

DIU's goal feast

SPORTS REPORTER
Dhaka International University (DIU) celebrated the biggest win of the Mentors' Inter-private University football tournament yesterday when they brushed aside Northern University 8-0 at the Army Stadium yesterday.

Manikganj lift police soccer title

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj
Hosts Manikganj lifted the Dhaka Range Police Football League title when they blanked Narsingdi 2-0 in the final at the Police Lines ground here on Thursday.

Khalek and Mahub scored the goals for the champions. Nazimuddin of Tangail was adjudged best player of the final. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad distributed prizes among the winners. Deputy inspector General of Police of Dhaka Range Md. Amir Uddin, Deputy Commissioner of Manikganj GM Saleh Uddin, Police Superintendent Sheikh Muhammad Maruf Hahan, Manikganj Municipality Mayor Md. Romjan Ali and District Sports Association secretary ASM Ikhla Hossain were also present on the occasion.

Miandad in PCB setup

PTI, Karachi
Former captain Javed Miandad is all set to join Pakistan Cricket Board as governing board member, PCB sources said on Wednesday.

Officials in the board confirmed that Miandad had agreed to become a governing body member in place of Ejaz Butt who is now the chairman of the PCB. "Miandad will return to the board since he was forced to step down as coach in 2004 following Pakistan's loss in a home series against India," one official said.

He said chairman Butt had been very keen to have Miandad on board and use his expertise. Miandad has been a critic of the former PCB chief Nasim Ashraf who resigned in August. "I have never had problems giving my service to Pakistan cricket and I will like to help out the board in any capacity as long as my role is a productive one," Miandad said.

The governing body is due to meet in the third week of November under the chairmanship of Butt.

Butt has also indicated that he would be introducing new faces as part of his team in next couple of days. Four former Test players, Saleem Altaf, Majid Khan, Wasim Bari and Aamir Sohail are said to be in line to get important positions in the new set-up.

Since taking over as PCB chief, Butt has started making changes in the board as well as taking steps to curb unnecessary expenditures.

"Whenever Pakistan won something, the board will give bonuses not only to players but also to all employees of the board and this meant extra bucks and waste of money," one source said.

He said there were around 700 people employed by the board and some of them were ghost employees who were being paid for doing nothing.

Imran, Javed defend Geoff

AGENCIES, Karachi

Former Pakistan captains Imran Khan and Javed Miandad stood by under-fire coach Geoff Lawson on Wednesday, saying the Australian was not the only one responsible for the team's poor performances.

New Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ejaz Butt described Lawson as "useless" on Monday and said his contract would not be renewed when it runs out in July-August.

"How can you blame the coach for Pakistan cricket's ills when your domestic structure is stagnant," Imran said.

Miandad said Lawson was not the only one who should be blamed for the inconsistent performances of team.

"It is not just an issue of coaching. Lawson should not be blamed solely. The players should also take responsibility and I think they should be held accountable as well," said Miandad, who had three spells as national coach.



Arambhag forward Anwar (L) battles for possession with Rahmatganj captain Shipon during their Citycell B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

WI give PCB some hope

AGENCIES, undated

The West Indies have thrown Pakistan a lifeline, offering to play two Tests against the cricket starved team at a neutral venue next month, Pakistan's top cricket official said Thursday.

Pakistan have not played a single Test this year after Australia postponed their full tour in March over security fears in the wake of deadly suicide bombings and other unrest blamed on Islamic militants.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ejaz Butt said the two Tests to be played in Abu Dhabi would be in addition to the three one-day internationals which the two countries have already agreed from November 10-14.

"We have received a proposal from the West Indies Cricket Board about two Tests this November," a PCB official told Cricinfo. "Many things have to be considered, such

as the TV rights, gate money and so on. We will seriously consider the proposal."

Butt said monetary issues needed to be sorted out before confirming the Test series.

"The West Indies have offered to play two Tests and we hope the proposal materialises and we find some sponsor for the Test matches," Butt, who took over as chairman of PCB earlier this month, told AFP. "We have to pay the West Indies Cricket Board (for the Tests) according to ICC regulations. Time is short, but I am hopeful something positive will come out."

"It will give our players an ideal opportunity to play some international cricket after a long layoff," said Butt.

Pakistan's last Test was against India in December last year, and if the West Indies offer falls through, Pakistan's next Test outing will also be against India in January next year.

Pakistan cricket has been badly hit by security fears, with other

foreign teams refusing to tour the troubled country in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on US soil and the subsequent US-led invasion in neighbouring Afghanistan.

