

BOA seeks Korean assistance

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed met with South Korean Counsellor Shin Jong Yoon at the embassy office here yesterday.

During the meeting, Kutubuddin and Shin Jong Yoon discussed some matters relating to the country's sports, where South Korea could make special contributions.

The BOA secretary general requested the Korean Counsellor to arrange some Korean coaches for seven sporting disciplines ahead of the South Asian Games to be held in Bangladesh in 2009.

The disciplines are taekwondo, swimming, shooting, athletics, badminton, table tennis and archery.

Kutub also requested the South Korean Counsellor to provide sports gear and latest technology-based equipment as well as to help build an indoor gymnasium.

Shin Jong Yoon assured that he would take up the matter with his government with utmost importance.

BOA director and CEO Col (ret'd) M Wali Ullah was present during the meeting.

Footage shocks commissioner

PTI, Mumbai

Board of Control for Cricket in India-appointed commissioner Sudhir Nanavati, investigating the slapping row between Harbhajan Singh and Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, on Tuesday said he was left stunned after seeing the video footage of the incident.

"What I saw was shocking but it has made my job easier. It will also help me in my further investigation," he told reporters after viewing the footage of the incident that took place after an Indian Premier League match between Mumbai Indians and Kings XI Punjab on April 25.

Nanavati saw the footage at the BCCI headquarters here with IPL chairman and commissioner Lalit Modi, BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah and joint secretary MP Pandove.

The Ahmedabad lawyer will submit his inquiry report on the matter to BCCI president Sharad Pawar on Monday.

Nanavati took the statement of match referee Farokh Engineer and will also speak to Mumbai Indians coach Lalchand Rajput, who was allegedly standing behind Harbhajan when he slapped Sreesanth after the match.

BFF's first

FROM PAGE 17 Federation Cup and a tri-nation club tournament before the B. League.

"We are thinking to host the Federation Cup in July and the international meet in August," said Badal adding that today's meeting may also come up with the decision to introduce futsal in the country in a bid to increase players' skill.

"The transfer should be in May as the BFF, the clubs and the players have already signed an agreement about the schedule," he added.

The emergency committee, which must include the president and vice-presidents, should be responsible for taking decisions at crisis moments if the whole EC is unavailable.

Kingly Kings

FROM PAGE 17 Yuvraj Singh with an away swinger -- made things interesting. However, the in-form Shaun Marsh played a steady hand and ensured there was no further hiccups. By the time he was dismissed -- bowled through the gate by Zaheer -- Punjab were only 21 away from victory and they coasted home with ten balls to spare.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGALORE ROYAL CHALLENGERS: 126 all out in 19.2 overs (Kohli 34, Dravid 66, Misbahul 8, Patel 4, Kumble 3, Steyn 1 not out; Sreesanth 2-16, Pathan 1-13, VRV Singh 1-33, Chawla 3-25) KINGS XI PUNJAB: 127 for 4 in 18.2 overs (Marsh 39, Hopes 5, Sarwan 31, Yuvraj 1, Jayawarden 17 not out, Pathan 17 not out; Zaheer 2-29, Kumar 2-22) Result: Kings XI Punjab won by 6 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: S Sreesanth. Umpires: S J Davis (Australia) and BR Dottore (West Indies) Toss: Kings XI Punjab.

Shoaib news

FROM PAGE 17 Hodge or a Salman Butt. Equally, someone like Shoaib brings a presence; whether he plays or not, there's a real buzz around him."

Asked about his approach towards Shoaib, Buchanan said: "That these are my expectations from you and I'm sure you've got expectations of me. That this is how the team operates, that these are the values we hold dear. Welcome to the Knight Riders, but there are no special rules for anybody."



BFF member Fazlur Rahman Babul (R) welcomes (from R-L) British footballer Anwar Uddin, coach Anthony Ferguson and Canary Wharf official Zakir Khan at the ZIA yesterday.

Anwar may consider a Bangladesh call

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

British footballer of Bangladeshi descent Anwar Uddin said he would consider playing for Bangladesh national team if he gets an offer.

