

SHAHEED SMRITI HOCKEY

Shadharan Bima in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Shadharan Bima moved to the final of Chowdhury Group Shaheed Smriti Hockey Tournament crushing Bangladesh Police AC 3-1 in their last group match at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Bima take on Bangladesh Army in the final today.

Bappi, Afsar and Turjo scored for Bima while Farid pulled one back for Police.

We can win

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will have a good tournament. But as I said, we can't depend on just one or two players; all eleven on the field have to perform," the Durham players said.

Collingwood is also the only English cricket captain to win an ICC trophy, a feat he accomplished when he led England to the World Twenty20 title in the West Indies last year. Asked to compare the two campaigns, he answered, "There are some similarities. We were playing good cricket before that, as we have been this time. As I said, we played and won some tough series which we can use as stepping stones."



PHOTO: STAR

Dancers slated to perform at the opening ceremony of the World Cup have one eye on the prized trophy as they rehearse their steps inside the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Of backstage heroes

AFP, New Delhi



They don't win matches by smashing sixes or grabbing wickets but prefer plotting their teams' success behind the scene.

Fourteen coaches go into the World Cup with different goals, some eyeing the trophy while others seek improvement. The only thing unacceptable to all of them is under-performance.

Seven of the nine Test-playing nations named new coaches after the 2007 event in the Caribbean for different reasons, highlighting the significance of their role.

India coach Gary Kirsten, England's Andy Flower, Australian Tim Nielsen, Sri Lanka's Trevor Bayliss, South African Corrie Van Zyl and Pakistan's Waqar Younis believe they have the team to hit the jackpot.

Coaches of the remaining three Test nations -- Jamie Siddons (Bangladesh), John Wright (New Zealand) and Ottis Gibson (West Indies) -- are also hungry for success and expect their teams to improve upon their 2007 performances.

With Mahendra Singh Dhoni as captain and former South Africa batsman Kirsten as coach, India have done remarkably well in recent years to eventually become number one in Test and two in one-day rankings.

Kirsten is likely to step down after the tournament.

Expectations grew with each success and millions of fans now want India to bury bitter memories of the 2007 edition that saw them crash out in the first round.

England are the in-form team, having recently won the Ashes in Australia for the first time in 24 years. Flower's biggest challenge is to make England believe they are formidable a side in one-dayers as in Tests.

"Andy Flower is a guy we all respect for what he's achieved and how he holds him-

self in the dressing room. He's been incredible," England captain Andrew Strauss said.

Bayliss played a major role in helping Sri Lanka improve their Test and one-day rankings and expects his team to repeat the 1996 feat in his last assignment.

Sri Lanka have also set lofty standards as they were the champions in 1996, semifinalists in 2003 and runners-up four years later.

"The World Cup success is a very big thing here in Sri Lanka. Everyone involved in cricket would like to copy what happened in 1996," said Bayliss.

Nielsen will feel the heat when Australia make a bid to win a fourth successive Cup without key players -- Glenn McGrath, Matthew Hayden, Adam Gilchrist and Andrew Symonds.

Australia, who did not lose a match in the last two editions with John Buchanan as coach, may not find it easy this time as they have shed much of their strength in recent years.

They, however, remain a team to beat in one-dayers.

Waqar, looking for consistency from his team, has said restoring faith among the players will be his top priority.

"My first task will be to mix with the players and raise their morale," Waqar said after being named coach last year.

Pakistan will be determined to put in a solid all-round performance this time after their first-round exit in the last edition.

South Africa had to be content with semifinal finishes in 1999 and 2007 as they faltered at crucial moments.

Van Zyl hopes his side handle the pressure better this time as they have the talent to beat the best.

Bangladesh, who made history by advancing to the second round in 2007 with Dav Whatmore as coach, have been steadily improving in recent years and the credit also goes to Siddons.

Raonic ends title drought

AFP, San Jose

Canada's Milos Raonic upset top seeded Fernando Verdasco 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/5) in the final of the SAP Open, becoming the first Canuck to win an ATP Tour title in 16 years.

