DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 20, 2008, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Dubai drops

bowler Mohammad Asif, who was detained in Dubai on June 1 for suspected possession of an illegal substance, has been dropped by the Dubai Public Prosecution and the fast bowler will be deported soon, according to a report in the Gulf News.

(PCB), however, was yet to confirm

prosecutor as saying the case was being dropped due to "insignificance"

"He [Asif] will be deported as soon as the police finalise the procedures," Mohammad Al Nuaimi, the public prosecutor who handled Asif's case, told Gulf News. "It is definite that he committed the crime as he was caught red-handed . however in certain cases and for a faster litigation process the Public Prosecution drops a case due to insignificance and deports the suspect."

action against Asif should he return, but even if they don't, the International Cricket Council (ICC) might. They have been monitoring the situation and it is possible that Asif will face penalties under the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA), of which the ICC is a signatory, once he is released.

Pakistan axe

FROM PAGE 17

The 26-year-old Akmal has been unimpressive behind the stumps and dropped some crucial catches in Pakistan's tri-series matches in Dhaka earlier this month.

series beating India by 25 runs in the final. Akmal has played 88 one-day

Shoaib Malik (captain), Salman Butt, Nasir Jamshed, Younus Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Shahid Afridi, Misbahul Haq, Sarfraz Ahmed, Fawad Alam, Bazid Khan, Naumanullah Khan, Sohail Tanveer, Umar Gul, Wahab Riaz, Rao Iftikhar, Sohail Khan, Yasir Hameed, Mansoor Amjad, Abdur Rauf, Saeed Ajmal.

Spotlight on

FROM PAGE 17

Alfaz, who last played for the national team last June, said it was a new area for him after playing for big names throughout his career.

prolific striker said.

Farashganj lost a score of prom-

"We have a few experienced

manager Mohammed Yusuf said the new-look team will fight hard to retain their sixth position.

ICC keen

FROM PAGE 17

and Pakistan have been a fantastic success, they have attracted new audience to the game.

"The ICC's policy has always been to encourage such popular formats but... if you ask any player around the world he would say that he likes to play Test cricket for his country," he said.

that the ICC is not endeavouring to preserve Test cricket, saying: "The ICC always gives importance to, and is serious to make sure that a special place is maintained for, Test cricket in the calendar."

He refused to admit that 50-over cricket will die after the introduction of Twenty20.

"For me, 50-over cricket will be a perfect balance between Tests and T20," he added.



For the first time since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia are through to the UEFA European Championship quarterfinals after giving an offensive masterclass in a 2-0 win over Sweden on Wednesday.

Asif case? CRICINFO, undated

The case against Pakistan fast

The Pakistan Cricket Board or deny the development.

The report quoted the public

It is likely that the PCB will take

Horizonte on Wednesday.

When 17-

Sharapova

became the

third youn-

Wimbledon

women's champion in 2004, she

famously tried -- and failed -- to call

Four years later, Sharapova, not

Not only is the Russian a three-

her mother from Centre Court.

to mention mobile phone technol-

ogy, has undergone a revolutionary

time Grand Slam title winner on

the court, she is also a global brand

off it, raking in an estimated 25

powerful that an internet search

brings up over seven million

take you by surprise. The things I

experienced the morning after I

Pakistan will host the Champions

Trophy in September provided

there are no safety and security

fears, a top official of the

International Cricket Council said

Richardson was speaking ahead of

the launching ceremony of the

biennial event which Pakistan

hosts from September 11-28.

ICC acting chief executive Dave

"When you are 16 or 17, things

results. Not bad for a 21-year-old.

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

on Wednesday.

million dollars.

AFP, London

Pakistan, however, won the

internationals and 38 Tests since making his debut in 2003.

PROBABLES

the B. League starts around August.'

"Playing for the national team is no more a target for me. Now it's a different type off feeling as I will be playing for a team who have not won a major trophy. My aim will be to deliver them the goods," the

ising players like goalkeeper Biplab, national fullback Arup Baidya, striker Robin, defenders Rajib, Rony, Liton and Khaled but coach Kamal Babu thinks that the young replacements would be able to fill in the void.

players who would guide the newcomers to play a lively brand of football," hoped Kamal, who retained ace defender Abu Faisal, Mamun Mia and midfielders Kabir and Amirul.

Chittagong Mohammedan

"At this point in time we are comfortable with the decision that Pakistan has the ability to host the Champions Trophy but we will continue to monitor security as it is fluid like anywhere in the world," Richardson rubbished claims Richardson said.

The top eight Test playing countries -- Australia, South Africa, England, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and the West Indies -will compete in the Trophy, regarded as the second biggest

event after the World Cup The ICC last month assessed security measures at the three cities -- Lahore, Karachi and

Pakistan gets Champs Trophy green signal

Surprised was Sharapova

won Wimbledon, you just wake up

that? It teaches you. That's not

breakthrough, major endorsement

deals were being signed and she

now boasts an impressive array of

blue chip backers which, allied to

her tennis and her looks, make her

of six left her mother behind in

Russia to travel with father Yuri to

Florida. Neither spoke English and

he took up numerous jobs to pay

Her name recognition is so have sacrificed in your life to get to Grand Slam every single year.

famous 73-minute demolition of

she has had to grow up faster and them."

that point," said Sharapova.

for his daughter's tuition at the prise," she said.

Not bad for a girl who at the age

the world's richest sportswoman.

"You go out your door and a van

In the days after her Wimbledon

and you feel it," said Sharapova.

year-old is following you. Was I ready for

something you learn."

Bollettieri academy.

Brazil midfielder Diego (L) tries a bicycle kick during their World Cup 2010 qualifier against perennial rivals Argentina at the Mineirao Stadium in Belo

before its board meeting starting in Dubai on June 29. "It is impossible to say that any country would be the final to host an event. Things can change and I think it is wrong to say that there is any question of a deadline but our board will take a decision on that,"

Rawalpindi -- which will host the

matches and a report will be put

said Richardson. Touring Pakistan has been a security concern for several foreign teams, especially Australia which postponed its March-April tour this year after a series of suicide

bomb blasts. However February's national elections and formation of a new government have improved the security situation which prompted Australia to reschedule the tour into two visits, with the five-match oneday series in 2009 and Tests in 2010.

Richardson, a former South African wicketkeeper batsman, agreed there may still be security concerns in Pakistan.

"I think that it is safe to say that there may be some players, organisations and member countries who might express some concerns from time to time over the safety situation in Pakistan," he said.

"It must be remembered that safety and security of players, teams, official and spectators is always the concern of the ICC. This one is no exception, the ICC will take no chance on safety and secu-

develop a thicker skin than other

endured thinly disguised barbs

from some of her compatriots on

tour who point to her American

accent, and ignore her fluent

Russian, as evidence of an alleged

made deepened by Sharapova's

long-delayed Fed Cup debut, in

which taking part is a pre-requisite

of competing in the Beijing

like there were many expectations

of me. That really took me by sur-

"After I won Wimbledon, I felt

"It was like if you won a Grand

"That was absurd. Now I deal

about them. I have confidence in

Their suspicions were only

Despite her roots, she has

girls her age.

lack of patriotism.

Olympics.

"You realise how you got there Slam at 17, all of a sudden everyone

In the four years since that with expectations fine. I don't care

Serena Williams on Wimbledon my own self to know what I do well.

Centre Court, Sharapova believes I know my faults. I'm not scared of

and what it took and how much you thought I should be winning a

rity of those stakeholders. The Federation of International Cricketers' Association chief executive Tim May on Tuesday criticised the decision to hold the Champions Trophy in Pakistan, given the security situation in the country.

Richardson said Pakistan had the responsibility to host the event in a safe environment.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and ICC have put together a process that is able to deal with the enable us to monitor the situation on daily basis from now and until to the conclusion of the event," said Richardson.

PCB chief operating officer Shafqat Naghmi said Pakistan

would ensure a successful Trophy. "The Pakistan government has promised foolproof security arrangements, so we are up to it and since people are passionate about cricket, the event will be well attended and successful," said Naghmi.

Venezuela meet Chile in Puerto Arch-rivals La Cruz on Thursday. The top four teams qualify directly for South

REUTERS, Rio De Janeiro



World Cup qualifier on Wednesday but moved

closer to leaders Paraguay who lost 4-2 in Bolivia.

Ecuador and Colombia also played out a goalless draw in Quito, leaving the Colombians as the only unbeaten team after six matches in the 10-team group.

Brazil coach Dunga, whose side lost 2-0 in Paraguay on Sunday, was jeered and insulted by a 52,000 crowd at Belo Horizonte's Mineirao stadium as Argentina dominated the second half.

Paraguay still lead the standings with 13 points but are only two clear of Argentina. Colombia are Uruguay (8), Venezuela and Chile rebound in stoppage-time.

(7) and Ecuador (5).

Archrivals fire blank

Africa in 2010 and the fifth plays off against the fourth team from the CONCACAF region.

Dunga, whose team were again disorganised in midfield, said it was too early to contemplate the a World Cup for the first time.

"The qualifiers don't finish for Paraguay. today," he said. "There are another 12 rounds of games to go."

Baptista producing an outstanding close-range save from Roberto game at the stadium, because I Abbondanzieri. But Argentina, beaten by three-

goal margins in their last three

the second. Julio Cruz and substitute Sergio Aguero missed excellent chances

Paraguay, facing high altitude and a shocking pitch in La Paz, finally came unstuck as they lost for the first time in the group against a team who started the day in last place.

Joaquin Botero and Ronald Garcia put previously winless Bolivia 2-0 up in 25 minutes.

In the second half, Botero and Marcelo Martins were on target for possibility of Brazil missing out on the hosts while Roque Santa Cruz and Nelson Haedo Valdez replied

In Quito, Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa decided to show sup-Brazil edged the first half, Julio portforhisteam by staying away.

"I'm not going to watch the believe I bring bad luck to football matches," said Correa, who last year watched Ecuador suffer their meetings with Brazil, dominated first home defeat for six years, at the hands of Venezuela.

Ecuador had slightly the better of the match and should have won while Lionel Messi was foiled by when Luis Bolanos fired over the third with 10, followed by Brazil (9), Julio Cesar and fired wide from the crossbar with the goal at his mercy near the end.

cricket's most experienced officials

have been as embarrassing but it

still left a bad taste and was yet

another example of cricket's unri-

But Davis, also speaking on

behalf of Gould, defended his

decisions. "For consistency with

our rulings earlier in the day, we

had to come off. The two teams

shouldn't come into it, if that's the

way the conditions are," he also

present threat, there was still a gap

of 30 minutes between the innings

when it might have been possible

"The number of balls left

Despite rain being an ever-

were struggling to stand up.

bowled in the second innings.

winner of a match.

told Sky Sports.

forgot that 20 overs had been

Wednesday's finish may not

Umpires vex Vettori

Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori turned his fire on the umpires after his team were denied the chance of a victory following a farcical finish to the second oneday international against England.

The Black Caps, chasing a revised target of 160 off 23 overs in a rain-affected clash here at Edgbaston, were 127 for two at the end of 19 overs with Brendon McCullum, one of the world's best one-day batsmen, 60 not out.

Provided they didn't lose another wicket, they needed just seven runs off the 20th over -- the minimum required to constitute a match -- to win, albeit under dark skies and with rain falling, as it had done for several overs.

Australian umpire Steve Davis and his English on-field colleague Ian Gould then took the players off in a match already interrupted and delayed by rain.

England took a seemingly slow 83 minutes to bowl 19 overs but Vettori said it was the umpires, not Paul Collingwood's men, who were tour."

"You just need the umpires to Lanka were obliged to come back take control of the game and dic-

Wednesday's 'no-result' which left Barbados because several of New Zealand still 1-0 down in the

five-match series. "There was obviously a bit of gamesmanship going on. You can't attack anyone for that but you need constant monitoring of the over-

International Cricket Council valled ability to avoid declaring a (ICC) match referee Javagal Srinath insisted England had not done anything to warrant disciplinary action. "England were not in breach of

the over-rate," the former India fast bowler told reporters. "They had enough allowances. There were a few referrals to the

third umpire and injuries." Vettori, whose side were beaten 2-0 in a three-Test campaign by England earlier this tour and lost Friday's lone Twenty20 by nine wickets before suffering a 114-run thrashing in last weekend's opening one-dayer, said this result felt for the teams to turn round in 10 in like a defeat.

"I think this is a game we would have won had we been able to play the allotted overs or even get through that 20th over.

"There's a sense of disappointment in the dressing room, it's almost like a loss. It's been a tough

to be frustrated by the outcome. In last year's World Cup final, eventual winners Australia and Sri

a bid to 'beat' the weather. "That's the standard one-day international playing condition. We couldn't go below that," said Davis. New Zealand all-rounder Grant

On his one-day international debut, the South Africa-born medium-pacer took three for 23 in five overs as England were bowled out for 162 off the last ball of their tate the play," Vettori said after on in near total darkness in allotted 24 overs.