Anwar, who had represented England's Under-16 and 19 sides, arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning to visit the youth football camp under the auspices of Canary Wharf, UK.

It is his second trip to Bangladesh following the 1989 outing with his father to his hometown Sylhet.

The 27-year-old, highly regarded as a traditional English defender in his youth, went to BKSP shortly after his arrival and spent time with the players in the

camp. The Dagenham & Redbridge player in the English League Two was a youth product of East London club West Ham United, but injury forced him to miss the train of Premiership.

Anwar's visit inspired the Bangladesh U-14 team also camping at the Savar sports institute and the London-born told the boys that as a Bangladeshi descendant, he wished their prosperity.

"If you have the courage and will, you can develop your game," told Anwar to the U-14 players.

Fazlur Rahman Babul, a member of Bangladesh Football Federation and co-ordinator of the youth project, who invited Anwar for the weeklong trip, said that the footballer responded to his call to play for the Bangladesh team.

"He (Anwar) said if the football federation offers him to play, he

will consider it and ask the English FA for permission," Babul said adding that it would take some time if all things fall into places.

"I tried to convince him to play for Bangladesh during Mohammedan's tour of UK in 2000 but he was eager about playing for England then. We don't know how long it will take to clear him to play for Bangladesh but if everyone agrees, we will try to include him in next month's SAFF Championship," added Babul.

Anwar will spend the entire day today with the members of the youth project at BKSP along with his tour party involving British coach Anthony Ferguson and Canary Wharf's head of public affairs Zakir Khan.

He is scheduled to meet the newly elected officials of the BFF on Friday.

Swiss priming themselves

AFP, Geneva



A giant helium-inflated football some 15 metres (49 feet) in diameter was hoisted over Geneva's iconic 'Jet d'Eau' fountain last week, but aside from that, a new row of UEFA flags in front of the central station and an electronic countdown clock in a nearby shopping street, there are few signs the city will be host to one of Europe's key sports championships in just a few weeks.

Geneva will host games by the Czech Republic, Turkey and Portugal, with the two latter teams playing the second game of the tournament at 1845 GMT on June 7.

The city is home to large Portuguese and Turkish immigrant populations and the organisers hope this high-profile game will get the competition off to a lively start.

Switzerland's capital Bern is another host city which will welcome teams and fans from the Netherlands, France and Italy for the competition.

The Bernese are notorious throughout Switzerland for their alleged slowness in speech and manner but will have to pick up the pace in the coming month to finish

off an extensive programme of roadworks and transport projects in the city centre, including a new tram interchange.

But the organisers remain upbeat that the tournament will be a sporting and popular success.

"The tournament will really capture the popular mood when the teams arrive," UEFA president Michel Platini told journalists in Geneva earlier this week.

The teams are due to arrive in Switzerland and co-host Austria on June 2.

"Then it'll be a real frenzy. It was just the same in France before the 1984 European Championships and the World Cup in 1998," Platini said.

It is certainly a massive undertaking for the Swiss authorities, with police drafted in from neighbouring France and Germany and even further afield like the Czech Republic.

In total, more than 2,500 foreign officers will help their Austrian and Swiss counterparts police the competition.

Germany alone will supply 1,700 officers, the largest single contingent, to be divided between the two countries.

France will send 750 officers to back up the Swiss police; Croatia will provide 31 officers; Poland 25 and Sweden 15 officers; Greece 12 and Russia and Spain 11 each.

Swiss telecoms company Swisscom also has its work cut out to ensure that the telecommunications infrastructure is all in place to sustain such a huge sporting and media event.

Over the next few weeks, the company will install 13 telecoms networks to serve the four Euro 2008 stadiums -- Geneva, Bern, Basel and Zurich -- as well as other key sites such as UEFA's central headquarters, fan zones, hotels, airports and stations to ensure adequate bandwidth.

"This is three to six times more than what a major international company would need," said Swisscom director Urs Schaeppi.

