

Adriano's driving licence seized

AS Roma's Brazilian striker Adriano, has had his driving licence confiscated by police after refusing to take a drink driving test, media reports said Wednesday. Adriano refused to be breathalysed and had his licence confiscated, police major Marco Andrade told sports website Globoesporte. He admitted he had been drinking to a police officer, the site said. Under Brazilian law, a driver can refuse to take a test but then faces being disciplined as if he had been caught driving while under the influence of alcohol.



THINK TANK: (FROM L) Bangladesh vice-captain Tamim Iqbal, coach Jamie Siddons and captain Shakib Al Hasan discuss strategy during yesterday's practice session at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

As if it starts tomorrow

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



It's in the air that this port city is going to be a part of history. Big banners promoting the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 have been hoisted all over the places of this metropolis and are bound to draw your attention. So much so that when you just step into the city you will feel the carnival is not far away from you.

The port city has got into such a festive mood and the security rehearsal at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday might give you the false impression that the World Cup is starting here tomorrow! But the tournament proper comes here exactly after a month. Tomorrow's is the first official practice match of this World Cup -- between Bangladesh and Canada.

This venue will play host to two Group B matches -- the Tigers will take on England on March 11 and the Netherlands three days later.

One may still be little surprised by watching the unfinished works at different parts of the city including the main approach road to the stadium and even question could be raised whether everything like lighting, installation of players' sculptures and fountains at Neemtali area of the city, and most importantly the roads, would be ready on time.

Roads are still being dug up here and there and sporadic painting is a common scene these days. One may even get frightened at the sounds of construction work as the Tigers were practising at the middle of the stadium. From that point

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BATTLE PLAN

By default?

MOHAMMAD ISAM

If things had gone to plan since at least 2002, Mohammad Ashraful would have been the undisputed king of Bangladesh cricket. As the years have passed by, Ashraful has slowly taken the shape of a cautionary tale, a bad enough example for kids in every club across the country to be derided if they slack off after making a big one.

Now part of the 15-man squad for the World Cup, the diminutive right-hander is seemingly content at having made it to his third World Cup, only the second Bangladesh player to do so after Mohammad Rafique.

But Ashraful's confidence should come from his ascendance on big occasions

though it is highly disputed that apart from the two World Cups in 2007 (50-over and Twenty20), he hasn't done much in the others. Ashraful, however, has done the job of creating big incidents: his back-to-back gems against Australia and England in 2005. The 100 and 95 made sure the whole world, through the high-strung British media, heard of this talent.

With the World Cup coming up in just over a week's time, it is wise to say that those days are well and truly over and Ashraful has to fight for a place in the middle-order, an unthinkable notion even less than three years ago.

When the fourteen cricketers left to play in the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL), it meant that the Tigers would have to do without Aftab Ahmed, Shahriar Nafees and Alok

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BNS for cricket and football: PM

SPORTS REPORTER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said that both cricket and football should share the Bangabandhu National Stadium, said the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

The Local Organising Committee (LOC) members of the World Cup met the Prime Minister to apprise her of the preparation details of the mega event.

"Finance Minister AMA Muhith, who was present during the briefing, told the Prime Minister of the cricketing tradition of the Bangabandhu National Stadium and she told us that

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Canada can't forget

SPORTS REPORTER



Ashish Bagai, the Canada captain, still remembers the night of February 11, 2003 vividly. When asked to reminisce, his eyes light up and it is pretty clear what makes him so happy even after eight years, exactly (and eerily).

"We remember that match (against Bangladesh). When JD (John Davison) took that catch, he threw the ball out of the stadium. We remember that evening, that night and early hours of that morning," said Bagai during his official press conference at Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

After making only seven runs, Bagai followed with three catches in his one-day debut in that famous win over Bangladesh in Durban. "For Canada it is still a very special match. It was our first win in an ODI and in a World Cup. Myself and JD (John Davison) are from that 2003 World Cup side," he added.

But much has changed in Bangladesh cricket, in particular the national side, and

the tidy wicketkeeper is well aware of his February 12 opponents.

"That (2003 World Cup) was an older Bangladesh team. I know that there are only two guys who are over 25 in this team (Mohammad) Ashraful and (Abdur) Razzak," he said.

"They've been playing a lot of good cricket lately. They have had a good series against New Zealand and people should expect good things from Bangladesh," Bagai added.

He also set forth his goals for the team, which at once could be cast aside as unrealistic but given the tournament's potentially capricious nature, also seen as reasonable for a team considered a minnow. "We have talked about getting to the second round. Wins against Zimbabwe and Kenya and an upset against one of the big teams -- that is our team goal. That is why we are in the World Cup. We expect to go into the second round," said Bagai.

Zubin Surkari, the 30-year-old batsman and a former captain, said that it would be

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Tickets up for grabs

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

Cricket fans have a good news. Fifty per cent tickets for tomorrow's practice match between Bangladesh and Canada are still up for grabs and will be sold at the booth of the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director Sirajuddin Mohammad Alamgir yesterday informed that the tickets would be on sale from 10am today and the gallery rate is fixed at Tk 50.00.

The first practice match will take place at the stadium tomorrow.

He also said that fans, who have the voucher, will be able to collect their tickets from different City Bank branches and also from the same booth.

BFF appoints Babu as manager

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation has breached its three-year practice when the football's governing body appointed the non-technical Amirul Islam Babu as the manager of the national U23 team yesterday.

The Bangladesh U23 side will play an away match of pre-Olympic qualifiers against Kuwait on Feb 23 and then host the same opponents on March 9.

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Cricket's wicked arts

AGENCIES, Undated

He's a trained lawyer, so Kumar Sangakkara should know when it's good to talk.

But put him as well as the cream of the world's wicket-keepers and close-catching fielders out on the pitch, the mind games begin.

Like it or not, sledging in cricket has become an art form all of its own; some jibes are witty, others obscure, some pornographic but with so much at stake in the World Cup, captains and players will use any means to get an edge.

And Sri Lanka's colourful Sangakkara is sharper than most.

On the eve of the last World Cup in the Caribbean, he became a star of the Internet thanks to his taunting of former South Africa's Shaun Pollock at the 2003 edition when the hosts were under pressure fighting for their lives.

"How's the pressure, skipper?" a smiling Sangakkara asked Pollock in comments picked up by the stump microphones as the South Africa skipper took guard.

"He's going to let his whole country down, lads. Oh, the weight of expectations. Forty-two million people depending on Shaun."

Although Pollock made 25 before being run out, Sri Lanka won the match on the Duckworth/Lewis method and a desperate Pollock was seen scratching his head in bemusement in the pavilion after his side had misunderstood the rain rules.

They were eliminated from the tournament and Pollock quit as skipper.

"There have been different experiences in the middle with a bit of a chat-

up but nothing or special comes to mind," said an unconvincing Sangakkara later.

"My honest opinion about sledging is that it doesn't belong on the cricket field. It is not the way the game should be played. But there are instances when you are faced with verbal challenges, there are times when you have to put your foot down.

"When the challenge is taken up, things can get ugly. But I would never practise that or use it as a tactic."

FEW OF THE BEST

Ahead of the 2011 Cricket World Cup, here are some of the best (or worst) sledging exchanges down the years, with some special Bangladeshi flavour, courtesy of Khaled Mashud:

Tino Best and Khaled Mashud: West Indian bowler Tino Best had come out to bat during a Test match against Bangladesh when he was accosted by wicketkeeper Mashud. To wire up the driven West Indian, Mashud referred to his shenanigans the night before. "You had a good game last night," said Mashud. "Too bad you cant replicate it on the pitch," he said to a shocked Best who was heard mouthing panicked, "You want to tell the whole world?"

Rod Marsh and Ian Botham: When Botham took guard in an Ashes match, Marsh welcomed him with: "So how's your wife and my kids?" to which Botham shot back: "The wife's fine, but the kids are retarded."

South Africa batsman Daryll Cullinan and Aussie spin wizard Shane Warne: As Cullinan was on his way to the wicket, Warne told him he had been

waiting two years for another chance to humiliate him. "Looks like you spent it eating," Cullinan retorted.

Robin Smith of England and Australian fast bowler Merv Hughes:

Hughes said to Smith after he played and missed: "You can't ***** bat". Smith to Hughes after he smacked him to the boundary: "Hey Merv, we make a fine pair. I can't ***** bat and you can't ***** bowl."

Hughes and Pakistan's Javed Miandad:

Javed called Hughes a fat bus conductor. A few balls later Hughes dismissed the Pakistan star: "Tickets please", said Hughes as he ran past the departing batsman.

England's James Ormond had just come out to bat and was greeted by Australia's Mark Waugh:

Waugh from the slips: "What are you doing out here? There's no way you're good enough to play for England." Ormond: "Maybe not, but at least I'm the best player in my family."

Warne and Sri Lanka skipper Arjuna Ranatunga:

Wicketkeeper Ian Healy believed he knew a way of tempting the portly Ranatunga out of his crease - "Put a Mars Bar on a good length. That should do it."

England captain Douglas Jardine and Australian counterpart Bill Woodfull during the notorious Bodyline series: After Jardine complained that one of the

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Canada captain Ashish Bagai takes questions at ICC's official World Cup press conference at Dhaka's Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



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