

Mithun captain of Academy team

SPORTS REPORTER

Wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Mithun was named captain of the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy team for the upcoming home series against South Africa National Cricket Academy team.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced two separate teams for the two four-day, three one-day and two T20 matches while former national skipper Habibur Bashar, who recently retired from all form of cricket, has been named team operations manager.

South Africa National Cricket Academy team will be touring Bangladesh from April 20 to May 12.

The selected cricketers for the four-day matches will have to report by 5pm on Tuesday at the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy, Mirpur.

SQUAD FOR FOUR-DAYERS Rony Talukdar, Nadim Uddin, Mahmudul Hasan, Mohammad Mithun (captain), Shuvagoto Hom, Sabbir Rahman, Nasir Hossain (vice-captain), Shuvashish Roy, Emon Ahmed, Alauddin Babu, Saqlain Sajib, Tanbir Hayder, Zubair Ahmed and Shaker Ahmed.

Stand-by: Anamul Haque, Kazi Kamrul Islam, Ariful Haque, Mohammad Abul Hasan.

SQUAD FOR ONE-DAY & T20:

Rony Talukdar, Asif Ahmed, Mohammad Mithun (captain), Shuvagoto Hom, Sabbir Rahman, Nasir Hossain (vice-captain), Anamul Haque, Shuvashish Roy, Alauddin Babu, Kazi Kamrul Islam, Nazmul Hossain, Sanjamul Islam, Ariful Haque and Zubair Ahmed.

Stand-by: Shaker Ahmed, Muktar Ali, Mahmudul Hasan, Tanbir Hayder.

ITINERARY

April 22-25: 1st 4-dayer at Chittagong

April 28-May 1: 2nd 4-dayer at Bogra.

May 4: 1st one-day at Bogra.

May 6: 2nd one-day at Bogra.

May 8: 3rd one-day at BKSP.

May 10: 1st T20 at BKSP.

May 11: 2nd T20 at BKSP.

RMFS dump Brothers

SPORTS REPORTER



Rahmatganj MFS came from behind to beat Brothers Union 3-1 in their home match of the Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Murad Ahmed Milon gave Brothers Union a 14-minute lead before Jakir Hossain levelled the margin in the 32nd minute and four minutes later Idris Kasirye put the old Dhaka outfit ahead striking his second league goal.

But two minutes from the break, Brothers bit back to equalise the margin through a strike from Khalilur Rahman.

However Rahmatganj finally had the last laugh as Paul Macjames struck the decisive goal six minutes from time to give Rahmatganj their fifth win in 15 matches that also lifted Rahmatganj to the fifth position in the 13-team competition with 18 points.

Away at the MA Aziz Stadium, hosts Chittagong Mohammedan played out a goalless draw with Farashganj Sporting Club. With their sixth draw in 15 matches, Chittagong Mohammedan now have 15 points, two ahead of Farashganj, who however has played a match more than the Black and Whites.

At the Feni Stadium, visiting Beanibazar SC also came from behind to hold hosts Feni Soccer Club to a 1-1 draw at the Feni Stadium. In fact Feni were ahead in the fifth minute before Sohail Rana levelled the margin for Beanibazar SC.

A cricket crunch

AFP, London

Cricket could be facing a world shortage of bats as a result of a European Union directive, according to a report in England on Friday.

The bizarre crisis follows an EU decision to outlaw before export the chemical methyl bromide, which is an insecticide used to treat the wood in bats, because it is said to damage the ozone layer.

Each year around 100,000 raw blades made of willow, known as clefts, are exported from England to India and Pakistan where they are made into the finished product.

But the wood cannot leave the country without a fumigation certificate and India and Pakistan do not accept any alternative treatment for the wood apart from methyl bromide.

It is feared the 10 million pounds a year industry could go bust within three months unless a solution is found - potentially plunging cricket into chaos.

Geoff Watling of Anglian Willow Services told the Daily Express: "We have just been following procedures introduced many years ago by the Ministry of Agriculture. Now our entire future is under threat because of an EU directive.

"We were told a form of heat treatment can be used as an alternative but it just doesn't work. It was not a helpful solution.

"Unfortunately the Indian Government cannot allow our willow to be imported without a treatment certificate. On that basis I give our industry 12 weeks to survive. We alone have 1,400 prepared trees ready to go.

"Unless something is done we are going to run out of cricket bats. The worldwide supply of Test standard and Twenty20 bats for the national and county sides could dry up within two years."

A Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs spokesman confirmed to the Daily Telegraph: "Under the Montreal Protocol methyl bromide was banned from 2005 in the developed world, except for quarantines, pre-shipment and critical uses.

"Methyl Bromide is no longer allowed at all from March 19, 2010."

