

BHF, BAAF polls next month

SPORTS REPORTER

The elections of Bangladesh Amateur Athletics Federation (BAAF) and Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) will be held next month, announced National Sports Council (NSC) director M Haidul Quayyum yesterday.

Quayyum, who is also the election commissioner for the two federations, confirmed that the BAAF polls will be held on August 21 and the BHF election is scheduled for 28.

Some 73 councilors will vote for a 28-member executive committee of BHF for which the draft voter list will be published on July 24. The final voter list will be published on August 5 after hearing objections and complaints.

Nomination forms will be available from August 7-10 with the deadline for submission on August 14. The final candidates with ballot numbers will be announced on August 20.

The draft voter list of the BAAF which will have a 24-member executive committee, be published on July 20 and final list on July 31.

Nomination forms will be available from August 3-4 while the nomination papers will have to be submitted on August 6.

The final list of candidates with ballot numbers will be published on August 11.

Bangladesh face Singapore

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh face Singapore today in a place-deciding match of the 6th Men's Junior Asia Cup Hockey in Hyderabad.

Bangladesh finished third in the four-team Group B ahead of Oman while Singapore finished bottom in the four-team Group A.

Malaysia, who finished third in Group A, will play Group B bottom-ranked Oman in other classification match today at 3 pm (IST).

The win in the place-deciding match will enable Bangladesh to play for fifth place against winner of the match between Malaysia and Oman.

Bangladesh suffered a humiliating 0-8 defeat against South Korea and conceded 2-8 defeat against Pakistan after making an emphatic 7-1 victory over Oman in the group encounters.

Div II Cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Sangskritik Biplobi Sangha (SABIS) reached final in the SunLife Insurance Second Division Cricket League with a 30-run victory over Sir Shahadat Ali Memorial Club (SSAMC) at the Shahid Miraj-Tapan Stadium yesterday.

SABIS made 104 for eight in 25 overs with Liton scoring 25 and Jasim 23. Mizan took two wickets.

In reply, SSAMC were all out for 74 runs in 18.4 overs. Sujon made 16 runs and Ujjal added 13. Liton claimed four wickets and Lal picked up two wickets.

Bangladesh A

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selection on July 25-27. After the three-dayers, Bangladesh A will play three one-day matches against Lancashire on July 30, Marylebone Cricket Club on August 1 and Durham on August 3.

Booters blamed

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The committee interviewed national team leader Shaquazzaman, coach Abu Yusuf, manager Sheikh Mohammed Aslam, assistant coach Golam Rabbani Chhoton, physician Mahfuzullah Chishty, captain Aminul Haque, vice-captain Biplab Bhattacharyya, striker ZAHID Hassan Emily, National Team Management Committee chairman Badal Roy and members Hasanuzzaman Babloo and Satyajit Das Rupu. The committee also considered reports by the team leader, manager and the coach.

However, it was learned that the eight-page report reveals that lack of commitment and grouping among senior and junior players, discontent over captaincy never gave the team a chance to be united.

