

Talukder shames cricket Neeyamur left in pain

SPORTS REPORTER

It could not have been a more eventful day for Neeyamur Rashid. He led Abahani to a 25-run win against Indira Road Krira Chakra with a dazzling all-round show in an important GreenPhone Premier League match at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday but then experienced the misfortune of sustaining a severe injury on his right-hand by a hot-headed Indira Road captain Jahangir Alam Talukder.

Talukder, a former national left-arm paceman, brought his reputation of being a heart and soul cricketer to shame when he used his bat to hit Neeyamur following a heated exchange.

The ugly episode took place when Talukder came into bat at number ten with his side still needing

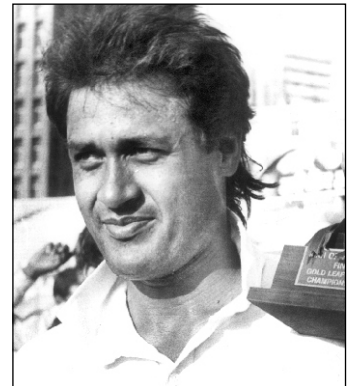
38 runs off 23 balls to topple Abahani's fighting 199-61 in 50 overs.

But instead of focusing on getting those runs, Jahangir wielded his willow targeting the head of

Neeyamur after the latter reportedly approached him to ask he had been shouting ceaselessly from outside the boundary line.

Neeyamur used his right-arm to block the bat from hitting his head, but only ended up having his arm seriously bruised.

He was immediately taken to the hospital for X-ray. It was learnt that



Jahangir Talukder

PHOTO: STAR FILE

the Abahani all-rounder has a severely swelled arm. But it could not be known whether it was broken.

As Neeyamur was being taken to the hospital, Talukder did his or his team's cause no good by making duck and Indira Road were promptly bowled out for 174 in 48 overs.

"It was really disappointing. It was also unbefitting of a cricketer like Dulu (Talukder) to react so brutally to the comment of a young player. It looked like Abahani is gradually becoming a target of such mindless violent acts. You never know I might be the attacked the next day," said Abahani captain Akram.

The former national captain said that Talukder was unusually charged up during the match and was protesting each and every decision that went against his team's interest.

While Akram termed the incident 'sad' some Abahani officials decided to take the issue much beyond the boundary.

"We have filed an FIR with the Fatullah Police Station against Jahangir Talukder," said Abahani manager Qamruzzaman Litu.

He also said that the injury to Neeyamur was big blow for his team. Neeyamur scored a fine 65 off 108 balls after Abahani lost both their openers for only two runs on the board.

He also shared 66 runs with Akram Khan for the fourth wicket. Neeyamur also bowled well to finish with 36-1 in his ten overs.

Akram continued his rich vein of form with an unbeaten 61 off 59 balls. The experienced middle-order batsman struck three fours and a six in his 59-ball knock.

The victory took Abahani's tally to 44 points from 11 games. With one game of the first phase in hand Abahani now jointly share the second position with City Club and Mohammedan SC.

The defeat on the other hand left Indira Road with a must-win situation against Bangladesh Biman in their last match to fancy their chances of a Super League berth.

In the other match of the day at the BKSP in Saver, Orient SC recorded a comprehensive 63-run win against Kalabagan Krira Chakra.

Sent into bat, Orient scored 227 before being all out in 48 overs. Opener Masum struck 58 off 93 balls that included four boundaries and Mithu hammered a run-a-ball 42.

Kalabagan, living in the dreaded relegation zone, were bundled out 164 in 47.5 overs.

State of strength

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category. Captain Tikolo, Maurice Odumbe and Thomas Odoyo and all very useful with bat and ball.

India captain Ganguly, Sehwag and Yuvraj have chipped in wickets but on most occasions have not been required to help out a bowling attack which has been able to cope with most situations very admirably.

Kenya edge this category because of their star trio's outstanding statistics.

Advantage: Kenya WICKETKEEPERS

Of all the pre-tournament mumbles surrounding the India squad, the loudest was that of the non-selection of an established wicketkeeper.

India chose two batsmen, Rahul Dravid and Yuvraj Singh, to fill in the role.

