



PHOTO: STAR

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker speaks to a congregation of young athletes during the inauguration of the second phase of NSC Talent Hunt programme at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

## COMMEMORATIVE T20I India accept SA's invite

PTI, Mumbai

India are set to take on South Africa in a one-off Twenty20 International on March 30 in Johannesburg to commemorate the 150 years of settlement of Indians in that country, it has been learnt.

"The same squad [Asia Cup squad], with a few changes, will leave for South Africa on the 28th of March to play a one-off T20 International on March 30 to celebrate 150 years of Indian settlement. The invitation from the SA board has been accepted by BCCI," sources said in Mumbai on Monday.

Senior batsman Sachin Tendulkar, who does not play T20 Internationals, is unlikely to be part of the squad and in his place Karnataka's Robin Uthappa is expected to get the nod.

The Asia Cup is scheduled between March 11 and 22 and the one-off T20 International in South Africa at the Wanderers ground will be preceding the Indian Premier League T20 competition commencing on April 4.

## NSC TALENT HUNT 2nd phase underway

SPORTS REPORTER

With a bid to grooming young sportsters for the national and international level, the National Sports Council started the second phase of its talent hunt programme in Dhaka yesterday.

Some 195 athletes including 52 girls in football, athletics, volleyball, handball and kabaddi, who were selected at the district level through a 21-day training camp, have assembled in Dhaka for another three week's of training. However, only 129 out of those 195 will get the full three weeks of training as the number of athletes will be cut down after the first two days.

The sports regulatory body, NSC, had started the preliminary training in the middle of the last year involving 20 disciplines at an expenditure of Tk 1.41 crore and that time a total of 2308 athletes were given training in 46 districts. Some 608 athletes were picked for the further training in Dhaka and the training of the rest of the disciplines will get underway gradually after the completion of the five disciplines. Tk 75 lakh has been allotted for the current phase of training.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker promised to keep this training programme running round the year by different phases, at the inauguration ceremony yesterday.

The participating athletes also appealed to the NSC to continue its effort to groom the

up and coming sportsmen in the country by running this training round the year. The basic training, which was given last year, benefited the athletes and paid rich dividends in the national meet, the athletes opined.

"I became second in 100m sprint during the junior athletics meet as I took part in the meet after a three-week training of NSC's talent hunt programme," said Mohammad Ashik yesterday.

Shanto Islam from Kishorganj participates in high jump and now he can clear more height than he used to earlier, he said.

"I cleared 1.75 metres in the training and hope I will be able to clear more once I receive further training from here," said Shanto, a student of class XI.

He however urged the NSC to give directives to District Sports Association to hold the athletics meet as the DSA only arranges top sports like football and cricket.

"After returning from here, I will have no engagement and will have to spend lazy time but if there is some sports meet, then I can engage myself in preparation," said Shanto.

However, footballers like Rakibul Hasan from Gazipur, Sabbir Hossain from Sherpur have no such problems as they undergo training under local coaches.

The most important is to keep the training continued on a long-term basis, which saw footballers like Kaiser Hamid, Rokib, Rehan and Karzon emerged in the 1980s.

## High hopes on Dav

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan hopes new cricket coach, Australia's Dav Whatmore, can find a magic formula to transform the country's talented players into a team that enjoys sustained, match-winning success.

The team's peaks and troughs are infamous. Last month's Test whitewash of England was followed by a flop in the limited-overs series, losing 4-0 in the one-day games and 2-1 in the Twenty20s.

Frequent changes in the Pakistan Cricket Board and sackings of captains and coaches have halted progress.

But Sunday's appointment of Whatmore - who guided Sri Lanka to World Cup victory in 1996 - could change all that.

Former captain and ex-coach Intikhab Alam is pinning his hopes on Whatmore.

"I think the missing 'more' in Pakistan cricket will be achieved through Whatmore," Alam told AFP. "With his perfect record in the past I hope he will enhance the team's performance, though it will take some time."

The 57-year-old, who played seven Tests and one limited-over international for Australia, also guided Bangladesh to the second round of the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean where they beat giants India.

Alam said a lot will depend on the players, some of whom resisted Whatmore's appointment in 2007 when an inexperienced Geoff Lawson was chosen instead.

