

China humble Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh suffered a 4-1 defeat at the hands of China in yesterday's men's hockey Pool B match at the 15th Asian Games in Doha.

Liang Hu opened the account for China after 19 minutes with a field goal before Xiangtang Liu, Huiren Hu and Yubo Na scored from penalty corners at the Al Rayyan Club ground.

Bangladesh, who trailed the first half 2-0, scored a consolation goal through Mazharul Islam one minute from time.

It was Bangladesh's third loss in a row after 6-0 and 9-1 losses to India and South Korea respectively. Bangladesh will play Oman in their last group match on Sunday.

In chess, Bangladesh drew 1.5-1.5 with Iran to take their tally to four points after two rounds of the classical mixed team event. Hosts

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Cricket transfer from Dec 10

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The Premier Cricket League transfer for the 2006-2007 season will begin on December 10.

The transfer was due to start on December 5 but the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis had to postpone it due to the political unrest and the countrywide blockade.

This year's Premiership will be divided in two parts, a Twenty20 league starting from December 19



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WELCOMING THE WORLD: A bird's eye view of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Bangladesh's newest international cricket venue, in Mirpur. The arena makes its international debut by holding the fourth one-day international between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe today.

Cricket's homecoming

SPORTS REPORTER

In spite of the Tigers' series victory being assured against Zimbabwe with two matches in hand, there was huge enthusiasm about the two sides' fourth one-day today.

The reason is simple: The Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium will make its international debut with the match, giving opportunity to the fans of the capital to watch international cricket after a long gap.

The latest cricket venue will be centre of cricket in the country although it is yet to get the shape the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has in mind as its 'Home of Cricket'. Only forty percent work of the total renovation work has been so far done to fulfil the requirements of the International Cricket Council (ICC), which gave its approval to the ground last Tuesday.

Even with the work half done,

one could hardly believe that it was once stadium for football and athletics because of the fantastic view of the inside field.

The board's plan to baptise the new venue during the Australia-Bangladesh series last April was dashed following the 'blame game' between the cricket authority and the National Sports Council (NSC) and it has taken nearly two years to convert venue into a cricket stadium.

The BCB, however, woke up late to complete the essential works within a month to host the last two matches of the ongoing series but its general secretary Mahbubul Anam said yesterday that it would need at least one more year for a proper homecoming.

"Out of the Tk 60-crore total budget, nearly Tk 15 crore has been disbursed to complete the minimum requirements. It would take another year to shape it as per our design of the home of cricket.

Everything, however, depends on the flow of money," said Mahbub.

The NSC is bearing all the expenses to renovate the venue, the seventh international cricket ground in the country.

It seems that the board and the NSC has a cold war going between them but Mahbub was optimistic that it would be a real home of cricket soon.

"There are still a lot of works to be done but no doubt, it would be our home of cricket," said Mahbub.

The cricket crazy fans in the city, especially the Mirpur residents, were little bothered with the make-up rather sounded happy about the return of international cricket in the city after nearly two years.

After BCB's decision to dispose of the famous Bangabandhu National Stadium -- which still holds its status as an international cricket venue -- the city fans had to travel to Narayanganj to watch

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Ganguly in the runs

PTI, Patechfstrom

Sourav Ganguly batted with a mission in raising the highest score yet by an Indian batsman on the tour so far, on the first day of the warm-up game against Rest of South Africa here on Thursday.

Ganguly was unbeaten on 70, an innings of uncommon restraint and polish, as he helped the visiting Indians reach 184 for 5 at tea after struggling at 69 for 5 at one stage.

Along with Irfan Pathan (54 not out), Ganguly has so far raised 125 runs for the sixth wicket, the first century stand by the Indians on the tour which has been nothing short of a disaster for them so far.

The previous highest score on this tour has been Rahul Dravid's 63 in the third one-day international in Cape Town.

Ganguly showed immense resolve in ducking underneath the rising deliveries and leaving those

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2011 World Cup Hosts to meet in Delhi on Monday

PTI, New Delhi

The officials of the four Asian countries, which would jointly host the World Cup in 2011, would meet here next week to thrash out issues related to the cricketing extravaganza.

The meeting on Monday has been called at the behest of the president of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Sharad Pawar after Pakistan said it was not happy with an earlier agreement according to which India was to host the final.

Pakistan would be represented by its cricket board chairman Nasim Ashraf and director of

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Whitewash new target



SPORTS REPORTER

There might be doubts over the characteristics of an unknown pitch at a new venue when Bangladesh take on Zimbabwe in the fourth one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today but the hosts would hardly feel any discomfort about the game itself.

After taking an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series, the Tigers feel that they are well equipped to stay on track for a whitewash.

"First of all we are excited about playing an international match once again in Dhaka and at a new venue. We will definitely try to make a memorable start in the first match at home of cricket," said Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar after a training session at the match venue yesterday.

"Our first mission was to win the series and we did it with two matches in hand. Now we are ready to finish the second mission successfully, that is nothing but whitewashing the opposition. We are not

too concerned about the character of the pitch," he added.

The 33-year old Tigers skipper has no experience of playing at this venue although a few first-class and practice matches have been held here but he believed that it would be more or less a surface like Khulna and Bogra.

"True, the clay of the pitch is different here but I don't think it would be difficult. Actually we have enough resources in the team to play in any condition. Our spinners have already done an excellent job and I am also confident about my pace attack."

There was an obvious question whether the Tigers were in a relax mood after ensuring the series but Bashar said that they will take the match as a new one.

"I can assure that the boys are determined to win all the matches. We are very much aware of the fact that we have not enough matches to play before next year's World Cup that's why every game is important," he said adding that they will celebrate only after making it 5-0.

But the premier Bangladesh batsman hoped that his batsmen will not misread the wicket like the previous match at Bogra where they had to

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Inzy's winning return

Cricket

AFP, Faisalabad

Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq capped his return with an uncharacteristic unbeaten 42 to help his side beat the West Indies by two wickets in the second one-day international here on Thursday.

Inzamam hooked his 86th ball for his fourth boundary to pull off an exciting victory with 10 balls to spare and helped his team gain a 1-0 lead in the five-match series at Iqbal Stadium.

Earlier, Runako Morton top-scored with 43 as the West Indies were dismissed for 151 in 49.5 overs after being sent in to bat.

Inzamam, who was returning from a four-match ban imposed for bringing the game into disrepute during the Oval Test fiasco in August, was scrappy as he took 18 balls to get off the mark and survived a number of appeals before finishing the game.

The Pakistan captain added 30 with Younis Khan (24) and another 28 with Abdul Razzaq (17) to stave off a valiant challenge by the West Indies, who fought for each run in a low-scoring affair.

Inzamam said it was a hard-earned win.

"It was not an easy pitch and we needed to fight hard to achieve the victory and we were lucky that we were not chasing a big target," said Inzamam, who won the man-

of-the-match award.

West Indian captain Brian Lara blamed poor batting for the defeat.

"We did fight hard and had we put more runs on the board it would have been a different thing. Bowlers showed that if we had more runs we would have pulled it (off)," said Lara.

West Indian pacemen Corey Collymore (3-19) and Jerome Taylor (3-39) removed the top order but Inzamam came to his team's support.

Pakistan lost opener Mohammad Hafeez in Taylor's first over for nought. Collymore then dismissed Imran Farhat (17) and Kamran Akmal (22) in an incisive six-over spell.

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PHOTO: AFP

MAN-OF-THE-MATCH: Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq follows through on a cut-shot during the second one-day international against West Indies at Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad yesterday.



Did U Know?

The very first Olympic race, held in 776 BC, was won by Corubus, a cheif.



Geoffrey Boycott

(English cricket legend)
"Make no mistake about it, the Ashes are gone. If you support England, don't kid yourself that they might come back."
Wrote in the Telegraph after England crashed to a spectacular defeat at the Adelaide Oval.

What to WATCH

BTV & CHANNEL 1

Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
Fourth ODI
Live at 9:00 am
STAR Sports
New Zealand v Sri Lanka
First Test, Day Three
Live at 3:30 am (Saturday)

Bond disbands Lankans

Cricket

AFP, Christchurch

New Zealand comfortably controlled the opening day of the first cricket Test against Sri Lanka here Thursday after being gifted first use of the ball on a bowler's wicket.

At stumps they were 85 for two after dismissing Sri Lanka for 154.

After opener Jamie How fell for a duck, the recalled New Zealand batsmen Craig Cumming and Mathew Sinclair went to work as the pitch eased in the afternoon sun.

Cumming, who was caught in slips early from a Lasith Malinga no ball, recovered to be not out 37 at stumps, while Sinclair fell to Chaminda Vass shortly before the close for 36.

But while there was an air of confidence in the New Zealand camp, Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene was left to rue his decision to bat first on a green wicket with overcast morning skies when he won the toss.

The groundsman warned it was a seamer's pitch to begin with and would flatten as the match pro-

gressed, but Jayawardene wanted only for his champion spinner Muttiah Muralidaran to bowl last.

The match was only 17 balls old when New Zealand strike bowler Shane Bond claimed the wicket of Sanath Jayasuriya on his way to dismissing Sri Lanka's most experienced trio of batsmen and returning



PHOTO: AFP

SHANE BOND ... rattling the Sri Lankan top-order

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figures of three for 43.

Apart from a 50-run partnership between Upul Tharanga (33) and Chamara Kapugedera (37) for the fourth wicket, the Sri Lankan batsmen put up scant resistance and the innings folded just before the scheduled tea break.

They went to lunch at 77 for three and after the break lost their last seven wickets for 77.

Bond was at his hostile best in his first Test on his home track.

He swung the ball away from Jayasuriya and was edged to Stephen Fleming at first slip to have the opener out for five.

Two overs later he dismissed

Kumar Sangakkara for four with a similar ball that flew to Sinclair, and completed his rout of the top order with a short ball that Jayawardene, on eight, skied to James Franklin at fine leg.

But while Bond won plaudits for his bowling his performance was less impressive in the field, where he dropped two late catches when Muralidaran engaged in lusty

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Why blast booters?

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) in a press release issued yesterday condemned the 'unsporting' and 'indecent' comments made by footballers of the country towards the federation during their 'uncalled for' sit-in programme.

Ex-booters joined the programme called by the current players who organised the sit-in at the BFF Bhaban premises in protest of the federation's repeated delays in holding the transfer. Even a

national footballer who is also a member of the BFF executive committee, announced his support for the programme and participated in the sit-in regularly.

As it had been seen, the players - who have been waiting for a league to start for nearly 15 months and the first transfer in two years -- remained calm, making their demands of a quick transfer in the writing on placards and gave speeches on the issue.

The BFF press release, issued after its meeting with club representatives on Wednesday night,

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