"In the stadiums, we're going to effectively install small telecoms factories," he said, estimating the cost at around at least 7 million Swiss francs (4.3 million euros).

Switzerland last hosted a major football tournament more than half a century ago with the 1954 World Cup.

That event became known as the 'Miracle of Bern' after West Germany defied all odds to triumph in the final, setting the stage for that country's post-war football renaissance.

The organisers of Euro 2008 must be hoping that some of that old magic rubs off a second time around.

Headache for Donadoni

Football

INTERNET, undated

That even the best news may have a flip side is a well known truth to Italy's coach Roberto Donadoni. The massive amount of goals scored recently by veteran strikers Filippo Inzaghi and Alessandro Del Piero must have thrilled the selector, but has made his job harder as he ponders the list of strikers for Euro 2008.

After spending months on AC Milan's injured list, the 34-year-old Inzaghi has resumed his scoring habits with a vengeance, notching nine goals in the last five games.

And Del Piero, 33, has steadily improved from a dismal start to the season to become the second best league scorer on 17 goals.

The Juventus captain is now one goal behind the young Marco Borriello and boasts one more than Antonio Di Natale, who has often played next to mainstay Luca Toni in the world champions' striking package.

"It is the first time in my career that I scored in five consecutive games," Inzaghi said on the weekend after helping the Devils beat Inter 2-1 in a hot city derby.

"And he had to wait for this moment in his long and honourable career?" Donadoni must have thought.

With the 23-man roster for the continental tournament due out later this month, Donadoni seemed to be all set in defence and midfield and was fairly certain about the six strikers who will help Italy win again a title they lifted only once in 1968.

The Azzurri start off their Euro 2008 campaign against the Netherlands on June 9 and, after the triumph at the 2006 World Cup, hope to clinch a prestigious double in the tournament jointly hosted by Switzerland and Austria.

In the coach's original plans, the powerful Toni, with 21 goals scored for German champions Bayern Munich, was to play next to Udinese's Di Natale, with close support from Juve's Mauro Camoranesi.

On the bench there was room for Di Natale's teammate Fabio Quagliarella, Borriello and Vincenzo Iaquinta, who is considered one of the league's most versatile forwards.

It was hard to disregard the talent of Antonio Cassano, 26, although his lack of discipline and frequent tantrums could mean that he is given some more time to mellow out at Sampdoria.

But things change in football, where goals and a good form matter a lot.

"I don't know about six months ago, but today, yes, no doubt about it," Donadoni said in a recent interview about calling up Del Piero.

"It appears that many (players) are set on giving me selection problems. But I'm certain of one thing: with Del Piero and the others, whatever my choices, there won't be controversies. We are civilized people."

At 44, Donadoni is rather young as coach, but has already got used to the critics' fire, and knows that winning is the best way to hit back at them.

Players may get

FROM PAGE 17 that extraordinary contracts of up to 14-15 million dollars were likely to be introduced by the next season.

Hayden confirmed that players were up for a financial windfall when the next season of the IPL gets underway.

"From what I have heard, some of the stuff (payments) this year could be just the tip of the iceberg," Hayden said.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles beat league leaders Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) in straight sets (25-15, 25-17, 25-20) in Premier League Volleyball at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

PDB lead the league table with 20 points from eight matches.

Three teams -- BDR, Bangladesh Police and Titas Club -- hold the second position jointly with 18 points.

INDO-BANGLA JUDO Bangladesh secured seven gold medals to finish runners-up in the First Indo-Bangla Judo competition held in Kolkata on May 3.

The gold medal winners are Al Mahmud Sarkar, Nurul Islam, Habibur Rahman, Shariful Islam, Milton Majumder, Dalia Akter and Shelly Ahmed.

DIVIII CRICKET Sheikh Russell Krija Chakra defeated Uttara Friends Club by five wickets in Third Division Cricket League at the Gulshan Youth ground.

Barkatullah smashed 25 off 24 balls with the help of six boundaries to take his side to the target of 90 runs in 17.3 overs. Earlier, the Uttara outfit were bowled out for 89 in 22.3 overs.

