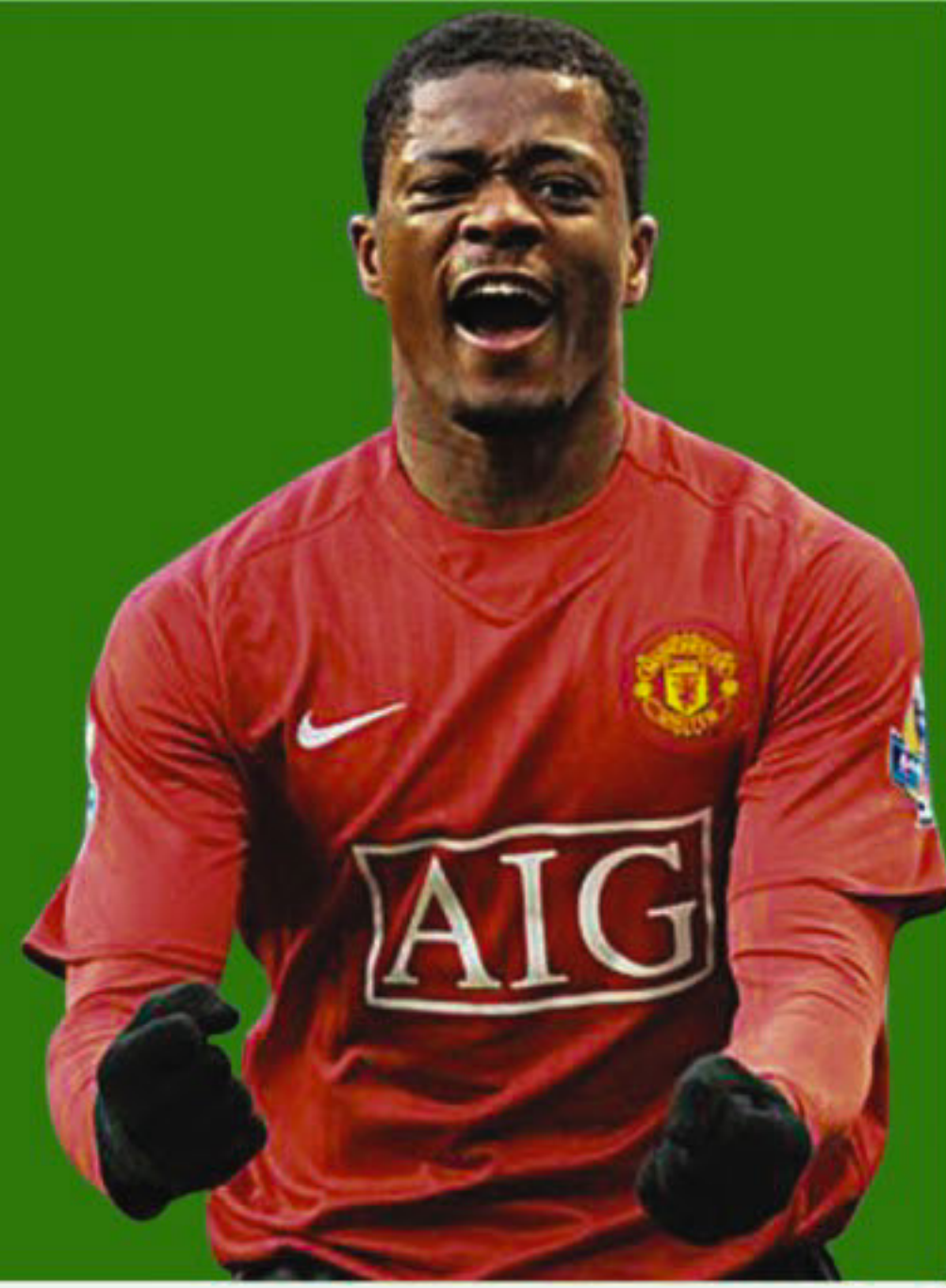


Disciplinary hearing for French stars

Five players in France's World Cup squad will face a disciplinary hearing for their part in Les Bleus' disastrous campaign in South Africa, the French Football Federation (FFF) said on Friday.

The five players are captain Patrice Evra, Nicolas Anelka, who was sent home during the tournament for insulting coach Raymond Domenech, Eric Abidal, Franck Ribery and Jeremy Toulalan, the FFF added in a statement.



Fresh contract for selectors

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is all over the news for the last month and unfortunately most of the time it has been for the wrong reasons. The trend continued as the recent decision of extending the selectors' tenure for three months took center stage and generated much discussion.

Following the criticism over the brief extension, BCB's president AFM Mustafa Kamal and director and cricket operations committee chairman Enayet Hossain Siraj met with the selectors on Thursday.

And that 'amicable' discussion ended with a promise.

"We have discussed about a lot of issues including World Cup preparations. There is a plan to start the preparation

from August 20 after Jamie Siddons returning from his holiday," informed Siraj.

"Yes, the contract issue was also discussed and what we told that we will give everybody a fresh contract and there would be no question of short-term or long-term contracts. We are going to appoint a bowling and a fielding coach very soon," informed Siraj yesterday.

What Siraj hinted was that there is no chance of bringing changes to the current selection panel and that was the reason they conducted extensive discussions with the selectors about team selection and preparation for the 2011 World Cup, where Bangladesh is one of co-hosts along with India and Sri Lanka.

It was not possible to get the other side's versions since chief selector Rafiqul Alam has proved unreachable for the last few days and the other selectors were also not ready to make any comments on the issue.

But it was learnt that the authority

would take seven days and engage in unofficial meetings to solve the issue.

The Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel has already come under huge scrutiny after the Tigers ignominious defeats against Ireland and Netherlands. And the whispering was all around that this selection committee accepted the interference from the board high-ups regarding team selection, which virtually affected the team's performance in recent times.

Many have already termed it a 'puppet selection committee'.

"They should resign from their post after the way the board dishonored them if they have some self-respect," said a board insider on condition of anonymity.

On one hand the board have been keeping faith on this selection committee despite dissatisfaction over their performance while on the other hand the selectors have also been unhappy with the board interference though they have not had the guts to protest the notion.

BOA ignores chess

SPORTS REPORTER

The exclusion of chess from the Asian Games-bound Bangladesh contingent has raised questions about the selection procedure of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) as the performance of the chess team has so far been satisfactory in the last Asian Games in 2006.

Bangladesh finished joint fourth and eventually came in seventh through a tie-breaker in the men's team event of chess, one of 10 disciplines that Bangladesh took part in during Doha Asian Games in Qatar.

Bangladesh's lone achievement in the Doha Asiad was a bronze medal from kabaddi. Besides, the other notable performances, albeit without a medal was in weightlifting.

The BOA has chosen 14 disciplines -- football, cricket (men & women), hockey, kabaddi (men & women), shooting, swimming, athletics, boxing, archery, wushu, karate, weightlifting, taekwondo and golf and the intensive training of those disciplines will get underway on August 10.

They also dropped the women's kabaddi team citing fund shortage, but later included it in due to pressure from the federation, who insisted that the women's kabaddi team have a bright chance to win a medal in the absence of the Japan and Iran teams.

The BOA initially asked the chess federation to send names of one man and one woman chess

player for the rapid chess event, but the federation wanted to send both men's and women's teams instead of just for rapid chess event, in which they have only a slim chance of doing well.

"Compared to the previous match, we have a strong chance to win a medal in the team event and logically we denied to send players in the individual event," said BCF general secretary Mokaddes Hossain adding that if Bangladesh could not do well in the team event, they had good chance to earn individual norms from the event.

"I have doubts on whether they understand the game of chess, because if they did they could not drop it," said Hossain.

But BOA vice-president and chairman of training committee Mizanur Rahman Manu was not backing down.

"All right, we may not understand chess, but they should have come forward to make us understand and I think there was a communication gap. Still chess has a chance to be included," said the BOA vice president adding that they just considered the performance of last South Asian Games when choosing the disciplines for the Asian Games to be held in Guangzhou, China in November.

Manu informed that BCF president and civil aviation and tourism minister GM Quader wrote a letter to BOA president and Army Chief Abdul Mubeen, who would will take a final decision once he returns from abroad.

Week-long camp for U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has been selected twenty-six cricketers for the two-week training camp of Under-19 developments squad.

The camp will start at Dinajpur BKSP from August 9. The selected players has been asked to report on next Sunday by 5pm at the Dinajpur BKSP.