Tharoor claims innocence

AFP, New Delhi



An Indian minister Friday denied any wrongdoing in a scandal over the ownership of an Indian Premier League cricket team as the government struggled for an answer to the week-long controversy.

Shashi Tharoor, a former high-flying UN official, has been at the centre of a storm since Sunday when news broke that a female friend had been granted a free stake worth 15 million dollars in a new IPL franchise.

Indian media reported that the woman, based in Dubai, was Tharoor's girlfriend.

Tharoor put together the consortium that bought the Kochi team, in Kerala, the southern state he represents in the parliament, and the opposition accused him of securing the stake for his friend as a "consideration" for his services.

In a statement in parliament, repeatedly adjourned because of angry shouting by the opposition, Tharoor said he had "not benefited, and do not intend to benefit, in any way financially from my association with the team now or at a later stage."

He said his conduct had been "within the

bounds of appropriate conduct for a member of parliament ... and a member of the union council of ministers."

Tharoor has held talks with his party boss, Sonia Gandhi, and briefed senior government ministers over the past week, but media interest and pressure from the opposition shows no sign of abating.

The suave, debonair Tharoor, a junior foreign minister and also a successful author, has refused to bow to opposition demands to resign.

Details of the Kochi franchise were revealed by the IPL chief Lalit Modi on microblogging website Twitter, leading to public row between the two men.

With interest mounting in the ownership of other teams, income tax officials raided the offices of the IPL umbrella organisation on Thursday.

Tharoor spent almost three decades in the United Nations before quitting in 2007, and was elected as a Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram, capital of Kerala, last year.

The IPL is a heady mix of sport and showbiz featuring teams made up of international stars and Indians who play a shortened format of the game, drawing capacity crowds across the country.

Farcical final

FROM PAGE 17

the final citing the tournament committee's verbal assurance. They claimed that the committee had no problem to allow their foreign recruit to play the game.

But, tournament and league committee secretary Anvir Adel had declined to let Mohammad's foreign player play as the Usha officials asked the committee to follow the by-laws which states that each team will be able to field five foreign players in a match but they must be registered by 8:00pm the day before the match along with Tk 500 as registration fee.

The Motijheel giants then argued that they were not given the by-laws, which was not even approved by the tournament committee, and they looked determined to play with their Malaysian recruit.

"As an experienced organiser, I have brought the Malaysian player knowing the rules of the tournament and would not bring him if I was not aware of the rules,"

Mohammedan hockey committee secretary Sajed AA Adel said.

"By-laws of the tournament was not even approved," added Adel, also a former general secretary of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF).

Tournament committee secretary Anvir Adel having denied Sajed's demand said that the representatives of the participating clubs had signed the by-laws and later he showed it to the reporters. He also raised the question of how a tournament can go up to the final without the by-laws being approved.

Anvir also declined to give Mohammedan verbal assurance saying: "I told them that they could field the foreign players if the by-laws permitted them."

However the statement was over when BHF president Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman came down to the field to request Sajed to start the game within a few minutes as the chief guest Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith was

on his way to the stadium.

The game got underway at 5:20pm with both captains taking part in the toss and moments later, Usha Krira Chakra protested fielding the Malaysian player.

Usha general secretary Abdur Rashid Shikdar convinced his boys to play under protest.

"We have already filed a complaint against Mohammedan for fielding an unregistered foreigner and the league committee will decide it," said Shikdar adding that they had played the final for the greater interest of the game and did not want to disappoint a 2000-strong crowd.

In another twist, Anvir Adel resigned from his post as tournament and league committee secretary before the delayed start of the game, and said that it was tough for him to work under the circumstances.

"It is really difficult to work with people who sign and then refuse that they have done so," said Anvir.



Spaniard David Ferrer hits a return to German Philipp Kohlschreiber during the Monte Carlo Masters Series quarterfinals in Monaco yesterday.

Formula 1 chief confirms 20 races for 2011

AFP, Shanghai

Formula One supreme Bernie Ecclestone on Friday confirmed there will be a record 20 Grand Prix races in the World Championship next year with a race in India joining the calendar.

Ecclestone had been expected to drop one or two races to make room for India but despite rumours that the events held in Turkey and planned for South Korea were under pressure, he insisted they will continue.

Fresh from a visit to Yeongam in South Korea, Ecclestone told reporters at the Shanghai International Circuit, hosting the Chinese Grand Prix this weekend, he was confident the first Korean Grand Prix would go ahead in October.

"We will definitely be there," he said. "We will be there."

"And next year? We are not dropping anything -- it's 20 races -- getting ready for 25!"

The Indian event, to be staged at a purpose-built sports complex, including a cricket stadium, at Noida, near Delhi, will take place in October 2011. It is set to have a 10-year contract.

Ecclestone also criticised local race organisers in China for not promoting their event properly. The Chinese Grand Prix is the fourth stop of the 19-race season in 2010.

"It is a shame because the whole venue is super, everything is good," the 79-year-old F1 boss said. "They are not promoting it properly -- it is as simple as that."

"The people that run the place ought to do a bit more. If you were in Shanghai you wouldn't even know there is a race here."

Deccan dispose

FROM PAGE 17

SCORES IN BRIEF KINGS XI PUNJAB: 174 for 3 in 20 overs (Jayawardene 93\*, Sangakkara 62; Harris 1-27)

DECCAN CHARGERS: 178 for 5 in 19.1 overs (Sharma 68\*, Suman 43; Yuvraj 1-22) Result: Deccan Chargers win by 5 wickets

Sultans

FROM PAGE 17

with the bat as he scored a 10-ball 18 that contained two timely boundaries.

This was the third win for Sultans of Sylhet in four matches while Barisal Blazers suffered their third defeat in as many games. Barisal Blazers were bundled out for 119 runs after deciding to bat first with Sri Lankan Jeevantha Rulungana making the team highest 26 off 17 balls.

Mosharrar Hossain, Sajju Datta and Farid Uddin Masud claimed two wickets each to cause the damage.

SCORES IN BRIEF BARISAL BLAZERS: 119 all out in 19.5 overs (Nazimuddin 10, Jeevantha 26, Nafees 20, Rokibul 16, Sahagir 21, extras 6; Mosharrar 2-30, Sajju 2-20, Masud 2-14).

SULTANS OF SYLHET: 120-6 in 19.1 overs (Kaushalya 17, Saram 39 not out, Reza 13, Mashrafe 18, extras 10). Result: Sultans of Sylhet won by four wickets. Man-of-the-match: Indika De Saram.

Nadal in last four

Tennis

AFP, Monte Carlo

Rafael Nadal survived a brief rain break before resuming his storied clay-court dominance with a 6-4, 6-2 quarterfinal defeat of fellow Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero at the Monte Carlo Masters on Friday.

Second-seeded Nadal has now won 30 consecutive matches on the clay of the seaside Country Club, his last loss at the event coming in 2003.

The four-time Roland Garros winner, in search of his first ATP title since last May, will face another countryman Saturday when he plays for a finals spot against 11th seed David Ferrer, who put out German Philip Kohlschreiber 7-5, 7-6 (7/1).

This year's event has turned into an Iberian play-day, with Spaniards accounting for five of eight spots heading into the quarterfinals.

That marked a first at the Master 1000 level during the post-1968 Open era.

The last time Spain sent five men to the last eight was at home in Valencia two years ago.

Nadal improved his record on clay against the man who preceded him as a major clay-court force to 5-1, last losing to the 30-year-old former number one in their last meeting in the Rome second round two years ago.

Demi relishing run-in

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich defender Martin Demichelis says he is relishing the league leaders' title run-in with German league rivals Schalke chasing their first Bundesliga crown.

Bayern host relegation candidates Hanover at Munich's Allianz Arena on Saturday evening, while second-placed Schalke will be bidding to close the two-point gap with four games remaining against Moeenchengladbach.

After this weekend, Bayern face Gladbach, Bochum and bottom-side Hertha Berlin while Schalke take on Hertha, Werder Bremen and Mainz with the season set to finish on Saturday May 8.

"I'm really looking forward to the run-in," said the Argentine star who is currently wearing a face mask after picking up an injury in his side's 1-0 friendly win over Germany last month.

"This is when we can show what we're capable of." The 29-year-old must wear the mask until the end of the season, but Bayern coach Louis van Gaal will be happy to

have him in the side - Munich are undefeated in all Bundesliga and cup fixtures in which Demichelis has started this season.

For Bayern's game with Hanover, van Gaal is expected to have a full-strength side including the deadly attacking force of Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery with the Champions League semifinal against Lyon looming.

With third-placed Leverkusen four points behind Schalke and six points from Bayern, Royal Blues manager Felix Magath says it is a two-horse race now.

"There are only two teams who have a realistic chance of the title now - Bayern and us," said the former Munich coach whose side were beaten 2-1 at home by Bayern a fortnight ago.

"We are the only team who can still deny Bayern."

FIXTURES

Saturday VfB Stuttgart v Bayer Leverkusen, VfL Wolfsburg v Werder Bremen, Schalke 04 v Borussia M'Gladbach, Hamburg v Mainz 05, Freiburg v Nuremberg, Bayern Munich v Hanover 96 Sunday Borussia Dortmund v Hoffenheim, Eintracht Frankfurt v Hertha Berlin

India to tour Zimbabwe in May-June

AFP, New Delhi

India will tour Zimbabwe in May-June for a triangular one-day series with Sri Lanka as the third team, the Indian cricket board said Friday.

Mahendra Dhoni's men will also play two Twenty20 internationals against the home side during the tour, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a press release.

FIXTURE

May 28: India v Zim, Bulawayo May 30: India v SL, Bulawayo June 1: Zim v SL, Bulawayo June 3: Zim v India, Harare June 5: India v SL, Harare June 7: Zim v SL, Harare June 9: Final, Harare June 12: 1st Twenty20, India v Zim, Harare June 13: 2nd Twenty20, India v Zim, Harare

Canada unable to host U-19 World Cup

CRICINFO, undated

Canada have pulled out of hosting the 2012 Under-19 World Cup after admitting they wouldn't be able to supply the required number of venues for the event.

The move doesn't come as a huge surprise following the recent reports from Canada over the problems with various grounds and bringing them up to standard. Last month the former Cricket Canada CEO, Atul Ahuja, hit out at the preparations in a wide-ranging letter which slammed the administration.

"The ICC had installed 10 turf wickets for the ICC Trophy in 2001," he said. "Currently, none of those are operational."

At the time the board told Cricinfo it was confident of bringing facilities up to standard, but conceded defeat earlier this month when they wrote to ICC.

"We are grateful to Cricket Canada for making what we recognise will have been a very difficult decision but their realistic and responsible approach allows ICC the time to find a suitable alternative venue," said ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat.

ICC will discuss possible alternative venues during the boarding meeting in Dubai on April 19 and 20.

Akram alleges tampering

CRICINFO, undated

Wasim Akram, the former Pakistan fast bowler and current bowling coach of the Kolkata Knight Riders, has said players in the IPL have been actively tampering with the ball, making it difficult for batsmen to sight it in the later stages of the innings.

Akram said he has spotted bowlers rubbing red soil on the ball in places like Mumbai, Rajasthan and Ahmedabad once the floodlights take effect, thereby reducing its visibility when the batsmen are looking to accelerate.

"I won't name anyone but I have seen quite a few cricketers who have been rubbing mud on the ball and that is also tampering," Akram told espnstar.com. "If umpires are not watching then I don't know who is. In this IPL, umpires should look for players who are putting mud on the ball because you can't alter the state of the ball with anything."

The ties

FROM PAGE 17

Malik, who is serving a one-year ban on charges of indiscipline during Pakistan's tour of Australia and New Zealand, said Mirza's support had helped him through the dispute.

"Our parents also supported us and that is why we are here," he said.

Malik had admitted beginning a telephone relationship with Siddiqui in 2001 after she sent him photographs -- but said he later believed the pictures were of another woman.

Siddiqui then lodged a complaint with police in Hyderabad, where Siddiqui also lives, negotiated the settlement which allowed the marriage to go ahead.

"It is all in the past and now we are happy," said Mirza.

Cyclones brew trouble

FROM PAGE 17

capitalise on them as the Dynamites were bowled out for a modest yet competitive total.

But the main reason for the Dynamites' moderate total failing to develop into a huge one was pacesman Rubel Hossain, who took five wickets for 32 runs.

The man known for his slinging action went on a clean-bowling spree, splaying the stumps of all his victims that included Riyad, Mohammad Rafique and Mehrab Hossain.

As the Cyclones began their chase of 156 runs, they failed to make a rapid start after their icon player Tamim Iqbal was made to bat at number four due to an injury to the left hand he suffered

while fielding.

Along with the injured Tamim, Faisal Hossain revived the Cyclones' innings somewhat and looked good to push the Dynamites but their untimely dismissals changed the course of the match.

Ashrafal took out Tamim for 23 off 24 balls when the left-hander holed out to Mendis at long-off in the 16th over. The Lankan had earlier taken a brilliant diving catch running from deep square-leg to get rid of Uttam Sarkar in the second over.

Ashrafal ended up with yet another three-wicket haul while Rafique, Mahbubul Alam and Millinda Siriwardana took one each.

With this win, Dhaka Dynamites continued their all-win record in the tourna-

ment while the Cyclones departed with only one win from their five matches.

Later, Tamim said he had pain on his left hand, the same place where he was hurt against Zimbabwe.

"I will consult the physio tomorrow (Saturday), and do according to his advice," said Tamim.

SCORES IN BRIEF DHAKA DYNAMITES: 155 all out in 20 overs (Mendis 32, Shamsur 25, Riyad 22; Rubel 5-32).

CYCLONES OF CHITTAGONG: 138-8 in 20 overs (Faisal 43, Tamim 23; Ashrafal 3-22).

Result: Dhaka Dynamites won by 17 runs. Man-of-the-match: Rubel Hossain.