

Army chief tipped for BOA post

SPORTS REPORTER

Army chief General Abdul Mubeen is tipped to become the new president of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) as only one nomination paper was bought yesterday, the day of collecting nomination papers for the August 20 election.

Gazi Mizanur Rahman, the chief election commissioner, confirmed that only one nomination paper was sold yesterday.

"I've got a verbal confirmation from the returning officer that only one nomination paper was sold," said Rahman. Returning officer Subrata Roy while contacted over phone said: "Only one nomination paper was purchased and that was for the army chief."

The post has been vacant following the resignation of former army chief General Moeen U Ahmed on July 7, nearly two-and-a-half years before his four-year tenure was to expire. Traditionally the incumbent army chief holds the post.

However, there was a whisper in the sports arena that this time a civilian might take over but the selling of the lone nomination form has virtually buried the whisper.

The submission date of the nomination paper is Wednesday while the scrutiny and withdrawal of candidature dates are fixed for August 16 and 18 respectively.



Did U Know?

Michael Jordan is considered a legend in the world of basketball. The record score of 5,987 that he has set is still unbroken in the NBA.



Kim Clijsters

(Belgian tennis star)

"I see it as a second career. Honestly, the first word that comes up is, oh, it's a comeback. But so many things have changed and so many things have happened."

After she made her long-awaited return.



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NCA crash to heavy loss

SPORTS REPORTER

GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) lost the first four-day against Standard Bank National Academy of South Africa (SBNA) by nine wickets inside three days following a batting debacle in the second innings at Tukkies 1 in Pretoria on Sunday.

The visitors could manage only 134 runs in their second essay before being bundled out in 36.2 overs leaving a

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SECOND ODI TODAY

Ash looks at encore

AGENCIES, undated



Sports Club ground in Bulawayo.

Bangladesh have kept faith in the same eleven that crushed Zimbabwe by eight wickets in the first match of the Grameenphone Cup series for today's game.

Many had pointed towards 'complacency', which could be a biggest enemy in the series after the Tigers whitewashed West Indies in both the two-match Test and three-match one-

TEAMS

BANGLADESH: Shakib Al Hasan (captain) Tamim Iqbal, Zunaed Siddiqui, Mohammad Ashraful, Rokibul Hassan, Mushfiqur Rahim (wicketkeeper), Mahmudullah Riyad, Nayeem Islam, Enamul Haque, Syed Rassel and Nazmul Hossain.

ZIMBABWE (from): Prosper Utseya (captain), Hamilton Masakadza, Mark Vermeulen, Sean Williams, Charles Coventry, Chamu Chibhabha, Stuart Matsikenyeri, Sean Williams, Elton Chigumbura, Raymond Price and Ed Rainsford.

day series but the Tigers steered clear of the notion to make a flying start in the five-match series.

Bangladesh's clinical effort in the first one-day, especially the ease with which the target was chased down, definitely pleased coach Jamie Siddons, who has long demanded big runs from his top order. The team also showed its character in bouncing back from a heavy defeat to Zimbabwe A soon after arriving from the triumphant tour of the Caribbean.

After a disciplined bowling effort on a placid track, the Tigers chased down the target of 208 with eight wickets and 15.3 overs to spare with Mohammad Ashraful hitting a majestic unbeaten 103. And Tamim Iqbal, who has long been acknowledged for his hitting prowess, showed signs of his maturity on Sunday by playing second fiddle once Mohammad Ashraful got going.

The focus will be on Ashraful and whether he can show a rare example of consistency in his batting.

"As I am no longer the captain therefore I have got to perform with the bat if I want to keep my place in the side. I did struggle in the Test series in the West Indies but got some runs in the ODIs. This innings will further boost my confidence," said Ashraful who also acknowledged the support from the team.

"My teammates, management, coaching staff... everyone backed me and encouraged me

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Mohammad Ashraful (on the stage, second from R) is the toast of his teammates as his unbeaten hundred sealed an easy victory for Bangladesh against Zimbabwe in the first ODI in Bulawayo on Sunday.

PHOTO: TIGERCRIKET.COM

Pakistan close the gap

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Skipper Younus Khan led the way as Pakistan defeated Sri Lanka by 132 runs in the fifth and final one-day international here on Sunday.

Younus top-scored with 76 and Misbahul Haq hit an unbeaten 73 to steer Pakistan to 279-8 after they won the toss and elected to bat in the day-night match at the Premadasa Stadium.

Teenage paceman Mohammad Aamer grabbed 4-28 and Navedul Hasan took 4-44 as Pakistan bowled out Sri Lanka for 147 in the 35th over to record their second successive win after Friday's 146-run success.

Sri Lanka, however, clinched the one-day series 3-2, after winning the Test series 2-0.

"We won the two day-night games, but lost the first three day matches. Maybe we do not like to wake up early," Younus said.

"I think we lost the Tests and the one-dayers because we could not take the pressure. But I am glad we made amends towards the end and showed what we are really capable of."

