

School cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Narial Govt. High School trounced Poura Secondary High School by 121 runs in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers U-16 National Cricket Tournament at the Nur Mohammad stadium yesterday. Batting first Narial posted 279 in 50 overs losing 8 wickets. Mostafizur Rahman Rony top scored with 102. Biplob snared 4 wickets for Poura. In reply Poura were bundled out for 158 in 32.3 overs. Hasibur Rahman Mizan claimed 3 wickets for Narial.

In the day's other match Saidpur Islamia High School beat Collectorate Public School by 49 runs at Nilphamary stadium. Saidpur scored 186 all out in 45 overs with Badhon top scoring with 63. Mafuzul Islam took 4 wickets for Collectorate. Collectorate could only manage 137 losing all their wickets in 27.3 overs in reply. Alamgir claimed 4 wickets for Saidpur.

Blignaut on comeback

CRICINFO, undated

Another former Zimbabwe international is trying to make a comeback according to the Independent newspaper.

Andy Blignaut, who last played international cricket in 2005, is in discussions with the Matabeleland Tuskers franchise.

Blignaut, 31, was involved in arguments with the Zimbabwe board over what he claimed were large sums of unpaid wages owed to him and eventually walked away from the game in 2006. However, he has been seen in the nets at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo.

"We are currently assessing Andy Blignaut," Matabeleland Tuskers convener Vumindaba Moyo told the paper. "He's certainly not going to walk into the team."

Will Kumar

FROM PAGE 17 Murali, so we are just awaiting his return in the side as well. It will be exciting to have these two guys playing together in the same side if we can manage that," observed Sangakkara.

"But Randiv's performance has been outstanding in the last two series. And we just want him to grow from strength to strength -- make sure he understands what he is doing, how he can get better and learn to cope with the pressures of international cricket," he hoped.

Sachin comes

FROM PAGE 17 The first Test will be held at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong over January 17-21 while the second match is scheduled for January 24-28 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Bangladesh Cricket Board already on Monday announced a 14-member Test squad for the series keeping Shakib Al Hasan as captain.

Jordaan slams

FROM PAGE 20 In a statement, his group said it "has decided to take a responsible stance regarding the Africa Nations Cup."

The group said it would "abstain from any act of violence in Cabinda during the tournament, assuring the safety of defenceless civilians," added the statement from FAC's chief of staff Miguel Boma.

Mingas dismissed the claim, telling AFP: "We are the ones who committed the act. We regret that the poor Togolese became victims. It was an attack against the Angolan occupation forces."

MU owe

FROM PAGE 20 "I don't have any concerns about the financial situation," he said. "There is absolutely no issue at all. I am really confident about that."

"Concerns of the supporters are down to the fact that I haven't moved in the transfer market."

"But that is nothing to do with the Glaziers or with David Gill (United's chief executive). It is simply because I am not going to pay 50 million pounds for a striker who is not worth it."



Newly appointed Bangladesh football coach Zoran Djordjevic briefs his charges at the BFF Bhaban yesterday prior to their departure for the camp for SA games.

Zoran journey on

SPORTS REPORTER



Serbian coach Zoran Djordjevic has advised the players to feel free to let him and his coaching staff to know the problems they will face during the South Asian football event camp at Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan in Savar.

He had suggested to the players at the first team meeting at the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday as 37 out of 39 footballers picked for the preliminary squad reported to the coach yesterday before leaving the capital for BKSP.

Two British-born players -- Sublu Mia and Sarwar Ahmed Sadiq -- did not report on the first day and are scheduled to join the camp on Friday.

"You are free to enjoy with your friends and family, but put off the light and take to bed when it is time," Zoran said. "If you have prob-

lems, please let me or my coaching staff know and we will listen to you and I believe we will be able to make you happy at the camp."

The Serbian coach might have been briefed about the incident of Bangladesh's previous Brazilian coach Edson Silva Dido, who expelled seven players from the residential camp at BKSP for the players walked out of training citing it 'unbearable'.

"I need such player who is intelligent and has the faith on himself and we will together deliver better result as a family," said the 57-year old coach, who called six to seven players to sit by his side after having watched that they were not attentive during his lecture.

Talking to reporters, the former Churchill Brothers' coach said that he would use his knowledge and experience to finalise the squad as well as talk to his assistants, doctor, physio and to the players.

"I am looking for players who deserve their place in the team and match with my game plan, strategy and tactics," Zoran said.