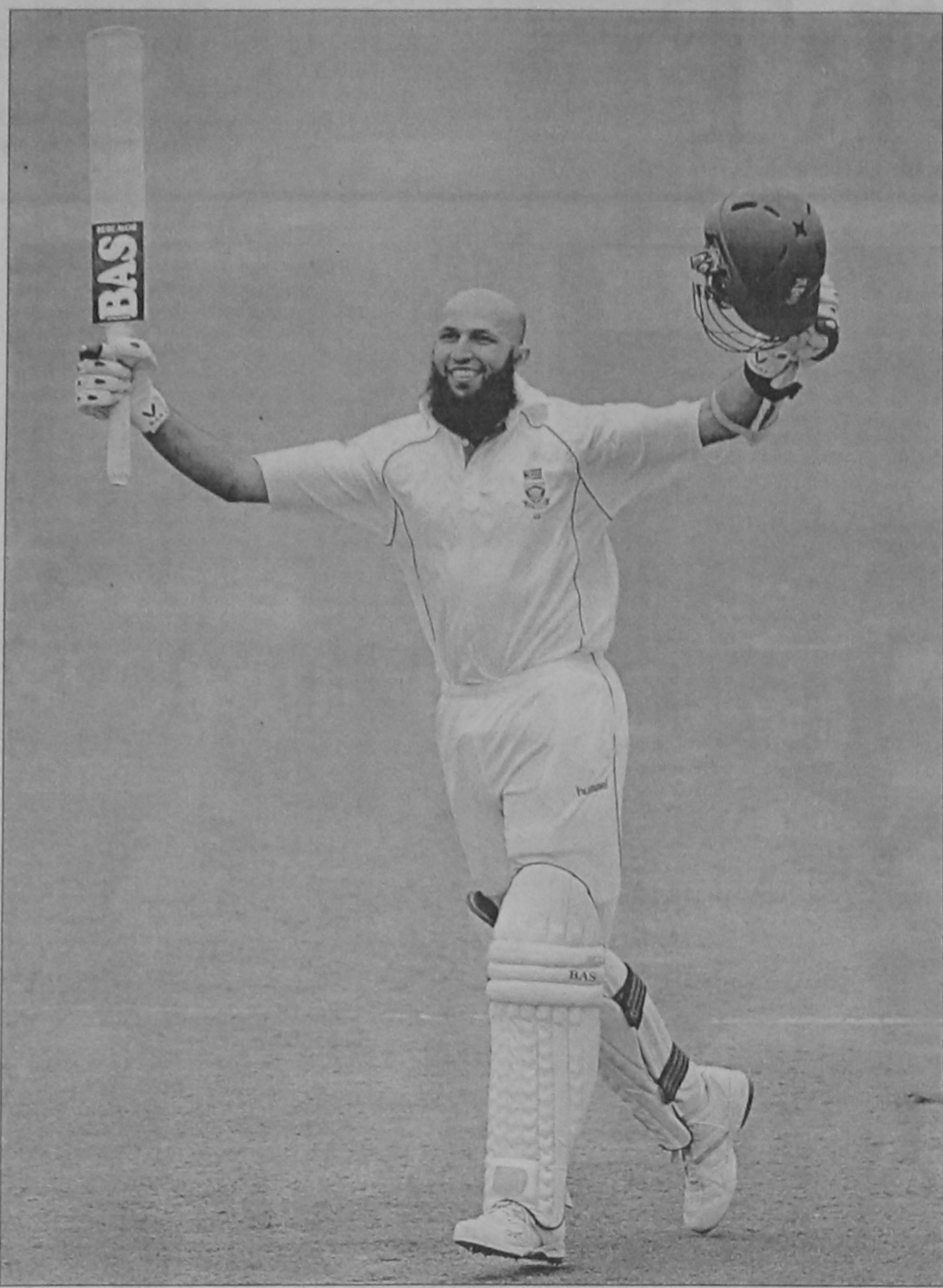
The team spirit was never there but none of the ten interviewees admitted that anyone had interfered in team selection over the coach, who had complained that he never had the freedom to run the show.

Yao Ming

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next month's Olympics, is considered to be the most important preparatory game for the hosts. Despite having rescheduled the Angola game so it will take place at a time in the afternoon similar to the scheduled Olympic time for the two countries' clash, Hu would not confirm whether it would mark the beginning of Yao's comeback.

"We can only say it depends on the game situation," said Hu. China opens its Olympic campaign against the United States, who include NBA All-Stars Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, at the Wukesong basketball arena on August 10, two days after the opening ceremony.



South Africa's Hashim Amla celebrates his century against England at Lord's on the fifth day of the first Test on Monday.

Amla satisfied

Cricket

Hashim Amla was a quietly proud man after his unbeaten century helped see South Africa to the safety of a first Test draw against England here at Lord's and in the process erased some painful memories.

During the 2004-05 series in South Africa, Amla averaged just nine in two Tests against England before being dropped after struggling against the short ball.

But the men who got him out back then -- Stephen Harmison, Simon Jones and Matthew Hoggard -- weren't in the England side at Lord's where a placid pitch made life tough for fast bowlers.

That didn't stop England peppering Amla on Monday with a succession of short-pitched deliveries and packing the legside, close-in field.

However, that didn't stop the 25-year-old completing his fifth

hundred in 26 Tests and first against England.

"I am satisfied to score a hundred at Lord's," said Amla, who was 104 not out when the match ended prematurely thanks to what South Africa captain Graeme Smith said was a "gentleman's agreement" even though the Proteas were only 47 ahead with a minimum of 19 overs left in the day.

"To score a hundred anywhere is a lovely feeling," Amla added. "My experience four years ago against England didn't go too well so it's great to get some runs against them under my belt."

Turning to England's tactics, stylish shotmaker Amla -- who came into this match on the back of big hundreds in the warm-up matches with Somerset and Middlesex -- said: "It was the same strategy they used four years ago. I am not a big hooker or puller. Over the years I've tried to develop my skills against the short ball and take a few on the body."