An eight-nation Champions Trophy was postponed after South Africa pulled out of the event which had been due to take place in the country in September this year.

The International Cricket Council last week rescheduled the tournament for September-October next year, but would closely assess security during Pakistan's home series against India early next year.

Pakistan also had to relocate its home series to Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka in 2002.

The previous PCB administration had invited West Indies for a two-Test series in Pakistan to fill gaps in their Future Tours Programme this November, but the Caribbean side turned down the offer as they still weren't convinced about the security situation.

Butt will back Lawson

AGENCIES, undated

In what appears to be a softening of his earlier stance, Ejaz Butt, the new chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, has said on Thursday he bears no grudge against Geoff Lawson, the Pakistan coach, and that the PCB will continue to support him through the rest of his contract period.

"As the PCB chairman, I am duty-bound to fully back Lawson and to take care of all his liabilities," Butt told the Dawn. "What I said in the press conference was my personal opinion which I had also given to the then chairman Nasim Ashraf." Butt added that Lawson would be given whatever support was needed to help him improve Pakistan's

performances on the field. In his first press conference as chairman, Butt had given an unusually harsh assessment of Lawson's tenure as coach, concluding that Pakistan had "no utility for him." He also said that his contract would not be renewed once it was over.

Cricinfo has also learnt that efforts at a reconciliation of sorts with Lawson have been made by the chairman. Speaking to Cricinfo, Lawson revealed that there had been no contact with Butt since he took over. But it is believed that a message has been passed on to Lawson through a third party that there "may have been some misunderstanding" over the initial comments made by Butt.

Lawson has also received unexpected backing from former Pakistan captains Imran Khan and

Javed Miandad. Both felt it was unfair to blame Lawson entirely for Pakistan's inconsistent performances since he took over last August.

"How can you blame the coach for Pakistan cricket's ills when your domestic structure is stagnant," Imran told Reuters. "Don't expect miracles from the coach."

Miandad, who had three stints as coach, felt the players should also shoulder the blame. "It is not just an issue of coaching," Miandad said. "Lawson should not be blamed solely. The players should also take responsibility and I think they should be held accountable as well."

Lawson told Cricinfo during the four-nation Twenty20 tournament in Canada recently that he was unfazed by the criticism directed at him.

Malik's life ban lifted

FROM PAGE 17

Laure's Civil Court to hear the case. Judge Malik Mohammad Altaf ruled in favour of the 45-year-old Malik on Thursday and ordered the ban be lifted.

Malik hailed the verdict as a vindication, and said he could now return to cricket, this time as a coach.

"I am relieved after the court verdict," Malik told AFP.

"I have served cricket for 19 years and today I feel vindicated. Now I can live a peaceful life and can do coaching which I badly wanted."

"I hope that talk of fixing never haunts cricket. Cricket is a pure game and is played by some nice and passionate players," he added.

Malik's lawyer said the court ruled that the Pakistan Cricket Board wrongly imposed the ban after acting on recommendations from the inquiry which was headed by a High Court judge.

"The PCB did not have the jurisdiction to ban Salim Malik so the court lifted the ban on our appeal," lawyer Shahid Salim said.

The ban had also prevented Malik from holding any office or having involvement in any cricket-related activity.

Malik was banned after Australian players Shane Warne, Mark Waugh and Tim May claimed he offered them bribes to underperform during Australia's tour of Pakistan in 1994.

Warne and May alleged Malik telephoned them in their rooms and offered them big money to underbow during the first Test in Karachi which Pakistan eventually won by just one wicket.

A one-man commission cleared Malik in 1995 of the allega-

tions citing a lack of evidence after the Australian players refused to return to Pakistan to testify. But High Court Justice Malik Mohammad Qayyum's inquiry team later recorded their statements in Australia.

Malik's name also featured in an Indian match-fixing inquiry, which led to a life ban for former captain Mohammad Azharuddin in 2000 -- a ban which was later lifted in 2006.

The late South African captain Hansie Cronje, also banned for life on match-fixing, named Malik as an offender in a separate probe in South Africa. Two lower courts earlier refused to hear Malik's appeal, but a three-judge panel of the Supreme Court in May this year directed the Civil Court to record evidence and reach a verdict.

PCB legal adviser Tafazzul Rizvi said it would honor Thursday's ruling.

"PCB did not impose the ban, we just implemented the recommendations of the inquiry tribunal," Rizvi told reporters in Lahore. "We will honor the decision of the session court and will not file an appeal against the ruling."