The 20-year-old needed two tiebreakers to secure victory in his first crack at Tour final. He is also the youngest winner on the Tour since 19-year-old Marin Cilic won three years ago at the New Haven tournament.

"It's been quite a month and a half, but an amazing month and a half," he said. "I just hope to keep this going."

Greg Rusedski was the last Canadian to win on the ATP Tour when he came through in Seoul, South Korea in 1995.

Rusedski was born in Canada but he angered Canadians by moving overseas, taking British citizenship in 1995 and then opting to play for Britain internationally.

The hard-serving Raonic said he felt comfortable Sunday playing indoors in a converted hockey arena where the National Hockey League's San Jose Sharks play their home games.

Raonic won \$92,000 in prize money and a Sharks' hockey sweater. Like most Canadian youngsters, he grew up playing hockey.

SA face Aus in warm-up

CRICINFO



There are only two survivors from that semifinal between South Africa and Australia at Edgbaston in 1999 in this World Cup. Only Jacques Kallis and Ricky Ponting have experienced the heartache and exhilaration that laid the foundation for an intense rivalry between the two countries in the 21st century. Most of the men in the present squads only had a small taste of the tough contest that plays out when these two teams meet, in the 2008-09 season. They'll be served another morsel in the warm-up match in Bangalore on Tuesday, and even though it's only for practice, the winners will take confidence out of beating their old foes.

South Africa have more painful memories and will be particularly gleeful if they walk away with a victory, although coach Corrie van Zyl warned against reading too much into the match. "It's important for us to win in terms of getting ready for the 24th, which is when the real thing starts," he said. South Africa have another ten days before their World Cup campaign gets underway against West Indies in Delhi and are being careful not to get distracted before then.

The outcome of today's match could be one such distraction, perhaps more so if South Africa win. Australia are by no means the invincible side they once were, and they don't have the same

hold over South Africa that they once did, but the contest is still talked up. Van Zyl is trying to get his team to think beyond that. "To think about those things in the past is unnecessary," he said. "This is a different side now."

The biggest change for South Africa is that they have a more varied bowling attack than ever before, headlined by three frontline and two part-time spinners. Collectively, they took six wickets in the warm-up game against Zimbabwe, and after seeing the amount of turn the Bangalore pitch offered, they must be drooling at the sight of it. Australia lost 9 for 58 against India on Sunday, and their batsmen have plenty to ponder over before facing South Africa's spinners, all of whom are likely to play.

"We want to give everyone an opportunity," van Zyl said, indicating South Africa may field all 15 players. It will be a helpful exercise for Dale Steyn, who got nothing out of the Chennai pitch and saw some Australian seamers succeed in Bangalore. Steyn bowled much slower than normal against Zimbabwe but there were no doubts over his fitness. "Dale brings a uniqueness to the bowling attack with his pace and swing and is obviously a very important player for us. We are looking to have a complete bowling attack and he is part of that."

There was a fear that one of the prongs of that attack, Lonwabo Tsotsobe, may be out of action for a while after spraining his knee against

Zimbabwe but he was running during training with no problems. "He has done work with the physio and practiced under guidance and we hope he will be ready for tomorrow," Van Zyl said.

The emphasis is on getting every member of the squad as prepared as possible and not on the overall outcome. With that in mind, the middle order is a concern because it did not have much time at the crease on Saturday. Although van Zyl would like to see the likes of JP Duminy, Colin Ingram and Johan Botha batting, he doesn't want it to come "because the top order did a bad job." Ideally he would like them to "get an opportunity at a later stage in the innings."

The only other player whose preparation is under scrutiny is Jacques Kallis. He batted with sublime confidence on Saturday but did not bowl and is unlikely to do so on Tuesday. Van Zyl hoped the step-by-step reintroduction will pay off and Kallis will peak during the tournament. "When he has had periods of rest, he always comes back so strongly, so we hope that he will happen again. It's important that he is ready for the business end."

That end of the tournament is not for another five weeks, and even though many will see Tuesday's match as a possible semi-final or final, it will be crucial for South Africa to remember that it isn't and concentrate on their method, not the result. A victory over Australia later in the tournament will be much sweeter.

AFP, Colombo



As a player, Waqar Younis had nothing but bad memories of the World Cup.

Now as a coach, he has the challenge of turning around Pakistan's talented yet unpredictable team.

"Well, it's true that the World Cup hasn't been too kind to me, but that is motivation and challenge enough to fight on and take another chance as coach of a talented team which can win the tournament," Waqar told AFP.

Waqar, now 39, was regarded as one of the most potent fast bowlers in his prime, producing wicket-taking deliveries on any surface, the most notable being his toe-crushing yorker.

Together with compatriot Wasim Akram, one of the best left-arm pacemen ever to have played cricket, Waqar formed a destructive new-ball pairing, fondly remembered as "two Ws", wrecking the best of batting line-ups on their day.

Waqar was considered Pakistan's main weapon in the 1992 World Cup in Australia, but a week before the event started he had to return home in tears without playing a match due to injury.

"It was a nightmare to return with an injury," remembers Waqar.

"Yes, it does hurt sometimes that I wasn't part of it but I still remember going to Lahore airport to receive the winning team when they returned.

"It will always stay with me, the

moment they arrived and I always cherish that great triumph of Pakistan.

"I had watched the World Cup at home in Lahore. Every single game was fun to watch and as we got into the later stages of the tournament it got very thrilling and that was the time when I missed it the most."

But soon after Pakistan's win in the World Cup, Waqar recovered from injury and along with Wasim wreaked havoc in England, leading Pakistan to a 2-1 win in a Test series marred by allegations of ball-tampering.

By 1996, Waqar had matured into a world class bowler, but his World Cup jinx continued.

Pakistan, again title favourites in the event jointly hosted by them, India and Sri Lanka, crashed out in the quarterfinals.

Up against their arch-rivals India in front of a vociferous Bangalore crowd, Waqar ran into free-stroking Indian batsman Ajay Jadeja who clobbered him for 22 runs in one of the death overs.

Pakistan lost by 39 runs.

"That was one of those days when I couldn't control the aggression, but we could still have won the game had the batsmen capitalised on a good start," recalled Waqar.

By 1999, he and Wasim developed some serious differences.

Wasim preferred express paceman Shoaib Akhtar over Waqar, who managed to play just one match in the event held in England -- that too in an embar-

assing defeat to minnows Bangladesh.

"Again, it was another forgettable event," said Waqar.

"I could play only one match, against Bangladesh, and we lost that match," said Waqar of the defeat, which was investigated for allegations of fixing.

In 2001, the roll of the dice fell in Waqar's favour as he was appointed captain after his career was revived through notable performances ahead of the 2003 World Cup held in South Africa.

But things didn't change as Pakistan crashed out in the first round after defeats against Australia, India and England.

"It was unfortunate that we couldn't manage to win any of these World Cups because we had the best teams from 1996-2003," said Waqar, who retired in 2004 after claiming 373 Test and 416 one-day wickets.

During the 2007 World Cup, where Pakistan again crashed out in the first round, Waqar was busy changing his base from Lahore to Sydney and took over as coach in 2010.

This time around, Waqar is very confident the World Cup jinx will be broken.

"In 1992, nobody thought that Pakistan would win the World Cup. This time the event is in our part of the world and we stand a very good chance.

"I would love to deliver the best I can as a coach this time and have everlasting memories of the event."

Soderling retains title

Tennis

AFP, Rotterdam

Swede Robin Soderling retained his title at the ATP Rotterdam Open Sunday with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 defeat of France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga to join compatriot Stefan Edberg in lifting the indoor trophy twice.

Two-time Roland Garros finalist Soderling could barely contain his joy after making it two titles from three events so far in 2011, where he stands 13-1.

"I'm incredibly happy about my win," said the world number four. "It's obvious that I like Rotterdam a lot."

Soderling, the top seed who beat Mikhail Youzhny a year ago for the title when the Russian retired injured in the second set, now stands 4-0 over Tsonga after losing his first set in the series.