That South Africa emerged with

a draw in the first of this four-Test series, after being made to follow-on, owed much to opener Neil McKenzie's marathon 138, which lasted more than nine hours.

"It's tough up front but you relax into it," McKenzie explained.

"It was something I made peace with, that I was going to bat time. I always like to get the scoreboard ticking, so it was a role I haven't played too often but it was something that was required."

McKenzie, by the end of his innings, was batting with a runner because of a groin strain but he was optimistic he would be fit for the second Test at Headingley which starts on Friday.

"It's feeling alright. I have some friction on it and the physio will assess it tomorrow (Tuesday)."

Reflecting on the match as whole, McKenzie said: "We feel satisfied but disappointed as well. We let ourselves down the first couple of days but we showed a lot of character to come back."

Lord's falls flat

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

And so England's Lord's hoodoo grinds on into another year. Yet another draw, their sixth in a row on this desperate strip of turf, and by the time the two teams reached their farcical "gentleman's agreement" midway through the final session, England's resignation was graffitied across their body language. With apologies to Hashim Amla, this was a stultifying day's cricket, one that did not favour whatsoever to a form of the game that can feel itself being marginalised with every passing minute.

Test cricket is said to be dying, and on this evidence its most famous pitch is already dead. England have posted scores in excess of 500 in the first innings in six out of their last nine Tests at Lord's, yet they've converted those starts into a solitary victory and five draws. There have been 23 English centuries in the past ten matches alone, and South Africa have just added four overseas entries in a single contest. It's the accolade that cricketers dream about as children, but these days the dressing-room honours board has about as much exclusivity as a Blairite New Year Honours List.

It's a sad indictment of the times. The MCC, the guardians of the game for two centuries, spent most of this match backtracking on a leaked plan to transform the height of the English summer into a Twenty20 bonanza. While the proposal may have its merits, the timing of the disclosure was unfortunate to say the least. The net effect was to create distractions on all fronts, and in the final analysis, no party was more distracted than the players themselves.

This isn't how great escapes should feel. When Michael Atherton and Jack Russell defied South Africa at Johannesburg in 1995-96, they galloped off the field with arms linked around each other's shoulders, into the grateful embrace of their teammates. When Glenn McGrath and Brett Lee saw off Steve Harmison at Old Trafford in 2005, the Australian balcony erupted as if they'd sealed a famous win.

On Monday, Amla and Ashwell Prince seemed every bit as bored as England's fielders, as between them they concocted a spurious appeal against the light, and skulked back to the pavilion. "It wasn't dark, we'd just had enough," admitted Michael Vaughan, with disarming candour. It is a crime against Test cricket that a match that was so eagerly anticipated, and so delicately poised

when Kevin Pietersen and Ian Bell came together on the first afternoon, could founder in such a pathetic manner.

Amla's century was a sublimely compiled effort, one that built on the foundations laid down by Graeme Smith and Neil McKenzie, and applied some sweetly sculpted touches as the innings wore on and his confidence in the conditions grew. But not even he could pretend it had been a challenge. In 2004-05, he made 36 runs in two Tests as Harmison and Co. bounced him back to provincial cricket, and though England tried the same tactic this time around, there simply wasn't, in Vaughan's words, enough "zest" in the pitch.

Nor was there enough drama in South Africa's survival, which amplifies the excellence of the rearguard they mounted, but also the futility of the final two days. "A hundred at Lord's, it's great," said McKenzie, the real star of the second innings. "But I haven't really rated it in terms of where it is. I'll definitely take the runs, but I'm under no illusions that things will get tougher." You can't imagine Atherton, or Willie Watson and Trevor Bailey shrugging off such a monumental achievement only minutes after it had been completed.

Fortunately, there is a silver lining to this contest, and that is the immediate onset of the second Test

at Headingley. The effort and exhaustion of the Lord's experience means England are already approaching Leeds with trepidation, as they sense the momentum of the series swinging the way of the visitors.

"If we win the toss and bat, it'll be a long fielding session for them," said McKenzie, with a touch of refresh in his voice. "We let ourselves down on the first couple of days, but we showed a lot of character in coming back for the last two days. We're into full competition mode now, and we've got away with having not been up for it for the first two days. We won't be sitting back any more."

