

ICC CRICKET
WORLD CUP TALK

'It was a fantastic team'

Javed Omar, the obdurate opener and the only Bangladeshi to carry his bat through a completed Test innings, played his first World Cup rather belatedly in 2007. He speaks to The Daily Star about his experience in the Caribbean during Bangladesh's most successful campaign to date.

DSS: How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2007 World Cup?

Javed Omar (JO): It was a big deal for me because I missed the previous two World Cups. Also, I knew that 2007 was my last chance to play in a World Cup, so I was naturally very excited. It was also special because before the World Cups in 2003 and 1999, I was pretty sure that I would play, whereas in 2007 I didn't expect to be included. In my mind I was still hopeful, but with there not being many matches to perform and prove myself before the World Cup, the situation was such that I may not have been included. In the series against Zimbabwe I played very well and also performed well in the league games. And then I got my chance.

DSS: How was the team atmosphere in the West Indies?

JO: The team in 2007 played well and was a good team because there was a good mix of youth and experience. There were established players like Mohammad Rafique, Bashar, Javed Omar, experienced young players like Ashraf, Mashrafe and Razzak, and new players like Shakib, Tamim and Mushfiq.

It was a fantastic team and the dressing room atmosphere was also great. We played well and we really enjoyed it. If you ask a lot of players they will say that that tour was their favourite. Some nights, after matches, four or five of us stayed in the same room.

DSS: What is your sweetest memory of the 2007 World Cup?

JO: Even though I wasn't in the team for the match I was the twelfth man the win against India is my best memory from the World Cup. It was extra special for me because that day was the day my son was born. So, our victory celebrations were all the more enjoyable because of the birth of my son.

It was also a sad time for all of us, because Manzarul Islam Rana died the day before. It hurt me a lot, and the pain was lessened a bit by our victory over India.

DSS: What is your expectation from the 2011 World Cup?

JO: Honestly, what I want is for Bangladesh to play good cricket. I feel bad when experts predict that we will reach the quarters or semis. The public can say that Bangladesh will be champions or things like that, but when the experts say these things, the expectations of the public will escalate, and there will be unnecessary pressure on the team.

For example, in the T20 World Cup, even before it started everyone was saying that we would reach the semis. Then we lost to Ireland and crashed out, and everyone was disappointed.

They are playing outstanding cricket at the moment, let them continue playing in that vein, then we can comment. In 2007, the public was happy that we played good cricket, even though we did not reach the semis. Good cricket should be the expectation this time too.



Javed Omar

Clubs in conflict with nat'l team

SPORTS REPORTER

Croat coach Robert Rubcic has been forced to cancel the scheduled practice match amongst the U-23 booters as part of preparation for the pre-Olympic Qualifier against Kuwait next month as a number of selected players failed to appear at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Only 22 players from the selected 28 reported to the coach as Bangladesh League leaders Sheikh Russel KC did not allow its six players to join citing that a crucial match on Sunday. Even out of those 22, two had taken part in a Bangladesh League match on Tuesday and three had been nursing injuries which left Rubcic with no alternative but to cancel the match.

Badal Roy, chairman of the national team management committee, said that they were looking at alternatives to ensure that national team's preparations are not harmed, even if it meant halting the league for the time being.

"We will soon sit with the Bangladesh League committee to take the final decision as the coach today (Wednesday) asked for four week's time to prepare his team after failing to hold the practice match," said Roy.

American Cup golf from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 31st American Cup Golf Tournament gets underway at the Kurmitola Golf Club today with some 500 professional and amateur golfers taking part in the two-day meet.

Chevron Bangladesh continues to be the co-sponsors of the event along with a host of local and international business organizations including hotels, banks, airlines, oil and gas service groups and energy companies.

"This is an ideal opportunity for both local and expatriate business professionals to interact in a fun setting," American Cup and Chevron Bangladesh president Geoff Strong was quoted as saying by a press release yesterday.

Tears of

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quite a scene as the media crowded around Mohammad Ashraf and Shahriar Nafees, two players who made it to the final fifteen, as Mashrafe belligerently smashed the spinners.

"He is obviously very upset, and I can understand that. This could very well be his last World Cup. I would love to have him in the team but it is just bad timing. It is very unfortunate," said coach Jamie Siddons, adding that it was the best possible team, except for Mashrafe.

"He will be our first replacement come February 19. There will be almost 30 days of hard practice so something is bound to happen and he will come back if he recovers in time," assured Siddons, but it was clear Mashrafe somehow knew his fate had been sealed.

