

Baisya recalled for third ODI

REUTERS, Dhaka

Bangladesh have called up fast bowler Tapash Baisya as they bid for a first-ever series victory in Saturday's third and final one-day international against Sri Lanka in Chittagong.

Bangladesh levelled the three-match series 1-1 with the four-wicket victory in Bogra on Wednesday, only their 11th win in 117 one-day internationals.

"We have called for Tapash Baisya to strengthen the squad in the final one-day," Faruque Ahmed, Bangladesh's chief selector, told Reuters.

He will fill the gap left by all-rounder Khaled Mahmud, who quit international cricket after the first match against in Bogra on Monday, Faruque said.

Baisya has played in 51 one-day internationals, taking 56 wickets at an average of 39.71.

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NSU win in ULAB Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

North South University (NSU) defeated East West University (EWU) by 17 runs in the third match of the ULAB Fair Play Cup cricket tournament at the ULAB ground yesterday.

NSU's Isam captured four wickets as EWU were bundled out for 103 in 30.2 overs in reply to their rivals' 120-9 in the allotted 35 overs. Isam was adjudged man-of-the-match.



Did U Know?

Until the 1870s, baseball was played without the use of gloves.



Niranjn Shah

(Indian cricket board secretary) "If any country starts Twenty-five25, will the International Cricket Council hold a Twenty-five25 World Championship?" Wondering where cricket will end up, with the ICC having announced plans for a Twenty20 World Championship.

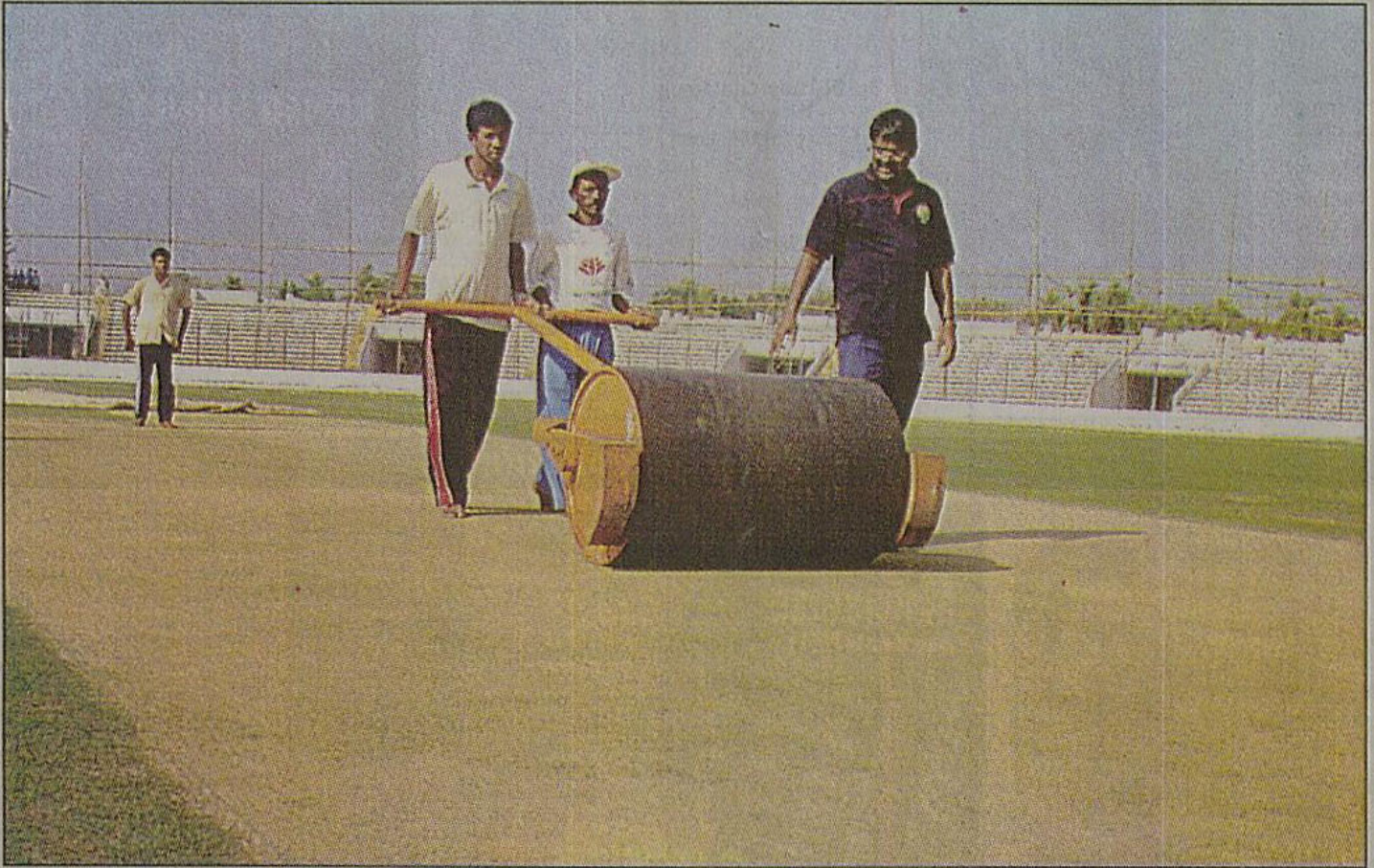


ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30 pm
New Zealand vs West Indies
Third ODI
Live at 6:58 am (Saturday)

STAR Sports
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live update at 10:00 pm & 10:30 pm



7th Nat'l Cricket League
(Four-Day Match, Day 1)
Dhaka vs Sylhet
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Stadium, Mirpur
Bansal vs Rajshahi
Venue: Barisal Stadium
Chittagong vs Khulna
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium



FINAL TOUCHES: Groundsman at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium roll the pitch on Wednesday. The venue will make its international debut when Bangladesh and Sri Lanka meet in the third and final ODI on Saturday.

Ctg wait eagerly for series decider

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The visiting Sri Lanka and Bangladesh teams arrived here in the port city yesterday to play the deciding one-day international of a three-match series and the first Test.

Both the matches will be hosted at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium, the new venue on the outskirts of the city. The one-day is scheduled for tomorrow while the five-day game starts on February 28 at the venue recently approved by the ICC.

Unlike the previous occasions, the two teams will be accommodated at the Peninsula Chittagong - a newly opened four-star hotel in the heart of the city.

With one-day series level at 1-1, the fans of Chittagong were eagerly waiting for tomorrow's series decider following the Tigers' historic win in Bogra and crowded the ticket counters in great numbers.

Most of the 14,000 tickets have already been sold though the rate of ticket sell was poor until Bangladesh's four-wicket victory.

"The win perhaps have left a magnetic effect on the cricket lovers of Chittagong to make a mad rush for tickets," said Zahirul Alam, manager of City Bank Agrabad Branch yesterday.

"Over three and a half thousand tickets were sold only from this branch today to leave us with only one and a half thousand tickets.

"To tackle the rush we had to bring another one thousand tickets from other branches where sales was abysmal," he told The Daily Star.

Tickets are being sold through five branches of the City Bank at Agrabad, GEC Intersection, Jubilee Road, Pahartali and Khatunganj. Tickets will also be available at the DKS Office at MA Aziz Stadium and at CDS Tennis Court counters during the match. The price of gallery tickets will cost TK 30 each.

Meanwhile, all preparations and necessary security arrangements have been taken to ensure safety and comfort of the players

and officials, told Divisional Kriya Sangstha (DKS) officials at a press conference earlier in the afternoon. Both the teams are scheduled to have their nets at the GDS, the second Test venue in the city this morning.

The ground was prepared long back and the galleries were protected with temporary canopies. The DKS officials informed that they have set up five hospitality boxes along side some VIP boxes for the Bangladesh Cricket Board officials and former cricketers at the 15,000-capacity venue.

The authority is providing former national cricketers with VIP tickets and school students of the city with 1000 tickets.

The total expenditure for the matches including accommodation and conveyances for players and officials were estimated at TK 65 lakh.

DKS general secretary Dastagir Chowdhury, venue coordinator SM Alamgir and BCB member Shahin Aftabur Reza, Shahabuddin Shamim and Lill Aziz were also present.

Patel tears Eng apart

Injury crises deepen for tourists

Cricket

AFF, Vadodara

Fast bowler Munaf Patel ripped through England's injury-hit batting on the opening day of the three-day tour match against the Indian Board President's XI here on Thursday.

The 24-year-old grabbed five for 59 as the tourists, facing fresh injury concerns over captain Michael Vaughan and Kevin Pietersen, were shot out for 238 in their first innings.

The home team, comprising India's young talent, were 93-1 at stumps with Test opening contenders Wasim Jaffer (48) and Gautam Gambhir (33 not out) toying with the England bowling.

Jaffer was leg-before to Ian Blackwell off the last ball of the day. Pietersen top-scored with 47 and Geriant Jones made 46, but none of the other England batsmen settled down in their last practice game ahead of the three-Test series starting in Nagpur on March 1.

Vaughan, 31, was sidelined from the game after a knee injury sustained on the tour of Pakistan last year flared up again.

Pietersen, 25, injured his back while batting and retired hurt despite being strapped up on the field by team physiotherapist Kirk Russell.

With just six days remaining for the first Test, an overworked Russell faced a race against time to field 11 fit men for the series opener.

Pace bowler Simon Jones and off-spinner Shaun Udal have been laid low by a stomach bug, while Paul Collingwood is troubled by a sore back.

Spinners Monty Panesar and Ian Blackwell were declared fit to

play the three-day match despite being afflicted by the stomach bug over the last 48 hours.

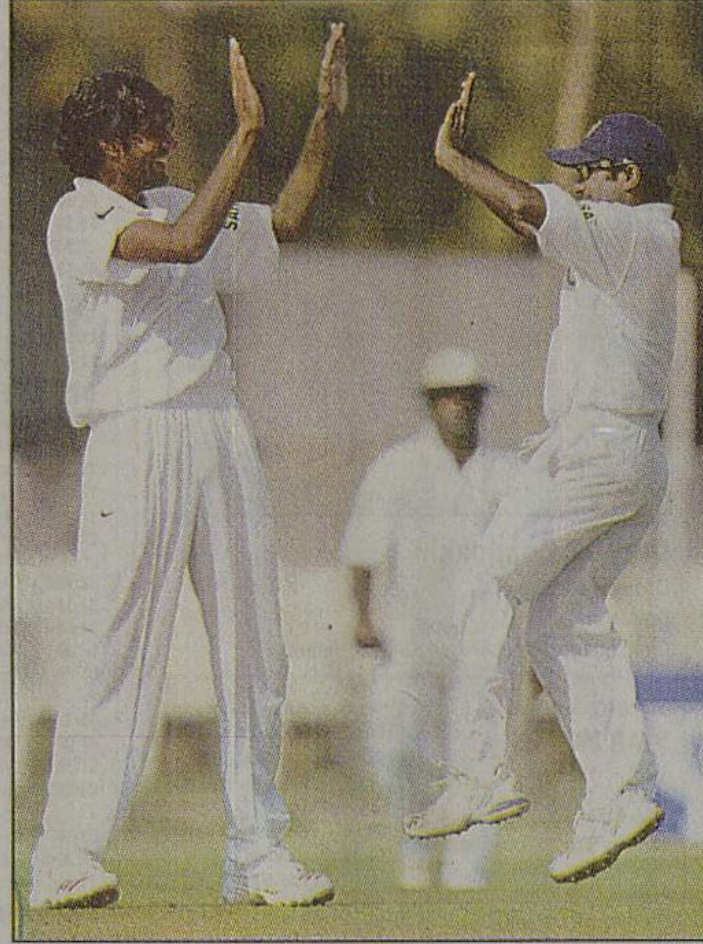
Vice-captain Marcus Trescothick, who took charge of the tourists in Vaughan's absence, was run out for 18 after winning the toss and electing to bat first.

The hosts removed Andrew

Strauss (23), Ian Bell (17) and Andrew Flintoff (one) to reduce England to 72-4, before Pietersen and Jones boosted the total.

Pietersen, who suffered a rib injury on the Pakistan tour, pulled up after trying to avoid a bouncer from young pace bowler Vikram

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Indian Board President's XI pacer Munaf Patel (L) swaps the high five with team mate Pragnan Ojha after the former took Matthew Hoggard's wicket.

Akhtar going to Australia for knee treatment

AFF, Karachi

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar said Thursday he will fly to Australia next week to see a specialist after being diagnosed with a degenerative disease in his left knee.

But the 30-year-old said he hoped to regain fitness in time for Pakistan's summer tour of England, despite also suffering problems with the other knee and his left ankle.

"I am going to Australia next week to have a specialist's opinion on the two injured knees and if they advise an operation then I will go through it and hopefully get fit for the England tour," Akhtar told AFP.

"I don't want to miss the England tour, and hope that I make it after healing the injuries," said Akhtar.

Akhtar, who has taken 165 wickets in 42 Tests and 199 wickets in 129 one-day internationals, said he would consult Australian surgeon David Young next week.

A Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) medical panel diagnosed the degenerative disease in his left knee but Akhtar said his right knee has also caused him trouble for a long time.

"Both my knees were causing problems but I played on despite these injuries, just for the sake of my team," said Akhtar, who took just four wickets in Pakistan's 2-0 home Test series win against India

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SAARC Bridge from Feb 25

SPORTS REPORTER

The fourth SAARC Bridge Championships will begin in Kolkata tomorrow with 120 pairs expected to compete in the Open Pairs tournament for the MA Samad Trophy. Six ladies' teams will fight for the Goenka Trophy.

A total of 28 teams from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka will participate in the Open Team event of the meet organised by SAARC Bridge Federation in association with Bridge Federation of India and the West Bengal Bridge Association.

The five-day tournament is being sponsored by Rangs Group, Unilever Bangladesh, Arab Bangladesh Bank and a number of Indian corporate houses.

The previous three editions of the tournament were held in Mumbai, Dhaka and Karachi respectively.

Apu to be buried tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The namaj-e-janajans of former Bangladesh Cricket Board joint-secretary Golam Faruque Apu will be held in the city tomorrow.

Apu died of heart attack in Florida, USA on Monday.

The first namaj-e-janaja will be held at the Brothers Union club premises at 12.30pm, the second at Gopibagh Jame Mosque after the Jhr prayers and the third at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 2pm.

He will be buried at the Azimpur Graveyard.

Rajshahi consolidate

ISPAHANI
MIRZAPORE TEA
7th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi maintained their undefeated run in the one-day competition of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League with a 19-run win over Barisal while Sylhet snatched a thrilling one-wicket win over title chasers Dhaka yesterday.

Having won all their home matches, Rajshahi were in trouble in their first away match when they were bundled out for a moderate 177 at the Barisal Stadium. However, out-of-favour national all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman's tremendous spell with the new ball helped the defending champions restrict their opposition to 158.

With a hundred per cent record after six rounds, Rajshahi opened up a four-point lead in the table as Dhaka slumped to their second successive defeat to remain on eight points. In the other match, Chittagong defeated hosts Khulna by 17 runs.

RAJSHAHI-BARISAL

Medium pacer Mushfiqur topped and tailed the Barisal innings with 4-30 from 8.3 overs as Barisal failed to recover from an early disaster at

the Barisal Stadium. Reduced to 54-5 by the 20th over, one-down Shahin Hossain's 39 and good lower-order support revived Barisal's hopes to turn the table on the league leaders when they reached 156-8. But man-of-the-match Mushfiqur picked up the last wicket to relieve his teammates after Mohammed Shahjada had broken a threatening 28-run stand for the ninth wicket.

Earlier, Nayeem Islam (65 off 131 balls) and skipper Hasan-uzzaman Rosel (47 off 99 balls) put on 108 runs for the fifth wicket to salvage Rajshahi who were tottering at 19-4 after being put into bat.

DHAKA-SYLHET

Dhaka made a nightmarish debut at their new home ground Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur when they were skittled out for 119 in 43.1 overs. The visitors opted to field on a green-top wicket and overgrown grass on the outfield contributed to the low-scoring affair.

The Dhaka batsmen failed to cope with the opening salvo by Rezaul Haque, who captured four wickets for 19 from 8.1 overs. Saif Mahmud was also very tidy, bagging 3-18 from ten overs.

The home pace attack was equally destructive with left-arm Ashraful Khan picking up two

wickets and Mohammed Sharif three, but their efforts were not enough to defend a small total. Although only three Sylhet batters reached double-figures, 27 extras helped their cause to reach 120-9 in 37.2 overs. Rezaul was adjudged man of the match.

CHITTAGONG-KHULNA

Unlike the other two matches, batsmen were on top at the Khulna Divisional Stadium but it was Faisal Hossain's occasional left-arm spin that won the match for Chittagong. In the match reduced to 48-over-a-side due to a delayed start, Khulna reached 230-9 in reply to the visitors' 247-7.

The home side were comfortably placed when half-centuries by Aslam Ali and Asadullah Khan Biplab during a 107-run fifth wicket stand took the Khulna total to 178. However, Faisal's introduction to the attack as the seventh bowler did magic as he gave the breakthrough by removing Aslam, who was just four runs away from a deserved century.

Aslam, clean bowled by Faisal, hit five fours and three sixes in his entertaining 107-ball 96. Biplab, who made 63 off 77 balls with four hits to the fence, was bowled by super-sub Ilias Sunny -- another slow left-arm -- before man-of-the-match

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Barca hit Chelsea hard

UEFA
CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFF, London

An inspirational performance from Argentinian teenager Lionel Messi helped Barcelona to a 2-1 win over ten-man Chelsea in another Stamford Bridge Champions League thriller here on Wednesday.

The victory, sealed by Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o's

header after Thiago Motta and John Terry had both scored own goals, leaves Barca as strong favourites to progress to the last eight after the second leg in the Camp Nou and claim revenge for their defeat in last season's fractious encounter between the two clubs.

Although Chelsea will protest bitterly over the first-half sending off of Asier del Horno, they could scarcely complain about the outcome given that they had been chasing the game long before the

dismissal of the Spanish full-back.

He was the third Chelsea footballer to be sent off in Champions League encounters with Barca, Celestine Babayaro in 2000 and Didier Drogba last year being the others.

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho had not helped to take the heat out of the encounter with a swipe at Barcelona in the match programme, summing up their attitude in the build-up to the match as "revenge, pitch, battle, revenge, pitch, battle."

Mourinho's mood had hardly improved after the match either, though, in keeping with his recent rather opaque musings on life he restricted himself to a dramatic comparison to the Messi incident.

"I'm not going to say anything about it (Messi) as I will get into trouble.

"It's a very cultural city Barcelona, you know all about theatre and you have theatre of very high quality in Barcelona."

His Barca counterpart Frank Rijkaard said it had been a very important result and a major step towards the last eight and took a different view, unsurprisingly, to the Messi foul.

"You have to accept the decision of the referee and I see a lot of fouls on Messi and he is not the sort of player to overreact," said the former Dutch defensive great.

Mourinho's claims in the programme were intended to be vindicated when the Barca midfielder Edmilson floored Frank Lampard with a lunge inside the first minute.

Messi however was bent on setting a different tone and from the outset it was clear del Horno was in for a tortuous evening courtesy of the little Argentinian's dancing feet.

Skipping inside his marker, it was Messi who unleashed Barca's first strike on goal, a low effort which Peter Cech needed two attempts to gather.

Another surge into the box teed up Ronaldinho, who uncharacteristically hesitated when presented with a site of goal, allowing the Chelsea back four to snuff out the opening.

The world player of the year did better with a cutback from the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



AIR ETO'O: Barcelona's Samuel Eto'o (R) rises to head in the winner in the 2-1 Champions League victory over Chelsea at Stamford Bridge in London on Wednesday.

No Sourav for first Test

Cricket

AFF, Vadodara

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was on Thursday dropped from a 15-man squad to play England in the first of three Tests against England starting in Nagpur on March 1.

The 33-year-old left-hander made way for young guns Mohammad Kaif and Suresh Raina in the middle-order, a move that could end the international career of the country's most successful Test captain.

"We have made a move to look towards the future and there is no going back from here," chairman of selectors Kiran More told reporters here.

"The one-day series in Pakistan (which India won 4-1) showed how much difference fresh legs can make to a side.

"Test cricket is certainly a different ball game, but the future belongs to younger players. As far as this selection committee is concerned, we will stick to them.

"This committee does not want to discuss the Ganguly issue again."

Ganguly's future had generated heated debate across the cricket-mad nation ever since he was sacked as captain and dumped from the one-day squad in October following a public spat with coach Greg Chappell.

Ganguly was selected for the first two home Tests against Sri Lanka before being axed from the third and was a controversial selection for the subsequent tour of Pakistan.

In Pakistan, Ganguly did not get to bat in the first Test in Lahore, was dropped for the second in Faisalabad and made 34 and 37 in the third in Karachi which Pakistan won by 341 runs to clinch the series 1-0.

He was not picked for the one-

day series which followed, in which India recovered remarkably after losing the opening match to win the next four games.

Ganguly, with 5,221 runs from 88 Tests and 12 centuries behind him, was considered by many to be an automatic selection for the first Test after the in-form Yuvraj Singh was ruled out with a hamstring injury.

Rookie fast bowler Vikram Rajvir Singh, 21, and leg-spinner Piyush Chawla, 19, are the new faces in the team that shows five changes from the side that lost the Test series in Pakistan.

Besides Ganguly, the players axed after Pakistan are seamers Ajit Agarkar and Zaheer Khan, opening batsman Gautam Gambhir and reserve wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel.

They are replaced by three players who took part in the Pakistan one-dayers -- Kaif, Raina and Sri Sreesanth -- besides Vikram Rajvir Singh and Leggie Chawla.

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