

BHF to meet coaches' demands

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is likely to sign a contract next week with the two German coaches for the national team.

Talking to UNB on Thursday afternoon, BHF joint secretary Abdur Rashid Sikder said they are likely to sign a contract after the arrival of two German coaches -- coaching director Gerhard Peter Rach and team coach Oliver Michel Kurtz -- from Germany on May 25.

The German coaching duo, now on short vacation in Germany, earlier demanded from BHF a total of 10,000 dollars per month as their remuneration with free accommodation, cook and transport.

Sikder said they are still seeking sponsors to meet the expenses of the two coaches.

"We've initial discussion with Dutch Bangla Bank and hope to get a positive response soon," said the general secretary.

Despite a disappointing performance of the national team in the just concluded Asia Cup Hockey, BHF plans to recruit the two German coaches till December keeping faith in their ability to achieve a good result in the ensuing South Asian Games to be held in Dhaka next January.

Zia still in 3rd place

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman is still in third place of the 8th Asian Continental Chess Championship at Subic Freeport in Olongapo City.

Zia beat Indian GM Abhijit Gupta in the ninth round to take his tally to six points, equal with seven others.

GM Niaz Moshref is half a point behind Zia at 5.5 from nine rounds after yet another draw, this time with Qatar GM Al-Modiakhi Mohammed.

In the other matches, GM Enamul Hossain Rajib lost to Gundavaa Bayarsaikhan of Mongolia while FM Abu Sufian Shakil lost to Filipino GM Gonzales Joyson.



Ravi Bopara

(England batsman)

"There was a team meeting at nine and I rocked up at 10, but these things happen."

Who is very chilled out about his time-keeping issues.



HIS ONLY CHANCE: Mumbai Indians' Mohammad Ashraful (L) trudges back to the pavilion after being dismissed by Delhi Daredevils paceman Pradeep Sangwan during their Indian Premier League match at the SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday. The Bangladesh captain only scored two off 10 balls in his debut game but as a consolation, took two catches later on.

Delhi cruise along

Ashraful plays, makes 2 & takes 2 catches

STAR SPORT DESK



Mohammad Ashraful's disappointing debut in Mumbai Indians' four-wicket loss to Delhi Daredevils in Centurion yesterday made sure the Bangladesh dream of the Indian Premier League was not realised.

In his side's last match of the tournament, Ashraful came in to bat at number four but scratched around for ten deliveries before edging Pradeep Sangwan to wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik after scoring just two runs in his side's total of 165-8 from 20 overs.

In reply, Delhi captain Virender Sehwag hit his first half-century of the tournament as leaders Delhi reached 166-6 in 17.3 overs. The first two catches of the Delhi innings however went to Ashraful, but success in the IPL remained out of the Tigers' reach as Ashraful joined teammates Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Abdur Razzaq (from last year) as flop shows.

But it was Delhi all the way with skipper

Sehwag making exactly fifty off 27 balls with five boundaries and two sixes.

"It was great to score my first half century this season," said opener Sehwag. "It is critical that I am in form with a semifinal at Centurion tomorrow."

Mumbai captain Sachin Tendulkar could not mask his disappointment after Mumbai finished with only five wins from 14 outings and finished second last on the eight-franchise standings.

"I thought we batted well today and built a good total, but our bowling was not up to the mark. This was a pity as our bowlers have generally performed well this season."

Ajinkya Rahane (56) and Tendulkar (46) performed best with the bat for Mumbai, who batted to get sixes with the first of only two coming from the former 98 balls into the innings.

Australian Dirk Nannes was his usual destructive self with the ball, taking 3-27 in four overs, and Pradeep Sangwan (2-28) was the best of the rest on a chilly afternoon halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

But it was Delhi all the way with skipper

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Pandey powers Bangalore

AFP, Centurion



Manish Pandey blitzed the highest score of the 2009 Indian Premier League Thursday to guide Bangalore Royal Challengers to a 12-run victory over Deccan Chargers and third place in the final standings.

