

Banker's cricket from tomorrow

Export Import Bank take on Eastern Bank in the opening match of the first-ever Banker's Cricket tournament at the Gulshan Youth Club ground tomorrow.

Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka Bank, Bank Asia and Trust Bank are the other teams in the competition, organised by event management company Maker Communication.

Matches will be 35-overs-a-side and only bank employees are allowed to play in the event. Apart from the Gulshan ground, City Club and Dhaka University grounds will be used and all matches will be played during weekends, informed tournament committee chairman Arman Islam.

A press meet in connection with the competition was held at a local hotel yesterday, where top officials from all participating banks were present.

Senior vice-president of Bank Asia Iteza Reza Chowdhury, assistant vice-president of Dhaka Bank Azam Khan, managing director and CEO of EBL Ali Reza Itefkar, associate director of Standard Chartered Bank Towhid Islam, deputy managing director of Trust Bank Ishtiaque Ahmed Chowdhury, strategic planner of Maker Communication Mohammad Khan and Arman Islam were present during the conference.

JU inter-varsity cricket champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Jahangirnagar University lifted the Inter-university Cricket Championship title with an emphatic nine-wicket win over Dhaka University in the final yesterday.

In reply to Dhaka's meagre 118 all out in 36 overs, the home side rattled 119 for one in just 15.1 overs at the Jahangirnagar University ground.

Aumi top-scored 53 for the visitors while Johnny Jr bagged 3-20 and Sajal and Farid two wickets apiece for the winners.

Man-of-the-match Sanjay smashed 57 and Johnny Sr 31 for Jahangirnagar, fiku of the home side was adjudged the man of the series.

VC of JU Dr Khondokar Mustahidur Rahman distributed prizes as chief guest after the final.

Robin told to leave?

REUTERS, New Delhi

India fielding coach Robin Singh will be fired before the home Test series against South Africa starting next week, local media reported on Wednesday.

Gary Kirsten, who has taken over as India coach before the series against his home country, has told the Indian board that Singh's services will not be required, the Hindustan Times reported.

The former India all-rounder joined the team along with bowling coach Venkatesh Prasad last year following their shock first-round exit at the World Cup in West Indies.

Prasad and Singh had a dispute with the board over their involvement with the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL), due to be launched next month, the paper said. Prasad is expected to continue in his role.

The first match of the three-Test series starts in Chennai on March 26.

MSC, Biman

FROM PAGE 17

Manju 4-5, Aqeel 4-25. MOHAMMEDAN: 142-2 in 29.4 overs (Imtiaz 80*, Rashedul 22, Nadimuddin 29*, extras 7, Kamrul 1-30, Elias 1-26).

Result: Mohammedan win by eight wickets.

SURJO TORUN: 179-9 in 50 overs (Aslam 15, Bashar 42, Nayeem 23, Nazmul 16, Mashud 23, Sharif 28*, extras 7, Mahbulul 2-26, Mosharraf 2-35, Nabil 2-34).

BIMAN: 183-7 in 49.3 overs (Nafis 55, Alok 13, Ejaz 32, Mosharraf 33*, Sajjal 10, Mahfuzul 21*, extras 6, Dewar 2-42, Younus 3-31).

Result: Biman win by three wickets.

BKSP: 267-6 in 50 overs (Mithun 116, Mushfiqur 22, Nasir 85, Mosiur 21*, extras 10, Shahjada 2-36, Rubel 4-45).

VICTORIA: 187 all out in 45.1 overs (Qaisar 26, Nasiruddin 11, Labbaek 28, Farhad 59, Wasel 26, Sajib 11, extras 11, Tapash 4-36, Mahmudul 2-37).

Result: BKSP win by 80 runs.

BFF, clubs

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response from the footballers to call off the strike, especially for the national camp.

"We are going to announce a concrete date for the transfer and hope that everyone would be satisfied with the decision," the BFF chief said.

BFF acting general secretary Marzoor Hossain Malu has been given the responsibility to talk with the players before today's announcement.

However, it is unlikely that the clubs would move from their decision to go into the transfer after next month's BFF election.

The BFF is also likely to name the preliminary national squad within a couple of days.