"There are some very good youngsters in the side with a lot of promise and I am sure they will take Pakistan cricket forward."

Sri Lankan captain Kumar Sangakkara said he was confident the hosts will recover from the two successive defeats.

"We should have batted better after the bowlers did well to keep Pakistan down to 279," he said. "It was a chaseable total but we did not have partnerships going at the top."

"It is special to win the series and if we keep working as a team there is no reason why we can't win more often."

The rivals, who contested the World Twenty20 final in

England in June when Pakistan won the title, will play a T20 international here Wednesday in the last match of the tour.

The half-centuries from Younus and Misbah helped Pakistan recover from the first-ball dismissal of Kamran Akmal, who was given out leg-before off Nuwan Kulasekara despite getting an edge on the bat.

Younus put on 69 for the third wicket with veteran Mohammad Yousuf (43) and 83 for the fourth, with Misbah before being bowled by seamer Dammika Prasad in the 37th over.

Misbah stepped in to keep the scoreboard moving after

the captain's dismissal, adding 60 for the seventh wicket with Naved, to carry Pakistan past the 250-run mark.

Kulasekara was the most impressive bowler, with three for 46 from his 10 overs.

Sri Lanka's reply began on the wrong foot when Upul Tharanga edged the third ball of the innings to Umar Akmal at second slip before a run had been scored.

Wickets tumbled regularly after that to reduce the hosts to 74-8, the only notable contribution in the top order coming from Mahela Jayawardene, who made 31 before being caught behind off Aamer.

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Navedul Hasan (L) and Mohammad Aamer celebrate the fall of a Sri Lankan wicket during the 5th and final ODI in Colombo on Sunday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

England's costly loss

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

England's crushing fourth Test defeat by Australia here at Headingley could cost the local economy up to two million pounds (3.3 million US dollars), experts quoted by the Yorkshire Post newspaper said Monday.

A full, five-day, match at Headingley, the headquarters ground of county side Yorkshire, would have been expected to generate some eight million pounds (13.3 million dollars) for the economy of Leeds.

But these projections had been downgraded to six million pounds (10 million dollars) after Australia won by an innings and 80 runs inside three days here on Sunday to level the five-match Ashes series at 1-1 ahead of the final Test at The Oval, in south London, which starts on August 20.

With supporters already checking out early of local hotels and the 18,000 fans who had bought tickets for Monday's scheduled fourth day set to be refunded, Gary Verity, chief executive of tourism organisation Welcome to Yorkshire, told the Post: "It is disappointing the full five days won't be played out."

"Of course, it will affect the estimated total

aimed at boosting Leeds's economy," he added. But Deborah Green, chief executive of Marketing Leeds, insisted the city and the surrounding region could still do well financially out of a Test match that only just lasted past lunch on the third day.

"We won't make as much as a region as would have done from the full five days but six million pounds could still be a conservative estimate," Green told The Times.

"And we count ourselves lucky that we've at least had three good days when the sun has shone."

Less fortunate are those fans who had purchased tickets in advance for what should have been the fifth day's play on Tuesday.

Unlike their fourth day counterparts, they will not be refunded.

Fifth-day tickets were sold at the reduced price of 20 pounds (33 dollars) for adults and five pounds (eight dollars) for children.

Helen Longley, Yorkshire County Cricket Club's ticket office manager, told the Post: "The tickets were sold on a non-refundable basis at a reduced price and if it had gone on for the full five days, supporters would have got a bargain. As it stands though, it is just the way it has turned out."

Fans with fifth-day tickets will have the chance to watch a Yorkshire match before the end of this season instead.

6-week rehab for Mashrafe

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is likely to return before Bangladesh's next international series in October as the injured leading paceman underwent a successful arthroscopic surgery on both knees yesterday.

The surgery was performed by orthopaedic surgeon Dr. David Young at the Avenue Hospital in Melbourne.

"Dr. Young is confident that the fast bowler would be able to start running after three weeks and should return to cricket action after six weeks of rehabilitation," said a statement from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Mashrafe hoped that he would be return to action before Bangladesh's next international assignment.

Speaking from Melbourne Mashrafe said: "I feel a lot relieved now. The surgery went well. I hope to be fit for the next international series. I wish to thank everyone for their prayers and good wishes."

The Tigers will next take on Zimbabwe at home in next October after their on going five-match one-day series against same opponents at the Queen's Sports Club in Bulawayo.

Mortaza injured his right knee during the first Test against the West Indies at St. Vincent last month and has been sidelined since. Vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan has taken over the reigns in his absence.

Fed Cup next month

SPORTS REPORTER

The football season's curtain-raising tournament, Federation Cup will get underway from September 10 with as many as 16 teams fighting it out at two venues of the capital.

The decision was made at the B. League meeting yesterday with its chairman and BFF senior vice president Salam Murshedi in chair.