Away at the Jagannath Hall ground, Dilkusha Sporting Club (127-8) beat Mirpur Boys (126 all out) by two wickets.

SATKHIRA CRICKET UNB adds: Ganomukhi Sangha clinched the Satkhira First Division Cricket League beating United Club by 13 runs in the final at the local stadium.

Ganomukhi Sangha batted first to pile up 249-9 in stipulated 50 overs and later dismissed United Club for 236 runs in 47.3 overs.

Sohel Rana of Ganomukhi Sangha was adjudged man-of-the-final while Bablu of United Club named as man-of-the-tournament.

A total of eight teams took part in the league that began on March 18.

Deputy Commissioner of Satkhira Mohammad Kefayatullah was the chief guest and distributed the prizes.

Dravid blames his batsmen

PTI, Bangalore

Bangalore Royal Challengers captain Rahul Dravid believes the batsmen are to be blamed if the side's semifinal hopes in the Indian Premier League now looks a distant dream.

Smarting from the side's fifth defeat in the tournament that came against the Kings XI Punjab here on Monday, a dejected Dravid did not make any effort to shield his off-colour batting colleagues.

"We have lost wickets at regular intervals and not gelled well. Our bowlers have done the job but we have not clicked with the bat," rued Dravid.

Now that his team faces a huge task of winning every match in order to stay in the race for last four berth, Dravid said, "who knows what happens in the last stretch. We need to win every match."

"We are playing three away matches now (Kolkata, Mohali and Jaipur) in the next 10 days. We cannot afford to make any mistakes," he added.

Tough task for Mumbai

PTI, Mumbai

The dramatic turnaround in their fortunes notwithstanding, Mumbai Indians have a tough task in hand to stop the relentless march of Rajasthan Royals when the two teams cross swords in their Indian Premier League tie at the DY Patil Stadium here today.

The home team, which is likely to miss the services of injured icon player and captain Sachin Tendulkar for their seventh match running, have turned the corner with superb victories over Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Daredevils.

But the Mumbai outfit, sixth in the table going into their needle clash under lights, have a tough task at hand now as it aims to halt the relentless progress of the Shane Warne-led and coached Jaipur franchise, which has surprised one and all with their brilliant performance after their only loss in the lung opener to Delhi.

First and foremost, the Mumbai Indians' batsmen need to convert their starts into big innings, as conceded by their veteran opener Sanath Jayasuriya yesterday who said that in a Twenty20 game at least one batsman in the top order needs to bat up to the 15th over.

A fascinating contest could evolve between Jayasuriya and the great Warne in the middle overs.

For this to happen the Mumbai top order needs to take head-on, Pakistani Sohail Tanvir, who had a sensational 6-14 haul that floored Chennai Super Kings at the Saiwani Stadium two nights ago, and the likes of Munaf Patel and Siddharth Trivedi.

Ravi rejects IPL offer



BBC ONLINE, undated

England all-rounder Ravi Bopara yesterday said he has rejected a lucrative offer to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The Essex player says he was offered a six-figure deal by an unnamed side.

"When figures like these are put in front of you it is tempting, but my goal is to play regularly for England," said the 23-year-old.

"I am confident that if I continue to score runs and take wickets for Essex I will hopefully play for England this summer and for many years to come."

Bopara, who has scored 341 runs in three County Championship innings and also tops his team's bowling averages, added that he might get his financial rewards down the line if he achieves his goals.

"If I do this, and with the current talk of new competitions and one-off matches to sit alongside the IPL, then I am sure there will be plenty of opportunities to enjoy the financial benefits in years to come," he said.

Bopara made his Test debut in

Sri Lanka during the winter before being discarded for the New Zealand leg of the tour after three Tests.

He is already seen as a key part of the one-day set-up and his decision to snub the IPL is sure to go down well with the England and



RAVI BOPARA

Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Hampshire skipper Dimitri Mascarenhas is currently England's only representative in the big-money Twenty20 competition, but established stars like Kevin Pietersen and Ryan Sidebottom have declared their interest in participating in the future.

Bopara is not centrally con-

tracted to the ECB and would be free to pursue a contract with one of the eight IPL franchises if an agreement was reached with his country.

Meanwhile, Australian legend Shane Warne, who captains and coaches IPL side Rajasthan Royals, has again criticised the ECB from preventing centrally-contracted players from featuring in the IPL.

"It's a bit short-sighted to not let the players play," said the 38-year-old leg-spinner.

"If the Poms don't want to play, well, so be it. It's still a good spectacle without them. But it would be better with them."

"Hopefully everyone gets their head out the sand and they allow their individuals to play and look at the bigger picture."

Warne added that if the ECB relaxed their stance, then IPL sides would be queuing up to recruit the best English talent.

"Andrew Flintoff is the one that everybody will be after," he said.

"He can bat and bowl, and in this competition I think it's very important to have those guys that can bat and bowl."

"Kevin Pietersen is obviously a wonderful player, so he would be handy in any side, but if we were chasing someone I think Andrew Flintoff would probably be one of the major people we'd be chasing."

Kiwis' winning warm-up

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Fast bowler Michael Mason put himself into the picture for the first Test at Lord's by bowling New Zealand to victory over Essex at Chelmsford on Monday.

Essex began the final day on 45-1, chasing 293 for victory, and knowing they did not have to face the spin of injured Kiwi skipper Daniel Vettori.

England opener Alastair Cook warmed up for Lord's with a patient 57.

But Mason (3-36) proved a menace and New Zealand, who next face England Lions on Thursday, won by 92 runs.

Mason also bowled well in the first innings, and his match analysis of 7-101 will have attracted the attention of the tour selectors.

The 33-year-old has only played in one Test, more than four years ago, but has featured in 21 one-day internationals.

Swing bowler Iain O'Brien also picked up three wickets in the second innings, including last man Tony Palladino, with New Zealand wrapping up victory before tea.

Essex's next-best contributor

after Cook was Ryan ten Doeschate, with the Dutch all-rounder making 38 before falling to the leg-spin of Aaron Redmond.

Cook's contribution -- on a wicket which offered assistance to the seam bowlers throughout -- was an important one, as he had failed to reach 50 in any of his previous innings this season.

But the Black Caps took wickets regularly at the other end, despite the absence of Vettori, whose stitched finger wound in his bowling hand will also keep him out of the Lions match.

Tom Westley drove Kyle Mills aerially to cover after making only seven, and then Ravi Bopara and captain Mark Pettini departed within an over of one another for nine and nought respectively.

Bopara was slightly unlucky to nick an innocuous delivery from Jacob Oram down the leg-side, and Pettini fell to a fine inswinger from Mason, which beat his forward push and bowled him through the gate.

Cook kept his composure and gradually began to middle the ball but his innings ended disappointingly with a tame drive at Mason into the hands of mid-off.

When James Foster popped a catch up to gully to depart for a duck, Essex had lost five wickets for 33 runs on the way to 100-6 -- and there was no coming back from there.

Cook admitted he was lucky to have been dropped on nought by Ross Taylor in the slips on Sunday evening.

He went on: "I'm very grateful I could spend a bit of time in the middle -- and I hope I can use it well."

"You get rhythm and time into your batting -- and you can't beat time in the middle."

"The last few games I've played, I haven't really had that."

Cook was not troubled by his right little finger injury, which was dislocated on day one at Chelmsford.

He said: "I was very lucky that it went straight back in, and the swelling has all gone now."

BRIEF SCORES

NEW ZEALAND: 355 (J Marshall 128; R ten Doeschate 6-57; A Palladino 3-50) and 195 (K Mills 53 not out; M Chambers 3-37) ESSEX: 258 (R Bopara 66; M Mason 4-65; I O'Brien 3-46) and 200 (A Cook 57)

Result: New Zealand beat Essex by 92 runs.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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