

BCB wants NCL on-time

SPORTS REPORTER

The tournament committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is determined to start the franchise-based National Cricket League (NCL) from October 14 regardless of whether they are still lagging behind in preparing the guidelines for the new-look competition.

"We are determined to start the league as per our announced time because we want to create an opportunity for the national players to play at least two longer-version matches before the start of the home series against West Indies," said BCB director and tournament committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain yesterday.

West Indies are expected to tour Bangladesh in October-November to play one T20I, two Tests and five ODIs.

The tournament committee had exchanged views with the representatives of the divisions and Dhaka Metro regarding the franchise-based first-class tournament.

"We discussed many things. They wanted to know about their involvement with the franchise-based tournament. Hopefully we can prepare a guideline within the next seven days so that they can understand everything," said Ashraf adding that there will be no stone left unturned to make the country's lone first-class competition more competitive and attractive.

The former national skipper was also not too bothered with the response from the sponsors.

"You can't compare this tournament with the BPL, which is completely a commercial venture. We want to start it if even two or three [franchises] can get sponsors. In that case the rest will play under their respective division's banner. We should start it to introduce real competitiveness in the first-class competition," he added.

The opening and final matches will be day-night affairs which will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and pink balls will be used in the day-night fixtures.

Ctg school hockey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

J M Sen School and Chittagong University School and College continued their winning spree in the six-team School Hockey League in Chittagong.

J M Sen School defeated Nasirabad Government Boys High School by 3-1 goals at the M A Aziz Stadium yesterday. Antu, Amin and Pranab scored for the winners while Shihab scored the only goal for the losing side.

In the day's other match, Jewel scored two goals as Chittagong University School and College defeated Municipal Model High School 2-1. Milesh scored the consolation goal for the losing side.

Second T20I abandoned

REUTERS, Manchester

The second Twenty20 international between world champions England and South Africa in Manchester on Monday was abandoned due to persistent rain.

The match was reduced to nine overs per side and South Africa were led by a spectacular 47 not out from Hashim Amla as they notched up 77 for five wickets.

Steven Finn took two for 17 from his two overs as the batsmen and fielding side struggled in the greasy conditions, Jacques Kallis (13 not out) helping to boost the score at the end with a seven-ball cameo.

The rain showed no sign of abating as England's batsmen took the field and they never got going, opener Craig Kieswetter swiping desperately at Morne Morkel's first over.

England were 29 for two off 4.1 overs when the umpires, aware that five balls were required to force a result under the Duckworth-Lewis method, called the players off the field.



A cheerful Sean Connery awaits the start of the US Open final between his countryman Andy Murray of Scotland and Serbia's Novak Djokovic at Flushing Meadows on Monday. The James Bond star cheered Murray on to his first Grand Slam win.

PHOTO: RUETERS

'Golden summer is on'

AFP, London



British leaders, tennis chiefs and former players hailed Andy Murray on Tuesday after the Scot became the first British man to win a Grand Slam in 76 years.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said Murray's triumph in defeating Serbia's Novak Djokovic in the US Open final was continuing Britain's "golden summer of sport" following the Olympics and Paralympics.

British tennis insiders meanwhile praised the influence of coach Ivan Lendl in turning Murray into a Grand Slam champion.

"Delighted Andy Murray is continuing a golden summer of sport by winning the US Open. A truly great victory," Cameron said on Twitter.

Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond said Murray was now a "legend" in his homeland.

"Congratulations to Andy Murray on what was a fantastic performance," he said in a statement.

"This is another brilliant win over Novak Djokovic and continues an amazing year for Andy. Now Olympic and US Open champion. Andy truly is a Scottish sporting legend and I'm certain that more Grand Slam titles will follow."

Roger Draper, chief executive of the Lawn Tennis Association, the sport's governing

body in Britain, said Murray winning the Olympic men's singles gold medal last month and following it up with the US Open title was "a phenomenal achievement," he told BBC radio.

"He's done it in an era where you've got not just Roger Federer -- the greatest player that's probably ever lived -- but you've got Rafa Nadal, Novak Djokovic as well."

Former British number one Greg Rusedski, who lost in the 1997 US Open final, said Lendl had a big hand in Murray's victory.

The Scot "found a way to get it done and found a way to control his emotions."

"He can thank Ivan Lendl for that. You have to give him so much credit for what he's done, to keep believing in what he's done," he told Sky Sports television.

"It shows you what a champion he is and, having won this, he can go on to win many majors and maybe end the year as the world number one."

Former British number one Roger Taylor, 70, a four-time Grand Slam semifinalist, added: "So much confidence has come from Andy's Olympics win and Lendl has added a great presence."

"Andy is on top of the world, very few people can beat him and now with the added confidence from the Olympics I am sure he will go on to win many Grand Slam titles and become number one in the world."

"Finally British tennis is back on the map."

Novak happy for friend

REUTERS, New York



Novak Djokovic hates to lose, but the five-time Grand Slam champion was happy for his friend Andy Murray, who beat him in a pulsating, five-set struggle for the US Open title on Monday.

"Any loss is a bad loss. There is no question about it," the Serb told reporters after his 7-6, 7-5, 2-6, 3-6, 6-2 defeat that denied him back-to-back US titles. "I'm disappointed to lose the match."

"I had a great opponent today. He deserved to win this Grand Slam more than anybody, I'm sure, because over the years he's been a top player. He's been so close, lost four finals. Now he has won it, so I would like to congratulate him."

"Happy that he won it."

The long-awaited victory made Murray the first British man to win a singles Grand Slam title since Fred Perry 76 years ago.

Djokovic, who is one week younger than fellow 25-year-old Murray and friendly off the court with a rival he has known since junior tennis days, welcomed Murray to the Grand Slam club after the Scotsman's triumph.

He walked around the net to give the dazed Murray a hug and a pat on the back after surrendering the nearly five-hour match with a forehand blasted long.

Having fallen short in his first four Grand Slam finals, Murray was denied another crack at a maiden major title by Djokovic at this year's Australian Open, when the Serb won their semifinal in another epic duel that lasted nearly five hours.

Murray ends British wait

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coach and things started to change.

He became the first British man to reach the final at Wimbledon since Bunny Austin in 1938 and although he lost, he at least managed to win a set.

Then a few weeks later, he avenged his loss to Federer when he won the gold medal on the same Wimbledon Centre Court at the London Olympics and arrived at Flushing Meadows with renewed confidence.

Perry, who died in 1995 aged 85, won eight grand titles and Murray said he was sure the late Englishman would have been thrilled to see him win.

And suddenly, the future looks brighter than ever for the Briton.

As Federer's relentless pursuit of Grand Slams slows with age and Rafa Nadal's creaking knees continue to trouble him, Murray and Djokovic are rapidly emerging as the sport's next great rivals.

Miandad to assist Pak batsmen

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan's former Test captain and prolific batsman Javed Miandad will join the national team in Sri Lanka to give batting tips ahead of the World Twenty20 this month.

"He has been given a special assignment for a short period before the start of the World Cup," a Pakistan Cricket Board spokesman said.

SAFF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL BD women bid bye

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's football team bid farewell to the 2nd Women's SAFF Football Championship after losing their last group match against hosts Sri Lanka 1-2 at the Ceylon Rugby and Football Club in Colombo yesterday.

Bangladesh finished third in Group A with three points from their 1-0 victory over Bhutan, with India qualifying with maximum nine points and hosts Sri Lanka taking the second semifinal berth with six points.

Bangladesh had made it to the semifinals in the inaugural edition on home soil in Cox's Bazar before losing against Nepal in the last four.

Bangladesh needed an outright victory in yesterday's match since Sri Lanka had a superior goal difference. And they stunned the hosts when they took the lead in the 75th minute, thanks to striker Aungmraching Marma's strike from a goal-mouth melee. But the lead lasted only eight minutes as Achala Chitrani scored with a clinical finish. And the hosts confirmed their semifinal berth three minutes later, courtesy of Hasara Dilrangi's goal.

All-round

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Du Preez, however, was confident that her team would recover in the next few matches. "The loss isn't a great concern. It's good to get over with these matches rather than losing in the upcoming world cup," said Du Preez.

The 2nd T20I will take place today at the same venue.

Striking concerns, defensive woes



SPORTS REPORTER

A flurry of mistakes from defenders in yesterday's practice match against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club added new worries for the national football team ahead of their two exhibition matches against Nepal this month.

The national team went down by 1-3 goals at the hands of the former professional league champions, thanks to one goal each from Sunday Chizoba, Mike Otojereri and Chinedu Ezimorah. All three goals resulted from lapses in defence. The national team however pulled one goal back through Zahid Hasan Emily in the 45th minute.

With Ariful Islam ruled out due to a knee injury, the stopper position proved to be the main concern for coach Shaiful Bari Titu as he tried Rezaul Karim alongside veteran Mohammad Sujat. But Reza proved ill-equipped for the job as he brought down Arup Kumar Baddya inside the penalty area after being beaten for pace. Linkon, playing in place of injured right-back Nasirul Islam, allowed Otojereri ample space to head home a cross. The third goal resulted from miscommunication in defence as Ezimorah was left unmarked while scoring with a header.

Coach Saiful Bari however was unwilling to read too much into the result, instead blaming fatigue for the defeat.

"I don't want to take this result too seriously as I experimented with things I taught

them in practice sessions and played two sets of squads in different formations to ascertain the best-suited formation," said Titu. "The players were tired after having two sessions of practice each in the last three days."

Bangladesh had always taken pride in the quality of its stoppers such as Monem Munna, Kaiser Hamid, Rajani Kanta Barman, Jewel Rana but the position has of late turned into a vulnerable one and Titu feels players like Sujat, Ariful, Reza and Mamun Mia are irreplaceable.

However, former skipper Rajani Kanta Barman who watched the practice match, feels there are other quality stoppers apart from them but some booters get favour from the local coaches.

"There are only three players in the central defending position at the moment, so there is no competition among them for the starting eleven. In the match, all three goals were conceded due to mistakes of the defenders, who didn't even mark the forwards," observed Rajani.

The striking zone too remains a concern for the coach as Zahid Hasan Emily, Mithun Chowdhury and fit-again Enamul Haque clearly lacked the sharpness and posed little threat to the opposition backline.

The margin could have been bigger had Sheikh Jamal president Manjur Kader not asked his side to adopt a softer approach in the second half in a bid to avoid injuries to the national players ahead of the exhibition matches to be held on September 18 and 20 in Nepal.

Aussies' heavy win

Pakistan claim series 2-1



AFP, Dubai

Australia brought Pakistan down to earth with a thumping 94-run defeat in the third and final Twenty20 international at Dubai Stadium here on Monday.

Chasing a daunting 169-run target, Pakistan were all out for 74 -- the joint lowest by a Test playing country in all Twenty20s -- for their biggest defeat in the history of the shortest form of the game.

Only Nasir Jamshed (17), Yasir Arafat (15) and Abdul Razzaq (13) could reach double figures as Australian paceman Mitchell Starc (3-11) and Pat Cummins (3-15) ran through the Pakistan batting line-up.

Pakistan, who won the first match by seven wickets and the second in Super over, never looked the same side as they lost wickets at regular intervals, the first five falling by the sixth over with the score on 19.

Razzaq and Arafat shared the highest partnership of the innings with 20, taking Pakistan past the lowest total in all Twenty20 -- 67 by Kenya against Canada in Belfast in 2008.

Pakistan's previous biggest defeat in Twenty20 internationals was by 48 runs, against England at The Oval in 2009.

India were also dismissed for 74 by Australia at Melbourne in 2008.

Earlier Warner made a 34-ball 59 with six sixes and a four and Watson hammered five sixes and a boundary during his 32-ball 47 to put on Australia's best opening stand of 111 in all T20s after they were put into bat.

The Australian openers went berserk from the eighth over when Watson hit Shoaib Malik for three towering sixes and from the other end Warner hit left-arterm Reza Hasan for as

many sixes in the ninth.

Even the successful Saeed Aijmal was hit for two sixes as Australian openers hit nine sixes in the space of 19 balls, bringing the second fifty off just 15 balls.

Paceman Arafat, who replaced Sohail Tanveer as the only change to the line-up, had both the openers in successive overs to put brakes on the Australian innings, finishing with 2-30.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 168 for 7 (Warner 59, Watson 47, Maxwell 27; Gul 2-30, Arafat 2-30, Aijmal 2-19)

PAKISTAN: 74 all out (Jamshed 17, Razzaq 13, Arafat 15, Starc 3-11, Cummins 3-15)

Result: Australia won by 94 runs.

Man-of-the-match: David Warner.

Man-of-the-series: Saeed Aijmal.

Suspended ban

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behaved better and if I had controlled myself, the situation wouldn't have escalated. I hope the confusion regarding this matter goes away."

"If I wasn't captain, it wouldn't have looked so bad. My behaviour had an adverse effect on my teammates, so I could have been a lot more responsible. If I had kept my cool, the incident wouldn't have stretched for a month," he added.

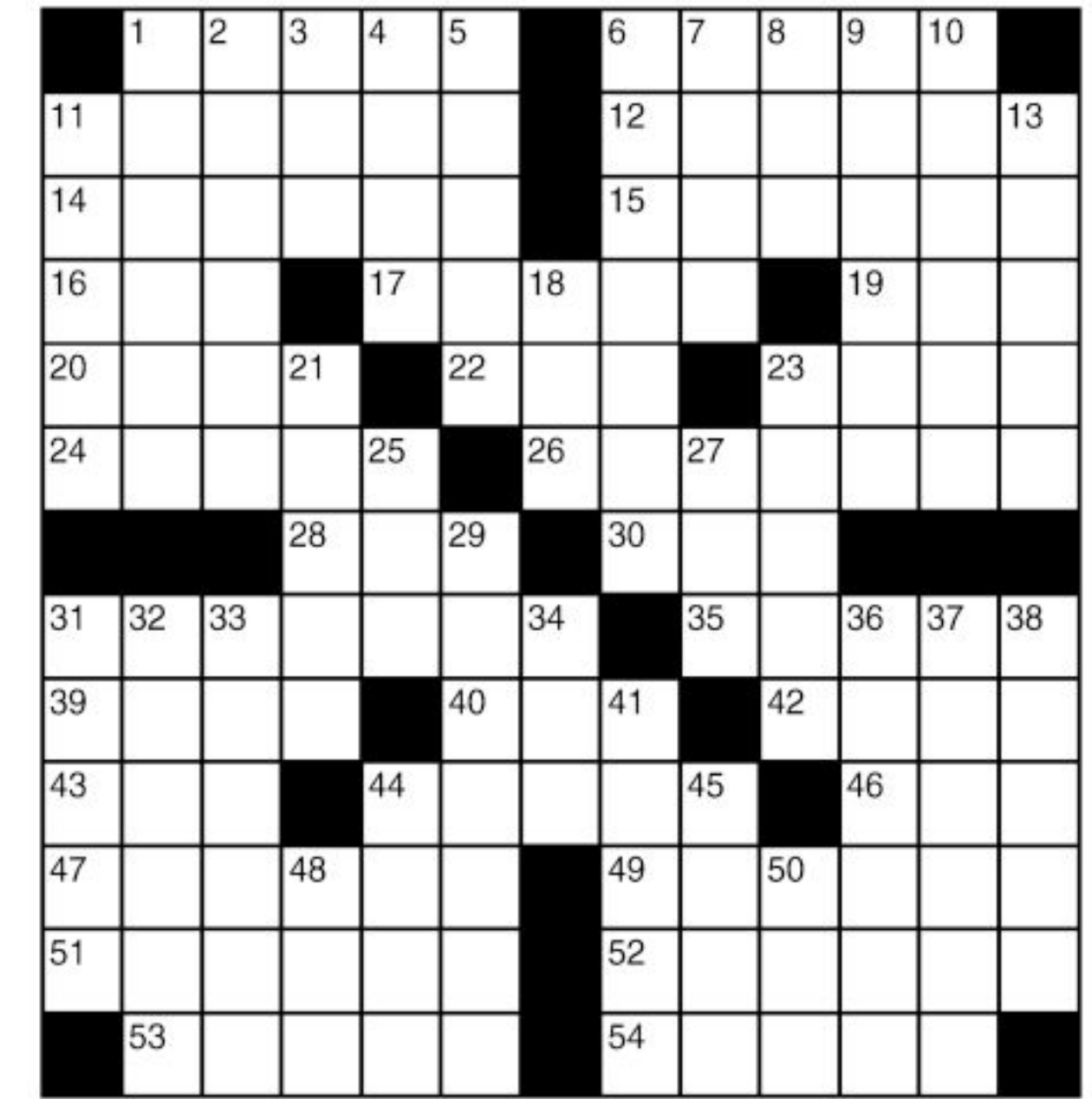
Nafees was not ready to relate this incident with the one he had with A team coach Stuart Barnes in Khulna during the practice prior to the tour of India.

"The two are separate incidents. We trained for two months and there wasn't anything wrong in the relationship between players and management. I personally don't want to see the two incidents being related. Whatever has happened is unfortunate," he explained.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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| 14 Convertible | 43 Grecian vessel | 3 Roscoe | 23 Epsom — |
| 15 Honcho | 44 Destroyed | 4 Fermi's bit | 25 Pitch |
| 16 Salt Lake athlete | 46 Chicken-link | 5 Cartoon skunk | 27 "Wow!" |
| 17 Crenshaw, for one | 47 GI ID | 6 Nixon's nixing? | 29 Grande dame |
| 19 "CSI" evidence | 51 Cause of hereditary | 7 Unyielding | 31 Dutch cheese |
| 20 Inmate's weapon | 52 Does recon | 8 Dadaist | 32 Open out |
| 22 2006 Nintendo debut | | 9 House-painter's need | 33 Rub elbows |
| 23 Leak slowly | | 34 Energy Gap | 36 Companionless fellows |
| 24 Doctrine | | 37 Recently | 38 Companionless fellows |
| 26 Dueler's warning | | 41 Pop | 44 Hardy cabbage |
| 28 Young bloke | | 45 Dashboard dial, briefly | 48 Kennedy or Koppel |
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| 31 Dome-shaped candy | | | |

Solution time: 27 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

MRVJ PFLM DUK'IM NUFXN
PU PJM LRIYM PU QKIVJRCM
R VJFVYM X F NKMCC
DUK'BB QRD R QUKPID CKL.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THAT MAD SCIENTIST STUDYING FLAKY-CRUSTED DESSERTS PREFERS THAT FOLKS CALL HIM A PIE-OLOGIST.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals L