

## NCA-PCA 1st 4-dayer today

SPORTS REPORTER

GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) will definitely try to revenge their one-day defeats to Pakistan Cricket Academy when they go into the first four-dayer of the two-match series at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra today.

The NCA showed their supremacy against South Africa Academy team in both four-dayers and the triangular tournament but they lost all three one-day games against their Pakistan counterparts.

The second and final four-dayer between NCA and the Pakistan Cricket Academy will also be held at the same venue from May 2.

## Protesters call off programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Test Venue Movement Council (RTVMC) yesterday called off their protest programme scheduled for today following 'fruitful discussions' with the Joint Forces here over shifting of floodlights.

Liaquat Ali, convener of RTVMC said that the Joint Forces promised and took responsibility for taking back the floodlights from Dhaka.

"They promised us that they would take back the floodlights just after the international matches," he said.

National Cricket Council is taking floodlights from Rajshahi Divisional Stadium to Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla Stadium in Dhaka for holding the tri-nation one-day series from June 8.

Talking to newsmen, Liaquat also said that the Joint Forces promised them to convince the Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen U Ahmed about arrangement of holding Test matches in the northwestern city.

Moeen U Ahmed is likely to visit Rajshahi on April 26.

However, NCC officials promised from the very beginning that the Rajshahi floodlights are being taken to Mirpur on a temporary period.



Dancers perform as the participating teams (background) look on during the opening ceremony of the Pioneer Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Bank challenge for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani look favourites to regain the Club Cup hockey title when they take on rank-outsiders Sonali Bank in the final today.

The final will kick off at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium at 4pm.

Sonali Bank entered the final following a stunning 2-1 semifinal victory over Usha Krira Chakra while Abahani edged last edition's champions Mohammedan Sporting Club in the tiebreakers after the high-voltage and temperamental first semifinal between the

two archrivals ended in a 1-1 draw. Abahani coach and former national captain Mahbub Harun, however, thought there was no chance to take Bank lightly.

"Yes, we expected to play Usha in the final but the bankers came as a surprise. In fact, they have played a great match against Usha and deserve a place in the final," said Mahbub.

Pre-tournament favourites Abahani, with a score of national stars and a solid squad, did not look that good against a very young and less experienced Mohammedan in the semifinal and Mahbub said that his players might have had suffered from complacency.

"May be our players took them lightly because of the opposition's lack of experience at this level. But I

think they have learned their lessons.

"There is no way we can take things for granted in a final. Bank have proved they are a strong team by coming this far. There main strength is the offence where the three-four young guys did really well."

When asked whether he was taking his side as the favourites to win the curtain raiser tournament of the season, the former midfielder general said he was positive.

"I think we are favourites and we will go for win. But that doesn't mean we will take it easy. We have to shrug off the lethargy we had shown in the semifinal," added the sky-blues loyal.

Sonali Bank's veteran captain Ashiquezaman said his side will

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## Speed's early exit

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

International Cricket Council chief executive Malcolm Speed has been put on paid leave until his contract runs out on July 4.

In a brief statement, David Morgan, the ICC's president-elect, said: "This is the result of a fundamental breakdown in the relationship between the CEO and a number of board members, including the president, over a variety of issues that include Zimbabwe."

"David Richardson, the ICC general manager - cricket, will serve as interim CEO until Speed's replacement, Haroon Lorgat, assumes the role at the ICC's annual conference at the beginning of July."

Rumours had been circulating for the last month that Speed had had a serious falling-out with Ray Mali, the president, following the

ICC executive's decision not to take any major action against Zimbabwe following an independent forensic audit carried out by KPMG.

Following the ICC's meeting in Dubai in March, at which the decision to overlook the audit was taken, Speed refused to attend the traditional post-meeting media



MALCOLM SPEED

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

## Hero to villain

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

If, as the cliché goes, India really is a land of contrasts, then what does that make Twenty20? One minute Andrew Symonds was being cheered simply for taking his place on the deep midwicket boundary. The next he was bowling what he cheerfully described as "the worst over in Twenty20 history". Jekyll and Hyde could scarcely have done it any better themselves.

Symonds' ferocious undefeated 117 from 53 balls was clearly still in the mind of the post-match interviewer Ian Bishop when, without a trace of irony, he said: "That's why they paid big bucks for you." Symonds was still recovering from the shock of conceding 14 runs in three balls to his old mucker Shane Warne, a sequence that means the

Deccan Chargers need to win in Mumbai on Sunday if he is not to leave India with a 100% losing record in the IPL. "Yes, Ian. Next question," he deadpanned. It was not the most tactful thing Bishop will ever say in his life.

This was a hero-to-villain transformation of the cruelest kind. And if there was some sympathy for the fact that Symonds was left needing to bowl the final over of the match - RP Singh, Chaminda Vaas, and Shahid Afridi had all completed their spells in search of the wickets which had apparently brought the Chargers to the brink of victory - then it was not immediately evident in the words of his captain VVS Laxman.

"We'd used all our regular bowlers, and Symonds was the most experienced of the ones left," he said. "He's experienced enough to bowl that yorker length and that's what we discussed at the start of the

over. You'd back him to bowl six balls without going for 16 or 17, especially when they had lost a few wickets."

Warne agreed. "Symonds can bowl those fast, full ones so well, but luckily for us he didn't get it quite right," he said. "A lot of people said we were the worst side in the competition. I just said we were the most inexperienced."

For Symonds, whose competition analysis now reads 6.5-0-101-0, there is a very real danger his century earlier in the evening will be forgotten completely. That would be harsh, because although he has batted under pressure before - especially when his Test place seemed a couple of failures away from another early conclusion - then the IPL has served up pressure of an unprecedented kind.

Not only does he have a nation to win over after his role in the Harbhajan Singh affair in Sydney,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

## BFF ELECTIONS

# Proxy voters named

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) election scheduled for Monday could be deferred once again.

This statement will remain a rumour.

In a country where main activities of the game had been rumours and gossips throughout the last one year as football was sent back to the tent, it is difficult to predict what is on the cards.

The latest rumour surfaced after the executive committee members suddenly found out that they do not have any voting rights.

According to the new BFF statutes, the executive committee members cannot vote. It proves that the councillors did not even read the new statutes before approving the amendments of the constitution in an extraordinary general meeting.

The EC members (most of them are candidates for the new election), anxious about their voting rights, tendered their resignations even though the FIFA/AFC had stated that one more resignation from the BFF would bring a ban on the federation.

Who cares? Thanks to BFF

president SA Sultan, whose resignation was rejected by FIFA a few months earlier, for not accepting the resignations.

Sultan, however, yesterday killed the rumour saying that the polls would be held on time.

"Yes, some of us feared there would be a directive from the football's world and Asian governing bodies. But I believe if they were interested, a directive would have come at least a week before the election," Sultan told.

"Moreover, the AFC delegation to observe the polls is due to arrive tomorrow. So I don't see any chance of further delays."

An AFC delegation led by its general secretary Dato Paul Mony was due to arrive in the early hours of today while AFC vice-president Monilal Fernando is expected tomorrow to monitor the election.

The FIFA/AFC have given special permission to the BFF to have replacement voters for the executive committee members so that the vote of the clubs or DFAs are not wasted.

### REPLACEMENT VOTERS

A total of 14 EC members, out of which 12 are contesting the polls except Sultan and Anwar Hossain Ujjal, cannot vote in the BFF election. Till filing of this report last night, 11 replacement voters were named.

They are: Mobinul Islam (SA

Sultan, Arambagh), Niaz Mohammed Khan (Anwar Hossain Ujjal, Brothers Union), Ahsan Ahmed Aumit (Mojammel Haque Mukta, Bangladesh Boys Club), Mizan (Monir Ahmed, Pratik KC), Habibur Rahman (Azfaruzzaman Sohrab, Muslim Institute), Aminul Islam Suruj (Asaduzzaman Khasru, Barisal Divisional FA), Golam Kuddus Nabi (Abdur Rahim (Dhaka DFA), Faruk (Golam Rasool Mollah, Tangail DFA), Shafiq Ullah (Dewan Arshad Ali, Chandpur DFA), Mahbubul Alam Khan (Golam Rabbani Helal, Barisal DFA), Makbul Hossain (Taibur Rahman, Magura DFA).

### CAMPAIGN

After finishing their campaign outside Dhaka, the panel led by Maj Gen (ret'd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury will deliver its election manifesto today. On the other hand, the panel led by Kazi Salahuddin was one step ahead in announcing their future programme but left Dhaka yesterday to convince the councillors.

It is believed that Forum, an organisation of district and divisional associations, will be the major force with their stock votes. Also, there have been allegations of involvement of big money to buy voters.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

## Pioneer League opened

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation's outgoing president SA Sultan yesterday inaugurated the Pioneer Football League with a grand opening ceremony at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The tournament will kick off in the first week of May but all the 70 teams took part in the march past amidst colourful fanfare.

The tournament is being held for the second year in succession after the BFF shelved the popular and fruitful tournament for four years.

It is believed that the scarcity of new talents is because of the long-time absence of the tournament, a breeding ground of footballers.

Tournament sponsors Dhaka City Corporation gave two footballs, Tk 1,000 conveyance and 17 T-shirts to each of the teams.

### LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Narail thrashed Gopalganj 36-1 in an opening day match of the Exim Bank 19th National Women's Handball Competition at the Bagerhat Stadium yesterday.

Narail led the first half 16-1 and later smashed twenty goals in the second half.

In the day's other matches, Jessore crushed Jhenidah 31-2, hosts Bagerhat blanked Jhenidah 21-0 and Faridpur smashed Jhalkathi 18-2.

Earlier, Bagerhat Women's Sports Association president Farzana Ahmed inaugurated the competition as chief guest. Bangladesh Handball Federation assistant general secretary Mohammad Nurul Islam was present.

### PREMIER VOLLEYBALL

Water Development Board and Bangladesh Police won their respective matches in the Premier Division Volleyball League at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

Water Development Board defeated Wari Club in straight sets while Police beat Sonali Bank in 3-1 sets.

Power Development Board meet East End Club in today's match at the same venue.

### DIV II CRICKET

Farashganj Sporting Club beat Kalindi Krira Chakra by five wickets in the Second Division Cricket League at the Fatullah Stadium.

Batting first, Kalindi were bowled out for 214 in 49 overs with Mahmud scoring 41 runs.

Faisal and Imran claimed four wickets each for Farashganj.

In reply, Yasin struck 86 to power Farashganj to the target in 48.2 overs. Shahidul contributed 57.

### DIV III CRICKET

Ashish's five-wicket haul guided Orient Cricket Academy to a 15-run victory over Pragati Seba Sangha in the Third Division Cricket League

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Warne topples Symonds



CRICINFO, undated

Shane Warne inspired Rajasthan Royals to a sensational come-from-behind win against Deccan Chargers by capping outstanding leadership and canny bowling with a 17-run charge in the last over.

The three-wicket victory - which was decided, for the second successive day, off the penultimate ball of the match - made Rajasthan the first team in the IPL to chase down a 200-plus score. They now lie fourth with four points from three games while Deccan, for whom Andrew Symonds scored a century and bowled the fateful final over, lost their third match in a row and remain at the bottom of the table.

In the penultimate over, it had seemed Rajasthan were out of the chase with RP Singh effecting two dismissals and conceding only six runs. Before that Shahid Afridi and Symonds had bowled in tandem to keep the scoring under check between overs 12 and 14, but Mohammad Kaif changed all that in the next where he hit three sixes off Symonds. Afridi dismissed Shane Watson, Kaif and Graeme

Smith and conceded only 28 runs. But having exhausted his main bowlers, VVS Laxman was forced to turn to Symonds for the decisive last over.

That began with the odds stacked against Rajasthan. Pankaj Singh took three off the first two balls before giving the strike to Warne. He then hit a four over Symonds' head, leaving ten to get



SHANE WARNE

off the last three balls. Warne needed just two of them, off which he hit consecutive sixes to spark scenes of wild celebrations among his teammates.

What set up the chase, though, was the 98-run partnership between Yusuf Pathan and Smith.

The two were mindful of the run-rate they had to maintain right from the start and went past 100 in 8.3 overs, which made Rajasthan the fastest side to get to that figure in the tournament.

Yusuf belied his lithe frame to get the ball into the stands several times while recording the fastest fifty of the tournament. He didn't move his feet much but used all his strength as he reached out and swung his bat at everything. He fell in similar fashion, not moving his feet when he reached for a wide one off D Kalyankrishna and found Symonds at long-off. Smith was more conventional though equally attacking. He drove down the ground and cut behind third man for boundaries.

Test cricket had been unlucky not to witness Warne as captain. Before his last-over heroics, he used his bowlers effectively to dent Deccan's start. He brought on Yusuf in the third over - to replace Munaf Patel, who went for 12 in his opening effort - and was rewarded with the wickets of Adam Gilchrist and Afridi. Though Symonds more than made up for the poor start, Rajasthan's target could have been much higher had Gilchrist built on his three fours. Warne also made Yusuf bat at No. 3 for the second game in a row, after getting him to

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



A Wari spiker (L) smashes towards the Water Development Board court during a Premier Volleyball League match at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



## Did U Know?

Rigobert Song of Cameroon is the only player to have been red-carded in two different FIFA World Cups, against Brazil in 1994 and against Chile in 1998.



## SET Max

Indian Premier League  
Chennai Super Kings v Kolkata Knight Riders  
Live from 3:30pm  
Royal Challengers v Rajasthan Royals  
Live from 7:30pm

## ESPN

English Premier League  
Chelsea v Man United  
Live from 5:40pm  
Tottenham v Bolton Wanderers  
Live at 7:55pm

## STAR Sports

English Premier League  
Birmingham City v Liverpool  
Live at 7:55pm  
Primera Liga  
Deportivo v Barcelona  
Live from 12:00am (Sunday)



Sachin Tendulkar

(Star Indian batsman)

"I am enjoying my cricket at the moment and don't want to think too much about the future."