



## Did U Know?

The first Kentucky Derby was run at Churchill Downs in 1875.



## Mike Gatting

(Former England cricket captain)  
"He is quite an imposing character. Michael Vaughan is laid back, Nasser Hussain was more up front while Freddie is in the middle. He can growl at you if he wants to but can also put his arm around you and offer some encouragement."  
While describing Andrew Flintoff's captaincy style as a cross between the two former

# An incurable disease?



QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

A dose of optimism, renewed vigour and talk of supreme confidence were the ingredients of the Bangladesh recipe for this edition of the Champions Trophy in India.

Unfortunately, however, the taste was no different from before as the Tiger's expectedly (or unexpectedly) crashed out in the most embarrassing of circumstances skinned right and proper by a West Indies team that they were looking to as prospective opponents that could be conquered.

That Bangladesh were caught in a Gayle, by the marauding West Indies opener is of no consequence. Chasing a target in the 160s was never something that would be too difficult for the accomplished West Indies batting line-up, prone as they are to inconsistency. What needs to be seriously looked into (and this is almost turning into a cliché) is the fact that despite talking the talk, Bangladesh almost always fails to execute their plan of action. And the reason for this is that despite all the tinkering, despite all the plan of action and in spite of all the talk of supreme confidence and reassessment of

their ways, they continue to make the same errors time and again.

The learning curve at this level is steep and harsh and as Geoffrey Boycott said during his commentary, 'Are they (Bangladesh) good enough?' That is a question that we must ask ourselves despite the feeling of resentment it brings.

What makes all of this some ten times worse is that Bangladesh always looks so bright before collapsing away like a deck of cards. Take yesterday's case for example.

Despite the early loss of Mohammad Ashraf (we shall come to him later) the Tigers still managed to flay the West Indies bowling to all corners of the park. Shahriar Nafees and the dashing Aftab Ahmed played all around the wicket, taking the Caribbean bowling to the cleaners.

Their 85-run second wicket stand provided fodder for the millions of fans who quickly settled in to watch what was beginning to look like a famous day for us.

And then all too spectacularly (and familiarly), it unravelled in a matter of minutes. Wickets fell like ninepins and at a time when Aftab should have shackled down to carry the innings, he fell prey to his own impetuosity.

But without being too harsh on the young man, he was at least one of the few that showed up on the day.

Which is more than one can say for most of the other players. First case in point Ashraf. Although his promotion up the batting order has been widely acclaimed as a reasonable enough decision, Ashraf at the moment is playing like a man who does not have a clear understanding of what it is that he has to do.

Does he stay there and play defensively to complement the attacking Shahriar, or does he play his own natural game based on flair? It is perhaps a question only the management can answer but at this moment, for us on the outside looking in, there seems to be a distinctive lack of communication between the young man and the coaching team. The reasons for his promotion are straight-forward enough. He is the best batsman in the team and he should get to play as many overs as he can. But is he himself confident of facing the new ball? Only he can answer.

And what of Habibul Bashar, Captain Fantastic? Long used to playing the transitional role between the middle and lower order quite successfully, he looks a shadow of his former self. But that may yet be harsh judgement. We haven't seen him enough to estimate. After all he has lasted a sum

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# Spotlight on Bashar



BISHWAJIT ROY from Jaipur

Bangladesh's first mission of making the second round berth ended in a disappointing note following a ten-wicket defeat against West Indies and now they will try to go return home with pride by winning the last game against Zimbabwe at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur today.

Baffled Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar agreed that they are under pressure because their last match performance has dented their confidence, which had been high after their impressive performance against Sri Lanka in the first game.

"We came here in the tournament with a target to qualify in the

second round but the way it shattered was frustrating. The team confidence has been dented a little bit which means we are under pressure," said Bashar.

"That's not the real picture of my team, the one we showed against West Indies. I am hopeful that the boys will come back hard in the last game to get back their self-belief before the coming home series against the same team next month," he added.

It might have been bracketed as the match of lightweights as the authority even didn't arrange a pre-match press conference for the insignificant preliminary encounter as Sri Lanka and West Indies qualified as expected.

But there were many reasons for Bangladesh to take the match seriously as they will not only try to forget the heartbreaking last match performance but also avenge their 3-2 series reverse against their

today's opponents two months back.

"We don't want to go back home empty handed. We lost the series against Zimbabwe but I still believe that we are a better side than them. Yes, they are still one position ahead in the ranking but if you consider the recent performance of the teams then definitely the graph speaks in favour of us," said Bashar.

Bangladesh skipper however himself came under scrutiny as he has yet to open his account in the ICC's second biggest tournament after the World Cup but most important question was whether he had fully recovered from his left metatarsal injury to lead his side from the front.

There was evidence in the last two games that the Bangladesh skipper was not comfortable in fielding and batting and many thought this was one of reason

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PHOTO: STAR

Action from yesterday's Premier Division Hockey League match between Abahani and Azad Sporting at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

# Usha, Abahani stay on course



SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Abahani and Usha Krira Chakra maintained perfect record in the Green Delta

Insurance Premier Hockey League with identical 4-0 wins at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Both teams shared the lead in the nine-team table after third round with maximum nine points.

The difference between the two matches was in styles as Abahani forwards showed more accuracy - scoring three field goals out of four against Azad Sporting Club -- than their Usha counterparts, who were more effective in penalty corners having converted half of their six chances against Sadharan Bima.

Usha, who led the first half 2-0, opened the account from a penalty corner when local specialist Mustafizur Rahman Dinar dragged home in the 26th minute.

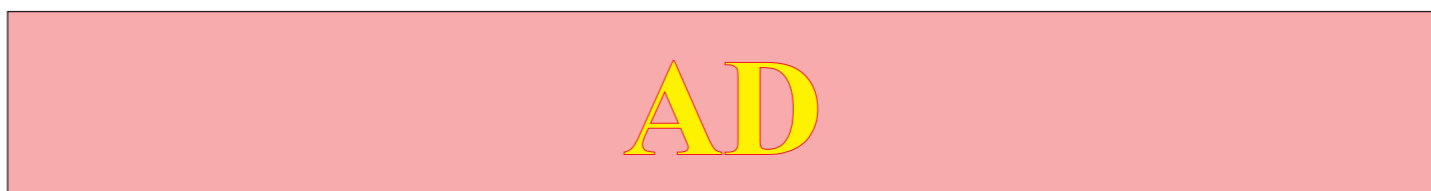
Skipper Shahidullah Titu doubled the lead in four minutes later but Bima defended doggedly to

keep the constant rival raids at bay.

With three Pakistani recruits, Usha dominated the show but had to wait long to increase the margin through two-goal Delwar Hossain, the Pakistani midfielder, who struck in the 59 and 69 minutes to seal the victory.

For Abahani, prolific scorers Musa Mia and Russell Mahmud Jimmy both enjoyed a brace. A young Azad side, which held Mohammedan to a goalless draw in the previous encounter, handcuffed the sky-blues for exactly half an hour before ace midfielder Musa broke the deadlock. Jimmy scored his first goal in the 34th minute while Musa made it 3-0 from a 47th minute penalty corner.

Jimmy, who has scored in all matches so far, completed the routine nine minutes later.



Mehrab Hossain, who has been drafted in the 12-member team for today's match against Zimbabwe, knocks at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Thursday afternoon.

## Babloo prefers youngsters for HK match

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Hassan-uzzaman Babloo has decided to field a very young side in next month's 2007 Asian Cup qualifiers against Hong Kong as preparation for the Asian Games.

A day after crashing 4-0 to Uzbekistan at home, the national football coach picked 27 booters for the away match against Hong Kong and the 15th Asiad to be held in Doha in December.

The 27-member preliminary squad included only seven senior players (above-23) including captain Aminul Haque.

The noted exclusion was second-choice goalkeeper Biplab Bhattacharyya. Big names like striker Saifur Rahman Moni, who was in the starting lineup against Uzbekistan, and Hassan Ali Mamun were also ignored.

"We can take only three senior players to the Asiad and the rest

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## 4-star Nazmul sinks StarTel

SPORTS REPORTER

Fast bowler Nazmul Hossain's four-wicket burst crumbled StarTel as Beximco won by 102 runs through the Duckworth-Lewis method in yesterday's GrameenPhone Corporate League match at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday.

Syfang Fan also won their first match of the tournament as they defeated a hapless Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) by three wickets, also through the D/L method while the match between Acme Laboratories and Channel F2 is to restart today after rain ruined their match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Left-handed batsman Nasiruddin Faruk was unbeaten on 35 as Acme reached 82 for 2 in 23 overs when rain stopped and eventually cancelled play for the day.

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## Not fitting of Akram

SPORTS REPORTER

Beximco captain Akram Khan escaped severe punishment after walking on to the ground, apparently in a bid to overturn a decision made by the umpires in the GrameenPhone Corporate League group match against StarTel at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday.

Umpires Showkatul Rahman and Awwal Babu were forced to stop play and hold back their decision of Mohammad Sharif's dismissal in the 43rd over after StarTel's Shumon Shaha took a touch-and-go boundary-line catch.

Both the umpires asked the

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# Asif ponders returning his C'wealth gold

SPORTS REPORTER

Selling gold medals or precious trophies for sportsmen to make ends meet at old age is nothing new in this country.

But if someone who has yet to turn 20 begins to think about giving up his pride possession, one has to wonder what's going on his mind.

Severely tortured and humiliated by police, country's one of the top athletes Asif Hossain Khan is contemplating to return his Commonwealth Games gold medal to the authority.

Also a South Asian Games gold medallist shooter, Asif told the Daily Star over phone last night that he has been thinking about giving up his 10m air rifle shooting Commonwealth Games gold medal -- won at the Manchester Games in 2002 as a 15-year-old -- since the police cruelly beat him up and his mates on October 2.

"May be it was not meant for me (the medal). If I was entitled to it, the police would have recognised me or would have not beat me up even after I gave them my identity," said Asif, who is still under treatment at



ASIF HOSSAIN KHAN

the Metropolitan Hospital.

"They did not hesitate for a

moment. I think I never deserved such a behaviour from the law enforcing agency," said Asif, who shot to fame after winning an individual gold medal at the Bisley Shooting Range in Surrey four years earlier.

"It's a very tough decision to give up something so precious. But I have been thinking to contact the Commonwealth Games organisers through the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) and let them know about my decision," he added.

When asked, he said that he would discuss this with all his family members before making an announcement.

Asif's condition was yet to improve and he felt pain under his feet, especially during last week's full moon.

"I have been taking sedative for the last few days and on the night of the full moon, the pain was

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# Gibbs names 3 names



AFP, New Delhi

South African Herschelle Gibbs revealed Thursday the names of three former Proteas cricketers involved in a match-fixing scam, said Indian police who now want to question the trio.

One of the three was Derek Crookes who toured India with the South African squad in 2000 and played 32 one-day matches making 1,001 runs.

Police declined to identify the other two.

Crime Branch joint police commissioner Ranjit Narayan led the two-and-half-hour questioning of Gibbs who he said was "part of the conspiracy" to fix match results for money during the 2000 tour.

"None of these three is part of the current South African team playing in the Champions Trophy but we now want to interrogate them for which a letter rogatory will be sent," Narayan said.

Gibbs, wearing dark glasses, was whisked away via a private exit. He described the interrogation of the 32-year-old batsman as "extremely fruitful and satisfactory."

"We now have information to move ahead in the case but more is needed and he has agreed to come back if we need him and he said he'll cooperate with us."

"Gibbs was asked about his role in the entire episode and the illegal gratification offered to him to underperform or throw away matches," Narayan said.

"In light of the information given

by Gibbs today, further investigation to collect corroborative evidence shall be conducted as we know that he had a role in the conspiracy," he said.

"Gibbs admitted he was made the offer twice, first in 1996 and then in 2000. And he has revealed three names and we will be sending

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PHOTO: AFP

South Africa batsman Herschelle Gibbs (C) arrives at the Delhi police headquarters on Thursday.