Johnson's loving it

CRICINFO, Hobart

Away from the limelight, Mitchell Johnson has quietly worked his way back from the horrors of the Ashes last year into something resembling his best form. He is no longer Australia's opening bowler, but a new role at first-change has brought considerable success.

With one Test still to go in the home summer, Johnson has picked up 28 wickets almost unnoticed in five Tests against the West Indies and Pakistan. Against the latter, he has bowled several critical spells, taking two wickets in the first over of the final morning at the MCG to set Australia on the path to victory and then two again in an over on the tumultuous fourth day at the SCG.

"I've had a fair bit of time to think about it [being first change] and recently it's been on my mind a lot," Johnson said. "To be honest I'm happy where I am and it's something I have learnt to do well. I probably started with ODI cricket, bowling first change and using those change-ups

so it's something I've had a bit of time to deal with. If I get the opportunity to bowl with the new ball again I will put my hand up. I'm happy to do whatever is best for the team.

"Through the West Indies series I was a little slow through the air. I probably wasn't quite at my best. But sometimes you come up against those teams and you relax a little bit. But as they showed they are a quality side and we almost let them off the hook a little bit. And coming up against Pakistan we know how good they are. I guess I've stepped up in the second half of the summer."

With 31 Tests behind him now, Johnson is the most experienced member of the attack and even though he no longer has the new ball, he remains the key man. He is also reaching a period in his career widely regarded as the peak years for a fast bowler.

"I guess leading is showing the guys on and off the field training, going at a 100 per cent and speaking to the guys about knowledge of the game," Johnson said. "I've played 30 games and some of the guys coming through now have only played a few so I feel it's my responsibility to

speak to those guys about conditions and the guys we are playing against. Leading the attack out in the middle is going out there and really just doing the things I do best. I try to break those partnerships and that is one of the big things I try and do and just enjoy my cricket.

"You've had guys like Glenn McGrath and Brett Lee and guys in the past that have talked in the past about being at their peak around 27, 28 and 29. I feel like I'm starting to know my game a hell of a lot better than in the past."

Johnson's had good support through the summer from Doug Bollinger and Peter Siddle, even if Siddle hasn't been rewarded for all his spells with a proportionate number of wickets. It is not, says Johnson, a major concern.

"Sid's not too fussed at the moment," he said. "He hasn't spoken about it too much. He's still pretty pumped up and he's doing a great job for us. He might not be getting rewards but he is still a big part of the side, tying down ends or being aggressive. He's still doing a great job for us. Doug brings a lot of energy to the side and he is great to have around."

Prior readies himself

CRICINFO, Johannesburg

session with Bruce French, England's keeping coach, on the outfield at the Wanderers on Monday. "Touch wood," he said when his almost error-free keeping was mentioned. "I've worked very, very hard on my keeping and I'll continue to do so. I always mention Frenchy. He's been an absolutely fantastic help."

Prior added that it has been his batting form that has caused him more problems during the tour despite two important half-centuries at Durban and Cape Town. It has been a case of all-or-nothing for Prior during the Tests, with his other three innings being single figures.

"It's been a weird series for me individually with the bat," he said. "I've managed to get a couple of scores, which has been nice, at important times. To help the team in those situations is always a great feeling. "But I've not gone into the series feeling in great form with the bat. It's as important to come up with those performances when you're maybe not feeling in the best nick. It's no good just scoring runs when you're feeling great; sometimes, you've got to get your 'ugly' runs when the feet maybe aren't moving as well as you'd hope. You've still got to get stuck in."

Before the series began it was expected that Prior would play at No. 6 with England fielding an extra bowling option -- either Luke Wright or Ryan Sidebottom -- but Andrew Strauss and Andy Flower went for six batsmen which shunted Prior down a spot. It was seen in some quarters as a defensive approach, but has worked a treat so far with the extra batsman -- Ian Bell -- helping to win and draw a Test.

However, Prior was adamant that even though England only need a draw at the Wanderers to take home the main prize there won't be any thoughts of playing it safe. "This team is going out to win this Test match, not to hang on to a draw or try to scrape through," he said. "If we can go back 2-0, that would be a dream come true for all of us. It would be a fabulous achievement to beat two of the top teams in the world, in back-to-back Test series."

Crossword

CRICINFO, Hobart

After days of confusion, Intikhab Alam has put an emphatic end to speculation surrounding Pakistan's wicketkeeping spot, saying that there is "no doubt" Sarfraz Ahmed will play as the wicketkeeper in Kamran Akmal's place in the third Test in Hobart starting on Thursday. "Speculation has been rife and silly since the Sydney Test about Akmal and his role in the Pakistan side. Reports emerged blaming his late-night babysitting for the four dropped catches at the SCG and there has been talk of his younger brother Umar pulling out of the third Test with an allegedly feigned back injury in protest at the axing. The team was given a day off from practice today, but Umar and Sarfraz trained at the Bellerive Oval under the eyes of Intikhab and Aaqib Javed, the assistant coach. There will be a selection meeting the day before the Test begins but Intikhab indicated that if it comes to a vote with the four-man selection committee (Mohammad Yousuf, Akmal, Intikhab and manager Abdur Raquib form the panel), Akmal will step aside. "Naturally he [Sarfraz] has been sent as a reinforcement," Intikhab said. "Unfortunately Kamran had a bad game and he

Sarfraz, not Kamran

CRICINFO, Hobart

is a very good wicketkeeper-batsman. It can happen to anyone but the fact of the matter is Sarfraz has been sent here and we will give him a chance. "It has happened in the past [a vice-captain having a vote on his own position in the side]. We were in Sri Lanka, the vice-captain was Misbahul Haq and he wasn't having a good time and we decided in the meeting, at times you have to take that tough decision and we'll take that decision. And there is no doubt that Sarfraz will play. "We have a three-member committee but this time the manager will also sit in. We're sure the right decision will be taken and he will have a vote as well. I have already spoken to Kamran and I think he understands. These things happen in cricket. I'm sure he's good enough and he'll come back."

Younger brother Umar had a longish net session, having sat out practice yesterday and woken up this morning to stories about the stiff back being merely a ploy to protest at the treatment of Kamran. Intikhab said the back was fine and talk of protest absolute rubbish. "He is ok. He had a sore back. The last few days the guys have been working very, very hard, and so I gave them a day off today," Intikhab said. "Umar didn't practice yesterday, he was sent to hospital and had x-rays done and the doctors said there is nothing wrong with him. He has

had one painkilling injection but that's why I brought him here to make sure he is fit and raring to go. "It's [the stories of his protest] all rubbish. At times I laugh when I read such stories. He's one of the emerging cricketers in world cricket and he is capable and has the ability to do that. He is ok."

Training cheerily alongside Umar was Sarfraz, who having played eight ODIs in 2008, finally finds himself on the verge of a Test debut, the first man other than Akmal to don Pakistan's Test gloves since late 2004. "Of course the pressure is there for representing your country against Australia," Sarfraz said. "But all the coaches, the manager and players have really supported me and told me to take no pressure and treat it like you are playing a normal first-class match."

Sarfraz was part of the same Pakistan A tour to Australia as Umar in June-July last year and had a similarly successful time, picking up 11 victims and three fifties in the two 'Tests'. And some advice had already come his way on conditions here, he said, from the man he is set to replace. "Kamri supported me and said play your natural game. I arrived two days ago and he said no pressure. He told me about the pitch here, a little bounce and some break. He is a very good player no doubt and everyone goes through a bad patch. I will give my 100 per cent for our team."

Cruel!

PTI, Johannesburg

India's newly-appointed bowling consultant Eric Simons said it was strange that his first big assignment with the Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led side was against his own country South Africa. "It will be a bit strange that my big test will be against my own country," Simons told the Afrikaans daily Beeld.

"But that's how it goes in professional sport these days. (Fellow South African) Gary Kirsten is already with (the Indian team) for a while now and even Andy Flower of Zimbabwe coaches England," said the former South African coach, who was yesterday named as India's new bowling consultant for the two Tests against Bangladesh and the subsequent home series against South Africa.

The unsung

FROM PAGE 17 toughness is very important because you have to face different kinds of condition and adjust with those," he added. The all-rounder said that he never set any long-term target rather he always focussed on the next assignment.

"I think if I can achieve the short-term goal, I will stay for long automatically in the international scenario. So, I am always focussing on my next assignment like I am now looking forward to the Test series," he went on. Riyad also believes that there is no alternative to working hard to survive in the fiercely competitive world. "I have to work hard. Now I am working on how I can perfect my drive and pull shots. The batting would be much improved if I can play the shots as I expected," he said.

In the end Riyad was not ready to give too importance to his performances in the tri-nation tourney rather he was looking for big one.