Malik played 103 Tests and 263 one-day internationals for Pakistan between 1981 to 1999. He also led his country in 12 Tests and 34 one-day internationals.

The original inquiry also recommended a life ban for paceman Aatur Rehman on charges of perjury, but the penalty was lifted in 2003.

Six other players -- Wasim Akram, Inzamamul Haq, Mushtaq Ahmed, Saeed Anwar, Waqar Younis and Akram Raza -- were fined over the affair.

B. League matches drawn

SPORTS REPORTER

Both the Citycell B. League matches were drawn yesterday at separate venues in Dhaka.

Rahmatganj shared a goalless draw with Arambagh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to move to second place in the table with ten points. It was their first draw in six games while Arambagh remained third from bottom with five points.

At Narshingdi Stadium, hosts Farashganj needed a 90th minute strike from Nigerian forward Eneke Lucky to cancel Mithun Chowdhury's goal that had put visiting Chittagong Abahani ahead after 81 minutes.

Farashganj pushed their collection to eight points after six matches while Chittagong Abahani are on six points after same number of outings.

Women's school football from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Metropolitan Women's School Football tournament kicks off today in Dhaka with 12 schools participating in the first ever tournament school girls.

Agar Khan International School take on Summer Field in the opening match at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex, where Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin declares the meet open.

Although this is a tournament for students, the BFF has chosen the word 'women' to give it a wider perspective.

It can be mentioned that the BFF is instructed to spend 25 percent of the amount it gets from FIFA -- US Dollars 2.5 lakh -- for women's development. Despite taking several attempts, the BFF failed to continue any of its past women's projects.

"We hope to expand women's football and it is just the beginning. We are hopeful that the school meet will lure more teams in the future. Under the Vision Bangladesh project, we have to emphasise on the women's game and we are doing it," said Sirajul Islam Bachchu, chairman of organising committee at a press briefing at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

Organising committee convenor Mahfuza Akhter and others were also present.

TEAMS

- GROUP A: Aga Khan International School, Master Mind, Summer Field. GROUP B: Scholastica, Siddeshwari Girls High School, Azampur Girls'. GROUP C: Green Herald, BIT, Rajdhani High School. GROUP D: Australian International School, Viqarunnissa Noon School, Natun Kuri.

Ireland's bad luck

AFP, Nairobi

Persistent rain put paid to Ireland's hopes of reaching the final in the one-day triangular series in Kenya after yet another heavy downpour prevented play in the game between the hosts and Zimbabwe on Thursday.

As a result both Kenya and Zimbabwe have qualified for the final on Saturday on the strength of their superior run rate while Ireland, who, despite being also on nine points, and needed only a point bow out of the series.

The incident has left the Ireland coach Phil Simmons a disappointed man.

"Every team wants to be in the final. We have played well in the series and we deserved our place. But there's little we could do with the rain," said Simmons.

The Irish side will now travel to South Africa where they are scheduled to play Namibia in the ICC Intercontinental Cup final starting in Port Elizabeth on October 30.

Biggies stay

FROM PAGE 17

Marseille coach Eric Gerets suffered a nightmare return to former club PSV Eindhoven as the Dutch beat the French club 2-0 to keep their slim Champions League hopes alive.

It was a gritty double from international striker Danny Koevermans that kept Gerets' side at the bottom of the pool all but ending Marseille's chances of progressing any further. Gerets was furious with his team's performance.

"There was a world of difference between the two sides. I was relieved when the game was over," said Gerets.

"There were a lot of mistakes. We weren't fresh but there are not excuses. We haven't lost hope but we have to be realistic and if we have to concentrate on something it has to be the UEFA Cup (for the third place finishers in the groups)."

Bond seeks support to ICL

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Shane Bond has said he would like to see international cricketers to come out in support of Indian Cricket League (ICL).

"I would like some of the international players to come and tell 'that's crap, mate,'" he told Cricinfo. "Whether they are playing in the IPL or not, everyone knows Arambagh remained third from bottom with five points."

He also lashed out at the administrators who were preventing ICL players from participating in official cricket. "I was five when I started dreaming about playing cricket for New Zealand and someone, a bureaucrat, who has never played the game, takes it away from me. It's just ridiculous," he said. "ICC needs to really take control of the game. If this sort of behaviour carries on and players get banned

the game loses its credibility." Before joining the league, Bond had offers from both IPL and ICL but chose the latter, as the contract was better.

Bond said he joined ICL after getting an assurance from the New Zealand board that he would be able to play international cricket. However, the board backtracked and he was asked to choose between ICL and New Zealand.

He was disappointed with the way his international career ended. "There were lots of politics going on in the background. It was disappointing not to finish on your terms for New Zealand. Playing the last game and have your family come and get to watch it."

Bond said financial reasons had prompted him to join the league. "I didn't know then I was not going to play for New Zealand, of course. You are always worried about kids; to give more than you got. After ICL, the financial pressure was off. I was just realistic. I was 32, had lots of injuries and I knew I had only

two years or so of cricket. It was difficult to travel away with a young family. From the financial side it was just common sense. Family comes first; this money has made a massive difference. I discussed the proposition with my wife and went through thoroughly."

Asked whether he joined ICL because New Zealand was in decline as a team and would he have done it if he were playing for a strong team like Australia, Bond said he couldn't answer the hypothetical scenario. "I didn't think team was in decline. We were disappointed with the World Cup. We still had the makings of a good side."

He said he had informed his teammates about the decision and they understood and respected it. "They were fully supportive. They were just disappointed with how it was handled (by the board). Some of them were also in dialogue with ICL and a few joined IPL later. I still follow New Zealand cricket. They are some of my best mates and I would always support them."

Odumbe's desire

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Former Kenya captain Maurice Odumbe has spoken of his desire to return to international cricket when his five-year ban for associating with a known bookmaker ends next year.

Odumbe was banned after a hearing in 2004. At the time Justice Ahmed Ebrahim said that Odumbe was "dishonest and devious in his behaviour in relation to the game of cricket" and that he had exhibited no remorse. "He has not been found guilty of 'match-fixing' but, as I have indicated, his conduct was outrageously reprehensible," Ebrahim concluded. "In my view, a five-year ban would meet the justice of the case." Odumbe has attempted to have the ban overturned without success.

Speaking to the Nation, Odumbe said he harboured ambitions to play in one more World Cup. "I have no doubts in my mind that Kenya will be in the World Cup," he said. "I am keeping physically fit in preparation for my rejoining the team once this ban is over."

Locals sources doubted that Odumbe, who will be 40 when his ban ends in July 2009, has much real chance of regaining his place in the side. The selectors are known to be looking to the future, and it will be hard for Odumbe to force his way back into the reckoning.

Odumbe also told the Nation that "Ravi Shah should be recalled to the team for the qualifier and I believe he will readily agree to come back and assist to see us through."

Those comments did not go down well with those close to the game who recall that Shah, undoubtedly a class batsman, has consistently refused to help Kenya outside high-profile events. He returned shortly before the 2007 World Cup only to disappear again as soon as the tournament ended. Again, the selectors are likely to see his recall as a desperate measure and a retrograde step.

Odumbe, who was one of the stars of Kenya's World Cup success in 2003, is increasingly seen as a figure from the past, and a discredited one at that, and a link with the dark days that followed the tournament from which Kenyan cricket is still recovering.

Davison to lead Aus in HK Sixes

AGENCIES, Sydney

John Davison, the former Canada captain, will lead Australia's side at the Hong Kong Sixes tournament next month.

Davison, 38, will act as playing coach of an otherwise young squad to take part in the event over November 8-9.

SQUAD

John Davison (captain), Brendan Drew, John Hastings, Michael Hill, Stephen O'Keefe, Nathan Reardon, David Warner.

Oram going

FROM PAGE 17
unbeaten on 8 as New Zealand took a 1-0 lead in the two-Test series.

He played a big part in the one-day series which New Zealand came from behind to win 2-1, and was named man-of-the-series for his performance with both bat and ball.

Injuries have dogged Oram throughout his career. He suffered a hamstring strain during New Zealand's last tour, in England earlier this year. He pulled out of the only Twenty20 of the tour at Old Trafford after hurting himself in the warm-up. He was ruled out for the first three ODIs only to return for the remaining two matches.



Tournament committee chairman and BFF member Sirajul Islam Bachchu speaks at a press conference in connection with the Dhaka Metropolitan Women's School Football Tournament at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 mins.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with letters and numbers for solving.

CRYPTOQUIP

AKOF AJVIU SJNTI XJN NUC
ZH VCECVCHSC FJ BVJNMU
JE VCBNTOV, SJRRJH
UOZTJVU? FKCKOJX MJTTJZ.
Yesterday's Cryptogram: IF A KITTY SUDDENLY OPTS TO MAKE A SOUND, COULD YOU CALL THAT A PURR-OF-THE-MOMENT DECISION?
Today's Cryptogram Clue: U equals S