Dravid, who got the nod ahead of his younger counterpart because of previous experience in the role, has shown his nimble ability with the gloves.

Although his form with the bat suffered in earlier group matches, he has grown in confidence.

He has 12 catches to his name, while his Kenya counterpart Kennedy Otiemo Obuya has eight.

The opener will be hoping to be fit in time for Thursday's contest after picking up an injury as a result of a vicious delivery from Australia's Brett Lee brother David Obuya in line to take over behind the stumps.

Advantage: India FAST BOWLERS

One of the biggest surprises of the World Cup so far has been the brilliant form shown by India's pace attack.

Much of the build-up centred around the side's star-studded batting line-up, but they have been outshone by the likes of Jagavallabha Srinath, Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra.

All three bowlers have enjoyed the spotlight.

Who could forget Nehra's six-wicket haul against England, Khan's four for 42 against New Zealand and veteran Srinath's performance against Sri Lanka.

The medium-fast pace of Kenya's Martin Sui, along with the three aforementioned reliable all-rounders will need to be at the top of their game against India's batting attack.

Advantage: India SPINNERS

Kenya's Collins Obuya has the ability to steal the headlines if he performs the way he has been this tournament.

With 13 wickets already to his name, the bowler who took five wickets against Sri Lanka, is the second most prolific spinner in the competition behind Muttiah Muralitharan.

On the other hand India's Harbhajan Singh has found the going difficult at this World Cup.

The Turbanator has nine wickets to his name and has been expensive at times.

But as the saying goes form is temporary but class is permanent. **Advantage: India.**

India look past Kenya

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But, wherever they are, all Kenyan fans can feel very proud of Steve Tikolo's boys in green.

LINE-UPS

INDIA (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Jagavallabha Srinath, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Dinesh Mongia, Parthiv Patel, Sanjay Bangar, Ajit Agarkar, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif.

KENYA (from): Steve Tikolo (captain), Maurice Odumbe, Asif Karim, Alishah Vadhwa, Ravindu Shah, Hitesh Modi, Brijesh Patel, Martin Sui, Tony Sujit, Thomas Odoyo.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (WIs) and Daryl Harper (Aus)

TV umpire: Simon Taufel (Aus)

Match referee: Mike Procter (RSA)

ROAD TO SEMIS

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INDIA runs in Harare (India 255-7 in 50 overs; S Tendulkar 81; and Zimbabwe 172 in 44.4 overs; S Ganguly 3-22)

Feb 23: beat Namibia by 181 runs at Pietermaritzburg (India 311-2 in 50 overs; S Tendulkar 152; S Ganguly 112 not out; and Namibia 130 in 42.3 overs; Y Singh 4-6)

Feb 26: beat England by 82 runs at Durban (Kenya 250-9 in 50 overs; R Dravid 62; S Tendulkar 50; and England 168 in 45.3 overs; A Flintoff 64; A Nehra 6-23)

Mar 1: beat Pakistan by six wickets at Centurion (Pakistan 273-7 in 50 overs; S Anwar 101; and India 276-4 in 45.4 overs; S Tendulkar 98; Y Singh 50)

Mar 7: beat Kenya by six wickets in Cape Town (Kenya 225-6 in 50 overs; K Otiemo 79; and India 226-4 in 47.5 overs; S Ganguly 107 not out, Y Singh 58 not out)

Mar 10: beat Sri Lanka by 183 runs in Johannesburg (India 292-6 in 50 overs; S Tendulkar 97; V Sehwag 66; and Sri Lanka 109 in 23 overs; Srinath 4-35; A Nehra 4-35)

Mar 14: beat New Zealand by seven wickets at Centurion (New Zealand 146 in 45.1 overs; K Khan 4-42; and India 150-3 in 40.4 overs; M Kaif 68 not out, R Dravid 53 not out)

KENYA Feb 21: awarded four points after New Zealand refused to travel to Nairobi over security fears.