"It's a slight concern," said Vaughan. "Our bowlers will be feeling weary, but hopefully the backroom staff can work their magic. I'm sure we won't do much fielding practice over the next few days, but we haven't had to chase many balls because it's been pretty static."

Static is one way of putting it. The decent final-day crowd who turned up to watch a challenging day of Test cricket, only to be left boozing in the late-afternoon sun, might have another word for it. Lord's and the MCC clearly want to be seen as innovators at this critical juncture for the game. But perhaps they'd do well to break off from gazing at the stars for a while, and start looking down under their feet.

A swift fall

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the Pakistan national team. His first international outing at Sydney proved a forgettable experience as his 18 overs in Pakistan's third loss in as many Tests went wicketless.

But the determined novice worked hard to ensure it was not his last, undergoing a short stint at India's MRF pace academy under the eagle eye of former Australian legend Dennis Lillee.

He showed signs of improvement by taking ten wickets in a first-class match against Ashes-winning Michael Vaughan's England in November 2005.

Injuries to his back and elbow stopped him showing his true potential, however and he missed Pakistan's first three Tests in England in the summer of 2006.

He finally arrived with a bang at the Oval, grabbing 4-56 to help Pakistan gain the upper hand before his team ended up forfeiting the game in a protest over ball-tampering allegations.

He was expected to lead Pakistan's attack on Indian pitches during the Champions Trophy before the dhow test saga unfolded.

He and fellow pacesman Shoaib Akhtar tested positive for nandrolone.

Akhtar was banned for two years and Asif for one year but the bans were however overturned on appeals.

Asif promised that he would learn from the first pitfall, but recent developments suggest otherwise.

Akhtar back

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September 11-28 but the eight top teams event will be played under a cloud after players from Australia, New Zealand and England raised safety concerns.

Last week's blasts in the capital Islamabad and Karachi further endangered Pakistan's chances of hosting the event.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is awaiting a security assessment of Pakistan during the Asia Cup, which finished here on Sunday. The ICC categorically said it is following a security process and will not compromise on it.

In case Pakistan is not found fit to host the Trophy, Sri Lanka has been chosen the alternate venue.

PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Shoaib Malik, Misbahul Haq, Salman Butt, Nasir Jamshed, Khalid Latif, Ahmed Shahzad, Khurram Manzoor, Yasir Hameed, Younis Khan, Azhar Ali, Buzid Khan, Shahid Afridi, Sohail Tanvir, Fawad Alam, Mohammad Hafeez, Yasir Arafat, Mansoor Ajjad, Shoaib Akhtar, Umar Gul, Mohammad Ali, Rao Ifkhar, Sohail Khan, Abdur Rauf, Wahab Riaz, Anwar Ali, Mohammad Amir, Kamran Akmal, Sarfraz Ahmed, Abdul Rehman, Saeed Ajmal.

India eye

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bowler feels because the captain might not be in a position to say whether it was close or worth having a go.

"It all depends on what happens on the field. It is difficult to say right now whether I am going to take the call or say that we will appoint one player to take the call on an issue."

Happy with the practice for the series, Kumble said, "We just followed our plans to spend a day in Chennai before we leave for Sri Lanka. Players have all had a camp in Bangalore for about a week. We have had eight days of training before going into the Test match. By the time the Test match starts, I am sure the team will be well prepared."

'Freddie is no wizard'

Cricket

AFP, London

England captain Michael Vaughan warned fans against expecting too much from Andrew Flintoff after the all-rounder was recalled in a 12-man squad for the second Test against South Africa at Headingley, starting Friday.

The fast bowler hasn't played Test cricket for 18 months, since captaining England to Ashes defeat against Australia at Sydney in January 2007, because of ankle and side injuries.

But he was added to the team that drew the first of this four-Test series at Lord's here Monday after proving his fitness with Lancashire.

England have fielded the same side for a world record six straight Tests and Vaughan, who plays at Headingley for Yorkshire, was giving little away as to how room might be found for Flintoff although the out-of-form Paul Collingwood would appear to be the leading candidate to be dropped.

Vaughan's men badly missed

Flintoff's extra pace and movement with the ball when, after making South Africa follow-on, they only took three more wickets.

But the England captain insisted the decision to bring back Flintoff had been a long time in the planning and wasn't a knee-jerk reaction.

"I always had it in the back of my mind to get 'Freddie' back into the team. He just needed another game to prove to himself," said Vaughan.

"He's got through a good game against Hampshire (where Flintoff took three wickets and scored 39 not out in the second innings of a match Lancashire won by six wickets Monday). He's ready to come back."