Managing Director and CEO of Eastern Bank Limited Ali Reza Itefkar speaks at a press briefing in connection with the EBL Women's Cricket Series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. BCB Women's Wing Chairperson Monwar Anis Khan is also seen.

Referrals in Tests soon

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

Players during the forthcoming Test series between England and South Africa could ask for decisions to be referred to the third umpire as part of a technology trial, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced at the end of a two-day board meeting here Tuesday.

However, the global governing body said any such trial was subject to the approval of English officials and their South African counterparts before it could take place.

The ICC also announced that the 2011 World Cup in the Indian sub-continent would be reduced in size to 14 teams from the 16 that competed in last year's edition in the Caribbean.

It added September's one-day ICC Champions Trophy tournament was still scheduled to take place in Pakistan, despite Australia's recent postponement of a tour there on safety grounds, although it would first commission its own security review in June before giving the final go-ahead.

Meanwhile there appeared to be no change in the ICC's position towards Zimbabwe's status following allegations of financial corruption by administrators in the troubled African state.

The use of the third umpire in international matches is currently

governed by the proviso that it is the on-field umpires alone who decide whether a decision needs to be passed on to the replay official.

However, concerns over the standard of international umpiring and a wish to avoid a repeat of the kind of controversy which saw experienced West Indian official Steve Bucknor stood down during the recent Australia-India series, following Indian complaints, have led to renewed calls for the increased use of technology in decision-making.

Former England coach Duncan Fletcher has been one of those calling for a 'challenge' system similar to that pioneered by American football and now in use in tennis to be brought into international cricket.

But the ICC said it had still to work out the details.

A similar experiment in English domestic one-day cricket last season was widely regarded as unsuccessful with the third umpire generally reluctant to over-rule his colleagues out in the middle.

Zimbabwe first went into voluntary exile from Test cricket in 2004 and has not played any matches in the five-day format at all for three years after under-strength sides suffered a series of heavy defeats amidst allegations leading white players had been forced out by officials who were picking sides on the basis of race and not ability.

But they continued to play one-day international and Twenty20

cricket. A report produced on the ICC's behalf by KPMG, one of the world's leading accountancy firms, into the 2005-06 accounts of Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) was found said by the governing body to have 'found no evidence of criminality and that no individuals had gained financially.'

However, the ICC's statement Tuesday said the report "highlighted serious financial irregularities."

It added: "ZC reported to the ICC Board that it had taken substantial remedial action to correct these irregularities and would continue to do so."

Last year's World Cup was heavily criticised for being too long, something caused in part by the presence of six non-Test nations.

While Ireland beat both Pakistan and Bangladesh, the poor performances of other 'minnows' such as Bermuda and Scotland did little for the tournament.

For the 2011 event, the 10 Test-playing nations will be joined by the semi-finalists from the World Cup qualifiers, to be held in Dubai in 2009.

Australia postponed its tour of Pakistan last week after two bombs in Lahore, one of the cities where they had been due to play, killed 26 people.

The ICC said it would conduct a "full independent security assessment of the situation in Pakistan" in June.

Aussies hail Hair recall

AFP, Sydney

Cricket Australia welcomed Darrell Hair's reinstatement as a Test umpire Wednesday and said the controversial official should be able to oversee matches in any Test nation, including Pakistan.

The Australian was barred from standing in top-level cricket matches following an abandoned Test between England and Pakistan in 2006, which ended with Pakistan conceding the first Test forfeit in the game's history.

Cricket Australia spokesman Peter Young said Hair remained one of the game's most technically proficient officials and welcomed the International Cricket Council's decision Tuesday to reinstate him to the elite umpire's panel.

"We're pleased to see Darrell back," Young told AFP. "Cricket Australia has always had a view that he is, in a technical sense, an excellent umpire, one of the best two or three in the world."

"World cricket needs good umpires, it's got good umpires but it needs more rather than less, so it's pleasing to see him back and we look forward to seeing him back on the circuit."

Hair has said he will be prepared to umpire in Pakistan if called upon to do so, although the Pakistan Cricket Board have shown no sign of altering their stance that what they regard as Hair's error of judgement in the 2006 Test makes him unfit to officiate top level matches.

Young said CA believed Hair's reinstatement meant he was eligible to umpire in all Test-playing nations.

"It's an ICC issue but we would support the notion that the ICC should be able to send him wherever it wants to send him in the world whenever it wants to send him according to its rostering of umpires," he said.

Tri-series

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Lipu also said that Bangladesh is likely to fly out for Pakistan on April 6 to play five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 match.

"We fixed April 6 as a tentative date for departure, but Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials said they will finalise everything within short time after checking with their broadcaster," he said.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Relegation league sides Agrani Bank and Purbachal Parisad shared points in a 3-3 draw in yesterday's lone match of the Senior Division Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Putul, Swapan and Paban scored one goal each for Agrani twice came from behind to pull off a draw. Shafiqullah struck twice and Mamun one for Purbachal.

After 16 rounds, both the teams joined Mohakhali XI atop the table with 19 points but the latter have a match in hand.

JFA CUP

BKSP joined Narayanganj in the semifinals of the 4th JFA Cup Under-15 Football Championship from Group A. BKSP defeated Cox's Bazar 3-1 to finish runners-up with seven points while Narayanganj won the group with 12 points after a 2-1 victory over Khulna at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

U-14 TRIAL

Bangladesh Football Federation will hold under-14 football trials on March 28 and 29 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium for the national team to take part in the AFC Festival of Football in Iran in May this year. The players have been requested to report to coach Jobair Nipu.

GAIBANDHA CRICKET

Our correspondent: Munshipara Kriya Sangha defeated Sunrise Sporting Club by eight wickets in the Naheed Cotton First Division Cricket League here at the Gaibandha Stadium. In reply to Gaibandha's 103 all out, Munshipara reached 104-2 in 25.2 overs with Nirhar scoring 50.

HOCKEY

UNB adds: Old Dhaka Hockey Association registered a thumping 6-1 win against Police AC in the Independence Day hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

National forward Habul struck twice while Prince, Jimmy, Samad and Asaduzzaman netted one each in their second successive victory.

In the day's other match, Bangladesh Navy beat Mirpur Academy 3-2.

KABADDI

Japan will play West Bengal in today's final of the Fresh Independence and National Day women's kabaddi tournament. The final will start at 3:30pm at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court.

In the first semifinal, Japan crushed Bangladesh Ansar 33-16 while West Bengal outclassed fellow Indian side Tripura 65-18.

Hair will be kept away from Pak matches

CricketInfo, undated

As expected, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed that Darrell Hair will not be asked to stand in any international matches involving Pakistan.

The ICC announced on Tuesday that Hair would be available to umpire major matches again after completing a mutually-agreed rehabilitation period. It followed his effective removal from big-time cricket in the aftermath of the forfeited Oval Test in 2006.

"We will probably keep him away from Pakistan matches where we can," Dave Richardson, the ICC's general manager of cricket, told the BBC. "We don't want to put umpires in an almost impossible position where any mistake they might make would be under such scrutiny that the pressure becomes impossible."

An ICC spokesman told CricketInfo there was no condition attached to Hair's return. "However, in making umpires' appointments a certain amount of common sense is applied," he added. "There is enough pressure on umpires without us contributing to it by appointing them to inappropriate matches or games that will heap undue attention on them."

Shocked

FROM PAGE 17

Another former captain, Rameez Raja, said the decision showed Pakistan's weakness at international level.

"The decision of Hair's recall shows Pakistan's lack of presence at international forums," said Raja, a television commentator during the Oval Test.

"It is surprising that Hair was reinstated without being tried and tested. It shows that the international community is ready to walk over Pakistan whenever they want."

But the PCB denied it had been weak on the issue. "We have made our views clear to the ICC on Hair. The entire matter was thoroughly discussed at the meeting and this is a wrong impression that the PCB was weak on this issue," PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf told AFP.

When asked if Pakistan would object to Hair officiating in any match involving the country, Ashraf refused a direct reply, saying "we have full faith on the ICC management that they will take a judicious judgement on the matter."

Charl's no to India

Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

Fast bowler Charl Langeveld Tuesday withdrew from South Africa's tour of India in the aftermath over the controversy of his selection ahead of fellow paceman Andre Nel.

