

SPORT

National camp practice game today

SPORTS REPORTER

A selection of the cricketers from the 29 national probables for the New Zealand home series in October will face Bangladesh under-23 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in a practice match today.

While the practice matches are taking place with an aim to finalise the Bangladesh A team that will be touring England in August, today's match may also witness captain Mushfiqur Rahim as a guest player.

Two more practice matches are scheduled to take place on Friday and Saturday respectively. So far 20 cricketers have been selected for the New Zealand series. That number will be brought down to 14 after the practice matches.

The under-23 team is scheduled to go to Singapore in August to participate in the ACC Emerging Players' Cup, which begins on August 17.

Minister calls for unity

SPORTS REPORTER

State minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarker urged all to be united to resolve the ongoing crisis over players' transfer, when high-ups of the newly elected executive committee of Bangladesh Hockey Federation met him at his office yesterday.

"We have briefed the minister about the present condition and what initiatives have been taken to solve the problem and we expect to reach a consensus regarding the players' transfer," said BHF general secretary Rahmatullah emerging from the meeting.

Basketball coaches' clinic underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The Citycell FIBA Asia Coaches' Clinic 2013, organised by Bangladesh Basketball Federation, got underway at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Some 30 coaches from different services teams, district sports associations, clubs and BKSP are taking part in the five-day clinic which is being conducted by international basketball trainer Dr Koh Koon Teck, said a press release.

WI 232 for 8

AFP, Providence

Solid contributions by the Bravo brothers, Darren and Dwayne, lifted the West Indies to 232 for eight batting first against Pakistan in the second One-Day International of the five-match series at the Guyana National Stadium on Tuesday.

After Darren's top score of 54 through the first half of the innings, skipper Dwayne provided vital impetus in holding the latter half of the innings together with an unbeaten 43 that proved critical in helping the Caribbean side to a total that represented a massive improvement from being routed for just 98 in the first match at the same venue on Sunday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: 232 for 8 in 50 overs (Charles 31, Darren Bravo 54, Samuels 21, Dwayne Bravo 43 not out, Pollard 30; Ajmal 2-45, Afridi 2-29)

PAKISTAN: Misbahul (captain), Jamshed, Shehzad, Hafeez, Shafiq, Akmal, Afridi, Riaz, Asad, Ajmal, Irfan.

League uncertainty hurting cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

It would be a shame for both the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the all-powerful clubs if this year's Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League is eventually consigned to the backburner, which increasingly seems like the odds-on possibility. The failure so far to arrange the league has hurt the country's cricket in many ways, as it not only disrupts the domestic calendar but is also a double blow for the cricketers.

The clubs' latest demand made on Sunday to postpone the league till September seems to be the final nail in the coffin because the New Zealand series is scheduled for October, making it impossible to start and finish the league before the international assignment.

The league is the main source of income for most of the cricketers in the country, so the players will suffer

heavily financially. There is also the considerable setback of the players faced with a long layoff from the game if the league is cancelled, which may put their fitness levels at risk.

So the uncertainty over the league came as a shock for a player like the out-of-favour Alok Kapali, who is still looking forward to make a comeback to the national side.

"It's really frustrating. In the recent past the cricketers have rarely had a long break between domestic tournaments. In reality it's very difficult for any player in the country to get the standard training facilities living outside Dhaka during off periods, so a long layoff means you have to struggle to maintain your fitness level," said the 29-year all-rounder from Sylhet yesterday.

"We, some fifteen divisional players, are trying our best to maintain our fitness using the available facilities in the town (Sylhet) but as I said it's not

good enough. Cricket is still the main source of income for many of us and the most frustrating fact is that the young players seem worried about their future in the game. Everybody should understand that the country's cricket can not survive with just the 30 selected cricketers," observed Kapali, who has so far played 17 Tests and 69 ODIs since his international debut in 2002.

"I have received only 15 per cent payment from my franchise and the league is now uncertain, so how can those of us not in national service survive? On the other hand players like us who want to make a comeback to the national team will suffer heavily if the league doesn't take place. So the picture is very bleak for discarded and upcoming cricketers," said the all-rounder, who made his last international appearance when he played a one-dayer against Pakistan at Chittagong in December 2011.



Dutch coach Rene Koster (standing L) imparts some tips to his U-16 charges during training at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The Bangladesh U-16 booters will leave Dhaka for Kathmandu today to take part in the SAFF U-16 Championship. PHOTO: STAR

U-16 team fly off today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh U-16 football team recorded a single-goal win over Arambagh Football Academy in the lone practice match yesterday, on the eve of their departure for Nepal today to take part in the SAFF U-16 Football Championship.

Coach Rene Koster has kept his sight on the title of the seven-nation championship, scheduled for July 20-30 in Kathmandu, but believes that the main target for the squad is to work as a supply chain for the future team as there are four to five real good players in his squad.

"The goal is to build the players for tomorrow and the boys will play in same style that the national team plays. I think the players will gain valuable experience by playing international matches. Wherever we play we want to win and there is no exception in the case for Nepal," said Koster, who took charge of the side on July 10 following one-and-a-half months of training under the supervision of local coach Golam Rabbani Choton.

"I have been working with the boys for a week now and my job is to insert the technical and tactical aspects into their game because that is the most important thing at the age level," said Koster.

Bangladesh were eliminated from the group stages of the inaugural edition of SAFF U-16 Championship in 2011 where Pakistan beat India to become champions.



Alby Shale poses next to an electronic timer after batting for 26 hours at the Oval cricket club in London yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Batting for a cause

AFP, London



A British graduate collapsed in a heap on Tuesday after batting for 26 hours solid at The Oval cricket ground in London in a bid to break the world record.

Alby Shale, 22, from Oxfordshire in southern England, began his marathon stand in the indoor nets at 6:45 am (0545 GMT) on Monday and finally declared his innings at 8:45 am on Tuesday.

The attempt was in aid of the Rwanda Cricket Stadium Foundation -- a charity set up to create an international-standard cricket ground in the African country, where the game is emerging.

The previous batting record of 25 hours was set in October by Australian batsman Jade Child. Shale, who has just graduated, is now waiting for Guinness World Records to go through the documentation and confirm his new landmark.

He faced around 200 bowlers in his spell at the crease. One of the bowlers was Prime Minister David Cameron, who turned up to give him a few deliveries.

With 10 minutes to go, Shale shrugged off the tiredness and started slogging at every delivery.

"At the final ball he just sort of collapsed into a heap and everyone piled in on top of him," a spokesman for the attempt told AFP.

"Someone sprayed a bottle of champagne all over the place."

He then posed for pictures by the clock showing 26 hours.

The rules set down by Guinness World Records allowed only a five-minute break for every full hour completed -- to refuel and go to the toilet.

The idea was the brainchild of Alby's father Christopher, Cameron's close friend and his Conservative Party constituency chairman, who died of a heart attack at the Glastonbury Festival in June 2011.

The charity is hoping to raise 600,000 pounds to build a cricket ground with a pavilion and some seating. Around 400,000 pounds has been raised so far.

Nazmul eyes new start

SPORTS REPORTER



International cricket hasn't been too kind to Bangladesh pacer Nazmul Hossain so far. He has spent most of his eight years at the top, since 2004, on the sidelines of the national team and like a number of other Bangladeshi pacers his career has been riddled with ill-timed injuries.

However, throw him the right sort of wicket and he can trouble some of the best in the world with his line and length. From 38 matches he has a respectable average of 31.5 and a healthy economy rate of 5.04.

He played a crucial role in the match against Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup in 2012 when he came in as a last-minute replacement and ran through the Sri

Lankan top order in a must-win encounter. That tournament however was the last time he played for the Tigers. Today Nazmul, who underwent a knee-replacement surgery on his left knee last month, faces a race against time to be match-fit for the New Zealand series in October. If he does manage that, it will be a good outcome for a Bangladesh pace cupboard that is all too often rendered bare through injury.

"It's been six weeks since I was operated upon. As per the plan I am bowling with a shorter run-up. I am hopeful of bowling in my full run-up in ten days' time," said Nazmul.

While the bowler isn't showing any signs of pain, he still tends to be extra-cautious while running. "There's a slight fear because of the surgery and I am gradually overcoming that," he said. "I remember when

I first started running after the operation, the physio had to stay behind me throughout, just because I was so scared. I didn't have the guts to run. I think overcoming the fear is one of the major points of progress," he added.

With regards to his inconsistency as a national player, the bowler blamed a number of factors. "There were times I didn't get the opportunity, even after playing well, because of the team combination. And then I also got injured. So it's been a rough patch. But I hope to overcome everything altogether once I recover," said the confident 25-year-old.

"I believe I can be ready before that (New Zealand) series. If the Dhaka League does take place in September then it can give me an opportunity to prove myself to the selectors," he said.

Pakistan friendlies finalised

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday revealed the fixtures of two International Friendly matches against Pakistan to be played in the middle of August at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"The matches will be held on August 13 and 16 after the Pakistan team's arrival on August 11," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday adding that they were going to ask the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to give the matches international friendly status.

Pakistan had expressed their desire to play two matches against Bangladesh and the game's governing body readily accepted the proposal as the matches would be handy

in the preparation for September's SAFF Football Championship. Bangladesh have never lost a match against Pakistan in their last eight meetings since 1999.

However, before facing Pakistan, Bangladesh will play two friendlies against Thailand during their ten-day tour of the South East Asian nation which may start from July 27 instead of 22.

"I talked to the president of Thai Football Federation and he has agreed to host two matches," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin adding that the president of the Thai federation requested to send the team after July 27.

Meanwhile, the national squad, which has been trimmed to 26 members, will play their third practice match against Arambagh KS today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, having won the first two matches against Team BJMC and BFF Eleven.

Arthur demands \$3.6 million?

REUTERS, Melbourne



Mickey Arthur is demanding 3.6 million dollars in compensation or reinstatement as Australia's cricket coach following his sacking last month, according to documents seen by the country's Seven News TV station.

South African Arthur also claimed to have suffered racial discrimination and said that captain Michael Clarke had described fellow batsman Shane Watson's influence on the team as "a cancer".

Arthur was earning 400,000 Australian dollars a year and up to 200,000 in bonuses. He was contracted until June 2015 and wanted payment for three years beyond that, estimating his losses to be as much as 4 million Australian dollars.

"We're disappointed that it's come to this position," Cricket Australia lawyer Dean Kino told Seven News.

"But Cricket Australia is confident in its position on this matter. And I'm sure it'll get resolved in the appropriate fashion."

The TV station said the documents reveal tension between Clarke and Watson, particularly regarding team discipline.

Arthur was sacked after David Warner punched England's Joe Root in a bar, the latest in a series of disciplinary issues to dog the team.



The pack rides into a tunnel during the 168 km sixteenth stage of the 100th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Vaison-la-Romaine and Gap, southeastern France yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Tamim leaves today

SPORTS REPORTER

Dashing opener Tamim Iqbal will leave Dhaka today to play the Caribbean Premier League in the West Indies, which begins on July 30, for Saint Lucia. The opener, who recently got married in grand fashion, will play under Darren Sammy who will be leading the team. His wife Ayesha Siddiqua is also expected to travel with him.

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is the other Bangladeshi cricketer participating in this competition. Shakib, who is currently playing for Leicestershire in the Friends Life Twenty20 in England, was bought by Barbados.