However, a cautious Vaughan added: "I think we are building him up a bit too much. I think it's a bit unfair on him. He's had 18 months out of the game, he's come back for Lancashire and done reasonably well."

"He's not a wizard, he's not going to come and sprinkle dust, he's just going to come and perform how he can."

"But he does have that bit of X-factor about him. You know when

you give him the ball he can create something and in the past when he's gone out to bat, he's made things happen. He also has the ability to take wonderful catches."

"His stature in the dressing-room is also important and I'm sure opposition teams around the world would rather play England without Freddie Flintoff than with him."

South Africa's Neil McKenzie was unsurprised by Flintoff's return to a squad.

"His name is always being thrown around, he's a serious player. We don't just prepare for one guy but he's a key figure in the England set-up and we will give him the respect he deserves."

Vaughan was coy over whether Flintoff would feature as a member of a four-man or five-man attack in Leeds. "That's the question I am going to get asked all week."

SQUAD

Andrew Strauss, Alastair Cook, Michael Vaughan (capt), Kevin Pietersen, Ian Bell, Paul Collingwood, Tim Ambrose (wkt), Stuart Broad, Ryan Sidebottom, James Anderson, Monty Panesar, Andrew Flintoff.

Hashim secures draw

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Somerset and Middlesex respectively.

The 32-year-old McKenzie, who batted after lunch with a runner because of a groin strain, had added just seven runs to his score when he flat-footedly cut at James Anderson and edged through to wicketkeeper Tim Ambrose.

However, a South Africa spokesman said an initial assessment by the medical staff was that McKenzie would be fit to play at Headingley.

McKenzie, having shared a double century stand with Smith, who made 107 on Sunday, added 125 for the second wicket with Amla.

Left-arm quick Ryan Sidebottom, bowling despite a stiff back, gave home fans another moment to cheer when he clean bowled the experienced Jacques Kallis for 13 with an excellent Yorker -- a delivery, which curiously, England rarely used.

New batsman Prince, who made 101 in the first innings was given a reprieve when his flashing drive off Broad was put down by Alastair Cook, diving to his left at a wide second slip.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard of the first Test between England and South Africa that ended in a draw at Lord's on Monday.

ENGLAND: 1st Innings 593-8 dec (Bell 199, Pietersen 152, Broad 76, Cook 60; Morkel 4-121, Harris 3-129)

SOUTH AFRICA: 1st Innings 247 (Prince 101; Panesar 4-74)

SOUTH AFRICA: 2nd Innings (overnight 242-1) Smith c Pietersen b Anderson 107; McKenzie c Ambrose b Anderson 138.

Amla not out 104

Kallis b Sidebottom 13

Prince not out 9

Extras: (b-8, lb-8, w-5, nb-1) 22

Total: (For 3 wickets in 167 overs) 393

Fall of wickets: 1-204, 2-329, 3-357

Bowler O M R W

Panesar 60 15 116 0

Pietersen 7 1 21 0

Sidebottom 30 9 46 1

Anderson 32 7 78 2

Broad 26 7 78 0

Collingwood 11 4 37 0

Cook 1 0 1 0

Result: Match drawn

Man-of-the-match: Ian Bell (ENG)

New format

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for the top flight teams. "We'll also make some additional donations to the clubs to improve their ground facilities," he said.

"CCDM is the platform of domestic cricket... we'll try to increase the volume of cricket and also try to develop the skill of our players day by day. We'll also organize more tournaments throughout the year," said Alamgir.

He also wanted to increase the number of Twenty20 matches in the Premier Division, while this shorter version cricket will also be introduced for the first time in the First Division.

Asked if he has any plan to make Dhaka cricket more attractive and crowd pulling, he said, "We won't be able to bring people to the field by force. If we can deliver good cricket, can get some talented players and keep on trying, we can hope to see more supporters."

When his attention was drawn about the poor amount in the local tournament sponsorship, Alamgir assured that he will do "something positive to fulfill our minimum expectations (from sponsorship)."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP
OA C KCZ OR DCXJ CWX OR
FJIE RSIOSBSKE JWAQIBJX, O
ZQTKX NCFJ SQ RCE SNCS
OS'R RTLJI-ODLQRJX
Yesterday's Cryptquip: BECAUSE MY DAUGHTER ENJOYS MAKING JALAPENOS BURST, I RECKON SHE'D BE CALLED A PEPPER POPPER.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: R equals S