Elliott had more reason than most



New Zealand opener Brendon McCullum looking for a single during the second one-day international against England at Edgbaston in Birmingham on Wednesday.

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CKYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TWO PEOPLE REGULARLY SCALE MOUNTAINS TOGETHER, WOULD THEY BE CALLED PARTNERS IN CLIMB? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals G

Ash to play to need

FROM PAGE 17

Bangladesh's poor record in the Asia Cup with just one win in 21 outings of the competition since 1988. The captain also admitted that it was not a record to be proud of but he would like for the win record to go up.

He echoed the views of coach Jamie Siddons, who also looked forward to the second round that will house the two top teams from the each group.

"I hope that we can make the second round with the win over UAE. Sri Lanka would be as good as any other team in the world and if we can play to the best of our ability, we can hope for a good result,"

said the Australian coach about Tigers' first round opponents.

"I just expect them to play really good cricket in the second round. I have seen some great signs in the batsmen on individual basis. But as far as putting all of that together, the players haven't done it yet. The bowlers must deliver better performances because that is one problem.

"Whether we will win after the first round I am not sure, But I am looking forward to putting our best game together as far as batting is concerned and a much better show in bowling," said Siddons. Ashraful also wanted to take the positives out of the Kitply Cup to

their next assignment and believed

that their experience in the same grounds during their Pakistan tour last April would help them. "We could not take hundred per

cent advantage of those pitches but yes, Lahore and Karachi have very good wickets and we hope to utilise it," informed Ashraful. He also expected that his fourday motivational programme

"There was no negative words during those 40 hours in the programme and there was positive thoughts and words so that one can think positive. I can only say if it works after the Asia Cup," hoped

would be worth doing.

uled for 4.30pm but the team, having arrived at the ZIA at 2.30pm, were yet to board the aircraft till 9.30pm. Manager Satyajit Das Rupu informed over phone that they were due to fly around 10pm.

Probe committee

Abahani's flight

Abahani were stranded at the Zia

International Airport yesterday for

over seven hours to board a

Bangladesh Biman flight for Kuala

Lumpur, where the B. League

champions will take part in the

The 11.30am flight was resched-

June 22-26 AFC President's Cup.

delayed twice

SPORTS REPORTER

wants more time

investigation.

SPORTS REPORTER The committee to probe the national football team's failure in the recently concluded SAFF Championship will need about a month to complete its

After the first meeting yesterday,

the head of the three-member

committee Harunur Rashid said that the one-week deadline set by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) was not enough to complete the task. "We have to interview many players and most of them are

abroad," said BFF member Harunur Rashid. Anwarul Hoque Helal attended the meeting but Sirajul Islam Bachchu, the other member was absent. "We need to talk to Bachchu and I feel that our report will have to

break the tradition. Usually, one person is made the scapegoat in these cases but we want to set an example by finding the real reasons," said Harun adding that they have asked the BFF to give them time till July 15 to submit the report.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Maghbazar Krira Chakra emerged north zone champions in the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League after a goalless draw with security situation and would | Siraj Smriti Sangsad at the MohakhaliT&T ground yesterday.

> Sporting Club became runners-up with 13. In central zone, Nawabpur Krira Chakra finished runners-up, behind Swadheenata Kira Sangha, beating Khilgaon Pragati Sangha 4-

Maghbazar finished atop the

table with 14 points while Dhaka

Tarun Sangha ground. DIVIKABADDI

Matuail Milan Smriti Sangsad and Dhaka Wanderers Club got off to winning starts in the First Division Kabaddi League at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court.

1 in the tiebreakers after a goalless

draw in regulation time at Basabo

Matuail outclassed Dhalpur Shatadal Sangsad 56-25 after leading the first half 27-11 while Wanderers recorded a 30-19 win over Maniknagar Kabaddi Club.

MANIKGANJ CRICKET 30 Expert Our Correspondent adds: 31 Test tube Shahadat Hossain MA Club and 32 Wrestling SABIS won their respective victory 33 Anthromatches in the Sunlife Insurance

29 Buck's

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34 Before

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Margaret

Manikganj. Shahadat Hossain defeated Biltu Club by 13 runs SABIS defeated Purba Dashara Cricket Ekadash by nine wickets.

Second Division Cricket League at

Shahid Miraj-Tapan Stadium in