The selected players are Ahmedul Kabir Rudra, Aslam Hossain, Ashik Ul Alam Naem, Deedar Hossain Imran, Al-Amin, Touhid Tareq Khan, Frazair Rahman Romeo, Prosenjit Das, Shahriar Sumon, Ratul Islam, Arif Reza, Zakaria Masud, Abdur Rashid, Fakrul Islam Nipu, Dewan Sabbir, MD Shuvo, Abu Jayed Chowdhury, Habibullah, Asif Hasan, Minhaj Reza, Nayeem Islam, Rony Chowdhury, Moniruddin Masud, Samsul Islam Anik, Irfan Shukkur and Jashim Uddin

Sheikh Jamal aim for foreign coach

SPORTS REPORTER

Newcomers Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club have already surprised the sports arena in their first appearance in the top fray having confirmed country's top footballers long before the proposed players' transfer.

They are now trying to rope in a foreign coach and trainer after being deprived of getting a local coach.

"We offered a local the chance to guide our side, but he expressed an inability due to his job restrictions and we have been searching for a foreign coach and trainer and already set contacts with a few proven coaches and I believe we will get them soon," said Manjur Kader, the president of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

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PHOTO: AFP

England pacer Stuart Broad (R) jubilates after bowling out Pakistan's Azhar Ali on the first day of the second Test at Edgbaston yesterday.

Eng ravage Pak again

Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

James Anderson and Stuart Broad took four wickets apiece as Pakistan collapsed to 72 all out - their lowest total against England - on the first day of the second Test at Edgbaston here on Friday.

This slump came just five days after Pakistan had been dismissed for their previous lowest against England of 80 in the first of a four Test series that the hosts won by a crushing 354 runs at Trent Bridge on Sunday.

England compounded Pakistan's plight by reaching 43 without loss at tea.

Andrew Strauss, the England captain, who'd started the reply with a first-ball boundary, was 24 not out and fellow left-handed opener Alastair Cook 17 not out, after having an lbw verdict overturned by the Decision Review System (DRS).

Pakistan, as happened at Trent Bridge, were again found wanting against accurate swing bowling in helpful, overcast conditions.

Umar Amin (23), Umar Akmal (17) and

Mohammad Aamer (12) were the only batsmen to make double-figure scores in an innings featuring five noughts.

But for a seventh-wicket stand of 27 between Amin and Aamer, Pakistan may well have been dismissed for under their record low score of 53 against Australia at Sharjah in 2002.

As it was, they were all out inside 40 overs in under three hours.

Anderson had been Pakistan's chief tormentor at Trent Bridge with a career-best 11 for 71. And he produced several near-unplayable deliveries after Pakistan captain Salman Butt won the toss and batted.

But it was Broad, on the ground where a fortnight ago he took a first-class career-best eight for 52 for Nottinghamshire against Warwickshire, who began a collapse that saw Pakistan 37 for six at lunch.

Imran Farhat completed a 24-ball nought when he edged a good length Broad delivery, angled across the left-hander, through to wicketkeeper Matt Prior.

And fellow left-handed opener Butt attempting a rare attacking shot, edged a drive off Finn to Graeme Swann at second slip.

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PHOTO: RUETERS

Sri Lanka off-spinner Suraj Randiv (L) high fives teammate Angelo Mathews after taking India's Murali Vijay's wicket on the fourth day of the third and final Test in Colombo yesterday.

Sri Lanka have India on the ropes

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

India's renowned batsmen were handed a stern challenge to secure a series-levelling win in the final Test after Sri Lanka fought hard with both bat and ball on Friday.

India, set a victory target of 257, ended the rousing fourth day's play on 53-3 in their second innings, following a triple strike by lanky off-spinner Suraj Randiv.

Randiv, sharing the new ball with Lasith Malinga, had in-form Virender Sehwag caught in the slips in his first over and later bowled Rahul Dravid off the inside edge for seven.

He then dismissed opener Murali Vijay for 27 to a disputed catch at short-leg by Mahela Jayawardene, which was referred to the television umpire before the batsman was ruled out.

Sachin Tendulkar, the world's leading run-getter playing a record 169th Test match, kept India's hopes alive with a watchful unbeaten 11.