"I know the reason why I have been dropped and I will work on getting fit for the matches. I'm not talking about the World Cup but the matches after that," said the Narail Express.

This is of course not the end of the road for Mashrafe, it never is. But the moment he broke down, it was understandable that he desperately wanted to play the World Cup at home.

The team management has left that window slightly open for the best pace bowler in the country and it is now entirely up to him to recover, and wait for the moment his luck changes.

Tough day for biggies

AFP, Melbourne



Former Australian Open champion Maria Sharapova dug herself out of trouble to reach the Australian Open's third round with a 7-6, 6-3 win over France's Virginie Razzano on Wednesday.

Sharapova, the 2008 winner and the 14th seed, was 0-3 and three break points down in the first set against 100th-ranked Razzano before holding serve and breaking back, and prevailing in the eventual tie-break.

Sharapova had to stave off six break points in the ninth game of the set before finally closing out the win on her third match point.

The glamorous Russian blonde, on the comeback trail after long-term injury problems, will face Germany's 32nd-ranked Julia Goerges in the third round.

Serbian third seed Novak Djokovic had to work overtime to reach the third round with a four-set win over Croatian Ivan Dodig.

The in-form Serb was always expected to be too good for the 81st-ranked Dodig, but was a fraction off his game and struggled to quell his spirited opponent before eventually winning 7-5, 6-7, 6-0, 6-2.

American Venus Williams bravely battled through a painful injury to reach the third round while

Spain's Fernando Verdasco survived a trademark five-set thriller.

Williams looked on the brink of withdrawing after appearing to have injured a groin muscle, before fighting back to beat unheralded Czech Sandra Zahlavova 6-7, 6-0, 6-4 in an enthralling match on Rod Laver Arena.

Meanwhile Verdasco, on the losing end of the Australian Open's longest ever match two years ago, prevailed in five gripping sets against Serbia's Janko Tipsarevic 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6, 6-0.

Women's world number one Caroline Wozniacki

finally hit form and American Andy Roddick also remained on track as a rollercoaster Day Three played out in bright Melbourne sunshine.

Elsewhere Roddick downed Igor Kunitsyn of Russia 7-6, 6-2, 6-3 and Czech sixth seed Tomas Berdych beat Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber in four.

Belgium's Justine Henin won 6-1, 6-3 against Briton Elena Baltacha and Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova beat Arantxa Rus 6-1, 6-4. On Tuesday, favourite Kim Clijsters humiliated former finalist Dinara Safina 6-0, 6-0.



Russian glamour girl Maria Sharapova waves to the crowd after defeating Frenchwoman Virginie Razzano in the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

India surge ahead

AFP, Cape Town

A burst of powerful hitting by Yusuf Pathan spurred India to a thrilling two-wicket win in the third one-day international against South Africa at Newlands on Tuesday.

Chasing a target of 221, India were struggling at 93 for five before Pathan launched a savage assault against South Africa off spinners Johan Botha and JP Duminy.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 220 (Plessis 60, Duminy 52, Smith 43; Zaheer 3-43, Harbhajan 2-32)
INDIA: 223 (Pathan 59, Raina 37, Kohli 28; Morkel 3-28, Steyn 2-31, Duminy 1-9)
Result: India won by two wickets and lead the five-match series 2-1.

Man-of-the-match: Yusuf Pathan.

Different

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of one good innings. I will be back in my place once I do that," said Ashraf, adding that he was sure he wouldn't be dropped.

"I think the selectors considered me because of my big-time experience and I have done well in World Cups in the past. Apart from performance, I can share my experience with my teammates," he said.

Nafees though wasn't sure if he would be picked even after his good form in the Premier League, saying, "I wasn't sure until it was officially declared because I wasn't an automatic choice. I only learnt of it a little while ago when the coach told me."

Abahani win, MSC rebound

SPORTS REPORTER

Imrul Kayes and Rajat Bhatia fired with the bat as Abahani snatched their tenth win in the Premier League yesterday against Prime Dholeswar, while arch-rivals Mohammedan (MSC) came back to winning ways beating high-flying Biman in a closely fought encounter.

ABAHANI-DOLESHWAR

At the Fatullah Stadium, both Kayes and Bhatia fell short of scoring hundreds but made sure that their team reached a fighting total of 248 in 50 overs. Kayes scored 82 of 100 balls. However, it was Bhatia's all-round performance that made the win easy as he scored 90 of 96 balls and later picked up 4 wickets for just 20 runs. Half centuries from Arman Hossain and Nazmul Hossain went in vain as Doleshwar were bundled out in the 45th over for 209 runs, handing Abahani a 39-run victory.

BIMAN-MSD

After the heavy defeat against Abahani, MSC came back strongly to win against Biman at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Winning the toss, Biman batted first and posted a challenging total of 244 for 6 in 50 overs. MSC had to wait till the final over to secure their win and it needed help from their lower order batsmen. When the eighth batsman Azhar Mahmood was bowled by a brilliant slower ball from Shafiqul, Muktar Ali

and Enamul Jr struggled to get the runs but in the end managed to win with Muktar scoring an unbeaten 37 off 35 balls. Sharifullah picked 3 wickets giving away 39 runs.

KALABAGAN-SURJOTORUN

At BKSP-2, Kalabagan batted first and scored 257 runs losing 8 wickets. There were no big innings from any individual and few chipped in with 30ish scores. Highest score of 49 came from the bat of Rokibul Hasan. Surjotorun failed to reach the target as their batting collapsed once again and they were all out in the 45th over for just 177 runs on the board. Arafat Sunny led the bowling attack with 4 wickets.

BRIEF SCORES

ABAHANI: 248-9 in 50 Overs. (Kayes 82, Bhatia 90; Delwar 2-39, Arafat 2-40)
DHOLESHWAR: 209 all out in 44.2 overs. (Arman 61, Nazmul 65; Bhatia 4-20, Rafique 3-42)

Result: Abahani won by 39 runs.
BIMAN: 244-6 in 50 overs. (Avishek 52, Yasir 54; Azhar 2-42, Shakib 2-46)

MSC: 245-8 in 49.1 overs. (Azhar 53, Nazimuddin 48, Shakib 41; Sharifullah 3-39, Sunny 2-41)

Result: MSC won by 2 wickets.
KALABAGAN: 257-8 in 50 overs. (Rokibul 49, Wajid 45; Shuvo 2-47, Razzak 2-52)

SURJO TORUN: 177 all out in 44.4 overs. (Hamidul 41, Dhiman 32; Arafat 4-32, Mahmudul 3-14)
Result: Kalabagan won by 80 runs.

Squad

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years and as well he didn't do anything special in the domestic competition. On the other hand Shuvo played good cricket in the last two series and Ashraf has the experience of playing on the big stage and he has also played some good cricket in the Premier League," defended Rafiqul.

"Alok hasn't played in the national team for the last two years," echoed Siddons with his chief selector.

Rafiqul also said that they had the plan to design the team with three pacers and they mainly focused on the spin attack considering the conditions.

"We generally play with two pacers in this kind of condition, so there is no point to take one more pacer in the team," said Rafiqul.

"We picked three left-arm spinners against teams which are weak against the outgoing ball and have more right-handers," added Siddons.

Rafiqul however was not ready to give any answer when asked whether their short tenure hampered their World Cup planning.

Pakistan end drought



AFP, Wellington

Pakistan stubbornly ground out a draw in the second Test against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve on Wednesday to secure their first series win in four years.

Captain Misbahul Haq produced a man-of-the-match performance with an unbeaten 70 off 226 balls to frustrate the New Zealand attack and ensure Pakistan reached stumps at 226 for five after being set a target of 274.

The draw followed Pakistan's crushing 10-wicket victory in the first Test at Hamilton and gave the tourists a 1-0 series win, their first since overcoming the West Indies 2-0 in 2006-07.

It also maintained Pakistan's record of never losing a Test match at Wellington's Basin Reserve.

Misbah said his side went into the final day happy to hang on for the draw and claim the series.

"In the end, I think the series was important for us, rather

than just this game," he said. "Everybody supported each other and really performed well."

New Zealand's hopes of bowling Pakistan out on the final day were raised when three wickets fell in the first hour as Chris Martin and Tim Southee made the most of the new ball.

Southee trapped Taufeeq Umar lbw for a first ball duck in the second over, with Martin dismissing Azhar Ali (10) lbw nine overs later.

SCORES IN BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 356 (Vettori 110, Taylor 78, Young 57; Gul 4-87, Tanvir 3-93)

PAKISTAN: First innings 376 (Misbah 99, Younis 73, Taufeeq 70, Azhar 67; Martin 4-91, Vettori 4-100)

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings 293 (Guptill 73, McCullum 64, Taylor 52; Gul 4-61, Rehman 3-119)

PAKISTAN: Second innings 226 for 5 (Younis 81, Misbah 70, Hafeez 32; Southee 2-49, Martin 2-63)
Result: Test drawn.