The Swede, retaining a title for the first time in his career, now owns eight trophies from 18 ATP finals. Soderling maintained his domination over Frenchmen as he won an eighth consecutive match against a player from France.

"I played well in the important moments," said the winner, who also claimed honours a month ago in Brisbane as he beat holder Andy Roddick in that final to move into the Australian Open on a high.

"It was a tough match with Jo, like always, but I was able to play my best tennis and keep up my momentum. It feels great.

"When you come to a place where you've played well, it brings up good feelings," said Soderling, who has enjoyed fresh success since starting with Italian coach Claudio Pistolesi in the close season.

"It's tough to defend the title, it adds some extra pressure, but I had only positive feelings this week. I had many tough matches and I saved a match point in the second round.

"I had to fight a lot in every match but I had the margins on my side. I've had a great start to the season."

Tsonga, seeded eighth, was denied his sixth career title after winning his last in October 2009 in Tokyo, the venue for his last final.

The defeat was only his second in a final after losing the 2008 Australian Open trophy match to Novak Djokovic.

But the Frenchman was content with his week and said he now feels that his tennis - stalled in 2010 with various injuries - has been re-born.

"I played a good match, in fact, it was my best of the week," he said. "I got better with each match this week, I'm pleased with the state of my game."

"I played well but Robin was too strong, especially at the end of the match. I'll take confidence from this match into Maresille next week and then hopefully into the Davis Cup (first round against Austria in Vienna)."

Soderling claimed victory in one hour 22 minutes, but was out-aced by Tsonga 20 to 12. The Swede claimed the opening set after losing an early break but getting it back in the eighth game.

Mosquitoes

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every open space, drain, pond and sewer to make sure no mosquito can breed. We want to ensure a mosquito-free World Cup for spectators."

He said areas near hotels used by teams and supporters would also be sprayed.

Malaria is usually restricted to rural areas of Bangladesh, but dengue fever is common in towns.

The country is a co-host of the World Cup along with India and Sri Lanka.

After the opening ceremony in Dhaka on February 17, the action begins with a Bangladesh v India clash in the city on February 19.

The World Cup is the biggest event that Bangladesh has hosted since its independence in 1971.

Authorities have already evicted hawkers and beggars, forced worn-out buses off the roads and banned laundry from being hung out near stadiums to improve Dhaka's image.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Makes a decision

5 Blond shade

8 Old fogey

12 Tree anchor

13 — out a living

14 Grand story

15 Chimney channel

16 Sermon subject

17 Small change

18 Precede

20 New Look designer

22 Documented evidence, maybe

26 Lays an egg

29 Insult

30 Attempt

31 Queue

32 Snapshots, familiarly

33 Active one

34 Check-casher's pair

35 Morsel

DOWN

1 "Carmina Burana" composer

2 Game on horse-back

3 Go sight-seeing

4 Spire

5 Man of morals?

6 Schuss

7 Rocker

8 Interior designer's concern

9 One at the switch-board

10 Cacophony

11 Calendar abbr.

19 Petrol

21 "Monty Python" starter

23 Archie's wife

24 Enrages

25 Orpheus' instrument

26 Buy, remodel and sell

27 Verdi work

28 Brilliant

32 Flute's kid brother

33 Sang with someone

35 Support of a sort

36 Omega predecessor

38 Abrasive powder

39 Thespian

42 Exceptional

43 Incite

44 Halt

45 Time of your life?

46 Food fish

48 Adversary

Solution time: 25 mins.

WIG

BONE

BERET

TARZAN

WRY

COVE

PROBE

TOED

AFE

JEKYLL

SEALED

DRIBS

DEE

AH

AVIAN

BANJOS

NANDJANE

JESTS

ROE

AMOK

CRISP

GOAL

APRON

LLANDHYDE

AIRED

LYES

LAX

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CRYPTOQUIP

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I S Z N S I E U O S M Q S Q Q S R Z

U Z S M N L R V C L O S M N S R V B C L ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF CROONING

ENTERTAINER NEWTON SUFFERED A DECLINE

IN POPULARITY, I GUESS WAYNE WOULD WANE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals D