



(L) OPENERS UNITED! Al-Shahriar, Shahriar Hossain and newcomer Moniruzzaman, all opening bats, stretching during a practice session. (R) COACH CALLS THE SHOTS: Dav Whatmore briefs his charges before the start of the first training session of the national cricketers at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) yesterday.



Did U Know?

The first player to cross the 1,000-run mark in Test cricket was England's Arthur Shrewsbury. He achieved this feat in his 21st Test against Australia in 1893.



TEN Sports

French Open
Live at 4:00 pm

ESPN

Western Union World Football
Repeat at 2:30 pm
Football Focus
Taped Version at 6:30 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

Primera Liga
Deportivo vs Atletico Madrid
Taped Version at 2:30 pm
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show



Manuel Rui Costa

(AC Milan's Portuguese international) "It's a great party, a season worth framing." After winning the Champions League and Italian Cup titles.

Wins for Eagles, Flame Boys

UNB, Dhaka

Eagles Club and Flame Boys Club won their respective matches in the Metropolis First Division Basketball League beating their rivals at Hanmondi Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Eagles beat Rangers Club 63-44 after dominating the first session by 32-12 points.

Salgira caged 24, Arif 15, Abir 14 for the winners while Mamun scored 15, Sezan 14 and Sumon 12 for the losers.

In the day's other match, Flame Boys earned huge 147-57 points after leading the first half by 67-24 points.

Sajib contributed 63, Joyti 24 and Setu 14 for the winners while Barua made 22, Timir 14 and Jewel 9 for the losers.

PCB plans big Akram send-off

INTERNET, Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is planning to include Wasim Akram in their one-day side to face South Africa later this year as a formal farewell to his remarkable international career despite Wasim announcing his retirement last month.

"Wasim had given nothing to us [the PCB] in writing and we want to give him grand send-off from international cricket," explained Lt Gen Tauqir Zia, chief executive of the PCB.

Zia said the plan is for Wasim to be included in either the match at Lahore or Karachi.

"It would be great to bid him farewell in front of his home crowd," Zia added that they wanted to utilise Wasim's experience. "We want him to train Pakistani youngsters," he told reporters. "It would not be in our interest that he coach and train in England."

Camp starts with a difference



SPORTS REPORTER

Observation was the main theme as new Bangladesh cricket coach Dav Whatmore watched his boys in training for the first time at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) in Savar yesterday.

The Sri Lankan-born Australian opted not to talk to individuals during the morning nets or in the afternoon's fielding session. Rather the high-profile former Sri Lanka coach preferred to let the 20 enthusiastic aspirants express themselves on the opening day of the Australia bound national team's residential camp.

Although it was not as tough a day's workout as was anticipated, Whatmore's training style nevertheless was refreshingly different.

Staring from uniformity in the training kit of every member of the team to intensive nets side by side on four lively wickets, everything reflected the job of a true professional who believes in deeds not words.

"I do not like to talk at length. It is sometimes boring," said Whatmore after being pressed hard by the reporters about his first day's experience.

Except for captain Khaled Mahmud none of the other players were given permission by Whatmore to speak to the press.

"It is exciting to practice under a famed coach. His way of coaching is different and he seemed a very easy going person," said Mahmud who led Bangladesh in the TVS Cup tri-series and home series against South Africa two months ago. He also marveled at the unique concept of nets on four wickets side by side. "I am experiencing something like

this for the first time in my long career," said Mahmud.

Whatmore said that he was keen to concentrate on individual skills of the players during the first five days.

"I want to see what a player is capable of."

For the batsmen, Whatmore singled out one objective: "It is very important for the them to know where their off stump is."

Whatmore also displayed his passion for technology when he employed former national wicketkeeper Nasir Ahmed, who is the computer analyst of the team, to film the entire day's training session.

In the afternoon four cricketers -- Habibul Bashar, Al-Shahriar, Javed Omar and Sanwar Hossain were scheduled to meet the coach as part

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

Kiwi plots NZ's fall



AFP, Bangalore

India's cricket coach John Wright on Monday sounded a warning to New Zealand, saying his team was "hungry" to thrash the Kiwis in the forthcoming two-Test home series.

"We've got a few scores to settle with them," said Wright, a former New Zealand captain who scored 5,334 runs in 82 Tests with 12 centuries.

New Zealand will play two Tests in India in October before the two teams are joined by world champions Australia for a one-day series in November.

Wright said the Indians were keen to avenge a series of humiliating defeats suffered at the hands of Stephen Fleming's team on their tour of New Zealand before the World Cup.

New Zealand whipped India in a two-Test series on seamer-friendly pitches, winning both matches inside three days.

There was no respite either from the New Zealand seam attack in the

subsequent seven one-dayers as India went down 5-2 to suffer one of their worst overseas defeats in recent years.

India, however, redeemed themselves at the World Cup in South Africa where they reached the final before losing to Australia.

The World Cup performance saw the Indian cricket board extend Wright's contract as coach for one more year.

Wright said New Zealand would encounter a different and well-prepared Indian team when they come in October.

"The boys have some time off after the World Cup and they should be hungry for runs and wickets," he said.

India have won all four home Test series against Australia, the West Indies, England and Zimbabwe since Wright took over as coach in 2000.

The most memorable moment came in 2001 when Sourav Ganguly's team came from behind to stun formidable Australia 2-1.

India have also done well in one-day tournaments under Wright.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Back with a bang



AFP, New Delhi

Former India batsman Ajay Jadeja made a spectacular return to cricket over the weekend after a court hearing his appeal against a match-fixing ban allowed him to play domestic matches.

Jadeja showed no rustiness after a forced lay-off of almost three years as he smashed 45 on Saturday and followed it up with an unbeaten 101 off 78 balls on Sunday in two local club matches in New Delhi.

Some 1,000 fans turned up to watch match-fit Jadeja's comeback to the batting crease and the flamboyant batsman did not disappoint them, smashing eight boundaries and six sixes on Sunday.

"It's great to be back. I still dream of playing for India again," said the 32-year-old who took up acting in Bollywood movies soon after being handed a five-year ban in December 2000.

"Cricket remains my first love. I just want to play."

Jadeja was banned from all cricket for five years by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)

after a federal investigation report into match-fixing accused him of mixing with illegal bookmakers.

Two other players, former captain Mohammad Azharuddin and Ajay Sharma, were banned for life, while a third, Manoj Prabhakar, was suspended for five years.

While Azharuddin's appeal



AJAY JADEJA

against the ban is still pending. Jadeja received permission from the BCCI to play domestic matches.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

It's Rajshahi v Biman



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rajshahi scored an exciting five-run victory over Comilla to reach the final of the 26th National Cricket Championship at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

In a low-scoring match, Rajshahi relied on two individual performances by all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman and medium pacer Rezwatul Islam Dola to set up a showdown against holders Bangladesh Biman tomorrow.

Put into bat, Rajshahi recovered from the loss of two early wickets to post a modest 150 all out in 47.5 overs with Mushfiq, who was unlucky to have missed out on a call-up for the Australia bound national team's residential camp at the BKSP, top-scoring with 34 off 62 balls. He only struck one four.

There was very little in the way of partnerships. The highest being 42

runs for the sixth wicket between Nuruzzaman Nayan (11) and Dola (14) that took the score from a perilous 61-6 to past the three-figure mark.

Besides, Mushfiq, lower-order batsman Mahbub Mustakim was not out on a 47-ball 25. Last man Shahriar Hasan slammed the only six of the Rajshahi innings.

Comilla used six bowlers to dislodge the fancied Rajshahi side. Monirul Islam Moni was the pick of the bowlers with three wickets for 30 runs. Veteran Bangladesh left-arm spinner Enamul Hoque took two wickets for 24 runs from his 10-over spell.

Comilla made Rajshahi sweat and were tantalisingly close to snatching an upset victory only to fall short by five runs as they were all out with two balls of the stipulated 50 remaining. Rajshahi's Dola and Nayan thwarted their enterprising chase by sharing seven wickets. Man-of-the-match Dola claimed four for 22 while Nayan bagged three for 22. Mushfiq also chipped in with two

wickets.

The top-scorer for Comilla was Sumon Barua with 34 while tail-ender Monirul added 25 of 34 balls which included a six.

Defending champions Biman had thrashed Narayanganj by 103 runs on Sunday to move into the final.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Rajshahi vs Comilla

Venue: Chittagong

RAJSHAHI: 150 all out in 47.5 overs (Mushfiqur 34, Mustakim 25 not out, Rezwatul 14, Extras 20; Monirul 3-30, Sumon 2-43, Anisur 1-6, Enamul 1-24)

COMILLA: 145 all out in 49.4 overs (Sumon 34, Azad Rana 26, Monirul 25 not out, Extras 18; Rezwatul 4-22, Nuruzzaman 3-22, Mushfiqur 2-25)

Man-of-the-match: Rezwatul Islam Dola (Rajshahi).

Result: Rajshahi won by five runs



PHOTO: STAR

Rajshahi's Mushfiqur Rahman fails to make his ground during their National Cricket Championship semifinal against Comilla at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Windies end on a high



AFP, St. George's

The West Indies humbled Australia by nine wickets at Queen's Park here on Sunday to finish the one-day international cricket series on an upswing with three consecutive victories over the World Cup champions.

The jaded Australians had already clinched the series by sweeping the opening four games, but Brian Lara's team looked more like the victors before a celebrating home crowd.

Wavell Hinds was again the tormentor with his second consecutive century to lead the West Indies to a comprehensive victory with six and a half overs to spare.

Hinds, who was not part of the original one-day squad, scored an unbeaten 103 off 130 balls to finish the series with 352 runs from five innings to be named man-of-the-series.

Lara finished the match with a flourish, plastering off-spinner Darren Lehmann for three successive sixes to remain unbeaten on 75 as the West Indies reached 249 for one in reply to Australia's struggling 247 for eight.

Chris Gayle was judged man-of-the-match with his 60 off 68 the only West Indian wicket to fall combined with his career-best ODI bowling figures of 5-46 off 10 overs in Australia's innings.

The euphoric victory buoyed West Indies cricket after their 3-1 loss in the preceding Test series to Australia and their run of four defeats in the first half of the ODI series.

While the West Indies regrouped after losing the series in Port-of-Spain, the form of Ricky Ponting's World Cup champions progressively fell away after the end of their record 21-game unbeaten run with signs of a lack of motivation seeping into the team.

The Australians leave for home on Monday for a well-earned five-week break after playing cricket continuously since last November.

The last time Australia lost three consecutive ODIs was in mid-January last year twice to New Zealand and the other to South Africa in the home triangular series.

Ponting, whose last tour match was dogged by a hip injury which forced him to retire while batting and prevented him from fielding, looked downcast after the heavy defeat.

Hinds and Gayle were major contributors to the West Indian resurgence.

Hinds followed up his unbeaten 125 off 140 balls in Friday's three-wicket victory here with another commanding performance. He belted nine sixes in the Grenada double-header.

He gave only one chance on Sunday when on 76 he hit leg-spinner Brad Hogg straight to long off where Jason Gillespie fumbled an easy two-handed catch.

Gayle scored 275 runs in the series and captured 11 wickets and did much to unhinge the much-vaunted Australian batting lineup.

Earlier, Lehmann hit his fourth one-day international century to rescue Australia to a reasonable

total.

The 33-year-old Lehmann scored 107 off 109 balls with 10 fours and a six to pick the Australians up after a disastrous start to their innings.

Australia lost both openers Matthew Hayden (eight) and Adam Gilchrist (five) to careless shots for 18 runs and Ponting retired hurt after being struck on the hip by fast bowler Mervyn Dillon.

Lehmann joined in rebuilding stands of 102 with Andrew Symonds (48) and 95 off 84 balls with Brad Hogg (53) to lift the World Cup winners to a close to five runs an over, but it was no where near enough.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



PHOTO: AP

MAN-OF-THE-MATCH: West Indies' Chris Gayle pulls one powerfully on way to scoring a half-century after he had taken career-best 5-46 with the ball in the seventh one-day international against Australia at the Queen's Park Stadium in St. George's on June 1.