The result means Deccan play-table-toppers Delhi Daredevils in the first semifinal at Centurion Friday while Bangalore take on Chennai Super Kings in Johannesburg the following afternoon.

Pandey batted through the innings after Bangalore won the toss and elected to wield the

willow first, finishing with an unbeaten 114 off just 73 balls as the Challengers posted a formidable 170-4 total.

It was a remarkable effort from the little-known 19-year-old, who took advantage of being dropped on two by RP Singh to score only the second century of the Twenty20 extravaganza this season.

"It was a brilliant hundred," reflected Bangalore skipper Anil Kumble. "Manish got a few opportunities but didn't get to bat in the other games because he was down the order."

"So we just took a chance and sent him up the order and he came off really well."

Deccan got off to a flying start in pursuit of their

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PHOTO: AFP

MAN-OF-THE-MATCH: Royal Challengers Bangalore's Manish Pandey salutes the crowd on reaching his century against Deccan Chargers in their IPL T20 match at the SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday.

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Akhtar out of WC

AFP, Lahore



Pakistan pulled fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar out of next month's World Twenty20 tournament in England due to injury, the Pakistani Cricket Board said on Thursday.

The 33-year-old missed last week's conditioning camp in a luxury Pakistani hill resort due to injuries on his groin and his omission had been widely expected after he missed the first of three practice matches here Wednesday.

"We have pulled him out of the World Twenty20 on the basis of a medical report given by our doctor which said that Akhtar needs 10 days to recover from groin wounds," the PCB said.

"The medical board has reported that Akhtar was suffering from genital viral warts," it said in a statement, adding that he would need another 10 days of care and treatment.

Akhtar becomes the first casualty of the 12-team event

for which final 15-man squads were announced on May 5.

The PCB said it has written the technical committee of the World Twenty20 for the right to name a replacement after the fast bowler's fitness was assessed by a three-man panel on Thursday.

Akhtar is likely to be



SHOAIB AKHTAR

replaced by paceman Rao Iftikhar for the second edition of the World Twenty20 which starts in England from June 5.

Akhtar, plagued by injury since his debut in 1997, managed to play just four Twenty20

matches last year due to fitness and discipline problems.

He was dropped from the team after getting just one wicket in the two one-day matches internationals against Sri Lanka in February.

He was later ruled out of the Test series because of knee problems. The series was ultimately abandoned after gunmen attacked the Sri Lanka team bus en route to the stadium in Lahore.

Akhtar was then included in Pakistan's squad for their five one-dayers and one Twenty20 match series in the United Arab Emirates this month.

He took three wickets in four one-day matches but did not complete his allotted 10 overs in any of the matches. He only bowled two overs in the one-off Twenty20 match against Australia in Dubai, conceding 18 runs.

The mercurial paceman was also included in the inaugural World Twenty20 squad held in South Africa in 2007 but was expelled two days before the event for assaulting team-mate Mohammad Asif with a bat.

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Mind games begin

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

As expected for a man whose girlfriend is a karate black-belt holder, Mitchell Johnson doesn't intimidate easily. So the sight of England's No. 3 Ravi Bopara rattling off three consecutive centuries against West Indies hasn't worried him in the slightest. It's a sentiment shared by his captain Ricky Ponting, who believes England's recent success will count for little when Australia arrive.

Bopara was the standout for England in their home series against West Indies, when he scored 143 and 108, following the 104 he made during his only appearance in the Caribbean in February. He hasn't played Australia in a Test, just as Johnson hasn't faced England, but Australia's new spearhead is confident his attack can get the better of Bopara.

"I've seen Bopara in those two Tests against the West Indies where he scored those two centuries," Johnson told Cricinfo. "He looked good, but there is a big difference between a series against the West Indies and the Ashes. There will be much more pressure out there, so it will be interesting to see how he goes."