"We decided to start the Federation Cup from September 10 with 13 clubs from the professional football league and three invited teams Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Police and Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan," said Murshedi after the meeting was held at the BFF House in Motijheel.

"It is an invitational tournament and we decided to invite Army, Police and BKSP along with 13 teams of the B. League," Murshedi said. "The clubs of senior division, at the moment, are not ready for the Federation Cup."

Last season, as many as 5 teams from 11 participants, having played the preliminary round, joined 11 B. League clubs in the 16-team finals. But this time, 16 teams, split into four groups, will play round-robin matches and the top two teams from each group will advance to the quarterfinals, a stage not held in last year's competition.

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Flintoff was fit?

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

Andrew Flintoff declared himself fit before being left out by England ahead of their crushing fourth Test loss to Australia, the all-rounder's agent told Monday's edition of the Times.

Andrew Chandler said team management were not satisfied that the fast bowler and hard-hitting batsman, who has been struggling with a knee injury throughout what he has said will be his final Test series, would last the distance.

As it turned out, England were beaten inside three days at Headingley, losing by an innings and 80 runs as Australia levelled the Ashes at 1-1.

Flintoff, 31 is due to see a knee specialist Monday as he bids to make the side for the fifth and final Test at The Oval, which starts on August 20.

But Chandler was adamant he could have played at Headingley.

"I've never seen anybody as low as Flintoff was on Thursday night when he was told he would not be selected," Chandler told The Times.

"He told them that he was fit enough to get through, that he felt no different to how he felt at Edgbaston and that he could get through and do his bit. They didn't want him."

"He was prepared to do whatever it takes, was prepared to put whatever needed to be put into his knee."

"The whole point of announcing his retirement when he did was to clear his head and prepare to do whatever needed to be done to play the final Test matches of his career."

"He just didn't see it coming. He wanted to

play and they didn't want him, and he didn't see that coming at all."

Flintoff's pace bowling led England to a 115-run victory in the second Test at Lord's and top-scored for the hosts in the drawn third Test at Edgbaston.

Chandler said England had failed to factor in the galvanising effect of match conditions on Flintoff after he was unable to convince team management of his fitness during nets sessions at Headingley.

"What they didn't take into account during Thursday's practice was that there was no adrenalin," he said.

"That was why he looked as though he was struggling so much and why he became so much worse on the final day at Edgbaston, when it was clear the game could not be won."

"He was hurting at Lord's but the adrenalin got him through. It would have got him through this week as well."

"His presence would certainly have lifted the crowd and the team, because without him they don't have much inspiration."

Barring an announcement from the specialist that Flintoff needs an immediate operation, the star of England's 2005 Ashes series win is sure to come into consideration for a Test side must win to regain the urn from Australia.

There were only three days between the end of the Edgbaston Test and Friday's start at Headingley and England captain Andrew Strauss hopes the next decision over Flintoff's availability will take place in calmer circumstances.

"We have to find out the fitness of Freddie and where he is at and then obviously the balance of the side is an issue as well," Strauss told

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Ponting's loving it

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

Australia captain Ricky Ponting said his side were now looking forward with confidence to the finale of the Ashes after levelling the series in dominating style.

Victory by an innings and 80 runs in the fourth Test at Headingley on Sunday, a win achieved with more than two days to spare, saw Australia level the five-match series at 1-1 with one to play.

They now head to The Oval, where the fifth Test starts on August 20, needing just a draw to retain the Ashes, with several of their leading batsmen and bowlers in fine form.

"It will be difficult for England to bounce back now. Everything is heading in the right direction for us at exactly the right time of the tour," said Ponting.

Australia were on top throughout at Headingley, bowling England out for 102 with recalled seamer Stuart Clark taking three wickets for 18 runs and fast bowler Peter Siddle a Test-best five for 21.

In reply, Australia piled up 445, man-of-the-match Marcus North scoring 110, vice-captain Michael Clarke 93 and Ponting himself a stylish 78.

Ponting is desperate not to follow in the footsteps of Billy Murdoch and become the first Australia captain in over a century to lose two Ashes series in England.

But after this victory Ponting, captain when England won the Ashes 2-1 on home soil four years ago, was in bullish mood after seeing his team fall behind this series

with a 115-run second Test loss at Lord's.

"It's a chance that I've been waiting for all tour, the chance the whole team has been waiting for," he said.

"After we lost at Lord's we've been wanting to play well and win again to get back to 1-1. I don't think we could have done anything better in this game."

In an England team missing injured stars Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff,

Australia's attack honed in on the weakness in the hosts' middle-order pinpointed by Ponting.

Ravi Bopara, Ian Bell and Paul Collingwood managed just 16 runs between them for six times out in the match, the worst collective display by numbers three, four and five in all of England's 890 Tests.

"I've said right through the series if we could get some early wickets and get their

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A happy Ricky Ponting with his daughter after his team's ruthless win in the 4th Ashes Test against England at Headingley on Sunday.

PHOTO: INTERNET