"It is the coach's responsibility to bring more consistency, which is missing, but at the end of the day it is important players also do their best and listen to the coach," said Alam.

Pakistan has also signed Julian Fountain as fielding coach, which Alam believes will help in their weakest area.

"Fountain comes with rich experience and has served England, the West Indies and Bangladesh so I hope with him around, much-needed improvement in fielding will also come about," said Alam, coach of Pakistan's World Cup-winning team in 1992.

Another former captain, Aamir Sohail, also believes Whatmore can help the team overcome recent mistakes, even if the challenge is huge.

"I wish him the best of luck in his endeavours and hope that he will take notice of our recent mistakes in one-day cricket," said Sohail.

"When you take responsibility in international cricket you are bound to face pressure but you need to be objective and I hope everyone rallies behind him in support to achieve the targets," he said.

Whatmore himself on Sunday acknowledged the enormity of the task ahead.

## Kamal drops

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Apart from the opener, Alok Kapali, Naeem Islam, Rubel Hossain, Shahriar Nafees and Forhad Reza were also given the boot. Jahurul Islam, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shahadat Hossain and new face Anamul Haque are the inclusions.

Jahurul deserves the recall after playing his last game for the Tigers one and a half years ago while Mashrafe returns after eleven months having undergone a knee surgery last year. Shahadat won back a place probably due to a lack of choices while Anamul has impressed over the past two seasons for the Bangladesh A team as well as in the domestic tournaments.

This time Kamal's whereabouts had to be traced somewhere between Karachi, Dubai and London as he was off to the United Kingdom yesterday. After Akram passed on his team to the committee led by Enayet Hossain Siraj, the mechanism in Mirpur tried to get in touch with Kamal, who upon contact approved the squad after making the changes.

## Pup asks bowlers to let team up

AFP, Brisbane

Australia skipper Michael Clarke berated his much-vaunted bowling attack as not good enough ahead of the second one-day international final against Sri Lanka in Adelaide.

Australia beat Sri Lanka by just 15 runs in the first of the best-of-three finals series on Sunday in Brisbane despite setting 322 for victory, and Clarke admitted his team's bowling had been disappointing.

"A win is a win, but we have a lot of work to do with our power play and death bowling," a frustrated Clarke said after the match.

"It hasn't been good enough all series. It continues to let us down."

"We are the number one one-day team and we have to be better than that."

in the run chase under lights at the Gabba before Nuwan Kulasekara (73) and Upul Tharanga (60) attacked Australia's pace quartet of Brett Lee, Ben Hilfenhaus, James Pattinson and Dan Christian.

The tourists came close and only some tight bowling by Shane Watson in the final overs denied the Sri Lankans an unlikely victory.

"Hopefully that [scare] allows us to understand that we have to be better than that," Clarke said.

Pace spearhead Lee went for three for 59 from his nine overs, but the efforts of Hilfenhaus and Pattinson will be causing Clarke the most concern ahead of Tuesday's game in Adelaide.

Hilfenhaus conceded 46 runs from just four overs and Pattinson was only slightly better, going for 49 runs from five.

"I just think we are not executing our skills to be honest," Clarke said.

"They practise all their different varia-

tions in the nets, but under pressure, at the moment, we are not executing.

"That's been the difference, I think, between us playing some great cricket throughout this series and playing [only] good enough cricket to win the games."

The Australian skipper said Kulasekara played cleanly in Brisbane to hit seven boundaries and three sixes and help bring his team back into contention.

"Credit to him, he batted really well, but we have got to find a way to hit our areas better under pressure," he said.

Clarke will be sweating on the fitness of opener David Warner, who suffered a groin injury during his magnificent 163 on Sunday.

Sri Lankan skipper Mahela Jayawardene, who has had to deal with a raft of injury problems in his squad, including big hitting Angelo Mathews, was more upbeat after the game than the winning captain.

## Dan has different idea First NZ-SA Test starts tomorrow

Cricket

CRICINFO, Dunedin

New Zealand will look to recent history and dig deep into their reserves of self-belief as they prepare for the first fixture in the three-Test series against South Africa. After losing both the Twenty20 and ODI series, their reputation, particularly among locals, has gone from being a side that will compete with and even beat their visitors to being a side that has little hope of either.

Daniel Vettori disagrees. "I think we probably can do it but we're going to have to be at the top of our game to have a chance," he said, carefully qualifying the can-do attitude of the squad. "We know we've got to play really well. When you're coming up against one of the top teams in the world that's the attitude you've got to take. It's similar to when we came up against Australia, who are one of the top teams, and we know that if we play well that we can beat them."

After their famous win in Hobart last year, New Zealand enjoyed a dominant home series against Zimbabwe but were unable to replicate it when facing South Africa. While Vettori stopped short of calling them the best team in the world, he said South Africa are "certainly up there." He acknowledged that the South Africa have brought with them a talented group of players who

New Zealand will have to improve their game against to beat.

"We are trying to talk about ourselves and what our strengths are and what we can do to nullify their strengths," he said. "That's what we did so well in that Test against Australia and if we can stick to that then we give ourselves a chance. If we get caught up in how good the South African team is then we'll be in trouble."

The self-belief gained from beating Australia will serve as enough evidence to New Zealand that they can conquer top teams. At home, they should be able to do it with regularity and Vettori said they will draw strength from that as well. "We always play pretty well at home so I think we've taken a lot of confidence from that."

Dunedin's University Oval has only hosted three Tests but has served New Zealand well. They beat Bangladesh and Pakistan there and Vettori said the squad has fond memories of the ground. "It's been a wicket that New Zealand has enjoyed," he said. "We had a great Test match victory against Pakistan, who had an exceptional bowling attack, and we did well against West Indies before the rain came along. So it's a ground that the guys enjoy playing at."

With most of the talk revolving on factors that will motivate New Zealand, it may be fair to assume that the unit is disheartened by their recent performances. Vettori said the situation is not that dire. "I don't think spirits need

lifting. It's just bringing some experience back into the side, particularly among the bowling, with Chris [Martin] and myself, and the batting with Ross [Taylor] coming back in. That makes a huge difference when you bring in close to 200 Tests."

Of the 207 caps that Vettori, Martin and Taylor have between them, Vettori accounts for more than half, making him New Zealand's most experienced player. Test cricket is now his sole focus after he stopped playing the limited-overs formats of the game and he feels the decision to narrow his focus will pay off. "There are obviously a few sides to that, one of which is playing more four-day cricket," he said. "But you also don't show your wares to the opposition team in the one-day or T20 series, which is normally before the Test matches. Although I've played a long time and played against these guys [South Africa] quite a bit, hopefully I'll bring a little bit of a surprise element in that I haven't played them in this tour."

South Africa will also have some surprises up their sleeves, with five players who were not part of the first two legs of the tour joining up with the Test squad, but Vettori said New Zealand have prepared. "With the new guys who we haven't seen a lot of, the likes of [Imran] Tahir, not a lot of guys have faced him before so we've done a lot of work around that."

## Boucher may retire in July

CRICINFO, Cape Town

Mark Boucher is likely to announce his retirement after South Africa's tour of England in July this year.

"I would like to go England and then start a process of trying to get another keeper involved. I think I've still got a lot to offer in that department," Boucher, who is part of South Africa's Test squad touring New Zealand, told ESPNcricinfo. "My body is getting a little sore, to be honest. The back is starting to play up a bit. If I can manage myself form-wise and it all goes to plan, then after England I will probably look at my career and my retirement."

Although South Africa have not picked their squad to England yet, Boucher was hopeful of being included, depending on his performances in New Zealand. He has been on three tours to England, and said his experience could merit a fourth visit. "I am pretty well-equipped mentally for what's going to happen," he said. "Even the English keepers will tell you that in England you will drop the odd ball. You just have to try and hold on to the catches, because it does move around there a lot."

Boucher has been South Africa's premier wicketkeeper for 15 years and has only missed three Tests since making his debut in 1997.

His first tour to England, in 1998, Boucher said, played an important part in his overall development.

## Morton killed in car crash

Cricket

IANS, Port Of Spain

West Indies cricketer Runako Morton was killed in a car crash here Sunday night.

The 33-year-old, one of the few cricketers to emerge from the island of Nevis, lost control of the car he was driving and hit a pole, according to reports. He died on the spot.

Morton had played 15 Test matches, 56 one-day internationals and seven Twenty20s for the West Indies since making his international debut in 2002. He last played in February 2010 in a Twenty20 against Australia in Sydney.

Former West Indies Chris Gayle, under whom Morton played in the national team, tweeted: "We lost a True Warrior W.I Cricketer Runako Morton-May is soul rest in peace! Our memories together Live On! My Condolences to his family."

West Indies player Carlos Brathwaite also offered his condolences. "RIP Runako Morton. Gone but not forgotten," he tweeted.

England star batsman Kevin Pietersen also expressed his shock on Twitter.

"My thoughts go out to Runako Morton's family this morning... Such sad news!! What a lovely guy & fierce competitor!! RIP bossman!!!" he said.

Morton had represented

Trinidad and Tobago, Leeward Islands and Nevis.

Morton scored 5980 runs at an average of 39.60 in a first class career that spanned over 17 years.

Morton's career, however, was never short of controversies. He was expelled from the West Indian Academy in July 2001, for a series of regulation breaches but a good run with the bat for Leeward



Islands in the Busta Cup forced the selectors to recall him in 2002 as a replacement for Marlon Samuels.

His career seemed almost over in September 2002, when he pulled out of the ICC Champions Trophy in September 2002, after lying about the death of his grandmother. In January, 2004, he was arrested but released without charge following a stabbing incident. Morton and Leeward Islands all-rounder Tonito Willett were arrested, before being released on bail, in March last year for possession of marijuana.

## Much to gain

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as a domino effect, Bangladesh too can enjoy some of the many options FIFA has in their parcel.

The support for the academy is as good a start as any, and the BFF should ensure that they look extensively into the manifold ways that they can use FIFA's assistance to foster the growth of football in the country. Blatter's visit can provide a good launching pad to raise the profile of the game but harnessing it will be Kazi Salahuddin and BFF's main aim before and after the elections to be held in April. Today afternoon Sepp Blatter will sow the seeds toward the birth of an emerging football nation. Raising it well will be our job.

## Blatter

FROM PAGE 16

Football Academy.

The FIFA boss will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Jatiya Sangsad in the evening and will later attend an official dinner hosted by BFF at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Blatter will leave for Bhutan at 9:30am the following morning.

## Aussies

FROM PAGE 16

be recalled after missing the Brisbane game.

"We all hope he [Warner] is up and firing tomorrow," Hussey said.

"It was a fantastic innings and all the boys hope he can replicate that."

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Help on the sly
- Creche visitors
- Sch. org.
- Short skirt
- Astringent
- Rowing need
- Quickly
- Take to the slopes
- Stretch vehicle
- Played Hamlet, e.g.
- Stares stupidly
- Soon, in poetry
- Crucifix
- Some graduate courses
- and outs
- Maximum
- "The way" in China
- Debris
- Crazy

36 Stubborn

- beast
- Dissolves
- Sordid
- Many millennia
- Standard
- Put off
- Request
- Operatic solo
- Goodyear product
- "Indeed"
- Trans-action
- Verve

DOWN

- Roadie's equip-ment
- Life story, for short

3 Type measures

- Like nobility, e.g.
- Sir's partner
- Too
- Eviscerate
- "This is no joke!"
- Of the very, very young
- Seize
- Saharan
- Man's possessive
- Swindle
- Puzzle diagram, e.g.

22 Highly rated

- Mailing-date indicators
- Writer
- Kingsley
- Location
- Ostrich's cousin
- Huck's transport
- Drunkards
- Frog's perch, maybe
- Piratic potation
- Signify
- Unruly hairdo
- Fix, in a sense
- Relaxation
- Europe's neighbor
- And others (Lat.)
- Raw rock
- Zero
- Historic period
- Lair

Solution time: 21 mins.

ASIA	EGG	SHAG
PENTFREE	COICO	
RAINTRIES	AOONE	
EON	TEMPER	
PRONG	BURP	
HELD	TARRIES	
DAG	URGESS	VAT
MARRIES	WILE	
HAUL	MALTA	
NAPALM	EAR	
ADAM	PASTRIES	
NONE	HATTERAS	
AGES	SUE	NAUT

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CRYPTOQUIP

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E IVZYP C OV XVCNL XP

RPPY PC XOY GIEX LENV.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: EPIC FILM ABOUT SOME

BIRDS AROUND ARUBA AND NEIGHBORING

ISLANDS: "PARROTS OF THE CARIBBEAN."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals T