

Sachin comes here today

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar may be busy handling his new football team -- the Kerala Blasters - in the ongoing Indian Super League.

But he however has taken time off from his busy schedule to come to Dhaka today and unveil the logo of Dhaka Premier League club Legends of Rupganj, owned by Lutfur Rahman Badal, who happens to be a good friend of the former India batting superstar.

The last time Tendulkar was in Dhaka, he scored his 100th international century during the Asia Cup in 2012. He is scheduled to arrive here in the morning, unveil the club's logo in a programme at the Sonargaon Hotel in the afternoon and then leave at night.

"It is an honour for my club that such a legend is coming to unveil its logo. I think this is the first time that the player has agreed to do anything of this sort," said an ecstatic Badal.

Legends of Rupganj were formerly known as Gazi Tank Cricketers Club, who won the Premier League -- Bangladesh's lone 50-over domestic competition -- title last year.

Simmons out of India tour

CRICINFO, New Delhi

Batsman Lendl Simmons has been ruled out of the remainder of West Indies' tour of India due to a back injury. Simmons will return to Trinidad & Tobago to continue his rehabilitation, according to the West Indies Cricket Board.

The batsman was not picked in the playing XI for the first two ODIs and had only played a practice game against India A on the tour. The WICB is expected to announce a replacement for Simmons in the coming days.

Simmons, who last played a Test for West Indies in 2011, has not been a part of the five-day squad for the last couple of years but has featured regularly in the limited-overs matches.

Halsall's 'expectation'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's newly-appointed fielding coach Richard Halsall has said that he wants to help improve the players' 'expectation' and 'physical' levels on the field.

The former England assistant coach was earlier signed to work with the Tigers only for the West Indies series. Barely a month after the end of the tour, he signed a two-year contract with the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

Having observed the Tigers for a month, Halsall mentioned a few areas where he believed the national cricketers could improve on the field.

"There is room for improvement in our physicality, so that our diving and sliding can get better quickly. But in general the commitment was excellent throughout the Caribbean series," Halsall told reporters at Mirpur yesterday.

Having worked for England for six years, Halsall was a key member in Andy Flower's backroom staff. When asked about the most visible difference that he observed between the fielding units of England and Bangladesh, he replied, "Expectation is the big one. Skill-wise I have not seen any difference. One of the only differences we will see is in the level of expectations; things like diving or sliding, which is not here at the moment."

According to Halsall, a better expectation level on the field could have churned out a better result for the Tigers in the West Indies.

"The expectation level affects your body language on the field. So when you have not won many games and you miss an opportunity, you think you have just lost a chance to win the game.

"Whereas in reality you will get or create another opportunity. Rather than thinking that our opportunity is gone, the mindset should be to create another one," explained Halsall.

The Zimbabwe-born coach plans to introduce more intense fielding drills in the coming days.

"I have been used to shorter training sessions, but in those we work hard physically and are very intense, so that will be one of the changes.

"They won't do it for long hours, but when they do something, they will do it with a much higher intensity. So the idea will be for them to train very hard; it makes their playing easy," said Halsall.

Apart from a few missed stumping opportunities Bangladesh's



Bangladesh's newly-appointed fielding coach Richard Halsall speaking to the media in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

fielding did not notice any glaring errors in the last series.

Their previous series against Sri Lanka though, saw them fumble aplenty. The Tests and the ODIs saw the Tigers miss at least 15 opportunities.

A rough estimate shows that the spilled chances led to the hosts giving away at least 400 runs in Tests and 176 runs in the first two ODIs.

The performance was one of the reasons why the pressure mounted on their last fielding coach Corey Richards. With a seemingly better profile, Halsall is expected to do a lot better. At the moment though, he has to deal with a team that is going through one of its leanest patches in international cricket.

A cheerful Halsall -- who jokingly took a dig at Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's fitness levels and thought that the BCB president was overlooking the training session from a chopper above the stadium -- though wants to take one step at a time.

As he puts it, "One catch can take us to the next round."

No Super Cup!

Foreigners' quota reduced

SPORTS REPORTER



Despite previous announcement of staging the 4th Super Cup from October 25, the Bangladesh Football Federation has seemingly backtracked from their decision and the money-spinning tournament will not likely be held at all this season.

The meeting of the Professional Football League Committee (PFLC) yesterday failed to reach a consensus about holding the Super Cup this season as the professional league clubs were divided into two groups over the number of participants. PFLC's approval to champions Sheikh Jamal DC and runners-up Abahani Ltd to participate in Bhutan's King's Cup (Nov 12 to 29) has also dashed the chance of holding the much-talked about tournament.

Another reason for not holding the tournament is the national team's busy schedule in the next few months. The national team is scheduled to play two FIFA friendly matches against Sri Lanka on October 24 and 27 respectively and two more friendlies against Japan Olympic football team (U-23s) in the second week of December. The BFF is also supposed to host the six-nation Bangabandhu Gold Cup International Tournament in the latter part of December.

"We have a really tight schedule for the national team and the clubs ahead and we will decide about the fate of the Super Cup in our next week meeting," said PFLC chairman and BFF vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy after the meeting at the BFF House yesterday.

However, a BFF high official, seeking anonymity, said that there is hardly any possibility to hold the Super Cup this year as the players' transfer window for the upcoming 2014-15 season will get underway from November 10.

Meanwhile, the meeting also approved the by-laws for the upcoming season, reducing the number of registered foreign players from seven to five and allowing only three players instead of four in a match. However, the eighth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League will return to its previous home-and-away format instead of three phases played last season.

The youth championship for professional football league clubs will be held in a single-league basis from the next season instead of a tournament format and any team failing to participate will be fined Tk 20 lakh.

The league committee also decided that clubs will have to pay twenty-five percent of a player's contract money during the official signing ceremony and the rest of the amount will be paid on a monthly basis.



PHOTO: STAR

Jordan women's U-16 team players train at the artificial turf in front of the BFF House yesterday. The Jordanians will take on hosts Bangladesh on the opening day of the AFC U-16 Women's Qualifiers at the BNS tomorrow.

Misbah knows what to do

AFP, Abu Dhabi



Struggling Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq on Monday said he needed to start scoring runs again to continue playing as captain of the one-day side.

Misbah, 40, withdrew himself from the third and final one-day match against Australia in Abu Dhabi on Sunday, raising doubts over his captaincy barely four months from the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

Shahid Afridi instead led Pakistan, but their fortunes did not change as Australia pulled off a sensational one-run win in the last over to seal a 3-0 whitewash.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan told AFP on Sunday it will be Misbah's decision to lead or leave the Pakistan one-day team but his board has contingency plans in case Misbah gives up.

But Misbah told AFP that he will try his best to regain his batting form and if that

failed he would reconsider his future.

"I have no such intention," said Misbah when asked if he was leaving the one-day captaincy.

"But obviously I will have to see in the next four to five Tests because runs are very important.

"Team and Pakistan come first. If I can get my form back and score runs then I will think of being back there but if not, then obviously, you can't put the team in such a difficult situation and you have to decide."

Misbah was the top run getter in one-day cricket last year with 1373 runs, but he managed just 67 in the 2-1 defeat in Sri Lanka in August this year and was out for a first-ball duck and then 15 in the two games against Australia.

Misbah said he still feels Pakistan needs experience for the World Cup.

"My effort is to just get my form back and come back into the side to fulfill the role I have always fulfilled. It's nothing like giving up one-day play, but obviously I am concerned over my form and runs."

We're 20 yrs late: Hair

CRICINFO, Dubai



Former international umpire Darrell Hair has said the ICC's crackdown on bowlers with suspect actions has come 20 years too late, and that the weakness of umpires

over time to do anything about the issue has helped created a "generation of chuckers." Hair was the first umpire to call former Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran for chucking during a Boxing Day Test in Melbourne in 1995.

"Whatever they're doing now, they're doing 20 years too late," Hair told Sydney Morning Herald. "They had a chance in 1995 to clean things up and it's taken them 19 years to finally come back and say they want chuckers out of the game. I can't believe that Saeed Ajmal has been able to bowl as long as he has, and they say he is bending his arm by 45 degrees [the legal limit is 15 degrees] or something. Well, every man and his dog would have known that."

"I suppose what it does show is the general weakness of the umpires over time to do anything about it."

After Hair called Murali for chucking in December 1995, the spinner had his action cleared the following summer, but was once again called by Australian umpire Ross Emerson during an ODI between England and Sri Lanka in Adelaide in 1999.

"All I was doing at any time was just doing my job and I think I did it to the best of my ability," Hair said. "The fact was that no other ICC umpires were willing to have a go. Ross Emerson was very adamant about his thoughts about chuckers but they soon put him into the background."

"I suppose I was lucky I had a few games under my belt so they didn't want to target me, but they certainly got him out of the way

fairly swiftly. It'll be interesting to see how many umpires are brave enough to get involved in it. I said it in the late '90s that if something wasn't done about it you'd have a generation of chuckers on your hands and now you have."

Since July 2014, ICC match officials reported Sri Lanka's Sachithra Senanayake, Pakistan's Saeed Ajmal, New Zealand's Kane Williamson, Zimbabwe's Prosper Utseya and Bangladesh's Sohag Gazi for suspect actions and all of them were banned from bowling in international cricket after undergoing tests. Sunil Narine, Mohammad Hafeez, Adnan Rasool, Suryakumar Yadav and Prenelan Subrayen were also reported for suspect actions in the Champions League T20. While all of these bowlers are finger spinners, Bangladesh's Al-Amin Hossain was the only medium-pacer reported, during Bangladesh's tour of West Indies in September.

The drive against illegal actions intensified after an ICC Cricket Committee meeting in June. "The game had reached a tipping point on this issue, when many groups within the game felt that there were too many bowlers with suspect actions operating in international cricket," ICC general manager of cricket operations, Geoff Allardice, told Fairfax Media.

"The most prominent of these groups was the ICC Cricket Committee at its meeting in June, when it observed the ICC's reporting and testing procedures were not adequately scrutinising these bowlers. They weren't the only ones talking about this issue, as similar views had been expressed by teams, players, umpires, referees and administrators."

"Since that time the umpires have felt more confident to report their concerns with certain bowlers, and their concerns have been supported by the results of the testing of these reported bowlers."

A princess in Jordan squad!

SPORTS REPORTER

Ahead of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers in Dhaka, participating teams Iran, United Arab Emirates and India arrived in the capital yesterday while Jordan, who came here on Sunday, had a training session at the artificial turf of the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday.

The girls of Jordan including Princess Safa Firas trained nearly one hour before leaving the turf to team hotel. However, neither Firas, who played for the Jordan U-14 team earlier this year, nor her teammates were allowed to talk to the media.

"We have a member of the royal family in the squad. But she obtained her place by proving herself on the pitch as we do not consider any player on the basis of her family background. Everyone is equal on the pitch," said coach Manar Mustafa Fraiz.

Fraiz informed that they have come here to win all matches but they are taking each of the opponents including hosts Bangladesh seriously.

Jordan take on Bangladesh in their opening match tomorrow after Iran take on United Arab Emirates.

Argument for & against

Opinions divided on Pistorius's punishment

REUTERS, Pretoria



South African track star Oscar Pistorius should serve three years of partial house arrest and community service for the negligent killing of his girlfriend, a witness said on Monday at the first day of the athlete's sentencing.

The 27-year-old Paralympic and Olympic star, whose lower legs were amputated as a baby, was convicted of culpable homicide last month for the shooting of 29-year-old law graduate and model Reeva Steenkamp on Valentine's Day 2013.

The case has riveted South Africans and gripped millions around the world, shocked by the fall of a man widely admired as an inspiration for disabled people and a symbol of triumph over adversity.

Arguing against a prison term, correctional services social worker Joel Maringa said Pistorius was a "co-operative" person who should be sentenced to three years of "correctional supervision", which would mean the athlete would have to spend a portion of the day at home.

Maringa also said Pistorius should carry out community service, such as sweeping the streets outside museums in Pretoria.

State prosecutor Gerrie Nel, who is pushing for a lengthy prison sentence, described the social worker's recommendations as "shockingly inappropriate".

Judge Thokozile Masipa adjourned the hearing early as Nel requested time to review documents before he calls at



South African Olympic athlete Oscar Pistorius (R) talks to one of his lawyers at the High Court in Pretoria yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sentencing hearing may last several days

Athlete could face up to 15 years in jail, or walk free

State could yet appeal culpable homicide verdict

suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and sometimes spent sessions weeping as she held him.

"What we are left with, My Lady, we are left with a broken man who has lost everything," Hartzenberg said, as Pistorius stared at the floor in the packed Pretoria courtroom. "It is foreseen that Mr. Pistorius will require intensive and ongoing psychotherapy."

Masipa cleared Pistorius of the more serious charge of murder, saying prosecutors had failed to prove his intent to kill when he fired four 9mm rounds through the door of a toilet in what he said was the mistaken belief an intruder was hiding behind it.