



Bangladesh cricketers (from L-R) Shafiul Islam, Imrul Kayes and Abdur Razzak go through a fielding drill during the Tigers' skill training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Shafiul being positive

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The pace bowling is a department which has become a spot of bother for the Bangladesh think-tank ahead of the coming Zimbabwe trip. The Tigers will definitely miss the experience in the pace bowling when they play their first Test in 14 months in Zimbabwe. It had been confirmed long ago that pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was going to miss the tour but things got worse when another experienced campaigner, Shahadat Hossain, was ruled out from the trip due to an injury he sustained during the recently concluded conditioning camp.

The selection committee led by Akram Khan has already expressed their anxiety over the shortage of pace bowlers in the pipeline, fearing that it would be difficult for them to bear another injury.

With only five Tests to his credit, right-arm paceman Shafiul Islam will have to lead the Bangladesh pace attack in the coming series along with Rubel Hossain. The 21-year old paceman from Bogra was however as confident as he could be while talking to reporters after the training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"I don't feel any pressure. We performed well in the last few series. I didn't get the opportunity to play with Mashrafe but I have a

very good understanding with Rubel," said a confident Shafiul.

Shafiul was hardly bothered with the fact that the Tigers are going to play the longer version of cricket after a long break; instead he was excited to bowl with the red ball.

"I think there is a lot of scope in Test cricket. You always have a chance to come back after a bad spell. It doesn't matter whether you bowl with the white or red ball, because the important thing is whether you can bowl well," explained Shafiul.

The young bowler informed that he started running yesterday and he was hopeful of getting back into rhythm within two-three days.

"Yes, I was out of action for the last few days as I suffered from fever. But I am confident that it will take two-three days to get back my rhythm once I start bowling tomorrow," said Shafiul.

The Tigers are now without a head coach as the newly appointed Stuart Law is yet to join the team, while the board is yet to announce the names of the specialist coaches. Shafiul, though, was happy with the guidance of Sarwar Imran, who is conducting the skill camp in absence of the head coach.

There was however an opportunity for the pace bowlers to take some tips from Australian coach Geoff Lawson, who came here to conduct a short course at the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy but Shafiul said that he has 'no idea' about Lawson.

India up against an unknown pitch

Third Test against WI starts today

Cricket

AFP, Roseau

India head into Wednesday's third Test against the West Indies - and the inaugural Test at Windsor Park - looking to close out a series that they have dominated.

The Indians, who are ranked the top Test side in the world, lead the series 1-0 after winning the first Test by 63 runs inside four days at Sabina Park in Jamaica. They also had the better part of the rain-hit second Test in Barbados which finished in a draw.

Logic suggests that their greater experience with bat and ball will see them complete a Test and one-day series double but the two unknowns remain the weather - it is hurricane season - and the pitch.

Windsor Park, located on the eastern side of the Dominica capital, provides the backdrop for the contest.

The ground, which was redeveloped six years ago at a cost of US 17 million dollars borne by the Chinese government, will become the 12th Test venue in the Caribbean, and 106th worldwide.

As for the pitch, the jury is still out. When the Windward Islands hosted the England Lions in a West Indies domestic first-class match earlier this year, there was plenty of

pace and bounce -- something Fidel Edwards and India's Ishant Sharma would cherish.

India could drop opener Murali Vijay, just 22 runs in the series, and middleman Virat Kohli, who has only made 46, with Parthiv Patel and Subramaniam Badrinath coming into the side.

Ishant Sharma will be fit to lead the bowling attack in spite of sustaining a gash under his left eye after a training ground collision with new-ball partner Praveen Kumar.

The West Indies have dropped Ramnaresh Sarwan - just 49 runs from four innings - and have brought uncapped left-handed opener Kieran Powell into the squad. He may have to carry the drinks, though, if the selectors decide to bring in Kirk Edwards for his Test debut.

SQUADS

WEST INDIES (from): Darren Sammy (captain), Adrian Barath, Carlton Baugh Jr, Devendra Bishoo, Darren Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Fidel Edwards, Kirk Edwards, Kieran Powell, Ravi Rampaul, Kemar Roach, Marlon Samuels, Lendl Simmons.

INDIA (from): Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), VVS Laxman, Subramaniam Badrinath, Rahul Dravid, Harbhajan Singh, Virat Kohli, Praveen Kumar, Amit Mishra, Abhimanyu Mithun, Abhinav Mukund, Pragnan Ojha, Munaf Patel, Parthiv Patel, Suresh Raina, Ishant Sharma, Murali Vijay.

TESTS THROUGH TIME



The sorcerer

He started his run too close to the non-striker's stump to look threatening. It began in a lazy amble off 17 paces, and he almost seemed to stop four paces before his delivery stride, as if undecided whether to bowl or not. Then, he not so much exploded as uncoiled without the customary fast bowler's leap, but with a left arm so quick that batsmen were mesmerised by the sight.

That was just his action, which in reality was just a small but integral part of his sorcery. Between the time the ball left his hand and reached the batsman, it could do a number of things. Sometimes it would swing away and come back after pitching. At times it would start outside the right-hander's leg stump and keep swinging away to beat the best defence on its way to the top of off stump as it did to Rahul Dravid in Chennai 1999. At other times he could bowl a vicious bouncer, or the inswinging or outswinging yorker. And all at good pace from that same whippy action.

Many may lay claim to being as good as Wasim Akram, but no one who wants to be taken seriously in cricket circles would dare say anyone in the game's history was better. The man from Lahore started as a raw teenager in handpicked in 1985 by the great Imran Khan, who said that Wasim was the most naturally gifted cricketer he had seen. In only his second Test, against New Zealand, he took 10 for 128 and was named man-of-the-match even though Pakistan lost. Although he was precociously talented, it took some time for him to emerge, under Imran's watchful eye, as the complete fast bowler that the world saw in the 1990s.

That was a golden era of sorts for fast bowlers. The West Indian quartet may have been fading, but were replaced by the immense Ambrose, while elsewhere there was the rise of the irrepressible Alan Donald and the metronomic Glenn McGrath. Yet, over an eight-year period, Wasim rose above all these stalwarts.

In 48 Tests from 1990 to the end of 1997, Akram averaged five wickets per match, and his average dropped to an outstanding 20.05, before his form finally tapered off in his last four years. His value to the side was underscored by the fact that he won 12 man-of-the-match awards in those 48 Tests, and that in his 41 victorious Tests, he took 211 wickets at a fantastic average of 18.48.

That incredible run of form started with an astonishing 11 for 160 in Melbourne in 1990, when a formidable Australian batting line-up was all at sea against the bowler who was just beginning to realise his immense potential.

The next Test in Adelaide contained evidence of a fact that has often been overlooked in the brilliant glow of Akram's bowling prowess -- his talent as a batsman. In Adelaide, apart from taking six wickets in the match, he scored his first Test century in the second innings, sharing in a 191-run stand with Imran. His first innings 52 made it only the twelfth instance of a player scoring 150 or more and taking six or more wickets in a Test match.

In the end, he really did not do justice to his batting talent -- ample evidence of which is a high score of 257 not out coupled with an overall average of 22.64. But it was as a bowler of unmatched ability that he will always be remembered. He finished with 414 Test and 505 ODI wickets, and even that does not seem enough.

-- Sakeb Subhan

Holding hurls a bouncer

AFP, London

Michael Holding has hit out at India for wielding "too much power" in world cricket.

India are the sport's financial powerhouse on account of cricket's massive following in the world's second most populous nation.

They also currently boast the 50-over world champions and the game's top-ranked Test side.

But there have long been concerns about the way the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) uses its influence in the sport's corridors of power.

For example, last week the International Cricket Council announced the controversial Decision Review System would be made mandatory in all Tests and one-dayers.

However, it added that ball-tracking devices -- which India objects to -- would only be used to assist in lbw decisions with the agreement of both teams.