Man-of-the-match: Misbahul Haq.

Final WC squads named

AGENCIES



Countries around the world have named their 15-man squads for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. The showpiece event gets underway with the opening ceremony in Dhaka on February 17.

The final squads are as follows:

ENGLAND
England handed wicketkeeper Matt Prior a surprise call up after 10 months out of the team. Prior replaces Steve Davies on the 15-man squad.

SQUAD
Andrew Strauss (captain), James Anderson, Ian Bell, Tim Bresnan, Stuart Broad, Paul Collingwood, Eoin Morgan, Kevin Pietersen, Matt Prior (wicketkeeper), Ajmal Shahzad, Graeme Swann, James Tredwell, Jonathan Trott, Luke Wright, Michael Yardy.

SOUTH AFRICA
Injured all-rounder Jacques Kallis and uncapped leg-spinner Imran Tahir were included but veteran wicketkeeper batsman Mark Boucher failed to find a place in South Africa's fifteen.

SQUAD

Graeme Smith (captain), Hashim Amla, Johan Botha, AB de Villiers (wicketkeeper), JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Colin Ingram, Jacques Kallis, Morne Morkel, Wayne Parnell, Robbie Peterson, Dale Steyn, Imran Tahir, Lonwabo Tsotsobe, Morne van Wyk (wicketkeeper).

NEW ZEALAND
The New Zealand selectors kept their faith in their struggling ODI team, avoiding wholesale change even though they lost their last eleven matches. Bowler Daryl Tuffey was the highest-profile omission from the squad.

SQUAD
Daniel Vettori (captain), Hamish Bennett, James Franklin, Martin Guptill, Jamie How, Brendon McCullum (wicketkeeper), Nathan McCullum, Kyle Mills, Jacob Oram, Jesse Ryder, Tim Southee, Scott Styris, Ross Taylor, Kane Williamson, Luke Woodcock.

IRELAND
Sussex batsman Ed Joyce was on Wednesday named in the Ireland World Cup squad, despite having played for England at the 2007 edition. The 15-man squad includes nine of the players

who ousted Pakistan from the previous edition.

SQUAD
William Porterfield (captain), Andre Botha, Alex Cusack, Niall O'Brien (wicketkeeper), Kevin O'Brien, George Dockrell, Trent Johnston, Nigel Jones, John Mooney, Boyd Rankin, Paul Stirling, Albert van der Merwe, Gary Wilson (wicketkeeper), Andrew White, Ed Joyce.

KENYA
Kenya named a squad that contains experienced players such as Steve Tikolo, David Obuya, and Thomas Odoyo.

SQUAD
Jimmy Kamande (captain), Seren Waters, Alex Obanda, David Obuya, Collins Obuya, Steve Tikolo, Tanmay Mishra, Rakep Patel, Maurice Ouma (wicketkeeper), Thomas Odoyo, Nehemiah Odhiambo, Elijah Otieno, Peter Ongondo, Shem Ngocho, James Ngocho.

HOLLAND SQUAD
Peter Borren (captain), Wesley Baressi (wicketkeeper), Mudassar Bukhari, Atse Buurman, Tom Cooper, Tom de Grooth, Alexei Kervezee, Bradley Kruger, Bernard Loots, Adeel Raja, Pieter Seelaar, Eric Swarczynski, Ryan Ten Doeschate, Berend Westdijk, Bas Zuiderent.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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12 Tennis legend Virginia
13 Bloodhound's clue
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15 On
16 Canadian Conservative
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18 Shril bark
19 NYC hrs.
20 Force inhibiting progress
21 Corn spike
23 Chowded down
25 Scottish landowners
28 Rids of lather
32 Memorable mission?
33 Occurrence

34 "Goodfellas" actor
36 Nauseated
37 Just out
38 Spring mo.
39 Aid at the plate
42 A Bobbsey twin
44 Amahl's night visitors
48 Recede
49 Predicament
50 Symbol
51 Family member, for short
52 — and the King of Siam

53 Dweeb
54 Cleo's slayer
55 A really long time
56 Deuce topper

20 Money-maker in Colorado
22 Worship
24 Traffic jam
25 Young fellow
26 Pub order
27 Actor McKellen
29 Vast expanse
30 Type measures
31 Sloppy home
35 In possession of
36 Informal interviews
39 Arizona city
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41 Recipe meas.
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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I ALWAYS SLEEP VERY WELL ON SMALL, PORTABLE FOLDING BEDS. I GUESS I MUST BE COTS-EFFECTIVE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals I