



Did U Know?

Women took part in the weightlifting for the first time in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.



Ruud van Nistelrooy
(Real Madrid's Dutch striker)
"Frank Rijkaard was very important in my career. He gave me the opportunity to play with Holland. He was very patient with me, gave me time and a lot of confidence."

What to WATCH

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Man United v Liverpool
Live at 5:55 pm
Reading v Arsenal
Live at 8:55 pm
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Barcelona
Live at 12:55 am (Monday)

'There shouldn't be religious pressure'

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan's cricketers have been told to avoid exhibiting their religious beliefs in public.

Nasim Ashraf, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), said in response to concerns the team was being used by religious elements, that the players had been advised to strike a balance between religion and cricket.

Since last year, the Pakistan team has made it a point to pray in public and hold religious gatherings in team hotels.

Ashraf said in a television interview he did not believe there was any connection between Maulvism, ultra orthodox Muslims, and cricket.

"There is no doubt their religious faith is a motivating factor in the team. It binds them together. But there should be balance between religion and cricket," Ashraf said.

Captain Inzamamul Haq, batsman Mohammad Yousuf, who converted to Islam from Christianity earlier this year and former leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed have been in the forefront of projecting a religious image of the team.

Ashraf said he had no problems with the players saying their

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Nothing beats Dhaka'98



BISHWAJIT ROY from Jaipur

Just a small crowd turned out to watch the crucial match between Australia and England in the ICC Champions Trophy at the Sawai Manhasingh Stadium yesterday. The local authorities were nevertheless satisfied with the limited attendance on Diwali day and especially when the tournament has yet to generate real enthusiasm among the fans.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) and the hosts Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) both had high hopes that the meet would heighten the passion for cricket in the country, which is already unmatched anywhere else in the world.

But the reality spoke a different story as only two matches -- both involving India and Pakistan respectively -- out of the twelve played so far saw a full-house since the tournament began on October 7. Interestingly, both matches were played at Jaipur.

Controversy over the under-prepared pitches, which produced low-scoring matches, and the

doping scandal involving Pakistan superstars Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif have only dampened the spirit of the tournament.

The governing body of the game introduced the tournament, which is second only to the World Cup in order of importance, in a bid to promote the game in the non-test playing nations and to ensure excitement in those countries.

And it got off to a perfect start in 1998 with Bangladesh hosting the first event successfully, then known as the "Mini World Cup".

The biennial event saw one more tournament under the knockout format in Kenya before it was revised in Sri Lanka and then in England to a round robin system.

But none of those tournaments saw the level of enthusiasm that was seen and experienced in Bangladesh. And now the cricket reporters across the world made no mistake to recall the first event's passion whenever they meet with their Bangladeshi colleagues.

It was believed that the ten participating teams will get a chance to play in front of large passionate crowds here in India after some lacklustre shows in the previous three events, especially in England, but things have hardly improved.

Many thought that the scheduling of the tournament was partially responsible for the current situation.

The ten days break given to the Indian team after their first match already created a controversy over the scheduling while Australia had to play two games within four days.

The length of the tournament this time was another reason behind the problem as more than one month was allotted to complete the meet. The previous tournaments were over and done with in two weeks maximum.

The locals, however, also raised questions about the sincerity of the local cricket board, which has been in a tug of war with ICC on financial matters. The BCCI were accused of not properly building up the tournament in a proper manner.

Although the resemblance to the format of the World Cup had invited criticism from some quarters about the merit of the tournament, ICC were buzzing on the financial aspect as the tournament has generated 65 million dollars in addition to the millions of dollars earned by the full member countries.

Whether the fifth version of the tournament will show a change after the two big festivals -- Diwali and Eid -- depends on how India and Pakistan, the most popular teams in the country, progress in the latter part of the tournament.

CCL semis on Nov 2 and 4

SPORTS REPORTER

Group A champions Acme Laboratories take on Epyllion in the first semifinal of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League on November 2 at the Dhanmodi Cricket Stadium.

Defending champions Beximco will face Group A leaders Partex in the other semifinal on November 4 at the same venue.

The final match will be held on November 6 either at the Dhanmodi Cricket Stadium or at the newly refurbished Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The remaining first round match between newcomers Raju Fish Culture Limited and the tournament fops Bangladesh Biman, which was abandoned due to unplayable condition of the ground, will be held on October 31 at the Fatullah Stadium.

Partex reached the last four as the only unbeaten team, gaining all ten points with their stunning 39-run win over Epyllion. In the other group, Acme were the group toppers with their 30-run victory over Beximco which virtually decided the positions in the group.

Inzi not in WC plans?

PTI, Karachi

Inzamamul Haq's tenure as captain will come up for review after the home series against the West Indies, Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Nasim Ashraf has said.

Ashraf, who took over from Shaharyar Khan just before the ongoing Champions Trophy, said a decision on who would captain the team for the tour of South Africa and the World Cup would be taken after consulting the selectors and taking into account form and fitness of a player.

"We have named Inzamamul Haq as captain for the West Indies series according to an old agreement but after that series the captaincy would be reviewed," he said in a television interview.

"While it is good to have stability in the team and captaincy but there has to be a balance between stability and reliance," he said.

Inzamam is serving a four-ODI ban for bringing the game into disrepute by causing first-ever forfeiture in the 129-year Test history at the Oval.

On his decision to convince

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Adam catches for 350th time

REUTERS, Jaipur

Australia wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist claimed his 350th catch in one-day internationals on Saturday in the Champions Trophy tie against England.

Gilchrist, 34, the leading one-day stumper, caught Kevin Pietersen off left-arm paceman Mitchell Johnson for one run to reach the milestone.

England, asked to bat first, were 84 for two in the must-win Group A league tie when Pietersen fell.

The effort took Gilchrist's total tally including stumpings to 395 victims in his 244th game. South African Mark Boucher lies second with 327 victims.

The Australia vice-captain is also test cricket's third most successful wicketkeeper, behind compatriot Ian Healy (395) and Boucher (364). Gilchrist's tally stands at 355.



Australia left-arm paceman Mitchell Johnson (L) celebrates after grabbing the wicket of England batsman Kevin Pietersen (not pictured) during their Champions Trophy match at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Saturday.

Both plead innocence



AGENCIES, undated

Suspended Pakistani paceman Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif appeared Saturday before a tribunal probing their doping case, and were asked to submit written statements, an official said.

Barrister Shahid Hamid chaired the tribunal which also included former captain and coach Intikhab Alam. Third tribunal member Waqar Ahmed, a doctor and doping expert, could not attend the meeting as his

flight was delayed.

Akhtar and Asif were sent home from the Champions Trophy in India on Monday after their urine samples tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone. Their 'B' samples are yet to be examined.

The pair reached Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) headquarters at Gaddafi Stadium early Saturday to record their statements separately.

"The hearing lasted around four hours as we had to do some initial work and then heard Akhtar and Asif. We have given them reports of their tests and have asked them to submit their written statements in the next hearing," Hamid told reporters.

"The tribunal met for some three hours and both of them were questioned for an hour after which they left and the members carried on their deliberations," a board spokesman told Reuters.

The next hearing is scheduled to be held on October 26.

The tribunal is expected to take two weeks to return its findings and recommendations to the PCB, which will then take a final decision.

"I cannot predict any time frame but would try to reach the conclusion as early as possible. We

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Jimmy's 4 in Abahani's 7



SPORTS REPORTER

National star Russell Mahmood Jimmy scored four times to propel Abahani to a 7-0 drubbing of Mariner Youngs Club in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The win was the sky blue outfit's sixth in a row while Mariner Youngs tasted their first defeat in the league. In the other match of the day, Ajax Sporting Club won another high-scoring encounter as they registered a 4-2 victory over Bangladesh Sporting Club at the same venue.

Apart from Jimmy, Abahani's Indian recruit Prakash Dar struck twice while Mahmudur Rahman Shuvo also scored a goal.

Right on the 2nd minute, Abahani were on top of their game as Jimmy converted a penalty corner. Within the

next ten minutes, they tripled the lead as Shuvo and Jimmy turned on the heat. Shuvo struck with a 7th minute field goal while Jimmy doubled his account after latching on to a pass from Shuvo.

Prakash then entered the fray in the 19th minute as his stunning shot from an acute angle from inside the danger area easily beat Mariners' goalkeeper Jahangir.

By then, the Mariners' confidence was badly dented and Jimmy further widened the margin in the 21st minute as he completed his hat-trick by converting a penalty corner.

Jimmy continued the agony of Mariners after the break as his spectacular close range shot gave Jahangir no chance. This was Jimmy's fourth and the team's sixth. Prakash scored the final goal for Abahani as his effort from a goalmouth melele.

Abahani missed several easy chances in a match that they completely dominated, barring a single chance that Mariner Youngs created

early in the second half. The chance came through a penalty corner but as was their luck, they failed to convert and missed the chance by a whisker.

Earlier in the day, Ranjan Banik opened the scoring for Ajax Sporting Club against Bangladesh Sporting Club in the 24th minute. Tutul Kumar then doubled the lead with a strike from a penalty corner just a minute before half time.

Kutubuddin Ahmed Yen then took the margin further away from Bangladesh Sporting with a regulation goal which was conceded quite softly.

But Bangladesh Sporting recovered well and scored twice with goals from Ehtesham and Zahid who netted in the 54th and 68th minute to keep their side's hopes alive.

But Rahat Sarwar confirmed Ajax's victory with a field goal just a minute before full time was called by the umpire.



PHOTO: STAR

ON FIRE: Abahani and national striker Russell Mahmud Jimmy (2nd R) celebrates one of his four strikes against Mariners during their Green Delta Premier Division match at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

ENG-AUSSIE SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Champions Trophy Group A match between England and Australia at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Saturday:

ENGLAND				
Strauss c Gilchrist b Symonds	56			
Bell c Hussey b Watson	43			
Pietersen c Gilchrist b Johnson	1			
Flintoff c Hussey b Watson	4			
Yardy c Gilchrist b Watson	4			
Collingwood not out	22			
Dalrymple c Ponting b Johnson	3			
Read c Gilchrist b McGrath	0			
Mahmood c and b Bracken	8			
Harmison c Gilchrist b Johnson	1			
Anderson b McGrath	15			
Extras: (lb-3, nb-6, w-3)	12			
Total: (All out in 45 overs)	169			
Fall of wickets: 1-83, 2-84, 3-110, 4-115, 5-125, 6-135, 7-136, 8-150, 9-151.				
AUSTRALIA				
Lee	9	3	25	0
Bracken	8	0	38	1
McGrath	9	1	36	2
Johnson	10	0	40	3
Watson	7	0	16	3
Symonds	2	0	11	1

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Ad

Ad