Premier Div b'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhumketu retained the lead in the Citycell Premier Division Basketball League after getting a walkover against Flame Boys at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium on Tuesday.

Dhumketu have now 14 points from seven straight victories while Flame Boys, who were playing against Europa Youth yesterday, are in bottom position along with Eagles and Bakshibazar with seven points each.

Dhumketu were followed by The Greys with 13 points from eight games as they recorded a hard-fought 50-49 win over Mohammadpur Basketball Club after trailing the first half 25-16.

On Wednesday, Hornets SC recorded their second triumph in eight matches when they defeated Mohammadpur Basketball SC 60-56 after leading the first half 31-28.

Women's football

SPORTS REPORTER

Gaibandha and Bangladesh Ansar & VDP won their respective matches of the National Women's Football championship at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Gaibandha defeated Kishorganj 5-2 after leading the first half 3-0. Mitu and Bely struck two goals each while Tithi netted one for Gaibandha. Rabeya Akhter scored twice for Kishorganj.

In the day's other match, Bangladesh Ansar handed a 1-0 defeat to Jessore with Nubai Ching Marma scoring the all-important goal.

Win 4 games

FROM PAGE 16

Despite this, tournament committee co-chairman Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir seemed confident that there would be a considerable turnout. He also informed that a total of Tk 1.45 crore will be distributed amongst six participants with champions getting Tk one-crore, runners-up Tk 20 lakh while both losers of the semifinals will be awarded Tk 7.5 lakh each and remaining two participants will be given Tk 5 lakh each.

Tahmid Azizul Huq, head of corporate communications of gameenphone, first thanked the national football team for its advancement into the second round of the World Cup pre-qualifiers and then thanked the football federation at their efforts to organize the Super Cup despite numerous commitments.

"We believe this tournament will bring life to country's football," Huq said. "We actually want to spread football at the grassroots level as well as to make our brand popular amongst people. We believe football has a good potential and it will go forward if the right sponsor is with football."

Tickets at all galleries have been fixed at Tk 50 while VIP tickets are at Tk 100.

The finest innings at Lord's

FROM PAGE 16

Africa; and a mixture of government lackeys and bookmaking families running the show in Sri Lanka. Nor is there any reason to retain faith in Giles Clarke, England's puffed-up principal, or Australia's Jack Clarke, whose limitations have been exposed often enough.

"Sangakkara, Sri Lanka's second-best cricketer, has never scored a hundred at Lord's, but his lecture can be put alongside the finest innings played on the ground. Actually it was not so much a speech as a plea for proper governance. Nor was it motivated by the darker forces observed in lesser men. Like the rest of us, Sangakkara is no saint, but his denunciation of the controlling forces at home spoke of frustration not ambition, affection not scorn, contribution not calculation. Its value lies in its very independence."

"... If the ICC is serious about tackling corruption and stopping political interference in cricketing matters, it could start by sending a working party to Sri Lanka with the task of

Extra game

FROM PAGE 16

"It's confirmed that the team is not going to get the specialist bowling coach for this tour," informed Sabbir.

The technical committee has recommended that one club should be allowed to field three foreign players in next season's Dhaka Premier League but it could not decided on how many players a club will be able to register.

"It's suggested that the foreign player should have first-class experience," said Sabbir adding that the committee also fixed the timeline for the pool players.

The committee also gave go-ahead to the proposed domestic calendar with some slight adjustments.

Sangakkara's

FROM PAGE 16

is very dangerous because it is not the administrators or players that sustain the game - it is the cricket-loving public. It is their passion that powers cricket and if they turn their backs on cricket then the whole system will come crashing down."

Crucially for the future of Sri Lanka, that public consists of supporters from both sides of the bloody civil war that was finally concluded last year. However, as has been seen by the numerous Tamil protestors who have made their presence known during the current Test and ODI series, there is a danger that the current state of the sport will breed disenchantment rather than foster unity.

"Cricket played a crucial role during the dark days of Sri Lanka's civil war, a period of enormous suffering for all communities," Sangakkara said. "But the conduct and performance of the team will have even greater importance as we enter a crucial period of reconciliation and recovery, an exciting period where all Sri Lankans aspire to peace and unity."

"It is also an exciting period for cricket where the reintegration of isolated communities in the north and east opens up new talent pools. The Spirit of Cricket can and should remain a guiding force for good within society, providing entertainment and fun, but also a shining example to all of how we all should approach our lives."

setting up sustainable democratic institutions.

"... Sri Lanka took a bright young team to Australia in October 2010, and beat the hosts 2-1 in the ODIs. On the surface all seemed well. Behind the scenes, though, the team management was worried. Sanath Jayasuriya had long since been a liability and they feared he might be imposed upon them, thereby compromising the team and affecting its morale. It did not happen, because the incumbents kept winning and the think tank stood its ground.

"But the Jayasuriya issue did not go away. He is a Member of Parliament, representing the governing party, a ruthless outfit intent on controlling all the levers of power, and to that end prepared to lock up the leader of the opposition, a popular soldier responsible for the final crushing of the LTTE. Arjuna Ranatunga, an opposition MP, took part in a protest about his leader's imprisonment, whereupon an arrest warrant was issued. Such are the joys of life in Sri Lanka."

Path for

FROM PAGE 16

Arambagh under the banner of 'Balur Math Roxsha Committee' protested the initiative of astro-turf installation and demanded to keep the field free for children, patients and women's who used the ground every day.

Following a one-and-half year deadlock regarding the instalment, FIFA recently warned the football federation that it would lose its image if two of the allotted FIFA project were not implemented immediately.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin said that the ground is for the residents of Arambagh who will use it whenever they like and the BFF will only look after it.

Two committees would be formed to decide how to use the venue.

Booters look

FROM PAGE 16

arrangement of the security system in Lahore but the tight security made them unhappy as they were confined to just the hotel and playing ground.

"The match we played against Pakistan in Lahore was a tough one for us as the opponent players put up their physical strength rather than fair play. Besides, we were in a bit of anxiety after a bomb was blasted in Lahore hours before our match," said Biplob adding that the Macedonian coach was satisfied with their performance as they played in line with the coaches instruction.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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| 1 Overseer of JFK and LAX | 38 Information officer | 1 Data | 25 Numerical prefix |
| 4 Jewel | 39 Ottoman officer | 2 Kind of committee | 26 Adnl. phone |
| 7 Gear parts | 41 Way out | 3 Farewell | 28 Powell co-star |
| 12 Throw in | 45 Representative | 4 Hook with a handle | 30 Luau bowlful? |
| 13 Big hatchet | 47 Before | 5 Ostracized | 31 X rating? |
| 14 Plankton components | 48 Done with desperation | 6 "— Black" | 32 Mimic |
| 15 Actor McBride | 52 Opposite of "oui" | 7 Chat | 33 Violinist's need |
| 16 March Madness semis | 53 Spud state | 8 Subordinate | 36 Creche trio |
| 18 Pirouette pivot | 54 Golf prop | 9 Id counterpart | 37 One inspired by Terp-sichore |
| 19 Movie | 55 — and outs | 10 Greek consonant | 40 Reach |
| 20 Pond gunk | 56 Male and female | 11 That woman | 42 Ohio city |
| 22 Away from WSW | 57 Raw rock | 17 Experts | 43 O. |
| 23 Verifiable | 58 Favorable vote | 21 Jupiter has 63 | 44 Nervous |
| 27 Anti-quoted | | 23 Crowd? | 45 Commotions |
| 29 Riddler of yore | | | 46 Quaker address |
| 31 Verboten | | | 48 Fleur-de— |
| 34 Trip around the world? | | | 49 Citric beverage |
| 35 Name-sake of a sort | | | 50 Reed instrument |
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Solution time: 25 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I LOVE TO DIP MY
DAILY NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT PILLS IN
BEER, THEN LABEL THEM "MALTY-VITAMINS."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals A