-amerger Ryan Sidebottom followed up with four for 65 as the two seamers, in the absence of injured quicks Matthew Hoggard, Stephen Harmison and Andrew Flintoff, got England back into the match after the hosts had collapsed to 298 all out.

At lunch, England were eight without loss in their second innings, a lead of 105. Andrew Strauss was nought not out and fellow left-hander Alastair Cook unbeaten on eight.

Anderson, whose previous Test best of five for 73 also came at Lord's, during his debut match against Zimbabwe in 2003, added Sourav Ganguly to a list of wickets that already included fellow star

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batsmen Rahul Dravid, the India captain, and Sachin Tendulkar.

India resumed on 145 for four with Ganguly -- who scored a hundred at Lord's in his Test debut 11 years ago -- 25 not out and nightwatchman RP Singh unbeaten on five.

Ganguly though was clean bowled for 34 by an Anderson delivery that swung back into the left-hander in Saturday's sixth over to leave India 155 for five.

Meanwhile debutant quick Chris Tremlett, who shortly before the second day's collected his first Test wicket when he caught and bowled top-scorer Wasim Jaffer for 58, after the opener had been put down on nought by wicketkeeper Matt Prior, continued to bowl with good pace and aggression.

Anderson, after a fine spell of one wicket for two runs in four overs, was replaced by Sidebottom.

And with his fifth ball Sidebottom had Singh skying to Anderson at mid-off for a Test-best 17.

Singh's exit brought in hard-hitting wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

However, a ball after hesitantly guiding Anderson just short of the

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England paceman James Anderson celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Sourav Ganguly on the third day of the first Test at Lord's on Saturday.

ESPN warns against piracy

PTI, New Delhi

Armed with a Delhi High Court order against piracy of the ongoing India-England cricket series, sports broadcaster ESPN Star on Saturday warned cable operators of strict action if they violated it.

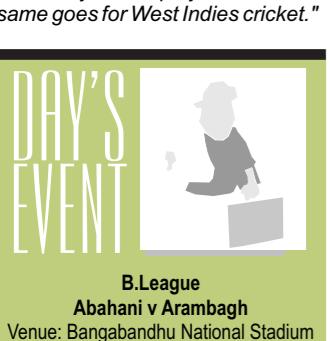
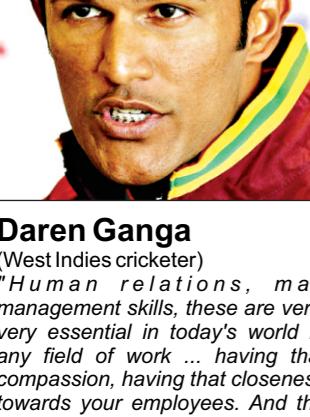
The Delhi High Court had on Thursday restrained 104 cable operators across India from telecasting or transmission of the ongoing cricket series, which began on July 19, without license from the broadcaster.

"We are stepping up our monitoring mechanism to tackle this issue so that the court order is followed and strict action is taken against cable operators who telecast cricket matches illegally," ESPN Star Software Vice President Rajesh Kaul told PTI.

He said non-compliance of the order by any cable operator would tantamount to contempt of court.

ESPN holds exclusive rights

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B.League

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Time: 4:30 pm