Nightwatchman Ishant Sharma was on two, with India needing 204 more runs on the final day with seven wickets in hand.

Sri Lanka made 267 in their second innings after a spectacular century partnership for the ninth wicket between Thilan Samaraweera and Ajantha Mendis.

India's spinners had sparked a dramatic collapse in the morning session as

five wickets fell for 24 runs to reduce the hosts to 87-7 in an hour's play.

But the last three wickets added 180 runs to frustrate the Indians as Samaraweera followed his century in the first innings with a fighting 83 in the company of tailenders.

Samaraweera added 38 runs for the eighth wicket with Lasith Malinga (15) and Sri Lanka's record ninth-wicket stand of 118 with Mendis (78).

The duo flayed the Indian attack for two hours and 32 minutes before India broke the partnership in the first over with the second new ball.

Samaraweera attempted to pull a short ball from Abhimanyu Mithun and gloved a catch to Indian captain Mahendra Dhoni behind the stumps.

Mendis, who hit 10 boundaries and a six in his maiden half-century, scored 20 runs in the company of last man Chanaka Welegedara before being held in the covers off Amit Mishra.

India's three spinners, Pragyan Ojha, Mishra and Sehwag, claimed three wickets each on a pitch that afforded turn and bounce to the bowlers.

Sri Lanka added 18 runs to their overnight score of 45-2 when Ojha trapped nightwatchman Randiv leg-before for six, one ball after Dhoni dropped a simple catch behind the stumps.

Ojha then dealt two deadly blows in successive overs, getting rid of Sri Lanka's batting mainstays, Mahela Jayawardene

and skipper Kumar Sangakkara.

Jayawardene edged a sharp turning ball to Rahul Dravid in the slips after making five, while Sangakkara (28) pulled a short delivery to Suresh Raina at square-leg.

It was the Sri Lankan captain's first failure in the series after making 103 in the first Test, 219 and 42 not out in the second and 75 in the first innings of this match.

Mishra, who was hammered for 1-140 in the first innings, then claimed two wickets with consecutive deliveries to reduce the hosts to 87-7.

Angelo Mathews hit a full-toss to Tendulkar at mid-wicket, while Prasanna Jayawardene was out leg-before off the next ball.

Malinga denied Mishra a hat-trick and partnered Samaraweera in the rescue act, before he was leg-before to Sehwag before lunch.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 425 (Dilshan 41, Sangakkara 75, Jayawardene 56, Samaraweera 137 not out, Mathews 45; Ojha 4-115, Sharma 3-72)

INDIA: First innings 436 (Sehwag 109, Dravid 23, Tendulkar 41, Laxman 56, Raina 62, Mithun 46, Mishra 40; Malinga 3-119, Mendis 2-109, Randiv 4-80)

SRI LANKA: Second innings 267 (Paranavitana 16, Dilshan 13, Sangakkara 28, Samaraweera 83, Mendis 78; Sehwag 3-51, Ojha 3-89, Mishra 3-47)

INDIA: Second innings 53 for 3 (Vijay 27, Tendulkar 11 not out; Randiv 3-20)



PHOTO: STAR

Adivasi King Debasis Roy (front) takes part in a friendly football match at the Dhaka University Ground against a select mainland team yesterday as part of an ongoing Adivasi festival.

Bhaji hits out at pitch

Cricket

CRICINFO

Harbhajan Singh has hit out at the benign nature of pitch laid out for the second Test between India and Sri Lanka at the SSC. Bowlers from both sides struggled to make an impression during the Test in which several batting records were broken. Harbhajan told Hindustan Times that such lifeless pitches brought nothing to Test cricket, "not even spectators".

"You just can't have one-sided contests where the batsmen dominate," he said. "The seamers run in and bowl their hearts out and get nothing out of it. There should be some purchase on the first two days. Later on, if the spinners bowl well, they should get bounce, if not turn."

"People say Test cricket is dying. It is because of such one-sided contests. If you look at series in Australia and England, they get a lot of results because they produce good wickets, wickets that are true. That's the way it should be everywhere."

There has been a glut of India-Sri Lanka encounters recently.

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SPORTS POLL
TODAY'S QUESTION
 Do the Tigers need a bowling coach?
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 England v Pakistan
 Second Test, Day Two
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