There's no doubt that facing Australia will be an enormous step up. For one thing, the West Indies captain Chris Gayle led by inglorious example in England, where he arrived late from the IPL and declared that he wouldn't mind if Test cricket died out. By comparison, Ponting

has plainly stated that he is desperate to win the Ashes on English soil.

"They've obviously done everything very well in the last two Test matches against the West Indies," Ponting said of England. "I guarantee they'll be facing a stiffer opposition than West Indies when we arrive. It's been made pretty clear over the past couple of weeks that their captain [Gayle] doesn't really want to be there."

England will be a very stiff and tough opposition, we know that. They always are when we play against them. The last series out here in Australia was a 5-0 result to us but it could've been a whole lot different had we not done some exceptional things."

One of the men who troubled England during that series was Stuart Clark, who with 26 victims was Australia's leading wicket-taker in a team that featured Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath. Clark believes England have improved since then and, in any case, will be tougher to beat at their home venues.

Since the tour of Australia Matthew Hoggard and Sajid Mahmood have fallen by the wayside, Ashley Giles has retired, and Andrew Flintoff has battled ongoing injuries. Steve Harmison didn't play in the home series against West Indies, although Clark expects him to win a recall for the Ashes. He said the England attack would be tough to dominate.

"The bowling line-up is different but probably better [than 2006-07]," Clark said. "Steve Harmison is obviously a great bowler and Flintoff may come back into the team. But

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Thirimanne ton sinks Academy

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

A brilliant century from Lahiru Thirimanne guided Sri Lanka's team to a massive 128-run win over GP-BCB National Cricket Academy at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The 19-year-old slammed 124 in the visitors' 306-5 from 50 overs before the home side were dismissed for 178 in just 39 overs as the Lankans made it one-all in the five-match series.

The Academy team were given a good start when Delwar Hossain cleaned up Mahela Udawatte for just four and that brought Thirimanne to the crease.

Thirimanne added 88 for the second wicket with wicket-keeper-batsman Kaushal Silva, who added 47 from 58 balls. Later, the centurion joined together for a 76-run fourth wicket stand with Priyanjan.

This was despite the county having spent 600,000 pounds (940,273 dollars) on a new drainage system during the off-season.

It was a concerning sign for Yorkshire chiefs ahead of the fourth Ashes Test against Australia, which is due to take place at Headingley from August 7-11.

When it was announced following an umpires' inspection at 2pm (1300GMT) that the officials would have

failed with the bat too with only Imtiaz Hossain scoring 41 off 51 balls with four boundaries and a six. The Academy middle-order all got a start but none of them got a big score.

Later though, Mukhtar Ali blasted four sixes in a 29-ball 35 but it was too late.

Ramesh Perera picked up four wickets while Muthumalige Pushpakumara took three. Chanaka Welegedara, Udarana and Thisara Perera had one each.

The series will be decided tomorrow in the fifth and final match at the same venue.



LAHIRU THIRIMANNE

Champions Club Cup from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bashundhara Champions Club Cup begins today at 12 secondary venues across the country.

59-district club champions split into 12 groups are contesting for the title. The meet will start with a colourful opening ceremony at Feni prior to the opening match between Feni Soccer Club and Bhai Bhai Sporting Club of Chandpur.

In the days other matches, Young Tiger Nurpur of Habiganj will play Telingar New Sporting Club of Brahmanbaria at Habiganj, Ghagra Sporting Club (Sherpur) meets Abahani Krira Chakra (Mymensingh) at Sherpur, Nijra Ekadash (Gopalganj) play Football Khelawar Kalyan Samiti (Rajbari) at Gopalganj, Diganta Proshari Sangha (Rajshahi) face Brothers Union Club (Pabna) at Rajshahi, Fanton Sports Association (Rangpur) play Probaho Sangha (Nowrangpur) at Rangpur.

Six other matches are scheduled to be played at Dinajpur, Narail, Meherpur, Bandarban, Barguna and Tangail.

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সকালের ব্যাচে

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