Feb 24: beat Sri Lanka by 53 runs in Nairobi (Kenya 210-9 in 50 overs; K Otiemo 60; M Muralitharan 4-28; and Sri Lanka 157 in 45 overs; C Obuya 5-24)

Mar 1: beat Bangladesh by 32 runs in Johannesburg (Kenya 217-7 in 50 overs; M Odumbe 52 not out; and Bangladesh 185; M Odumbe 4-38)

Mar 4: lost to West Indies by 142 runs at Kimberley (West Indies 246-7 in 50 overs; C Gayle 119, S Chanderngopal 66; and Kenya 104 in 35.5 overs; V Drakes 5-33)

Mar 7: lost to India by six wickets in Cape Town (Kenya 225-6 in 50 overs; K Otiemo 79; and India 226-4 in 47.5 overs; S Ganguly 107 not out, Y Singh 58 not out)

Mar 12: beat Zimbabwe by seven wickets at Bloemfontein (Zimbabwe 133 in 44.1 overs; A Flower 63; and Kenya 135-3 in 26 overs)

Mar 15: lost to Australia by five wickets at Durban (Kenya 174-8 in 50 overs; S Tikolo 51; B Lee 3-14; and Australia 178-5 in 31.2 overs; A Gilchrist 67; A Karim 3-7)

Ronaldo carries Real through



AFP, Paris

A rare header by Brazilian superstar Ronaldo sneaked holders Real Madrid into the Champions League quarter-finals as they beat Lokomotiv Moscow 1-0 in their Group C clash and recorded their first victory in the Russian capital in nine visits.

But for a dreadful miss by Lokomotiv's Brazilian midfielder Julio Cesar in the dying minutes it would have been farewell to the Spanish nine-time European champions and instead Germany's 1997 Champions League winners Borussia Dortmund would have progressed after their 1-0 victory over AC Milan in Milan.

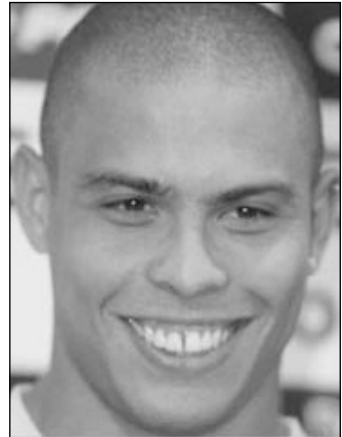
However progressed as group champions. Instead Real remain on course to retain their title having finished a point ahead of Dortmund while Germany is left with no representative in the last eight for the first time in 19 years.

Group D's matches saw both sides that made the last eight, Manchester United and Juventus

lose.

United fielded a weakened side made up of raw youngsters and crusty veterans and paid the price going down 2-0 to Deportivo La Coruna while Juventus were beaten by surprise packages Basel, who came from a goal down to snatch a 2-1 victory with an injury-time winner.

While Juventus, Basel and Deportivo all finished level on points it was the Italians who progressed as Basel needed to beat them by four clear goals.



RONALDO

Captain Latif

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lity of leading the team at this critical stage as I want to play a key role in the revival of the senior team," Latif said.

"It is a big honour for me and I will work closely with the new selection committee and team management to bring positive results for Pakistan."

This is the second time Latif has been captain. In 1998, he led Pakistan to Bangladesh, South Africa and Zimbabwe before being removed by the Board.

In November, he announced his retirement from Test cricket and indicated he would retire from one-day cricket after the World Cup.

"I have decided against retiring now because this is a critical period for the team," he said.

"And I believe I can still play a vital role in the rebuilding process." Latif, who has played 34 Tests

and 149 one-dayers since his debut in 1992, was one of the few successes for Pakistan in the World Cup with his neat keeping and useful batting.

The team for Sharjah is due to be announced by Friday and several new and young faces are expected in the side for the triangular tournament.

Former captain Miandad was coach twice between 1998 and 2001 before being forced to step down because of differences with senior players.

Miandad, 45, remains Pakistan's highest Test run maker and is a reversed figure in Pakistan cricket.

Another former captain and opener, Aamir Sohail, will head the new selection committee of former Test players Saleem Yousaf, Shoaib Muhammad, Farukh Zaman and Shafiq Ahmed. Ahmed is the only member kept from the outgoing committee.

Getting scalps

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However, his skipper Ricky Ponting scored a century and took the plaudits.

On Tuesday, in the semifinals, he did it again.

At 22 without loss in the fifth over, chasing a meagre 213 for victory in Port Elizabeth, Jayasuriya's men had cause for optimism.

Lee then uprooted Marvan Atapattu's off stump with a 160.1kpm (99.48mph) thunderbolt, punching repeatedly at the floor in delight. "That started it off," said Ponting.

Lee kept Jayasuriya honest by peppering his ribcage and cracking him on the elbow, had Hashan Tillakaratne caught behind and then removed Avishka Gunawardene, fencing to the slips, as Sri Lanka collapsed to 45 for four.

Wicket to wicket, Lee took three for 17 in 24 balls, in the process equalling Shane Warne's Australian record of 20 wickets in a single World Cup.

Lee hasn't just caused inroads, he has ripped the heart out of Australia's opponents. He removes specialist batsmen rather than picking up tail-enders on the cheap. Games look alive and then suddenly, a few balls and a few bemused batsmen later, they aren't.

Australia recognise Lee's true value, even if World Cup adjudicators have not. Lee took five for 30 in the second final of a tri-series event on home turf against England in January and was promptly named both man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series.

On Tuesday, he was pipped by Andrew Symonds' excellent 91 not out, which gave Australia a total to defend.

Ponting was delighted with Symonds' knock "he played beautifully, he has done so all tournament" but he had some praise for Lee as well before Sunday's final.

"The way Brett is bowling is outstanding. Let's hope he's got one more big game in him."

From spinach to spin

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hesaid.

Then former India bowler Balwinder Sandhu arrived to coach Kenya and taught him the basic grip before the under-19 World Cups in 1998 and 2000.

"I spoke to Shane Warne two years ago," Obuya added.

"He told me how to hold the ball, not to grip very tightly."

"I also went to Anil Kumble. He taught me to bowl a googly, how I should come wide of the stumps."

The softly spoken Obuya, who made his one-day debut in 2001 against West Indies, has taken 13 World Cup wickets at 25.69 runs apiece. He also impressed in the upset win over Zimbabwe, with three for 32 off 10 overs.

Only 10 players have taken more wickets in the Cup. India's off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has taken nine while his teammate Kumble has five.

It has been a sudden transformation.

Before the tournament, Obuya's career figures showed seven wickets in 16 games at 89.42.

India have already had one look at him. He started well against them in the Super Sixes, conceding five runs in his first four overs and dismissing Rahul Dravid caught and bowled.

Although Saurav Ganguly counter-attack to regain the initiative, the India captain praised his young opponent.

"If the right people guide him properly, he can become a very good bowler," he said.

tator, agreed.

"His control is excellent," he said. "He now has to bring more variety. He should also learn how to vary pace and length, especially when batsmen go after him."

Australia certainly went after Obuya, who has two brothers in the squad, on Saturday, hammering him for 62 off eight overs.

"I went for runs because of the attacking field. But I will get my line back before we face India," he said.

Obuya said his most satisfying wicket was that of Sri Lanka left-hander Kumar Sangakkara, caught behind off a glove by his brother Kennedy Otiemo. "The ball turned just so much," he said with a smile.

Quips & Quotes

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innings of 91 against Sri Lanka.

"I love the job, I love the passion"

Half-done Lanka

FROM PAGE 16 Jayasuriya said he hoped Whatmore will continue.

"Day has been very good for the boys. We won the 1996 World Cup with him and we have done well again since he came back in 1999."

"He has been doing a good job. He has been there for a long time."

"We have been grooming some youngsters since 1999 but unfortunately some of them did not perform well in this tournament."

"But we have some talent in the side and when we go into the middle we have to fight hard."

Hail gentlemen

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claimed he couldn't be certain that a catch off Steve Waugh was clean or not in the fourth Test in Melbourne.

The Australian skipper, who had made 56 at the time, edged Andrew Caddick who appealed for the dismissal.

But Butcher said he wasn't certain as he took the ball near the ground. He shook the hand of Waugh who batted on to make 77 as the Aussies eventually went to win by five wickets.

"It showed good sportsmanship and how the game should be played," said Australian batsman Justin Langer.

England found themselves the beneficiaries of a gesture of Test match sportsmanship in Bombay in 1980 when Bob Taylor made his way to the pavilion thinking he was out, caught behind.

However, he was called back by Indian captain Gundappa Viswanath and Taylor seized his chance by building a match-winning partnership with Ian Botham.

"It's not just in cricket where unexpected generosity has been applauded."

At the Australian Open in 2001, Swedish tennis player Magnus Norman handed victory to French player Sebastien Grosjean by ignoring a "let" on match point in their fourth round match.

The gesture by Norman gave Grosjean a place in the quarterfinals.

Time is Wright

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"The Kenyans are an underestimated side. Like us they've grown in confidence during the tournament."

And he insisted there was no danger of his players not being up to the task.

"This next match is a very important match for us. Motivation will take care of itself. You shouldn't need to motivate anyone in a semifinal."

"For all of us, it's one of the biggest games of our careers."

Symonds shows

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own bat.

"I knew he had that in him and everyone who has ever played with him knew he had it in him and it is now coming out at vital times," Ponting added.

"If you look at his numbers they are very good, but more importantly is the way he has gone about his cricket since he has been out there."

"He has been good, positive and has worked on all aspects of his game, batting, both forms of bowling and in the field and he is just a lot more confident."

"That success in the first game against Pakistan (when he made 143 not out) makes it easier but he is more of a thinking cricketer than maybe he was in the past and I could not be happier with him."

Symonds said hard work and belief had been the keys to his turnaround in form during the tournament.

"It has probably been practice and a lot of assistance from the team and people within the side," he said.

"I am believing in myself and after that first game my confidence has been as high as it ever has been."

"I am also now trusting myself to go out every time to produce the same thing."

Sports on war

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war went ahead Thursday.

"Washington is probably the safest place over the next weeks," said Leslie Gianelli co-president of the organising committee. "We worked with district and federal authorities to ensure the safety of skaters."

The 12-day WTA and ATP Masters Series event in Miami starting Wednesday and others that follow in Europe and the United States next month could become targets of terrorism, a fact which worries players.

"I have the same concerns as anyone," said world number one Lleyton Hewitt of Australia. "But as professional athletes, there is not much we can do about it. We have to travel."

ATP and WTA players go to Estoril, Portugal, in early April. The men's tour has events in Monte Carlo and Barcelona. The women have events in Casablanca and Budapest but also three US tournaments after Miami.

Meanwhile French sports minister Jean-Francois Lamour announced the setting up of a "lookout cell" to oversee the security of their athletes abroad and foreign athletes visiting France.

Why 'walk'?

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Sri Lanka skipper Sanath Jayasuriya added: "We thought it was out...and he walked off. We were very pleased but he would have felt it (the edge)."

De Silva also walked after edging a catch against Zimbabwe on Saturday.

It was Australia, under Ian Chappell in the mid-1970s, who were widely credited with starting the trend of not walking, even when the batsman knew he was out.

Chappell's attitude was that it was the umpire's job to make the decision.

While other sports, such as golf and snooker, commonly see competitors call fouls against themselves, cricket has slipped down that fair-play scale.

However, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) said Gilchrist should be applauded for his decision.

"Such behaviour is vital for the very integrity of sport and our sporting system," ASC chief executive Mark Peters said in a statement.

The Government-funded ASC administrators grants to peak sporting bodies in Australia. Australia's success in sports

such as rugby union, rugby league, cricket and tennis has come at a price with some critics saying the ruthless approach of some of the country's top sportsmen has lacked a sense of fair play.

"I'm sure many of us have witnessed examples of poor behaviour on and off the sporting field, by players and spectators," Peters said.

"The personal values and social and behavioural skills once

learned through participation in sport have become less common."

"I've stood there before and not walked, but maybe that's just where I think my career should head," Gilchrist told Sydney radio on Wednesday.

"Hopefully maybe it can have an impact on cricket."

The Age newspaper also called Gilchrist's act "a display of honesty rarely seen on an international cricket field."

"This was a refreshing gesture from a quality player after the game reached new lows in Australia over recent summers, with batsmen who have clearly been caught hanging around for mostly inconclusive replays viewed by the third umpire," The Australian newspaper said.

De Silva

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experience."

Jayasuriya, who has the second-highest Test average of the current Sri Lankan team, made 21 runs in seven World Cup innings. Arnold, whose career average in one-day cricket is