Ian's views on India

CRICINFO, undated

Former Australian captain and leading commentator Ian Chappell has said India don't have the resources to retain their No. 1 spot in the ICC Test rankings for a long enough period to emulate Australia and the great West Indies teams of the past. Chappell said that India's batting alone will not sustain them and to do so, they will have to unearth a couple of champion bowlers.

Chappell and former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar aired their views in Time Out, Cricinfo's new fortnightly audio show hosted by the leading commentator Harsha Bhogle. India bagged the top ranking from Australia after beating Sri Lanka 2-0 in the three-Test series at home last month. India jumped from No. 3 to No. 1 for first time since the rankings came into place in May 2001. Manjrekar said a big reason for India's success is the arrival of a strong opening pair in Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir, and the ability to

adjust to foreign conditions. "It's a huge asset to have a stable opening pair. I noticed a change in India's batting around the time Sourav Ganguly was leading India, John Wright was in charge, and I saw India playing on foreign pitches," Manjrekar said. "I found that the new generation of Indian batsmen could play the pull shot, the cut shot, and they were pretty good against the short deliveries."

However, Chappell felt that India have completed only half the job of being a well-rounded team. "I don't think great teams are built on opening batting partnerships. But to me, there is a far more important thing, and this is one reason why I don't rate India as a long-term No.1," Chappell said. "I think you have got to have two champion bowlers in your line-up to be a long-term successful cricket team. That is where India is falling down at the moment."

"When I look at the averages and the strike-rates for India in the last 12 months, I don't see two champion bowlers. In fact, I am struggling to find one champion bowler in that line-up. They've got some good bowlers. Sure, they have got a very good batting line-up, but the bowling is really not good enough to see them win consistently all around the world." Over the last two years, India have played 20 Tests, winning nine and losing three. Three of those wins have come against Australia, including one in Perth during their last tour in 2007-08. Chappell acknowledged that India had performed above themselves in the last two tours of Australia, but their success would have tasted much better had they beaten them while they were still a major force in international cricket. Since the collective retirement of their champion players like Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne, Justin Langer and later Matthew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist, Australia haven't produced the same level of consistency in results. "I would have thought it was a greater achievement if they had caught up with Australia while Australia was still very much a great side, rather than waiting for Australia to come back to the field," Chappell said. "That to me has been the disappointing thing."

Boxers happy at home

FROM PAGE 17 and India in a few categories as each participant country would be allowed to take part in seven out of 11 categories in the meet.

But, one thing is for sure that the boxers will hardly get the feel of a new boxing ring, as it won't be installed at the newly built stadium before January 20. Like the boxing federation, the Bangladesh Cycling Federation is also dreaming high to win gold medals in two out of four events though they have no clear idea about the opponents.

The event of cycling was included in the regional extravaganza from the last meet in Colombo where host Sri Lanka clinched five golds out of six and Bangladesh returned empty handed. "Our appearance in the Colombo edition was a token participation but this time we are expecting gold medals in men's 80km time trail (Team) and women's 30km time trail (Team) because the training under the supervision of coach Hyungil Kim has been going well in Khulna, the venue of cycling," said BCF general secretary Parvez Hasan adding that the cyclists had been training in Khulna for four months to get used to the venue. Parvez, however, failed

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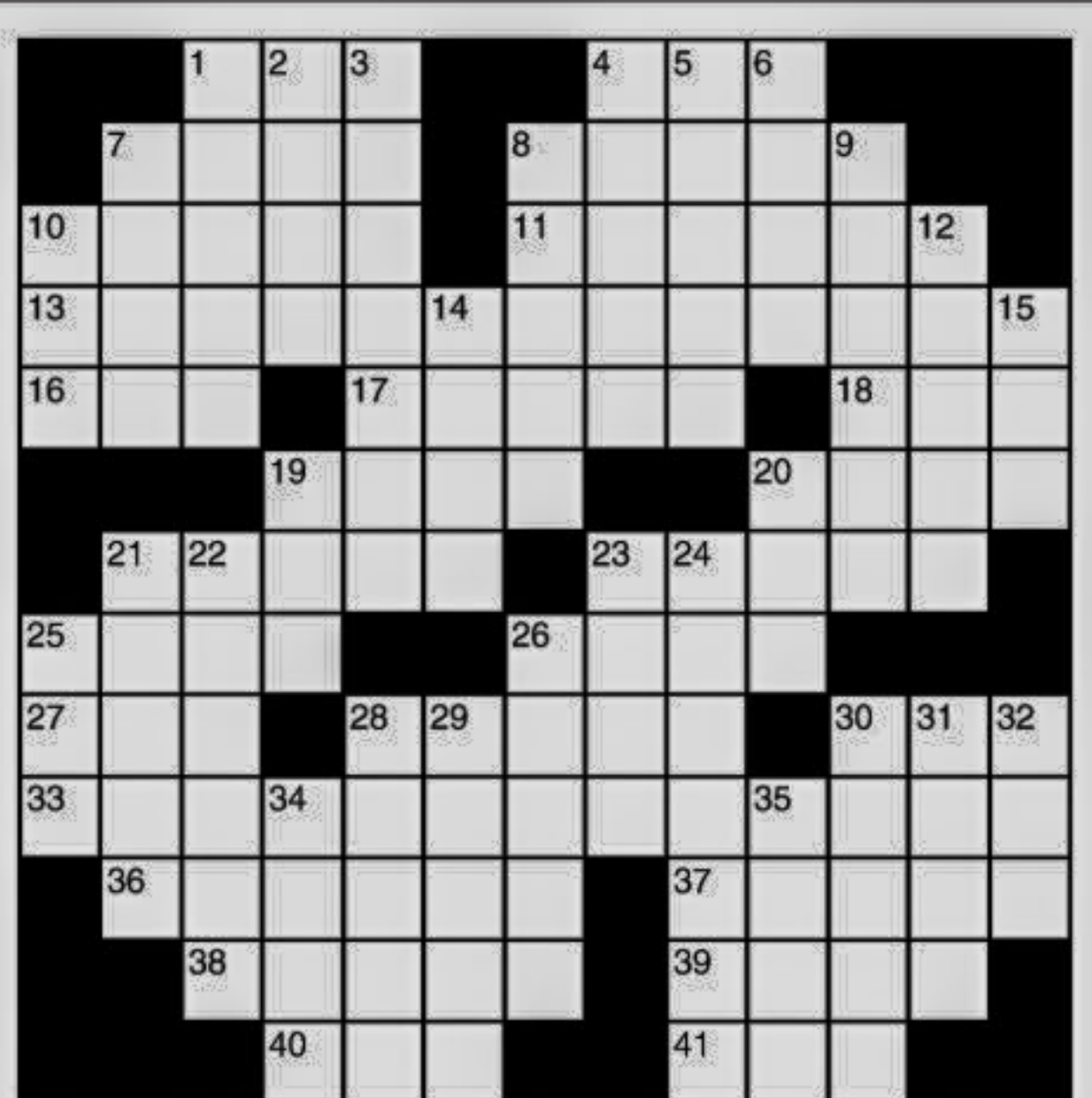
update the media about the latest timing of the men's team and women's team in the training. BOXING SQUAD

Moshiur Rahman (48kg), Wahiduzzaman (51kg), Nadim Hossain (54kg), Jewel Ahmed/Rokonuddin (60kg), Abdur Rahim (64kg), Suruj Bangali (69kg) and Zahiruddin Rubel (81kg). CYCLING SQUAD

WOMEN: Chinghy Barmas, Farhana Sultana, Sathi Biswas, Monoara Khanom Sathi, Akashi Sultana. MEN: Ripon Kumar Biswas, Muslim Uddin Majibur, Shamsul Huda, Anwar Hossain and Ektier Uddin.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Space in between 4 Recipe measure 7 Former larva 8 Esteem 10 Artist's support 11 Greyhound alternative 13 Miscellany 16 Street address? 17 Saints' "Macabre" Got a Secret? 19 Gossip 20 Platoon, for example 21 Set (down) suddenly 23 Made on a loom 25 Hodge-podge 26 Picks up the check 27 Bleachers occupant 28 Tale-tellers 30 Constrictor 33 Irregular moves 36 Sawbuck 37 Gear up 38 Money 39 Baseball scores 40 Obtain 41 Perched Solution time: 21 mins. OLDS BAH IBID ROOT AAH NODE TUNA CREATION STATION GULLY URN FRI BRISK ORATION OER TWO NIN OVATION UNCLE INN USE EMITS ELATION VACATION HOME EDEN DNA EWER REDS SSR RAND



CRYPTOQUIP

WD OTNOMT GWUQNCTF SJ TDDTQYWCT PTYZNG DNF FTGAQWJX UPNX, W'G QSMM YZSY S ONMMAYWNJ UNMAYWNJ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AN ELEPHANT DRIVING A HEAVY RIG MUST NEED TO TAKE A BREAK. MAYBE IT'LL PULL INTO A TRUNK STOP. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals P