



Did U Know?

Farveez Maharoof took 6/14 from 9 overs in the Champions Trophy qualifying match against the West Indies at the Brabourne Stadium on October 14. It was his best performance, the second time that he has taken four wickets or more in a match.



Kapil Dev
(Indian cricket legend)
"The fans can raise you on their shoulders one day and abuse you the next day. This is part of our culture. Bouquets and brickbats are part of the job."



BTV & SET Max
ICC Champions Trophy
Australia v West Indies
Live at 2:45 pm
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Live at 8:30 pm

Pro League kicks off Dec 21

Transfer Nov 1-Dec 31
SPORTS REPORTER

All the barrier to launch the inaugural Professional Football League seemed to be over as the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) announced that the tournament will start on December 21 in Dhaka.

The start of the tournament was deferred twice due to the non-cooperation of the participating clubs who denied to enter the transfer until the Bangabandhu National Stadium was ready for football.

The 12 clubs, however, gave their consent a couple of days ago to inspire the BFF take the decision in its executive committee meeting yesterday.

The transfer will begin on November 15 and it will continue till December 31.

The BFF also decided to hold its annual general meeting on November 1.

Meanwhile, the under-16 squads of local giants Abahani and Mohammedan are expected to play in an exhibition match on November 7 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in honour of French great Zinedine Zidane. The federation will also accord a reception to one of the all-time great footballer on the same day at the BFF Bhaban.

SL-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Sri Lankan innings in the Champions Trophy Group B match against Pakistan at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Tuesday:

SRI LANKA				
Tharanga c Akmal b Razzaq	38			
Jayasuriya b Iftikhar	48			
Jayawardene c Farhat b Malik	31			
Sangakkara c Iftikhar b Malik	39			
Atapattu run out	36			
Dilshan b Afridi	3			
Maharoof b Razzaq	22			
Vaas b Razzaq	15			
Muralidaran lbw b Hafeez	0			
Malinga b Razzaq	0			
Fernando not out	4			
Extras: (lb-2, nb-8, w-7)	17			
Total: (All out in 49.2 overs)	253			
Fall of wickets: 1-63, 2-108, 3-141, 4-181, 5-186, 6-225, 7-236, 8-239, 9-240.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Naved	4	0	33	0
Iftikhar	7	0	40	1
Gul	6	0	23	0
Razzaq	7.2	0	50	4
Malik	8	0	34	2
Afridi	10	0	47	1
Hafeez	7	0	24	1

Pitch worries Aussies



AFP, Mumbai

Australia will fear the turning wicket more than their rivals when they make their Champions Trophy start on Wednesday, a tournament they have never won.

Australia's opening match against the West Indies is at the Brabourne Stadium where the dusty, slow wicket has been ridiculed by most teams who have played on it in recent days.

Brian Lara's West Indies could only muster 80 runs against Sri Lanka here Saturday and on Monday South African captain Graeme Smith slammed the pitch after his team went down to New Zealand by 87 runs.

"The pitch broke up, the ball turned a hell of a lot. I don't think the pitches are going to provide 100 overs of good cricket," said Smith,

whose side is ranked second behind Australia in the one-day game.

Ricky Ponting's Australians are determined to take home the Champions Trophy, the only major silverware missing from their cupboard despite being the undisputed one-day kings, with back-to-back World Cup wins in 1999 and 2003.

The prolonged monsoon season that ended this month has prevented India from preparing traditional flat pitches that favour batsmen. Instead, the ball has ruled the bat.

Only Sri Lanka has passed 300 in the eight matches played, against lowly Bangladesh, a far cry from totals of more than 400 that have been achieved four times this year alone.

Veteran Australian batsman Damien Martyn conceded the world champions' biggest worry would be how the pitch played on Wednesday.

"I was shocked because the practice wickets at the Brabourne Stadium have been pretty good," said Martyn.

"We know it's going to turn, but the quicks were surprised by the lack of bounce and variation."

"Usually, the one-day wickets here are nice and flat and hard in the first 15 overs. Now we know that we're going to have to adjust to it, but it looks difficult."

The Australians had good stints with both bat and ball in the two practice matches they played in Mumbai since their arrival a week ago.

All-rounder Shane Watson is almost certain to be rewarded for his good form by being promoted to open the innings with wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist.

Left-handed Simon Katich, another contender for the opener's berth, left-arm seamer Mitchell Johnson and off-spinner Dan Cullen are expected to be left out of the playing 11.

Australia's next group A match is against old foes England in Jaipur on Saturday, the day India celebrates its biggest festival, Diwali.

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TROPHY TREATS

BISHWAJIT ROY from Jaipur

When the batting of two minnows was found wanting during the preliminary round matches of the ICC Champions Trophy, everyone raised questions about the capability of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe in the highest level of the game.

There was a lot of criticism after Bangladesh made only 161 runs against the West Indies at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium here though they had put on a very impressive batting show against Sri Lanka in Mohali in the first game.

But once the tournament proper started, the experts and local media have started to sing a different tune as they blamed the under-prepared pitches in three different venues - Jaipur, Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai and Ahmedabad - for the low scores.

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar also expressed his utter

surprise about the dubious character of the Jaipur surface, which was newly laid, but media took his reaction as an excuse for his team's failure.

But when it came from the South African skipper Graeme Smith and Sri Lankan champion off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, everybody noticed the issue. After completion of two games, the issue got the spotlight.

The main event started off in the wrong foot when England were booked for 125 and then India struggled to chase down the total as the ball kept low and slow in Jaipur.

The second match in Mumbai also produced a low-scoring affair where South Africa were bundled out for 108 runs in reply to New Zealand's 195. Smith came down heavily on the pitch turning the surface under-prepared.

"The wicket was not up to international standard," he reacted. Muralidaran also criticised the

wickets for the tournament in a column of a local newspaper. He said that got unexpected assistance from the condition.

"The wickets that have been prepared in this tournament are not up to the mark. In our last match in Mumbai against West Indies, the pitch had uneven bounce and batting became very difficult. It seems like a newly-laid pitch. It's not going to be the same as the ones we played on when we toured India last year," he wrote.

"Luckily these pitches are giving us some unexpected assistance in this tournament," he added.

Local journalists, however, explained the reason behind the poor surface and said that the authority didn't make these typical wickets intentionally.

"Actually the late monsoon made it difficult for authorities to prepare the pitches properly. The

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Tigers return home

Bashar looks on the bright side



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's performance in the ICC Champions Trophy once again proved that the Tigers have a long way to go before cementing their place in the big league.

Still, national captain Habibul Bashar believes that Bangladesh have managed to bridge the gap with the cricket giants.

Having failed to qualify for the main round of the biennial event, the Tigers returned home from Delhi yesterday morning and Bashar claimed that the tour was not entirely hopeless.

"I know that we could not fulfil our target of reaching the second round, but overall, it was not a bad trip," Bashar told on their return at the Zia International Airport.

"We have played one bad match, against the West Indies, and I reckon the other two games were satisfactory," said the top batsman of the country whose side crashed to Sri Lanka and the West Indies

before wrapping up their campaign with a consolation win against Zimbabwe.

"All the matches have been low scoring. If you consider that, our performance was not bad at all. I don't agree that the difference between Bangladesh and the top sides remains the same."

"We have played two big teams in this tournament after a long time. The last time we faced a big opponent was against Australia at home. The long break has affected our performance and I believe that the more we will play against the big boys, the better will be the results," he said admitting that the Tigers' never ending top-order crisis has yet to be over.

"It was total failure against Sri Lanka in our first game but in the next two matches, at least one top-order player got runs. But this has not been a tournament for the batsmen so far and most of them have been struggling. The wickets are not at all batting friendly."

"But I would not give any excuses for the disaster against West Indies because we lost our way from a commanding situation. Someone should have shouldered the responsibility," said Bashar.

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Sri Lanka opener Sanath Jayasuriya plays a cover drive during an ICC Champions Trophy match against Pakistan at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Tuesday.

Abahani on top

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Abahani stormed to the top of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League table with a 7-0 thrashing of Ajax Sporting Club at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Moududur Rahman Shuva scored a brace in an embarrassingly one-sided match that Abahani led 3-0 at the break.

Although Club Cup runners-up Abahani were without any foreign recruit, it was all sky-blues from the word go and the floodgate opened after 12 minutes through Shahidullah Khokon.

Jimmy doubled the lead in the 24th minute from a penalty corner while Shuva scored either side of the break as Abahani sealed three points.

Imran Haider, Asif-e-Noor and Monirul Alam Sumon completed the rout for Abahani in the last 20 minutes.

With five wins in as many games, Abahani now prepare for the big matches as they face Mariners, Mohammedan and holders Usha in their remaining first-leg clashes in the 9-team fray.

In the day's earlier match, two goals in the last six minutes gave Sadharan Bima their first league win with a 3-1 defeat of Bangladesh Sporting Club.

Manu put Bima ahead after 16 minutes but Shimul cancelled the lead for bottom-table Bangladesh Sporting in the 51st minute. However, Bima's pressure told when Jewel and Jamil hit the mark in the 64 and 69 minutes.

Title contenders Mohammedan Sporting Club will take on Mariner Youngs Club in a crucial match today at 3pm.

Sportsmen keep pressing for justice

SPORTS REPORTER

Former and current sportsmen of the country will go into a greater movement after the Eid vacation to press home their demand of justice against the brutal police attack on ace shooter Asif Hossain Khan and his mates.

Footballers, cricketers, shooters, hockey players and athletes from almost every discipline yesterday gathered at the Sonali Otiti Club and demanded better treatment of the injured shooters. They also asked for the withdrawal of the case against the shooters and punishment of the guilty.

A ten-member committee was formed with former national footballer and national coach Golam Sarwar Tipu as convener and ex-national captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu as joint-convener.

The committee will be responsible for speeding up the campaign against the barbaric police attack and organise a greater movement after the Eidul Fitr.

Meanwhile, Commonwealth and SA Games gold medallist Asif received his visa for Bangkok yesterday but senior shooter Shoebuzzaman was yet to get the papers. The National Shooting Federation after a long delay has decided to send the two shooters abroad for better treatment.

Enamul stars for Epyllion

SPORTS REPORTER



GrameenPhone Corporate League 2006-2007

Enamul Haque took four wickets as Epyllion won a low-scoring affair against MM Ispahani by five wickets in yesterday's GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

In other matches of the day, Partex won by six runs through the Duckworth-Lewis method at the BKSP ground while Raju Fish Culture beat Asia Pacific Blossom Hotel by 36 runs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium for their first victory in the tournament.

Epyllion shot out Ispahani for only 68 runs in 27.4 overs with Test left-arm spinner Enamul picking up four wickets for only three runs. Fellow

left-amer Nabil Samad took 2-9.

In reply, Epyllion lost early wickets but Ispahani hardly looked like defending a meagre total as opener Gazi Salahuddin's unbeaten 23 took them home by the 26th over. Ashiqur Rahman took three wickets while off-spinner Yasin Arafat picked up two wickets. Enamul was named the man-of-the-match.

Raju Fish Culture rode on an unbeaten 66 from veteran Sazzadul Hasan, 45 from Mosaddek Hossain and Monwar Hossain's 44 to score 188-6 in their stipulated 50 overs. Fast bowler Mohammad Azim took 2-35 for the hotel-side.

Mohammad Kalim's unbeaten 69 was not enough for Asia Pacific as they were bowled out for 152 in the 41st over. Monwar Hossain, who was adjudged the man-of-the-match, took four wickets for 18 while Shahnewaz Khan captured 2-34.

Partex were six runs ahead when

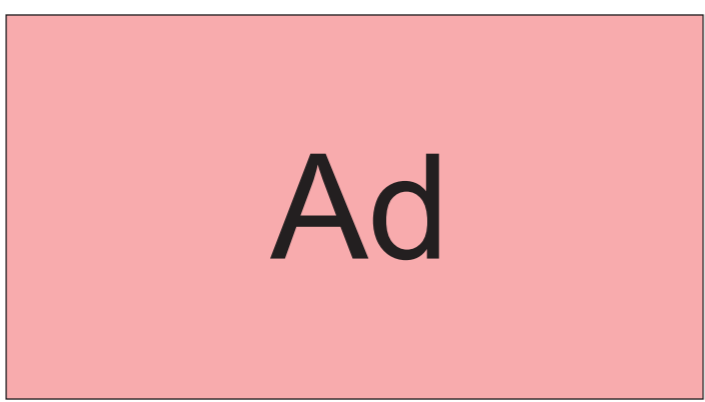
rain stopped play at the Savar venue as they were chasing a 171-run target set by Bangladesh Biman. In-form opener Javed Omar scored 57 while Tariq contributed 35 for Partex. Mushfiq Babu took 2-18.

Earlier, only Sanwar Hossain (40) and Tamim Iqbal (35) made some meaningful contribution as Biman stumbled to 170 in 49 overs. Kamrul and Mustakim shared six wickets evenly. The discarded one-day international opener Omar was adjudged man-of-the-match.

After four rounds, Acme Laboratories are heading Group A with seven points while Beximco and Syfang Fan are jointly second with six points each.

In the other group, Partex are on top with eight points, followed by

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A smiling Shahriar Nafees (C) and Aftab Ahmed push their trolleys upon their arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