His shock withdrawal came just three days before the Proteas are due to depart for a three-Test tour which will decide second place on the International Cricket Council ranking list.

Cricket South Africa chief executive Gerald Majola said in a statement: "Charl Langeveld called me today (Tuesday) in an emotional state saying he wanted to withdraw from the tour to India so that he can consider his international future in the right frame of mind."

"He said that the public controversy over the selection of Proteas team to tour India had upset him to the extent that he would not be in the right frame of mind to tour India and do his best for the Proteas."

"Charl said he wanted to use this

time instead to consider his future in international cricket in a cool and calm manner."

Langeveld was picked ahead of Nel against the wishes of South African coach Mickey Arthur, who wanted to keep a successful squad together.

It was widely believed that Langeveld was picked mainly to lift the number of black players in the touring squad to comply with a policy that there should be six players of colour in a 14-man squad.

Langeveld and spin bowler Robin Peterson were picked in place of white players Nel and Johan Botha who toured Bangladesh last month in a squad that contained only four players of colour.

The squad for Bangladesh was signed off by Majola without the approval of Cricket SA president Norman Aarendse, who continued to insist that the target be met.

Aarendse received backing from Cricket SA's general council at a meeting on February 29 and said after the announcement of the squad for India that the players had been selected in accordance with policy.

Both Nel and Langeveld were reported to be deeply upset when the squad was announced on the eve of the second one-day international against Bangladesh in Dhaka on March 12. The South African Sunday Times reported that both players were in tears in captain Graeme Smith's room.

Nel was reportedly so disappointed that he wanted to withdraw from the next day's game but was persuaded to play and claimed the man of the match award by taking four for 27. New ball partner Langeveld also shone, taking three for 31.

Majola said he had discussed Langeveld's situation with selection convenor Joubert Strydom and it had been decided to accede to the player's request. He said the selectors were considering a replacement.

Majola said: "I have assured Charl that he is very much in the Proteas' plans, and is regarded as one of our best fast bowlers in both ODI and Test cricket. We will have in-depth discussions with him and hopefully he will continue to be available for international selection."

Ramnarine banks on trio

Cricket

CricketInfo, undated

Dinanath Ramnarine, the president of the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA), is confident that Chris Gayle, Ramnaresh Sarwan and Shivnarine Chanderpaul will make themselves available for selection for the first two Tests against Australia in May.

Before the ICC meeting in Dubai, Donald Peters, the chief executive of the West Indies Cricket Board, raised the possibility of all three players missing the start of the Australia series because of their Indian Premier League (IPL) commitments. Earlier in the week board president Julian Hunte had made similar statements but Ramnarine allayed those fears.

"I would say there is no doubt in my mind that we would have our best team," Ramnarine said at the annual WIPA awards ceremony in Port of Spain. "I feel fairly confident that our players will play against Australia. It was never a doubt in my mind."

"The ICC is aware of what is taking place and I think there needs to be meaningful discussion and

some level of compromise where both parties are particularly happy. But certainly from our perspective, we are going to continue to have discussions with our board, at the FICA level with the ICC, to make sure that there is some sort of compromise. Common sense must prevail."

The ICC executive board met in Dubai on Tuesday and decided that every ICC member had the right to object to a player from its country taking part in the IPL. It also emerged from the meeting that the ICC's Future Tours Programme will not be altered to suit the IPL, a measure Peters had said the WIBC would have been pushing for.

Peters had earlier said: "Cricket administrators around the world are worried about the IPL, particularly New Zealand and West Indies because the IPL takes place in the middle of when our seasons occur. But all of us stand to lose a significant amount of players."

All players participating in the IPL must have the consent of their national boards as a result of a No Objection Clause in the contracts. But, Peters said on Friday: "I am not going to not release the players because they would go anyway. Given the amount of money

involved, it certainly destabilises the infrastructure of cricket. It's not fair to the players, and it's not fair to the national teams."

However, Ramnarine said discussions with the WIBC on the matter had only started the next day because the chief executive had been out of the country.

Asked whether he felt the emergence of the IPL was a threat to world cricket, Ramnarine said: "The ICC has a monopoly on the game, the boards have a monopoly on the game and at some point in time, somebody is going to try to break that monopoly and that is what is taking place right now. It's something that you have to pay close attention to."

In a related issue, Ramnarine said that the contractual negotiations with the WIBC for the imminent home series were almost at a conclusion.

"In principle there is an agreement which is great," Ramnarine said. "The tour will be going on. Players are actually on their way to Guyana. We are still working out a few things in the contract. I would say in principle, 99 per cent of the things have been agreed. I don't foresee any difficulty."

Herath takes over

Cricket

AFP, Providence

Sri Lanka's bowlers had a decent work-out, after their batsmen, led by Tillakaratne Dilshan, plundered more easy runs against the Guyana Cricket Board President's XI on Tuesday at the Guyana National Stadium.

Left-arm spinner Rangana Herath captured five wickets for 67 runs from 19 overs and Thilan Thushara took two for 31 from 10 overs, as the GCB President's XI were dismissed for 248 just before stumps were drawn on the second day of the three-day (non-first class) tour match.

Shamarh Brooks, captain of the West Indies Under-19s to this year's Youth World Cup in Malaysia, hit the top score of 68 for the home team, and left-handed compatriot Jason Haynes supported with 61.

This followed Sri Lanka's declaration on 492 for five in their first innings about half-hour before the lunch interval with Dilshan undefeated on 101 and Chamara Silva

unbeaten on 51.

The GCB President's XI then benefitted from a bright start from the left-handed opening pair of Jason Haynes and Kieran Powell.

They carried the GCB President's XI to 25 without loss at lunch and proceeded to put on 52 for the first wicket after the interval before he was caught behind off Nuwan Kulasekera for 27.

His dismissal triggered a slide which saw Shemroy Barrington caught behind off Thilan Thushara for five, GCB President's XI captain Patrick Broome bowled by Herath for 13, and Steven Jacobs, vice captain of the West Indies Under-19s, caught at cover off Thushara to leave the home team on 95 for four.

Brooks joined Haynes and they stemmed the fall of wickets, but the GCB President's XI suffered a setback just prior to the tea break.

Haynes, who hit nine fours and a six from 93 balls in close to 2-1/2 hours, was run out on the stroke of tea looking for suicidal single to cover to leave the GCB President's XI on 135 for five at the break.

After tea, Brooks distinguished himself, when he struck four fours in the eighth over off-spin legend

Muttiah Muralidaran, including three off successive deliveries.

But the GCB President's XI stumbled, when Krishna Deossaran and Rajendra Chandrika both fell for ducks as the hosts subsided to 159 for seven.

Brooks continued to play with enterprise and so too Christopher Barnwell towards the end to show there was some sting in the tail of the home team's batting.

Earlier, Sri Lanka continued from their overnight total of 343 for five, and Dilshan, in particular, and Silva tore into the inexperienced GCB President's XI attack.

The pair scored at close to two runs-a-minute and added an unbroken 149 before Dilshan clipped Barnwell a boundary to post his century and prompt the declaration.

The first Test between West Indies and Sri Lanka will contested from March 22 at this same venue, and the second Test will be from April 3 at Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad.

The first two one-day internationals will be on April 10 and 12 at Queen's Park Oval, and the third ODI will be a day-night affair at the Beausejour Stadium in St. Lucia on April 15.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 They get in the "lutely" 20 "La Cage - Folies" 23 Prognosticator 24 Due 25 Trawler equipment 26 Henry Clay or Daniel Webster 27 Emanation 28 Despot 29 Touch-down score 32 Maestro Herbert von... 33 Soldier's civvies 35 Nourished 36 Lacks the ability 38 Dark period 39 Fifth day Christmas gift 42 Dubious 43 Unrebelished 44 Cupid's after ego 45 Silthiey squeezer 46 Difficulty 47 "Rocks" 49 Before

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers 1-44 and letters in some cells.

CRYPTOQUIP

BGR XRN HUDSRBV OSCQ RXXLCKRK ZLDG BRCCSFQR BRYHSXO. VUL ZSOGB HYV HGR NYH Y KRF VUL BYLXB. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AN OLD STITCH ABOUT A FAMILY GUY WHO'S UNUNCOMMITTED PRO AT LANDSCAPING: "FATHER MOWS BEST" Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals U