



Abahani's Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) and Sabbir Rahman geared up with the team for today's Dhaka Premier League encounter with Khelaghar SKS at the BCB academy ground in Mirpur yesterday. The league leaders will hope for more of the same from the two if they are to qualify for the Super League stage with a win.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tigers to ask for a break before WC

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh cricketers are mulling a short break between their tour of Ireland and the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019. Bangladesh are scheduled to depart for Ireland on the first week of May to participate in the tri-nation ODI series involving West Indies and hosts Ireland. Following the 13-day series, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had planned for the team to travel to England, where they would undergo a five-day camp at Leicester before heading to the mega event scheduled to begin on May 30.

Keeping the long World Cup campaign in mind which -- starting with the tri-series -- will stretch to more than 70 days, the cricketers are planning to request the BCB to allow them a four-day break to visit their families before joining the conditioning camp at Leicester.

"I have heard the cricketers are thinking of a break, but I have not received any official request. We understand that the tour of Ireland and England for the World Cup is a long one. If the players send an official request we will surely look into the matter. There will be a four-day break between the tri-series in Ireland and the camp in Leicester. I have heard the players feel that it would be better for them if they could spend time with their families at home," BCB cricket operations chairman Akram Khan told reporters.

The selectors are likely to declare the squad for the tri-series in Ireland and for the World Cup on April 22 where the squad will participate in a four-day camp in Mirpur before travelling to Ireland.

'I aim to contain'

SPORTS REPORTER

One of the younger members of the Bangladesh team, Mehedi Hasan Miraz is expected to take part in his maiden World Cup in the upcoming mega event in the UK this summer with a lot of hope riding on him.

Since making his Test debut with a bang at home in 2016, when he picked up 19 wickets in his first two Tests against England, the 21-year-old has managed to establish himself in the longest format of the game.

Mehedi, who did showcase his ability as an all-rounder during his age-level days, has however had to fight for a place in the limited-over formats since making his ODI debut the following year.

It was during the tour of West Indies in summer 2018 that Mehedi successfully opened the innings with the new ball and managed to restrict batsmen. He backed up that performance in the Asia Cup, where he also opened the innings with the bat in the final and contributed.

Mehedi is rated as the next big thing of Bangladesh cricket, but will still have to fight for a place in the playing eleven in the World Cup keeping the seaming friendly pitches of England in mind.

The cricketer is also aware of the challenge and informed that he is preparing himself according to the condition and look to play the supporting role for the pacers.

"I think it's important for the spinners to contain runs as the spinners won't get much purchase in those conditions. Even if you are unable to pick wickets it's important to remain economical and if you concede five and a half runs per over along with chipping in with a few wickets, it will be good. My aim will be to support the pacers by containing runs in the World Cup," Mehedi told reporters yesterday.

The cricketer from Khulna has had the experience of playing in England during the Champions Trophy in



Mehedi Hasan Miraz has become somewhat of a regular in Bangladesh's one-day team, however, the young all-rounder may miss out on a spot come the World Cup.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

2017. He thought that his experience would help him cope with conditions in the mega event.

Mehedi, however, is yet to establish himself as an all-rounder despite having all the potential. In that regard, he said that he was working on his batting to contribute at crucial stages.

"I think it's important to score 20-30 runs at a crucial stage and I am working on that aspect in my batting as I won't be able to play long innings. If I am able to contribute few runs with the bat and put up a partnership in the latter stages it will definitely help the team," he said.

NZ U-19s postpone tour of BD

SPORTS REPORTER

The New Zealand Under-19 team postponed their upcoming tour of Bangladesh as the country as a whole are yet to recover fully from the trauma caused by the terror attack in Christchurch last month.

The visitors were initially scheduled to arrive in Bangladesh on April 10 to play a five-match youth ODI series starting from April 16.

"The home series against New Zealand Under-19 squad is postponed for the time being as they informed us that they are not coming as per schedule. It looks like they are yet to recover from the shock due to the terror attack. It is understood that the parents might have some reservations as the series was expected to be played between young cricketers," Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh team narrowly escaped the shooting incident at the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch on the eve of the eventually cancelled third Test against New Zealand. The team bus arrived at the mosque moments after the shooter exited.

Australia sweep series

AFP, Dubai



World champions Australia completed a 5-0 whitewash over Pakistan with a clinical 20-run win in the fifth and final one-day international despite a brilliant hundred from Haris Sohail in Dubai on Sunday.

Sohail scored a 129-ball 130 for his second ODI hundred but failed to take Pakistan past Australia's imposing 327-7, finishing at 307-7 in 50 overs.

Australia's total was built around Usman Khawaja's 98 and a fiery 33-ball 70 by Glenn Maxwell coupled with Shaun Marsh's 61 and skipper Aaron Finch's 53 in a dominating batting show.

The series win gives Australia an eighth straight ODI victory following their 3-2 series win in India after losing the first two matches.

Man of the match Maxwell's ten fours and three sixes helped Australia get 107 runs off the last ten overs, seeing them over the line.

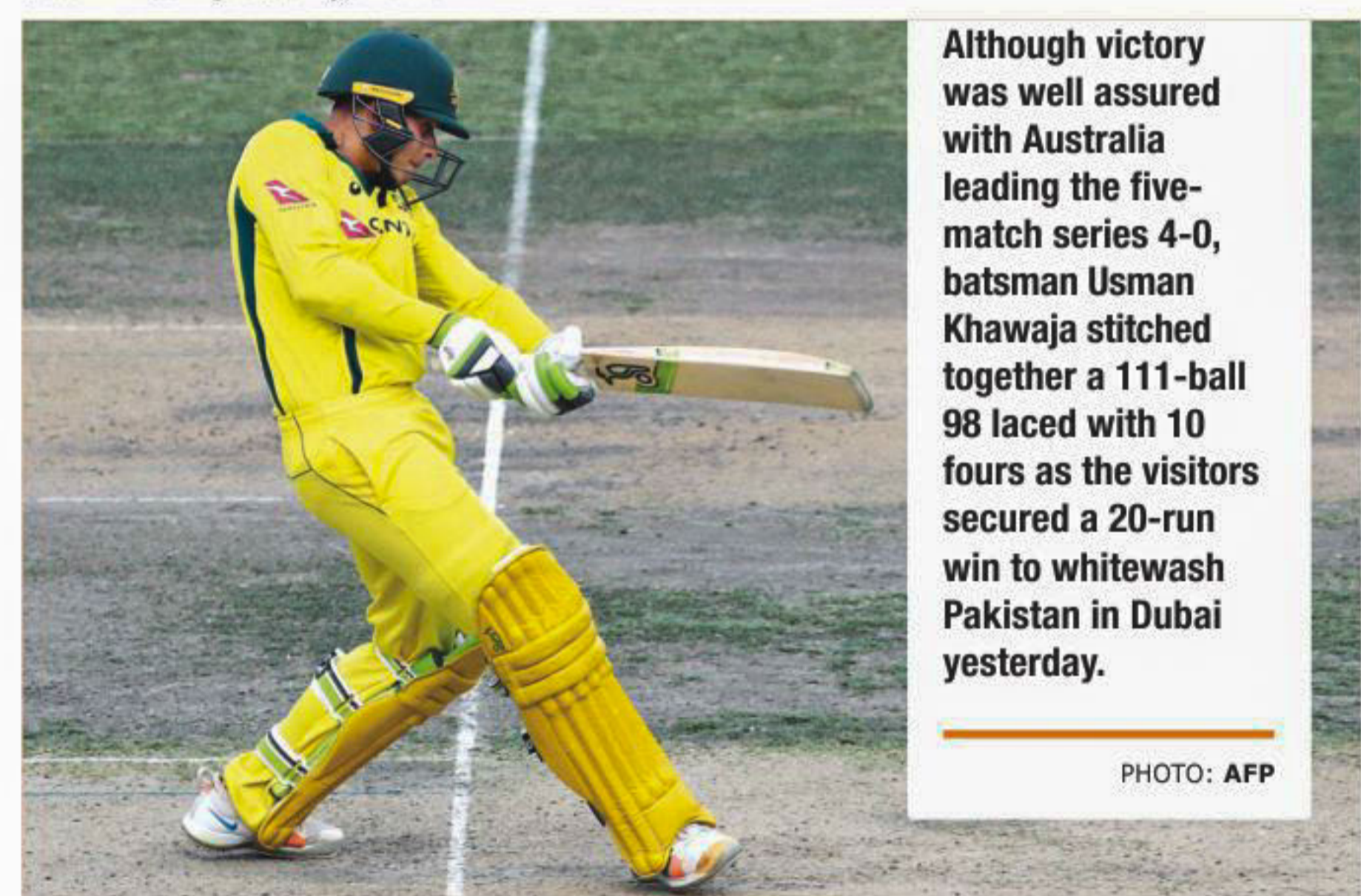
SCORES IN BRIEF:

AUSTRALIA: 327 for 7 (Khawaja 98, Finch 53, Marsh 61, Maxwell 70; Shinawri 4-49, Junaid 3-73)

PAKISTAN: 307 for 7 in 50 overs (Masood 50, Sohail 130, Wasim 50 not out, Behrendorff 3-63)

Result: Australia won by 20 runs and win the five-match series 5-0.

Player-of-the-match: Glenn Maxwell
Player-of-the-series: Aaron Finch



Although victory was well assured with Australia leading the five-match series 4-0, batsman Usman Khawaja stitched together a 111-ball 98 laced with 10 fours as the visitors secured a 20-run win to whitewash Pakistan in Dubai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Undaunted on wheelchairs

In 2010, Mohammad Mohasin formed Wheelchair Cricket Welfare Association Bangladesh (WCWAB), acting as its founder captain. The organisation emerged as a national level non-government and non-profit voluntary one for differently-abled people of Bangladesh with the aim of strengthening their position in society. Scan the QR code to watch a video story on the WCWAB.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ THE STORY & WATCH THE VIDEO



BANGLADESH HOCKEY FEDERATION ELECTIONS

No compromise yet as two panels submit nominations

SPORTS REPORTER



The highly-anticipated Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) elections is starting to heat up as two panels, backed

by well wishers, councillors and organisers, submitted their nominations for 28 posts -- the five vice presidents, one general secretary, two joint secretaries, a treasurer and 19 members -- to the election office at the National Sports Council yesterday. The elections will be held on April 8.

Interestingly, 58 out of 84 councillors submitted their nominations to contest in the BHF polls with the ad-hoc committee's outgoing general secretary and Abahani director Abdus Sadeque leading one panel while outgoing vice-president, Mohammedan SC councillor and Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club hockey committee chairman AKM Mominul Haque Sayeed at the helm of another panel.

Both candidates expressed their hope to win the elections and believe that the councillors will choose the appropriate individual for the betterment of the country's hockey scene.

"I belong to Abahani, who think there is no suitable general secretary candidate at the moment following the demise of Khaza Rahmatullah. So,

I am contesting as the club wills it," said former national team player Sadeque. "I think we should win the elections even though everyone belongs to hockey. If elected, I want to invest more in the district level as well as form two more national teams -- under-21 and under-18 -- as a pipeline for the national team."

"You know what I have been doing in sports and I believe voters will take that into consideration to cast their votes in my favour. Most premier league clubs and lower division clubs have been with me and assured that they would support me till the last moment," said Sayeed after submitting the nominations.

The previous BHF polls in 2013 actually had a negative effect on the sport as the ensuing drawn out stalemate led to five premier league clubs, like Mohammedan SC and Mariner Youngs Club, boycotting the then elected committee led by Khaza Rahmatullah. The turmoil finally ended after two-and-a-half years following reshuffles in some top posts which made Rahmatullah vice-president and Sadeque general secretary.

The current premier league teams are also divided up between two or three groups who are grasping for power, particularly the general secretary post, raising the question over

whether all the clubs will agree to play together under the new committee. In that perspective, the hockey fraternity has demanded the formation of a consensus panel in the sport's best interest, however, that consensus/compromised panel seems ever elusive.

"I think there is no possibility of forming a comprised panel. Keeping me as general secretary, our panel tried it but Mr. Sayeed declined," said Sadeque.

"Actually we heard about the compromised panel from you [the media] but no one gave us such a proposal. So, we don't know about it. Rather, we are preparing for the elections. You see, some people try to further their own interests under the banner of a club. I think voters will decide the right person to cast their votes for," claimed Sayeed.

However, there have been whispers that there is still a slim chance for a consensus panel to be formed as candidates will have the opportunity to withdraw their nominations on April 4. General secretary aspirants Sayeed and Usha KC general secretary Abdur Rashid Shikdar submitted their nominations for both general secretary and vice-president posts while Sadeque only submitted one nomination, for the general secretary post.

SL captain arrested for DUI

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan Test cricket captain Dimuth Karunaratne has been arrested and charged with driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol after an accident in the capital, police said Sunday.

Karunaratne, 30, was taken into custody following the pre-dawn accident that resulted in the driver of a three-wheel taxi being taken to hospital.

"We have released him on personal bail, but he was asked to be in court on Monday for a magisterial inquiry," a police spokesman said, adding that his vehicle was detained.

The incident comes as Sri Lankan cricket officials mull who to name as captain of the one-day squad for the World Cup hosted by England and Wales from May 30.

Karunaratne, who led Sri Lanka to a stunning Test series victory against South Africa last month, had been in the frame to lead the one-day side as well.

Sri Lanka's cricket board said it would investigate the incident.