

BKSP in final round

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP moved into the final round of the National Cricket Championship with a 23-run victory over Sylhet yesterday.

The Sports Institute side thrived on two half centuries by Misyur Rahman (55) and Sumon Saha (51) to put up a decent total of 235 all out in the stipulated 50 overs.

Subalov was the other notable scorer with 38 while Nurul Haq picked up four wickets for 44 runs. Tazin hammered 72 but it was not good enough for Sylhet as they were bundled out for 212 in 49 overs. Kibria was the most successful BKSP bowler at 4-39 while Sumon claimed three for 22 runs.

In the day's other match at the Natore Stadium, Sirajganj registered a massive 145-run victory against Noagaon to reach the zonal final.

Shakil hit 70 and Jewel scored unbeaten 62 as Sirajganj piled up 275 for 5 in their share of 50 overs.

In reply, Noagaon were dismissed for 130 in 37 overs. Liton captured four wickets for 18 runs.

BHF meeting tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) called an emergency executive committee meeting for tomorrow to resolve the crisis over the stalemate of the Premier Hockey League.

It would be second meeting within the span of four days as they had failed to stick to their position of continuing the league and announced postponement of the Super Five Stage till the end of the Asian Games after the meeting on Friday.

The BHF has however only decided to hold another meeting after joint league leaders Abahani and Usha Krira Chakra along with Sonali Bank denied to release their players to attend the national camp for the next month's Asian Games to be held in Qatar.

The federation postponed the league following boycott by Mohammedan and Mariner Youngs Club.



PHOTO: STAR

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE HAPPY? Barisal captain Shahriar Nafees (R) consoles Mehrib Hossain of Dhaka after the latter was dismissed short of a century during the third day's play of their National Cricket League match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Imrose Rajshahi's hero

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Junaid Imrose struck a match-winning century to propel Rajshahi to a tense three-wicket win over Khulna on the fourth and final day of their Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The first outright result in this year's competition came after Rajshahi chased down 227 runs, thanks mainly to Imrose's unbeaten 114. This comes after all the games in the opening round were drawn as well as this round's fixture at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium between Sylhet and Chittagong.

Sylhet batted throughout the day to avoid setting a target for Chittagong and only in the 87th over were bowled out for 305 runs. Result is also imminent at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium where Dhaka set Barisal an improbable target of 461 runs to win in their second innings. Dhaka declared their second innings at 265 for six. Barisal already lost one wicket in their pursuit, scoring 66 runs when stumps were drawn.

BARISAL v DHAKA
Dhaka's opening pair of Javed Omar and Mehrib Hossain contin-

ued to flourish as they batted with some panache to put up a 152-run opening stand. Both batsmen batted solidly but it ended just one ball into the middle session when Omar (68) was caught off left-arm seamer Sajidul Islam.

The dismissal did not deter Mehrib as he continued to flourish and reached his fifty in 69 balls. But he failed to reach his first century of the season when he was caught off Arafat Salahuddin for 98. Rival skipper Shahriar Nafees consoled Mehrib but it must be ranking Mehrib still.

Dhaka accelerated to give Barisal a massive target and lost wickets quite regularly after the opening stand. Big-hitters Mohammad Sharif (35) and Nadif Chowdhury (20) were promoted to provide some impetus to the innings. Dhaka captain Al Shahriar, who did not bat, declared at 265, giving his bowlers more than a single day to have a crack at the Barisal batsmen.

Part-time seamer Hannan Sarkar was the most successful bowler taking 2-54 while Sajidul, Arafat Salahuddin and Ali Arman took one wicket each.

But Hannan failed with the bat when he edged one to Anwar Hossain off Mahubul Alam for only 8. Arman was sent in as the night-

watchman and he remained not out along with skipper Shahriar Nafees who was batting attractively on 44, hitting six boundaries.

KHULNA v RAJSHAHI
Rajshahi number five Mushfiqur Rahim fell early on the day after making just 13 runs and that put them into more trouble at 67 for four. All-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman (14) was dismissed by national left-armed Abdur Razzak and Rajshahi slipped further to 107 for five.

Hasanuzzaman Rosel joined Imrose, unbeaten overnight on 31, and the two resurrected the innings. Rosel supported the opener and the two added 109 for the sixth wicket, taking Rajshahi only eleven short of a win. Rosel struck seven fours in his 85-ball 49 and by then, his dismissal by left-arm seamer Syed Rasel brought Khaled Mashud to the crease. By this time, Imrose had reached his hundred, becoming the fifth batsman in this year's competition to score a ton. Interestingly, the other four were also struck in this round of games. Imrose's knock featured thirteen fours and a six in his match-winning hundred which spanned for more than five hours.

Further drama ensued when the dependable Mashud edged one to 'keeper Sagir Hossain off Dollar

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Bangladesh squad to be named today

SPORTS REPORTER

There is likely to be one change when the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announces a 14-member Bangladesh squad today for the first three one-dayers of the five-match series against Zimbabwe.

The Faruque Ahmed led selection panel submitted three squads to the board yesterday after the last meeting in the morning and the fate of Mohammad Ashraf dominated the discussion.

It was learnt that the committee made one change in the team for the first three one-day internationals from the squad that had played in the recently concluded ICC Champions Trophy in India.

According to source a strong section of the panel wanted to give Ashraf a clear message that his place in the squad is not set in stone.

The board will announce three separate squads for the warm-up match (November 26), Twenty20 international (November 28) and a 14-member National squad for the first three one-day internationals against Zimbabwe.

As per revised itinerary Zimbabwe was scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on November 22 but BCB yesterday informed that the Southern African nation will now come here on the earlier scheduled date of November 23.

Biman regain chess title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman regained the title of the Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League after two seasons when they won their last round board against Muktiyoddha Sangsad 3.5-0.5 at the federation hall-room yesterday.

With the 15th and last round success Biman, who had played with GM Ziaur Rahman, GM Reefat Bin Sattar, IM Abdullah Al Rakib, FM Mehdi Hasan and FM Rezaul Haque, finished their tally with 48.5 points.

Biman became league champions for 12 occasions since the competition had started in 1977.

Last two times champions Leonine Chess Club became runners-up with 45 points after beating Rajshahi Daba Unnayan Sangstha 4-0 in the final round while Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club finished third securing 42.5 points in their first appearance in the league.

The two bottom-sides Rajshahi Daba Unnayan Sangstha and Anushilan Kirira Chakra has been relegated to the second division league.

A total of 15 teams took part in the single round robin-league system competition.

Give Dravid time: Ganguly

PTI, New Delhi

Rahul Dravid on Saturday got a vote of confidence from his predecessor Sourav Ganguly who said it was important for fans to be patient and give the Indian captain more time to handle the toughest job in world cricket.

Ganguly said captains needed time to mature and it was necessary to give Dravid time to grow into the job. "He is a great player. I think it is important that any captain has to be given time. Captaining India is the hardest thing," Ganguly said. "Most important thing is time."

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WI firm on comeback

2nd Test in Multan begins today

Cricket

AFP, Multan

West Indian vice captain Ramnaresh Sarwan said his team was determined to win the second Test against Pakistan to keep their chances alive in the three-match series.

"Losing the first Test was a huge blow to us but we have two Tests to go and this one is special because we have to win this to draw the series," Sarwan said, ahead of the second Test starting here from Sunday.

Despite a fighting 122 from West Indian captain Brian Lara, Pakistan won the first Test in Lahore by nine wickets on Tuesday.

The 26-year-old Sarwan said West Indies needed to play consistent cricket over five days.

"We would have to go into the final Test with a win so that the series is still open but for that we have to play well in all depart-

ments," said Sarwan, who has been from Guyana.

The third Test starts in Karachi on November 27.

Sarwan said a number of factors contributed to the first Test defeat. "Getting out for 206 on the first day on that sort of wicket made it difficult for us to come back and then dropped catches did not help either," said Sarwan, referring to chances spilled off Mohammad Yousuf when he was on 43 and 101.

Yousuf went on to make 192 to help Pakistan gain a big first innings lead of 279.

"There were some other things which did not go well and those were totally out of our control," said Sarwan in an apparent reference to the umpiring of Sri Lankan Asoka de Silva, who did not refer a close stumping call off Yousuf to the third umpire when the batsman was on 53.

De Silva also adjudged opener Chris Gayle and Sarwan leg-before when television replays showed the

deliveries hit the batsmen high on the pads.

Sarwan said he himself was due for a big score.

"I am very determined. I have been in the poorest form for a long while now and haven't gotten any scores together on the entire trip to Asia," said Sarwan, who has just one fifty in his last 13 one-day matches and who managed just three and 23 in Lahore.

Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer warned his team of a possible West Indies backlash.

"We caught the West Indies after they played a lot of one-day matches, but we have to be aware that they will come back hard on us," said Woolmer, who played 19 Tests for England and is a former coach of South Africa.

Pakistan have won eight of their 23 Tests, with nine defeats and six draws, since Woolmer took over as coach in 2004.

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PHOTO: AFP

West Indies players Shivnarine Chanderpaul (R), Chris Gayle (C) and Dave Mohammed share a light moment during a practice session at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

India's trial by pace

First ODI against S Africa today

Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

The odds seem stacked against India when a five-match one-day international series against South Africa starts at the Wanderers Stadium Sunday.

India have won just three times in 16 one-day internationals against the host nation in South Africa and suffered a 37-run defeat in their only warm-up match against a Rest of South Africa team in Benoni Thursday.

Only captain Rahul Dravid of the Indian top order was able to handle the pace of Dale Steyn in Benoni and it will be a relief to the Indians that South Africa's fastest bowler is not in the national one-day team.

Even so, the tourists can expect some aggressive pace bowling from Makhaya Ntini, Shaun Pollock, Andre Nel and Jacques Kallis as South Africa seek to take advantage of the bounce and pace usually on

offer from home pitches.

Both Dravid and coach Greg Chappell said they expected an improvement on Thursday's performance, pointing out that the Indians had barely had time to adapt to South Africa conditions before playing in Benoni.

Chappell said Dravid, who made 79, had provided an object lesson to younger players in the side on the art of playing pace bowling in difficult conditions.

For both teams, the series is part of the build-up to the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies.

South Africa named the same 14-man squad that reached the semifinals of the recent ICC Champions Trophy in India -- where India failed to reach the knockout stage -- for the first one-day international.

"We want to build up a winning momentum," said South African coach Mickey Arthur, who said it was unlikely major changes would be made before the World Cup. "We have decided on the bulk of the

squad," said Arthur. "There is a bit of a debate about one or two places but we want players to gain confidence in the roles we expect them to play."

It is the first one-day international to be played at the Wanderers since the world record "438" game last season when South Africa overwhelmed a huge Australian total of 434 in a riot of run scoring.

The Indians have experienced being on the wrong side of a high-scoring match at the stadium. Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly both scored centuries as India made 279 for five five years ago -- only for South Africa to sweep to victory by six wickets with a hundred by Gary Kirsten.

Tendulkar is the only one of the three century-makers in action this time and as always the world one-day run-scoring record-holder will be a key player.

Whether or not Tendulkar will have the quick-scoring Virender Sehwag as his opening partner is

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Did U Know?

Former India cricket captain Mohammed Azharuddin is the only player in the history of Test cricket to score a century in each of his first three matches.



Ronaldinho

(Barcelona's Brazilian super star) "Frank Lampard is a great player and I am happy to have had the chance to meet him and get to know him on several occasions on and off the pitch."



TEN Sports
Pakistan v West Indies
Second Test, Day One
Live at 10:30 am

ESPN
South Africa v India
First ODI
Live at 6:30 pm

STAR Sports
Tennis Masters Cup
Final
Live at 2:00 pm

All they want is freedom

MOHAMMAD ISAM

If you let them play, you can see their eyes glint with immeasurable joy. And the intensity that they exert is quite amazing. Yet, they cannot be taken to a park on a regular basis, just because the sentiment from the parents of the intellectually disabled children is that they might not be accepted or even scorned at.

We would never talk about such matters in public but the harsh reality is that the 'avoidance' is quite involuntary on our part.

So it was quite surprising for Lavel's father Zahid Hossain, a banker, to allow his intellectually disabled child to go such distance, just to play the game of cricket.

"We were quite apprehensive to say the least. I have never let him out

of my sight but seeing their practice sessions before leaving and being assured by the coaches, I thought this could be a good opportunity to let him go," said Zahid.

His son Lavel was among 30 students trialed initially as part of a nationwide campaign to find cricketers in the forty-five schools headed by Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled (SWID) International for a tour to India to participate in the Special Olympics Invitational Cricket Tournament earlier this November.

After the preliminary trials, fifteen were selected and called to practise at the Gulshan Youth Club ground.

National sports director of Special Olympics in Bangladesh AHM Mostofa, who was the head coach and manager for the tour, also echoes the view of Lavel's father.

"It was quite surprising to see their parents so much involved in this venture. Personally, I felt that if these boys were allowed their

freedom, they would function well," said Mostofa, a voluntary with the organisation since 1995.

"If we guide them properly, their physiology will improve a lot. Whenever they are out in the open, say in a park, their blood circulation rises. This allows their brain to work much better and makes them apply their natural skills," said the man who was in the physical education department of Dhaka University for nearly 32 years before joining hands with the Special Olympics.

Coach Sadiquzzaman Pintu was invited to give the boys technical help in terms of their skills, which he says they had plenty of.

"I had never worked with intellectually-challenged boys before so I thought I would just embrace them as a big brother would, since teaching them cricket was secondary," said Pintu.

Aged between 17 and 22, these



PHOTO: COURTESY

Players of the Bangladesh Special Olympics cricket team at an official gathering during their tour of India to play in the invitational tournament earlier this month.