

Hosts, SA both under pressure

SYDNEY, Feb 25: Both sides will be under pressure but for different reasons in the historic World Cup clash between Australia and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

It is probably the toughest baptism imaginable for the mainly young and inexperienced visitors as South Africa make their World Cup debut after 22 years of cricketing isolation.

Their main pressure will come from the expectant hopes of their own sports-mad nation, delighted to be back at full international level after years in the wilderness because of apartheid.

The South Africans have not been helped by having their last three practice matches washed out by rain.

Coach Mike Procter concedes: "The bowlers have gone off a bit because they haven't bowled for a few days. And in the World Cup you can't afford to give away loose deliveries."

South Africans travelling with the team said the frustration of not being able to practise had added to the tension among the players.

But captain Kepler Wessels



ALLAN BORDER

said he believed there was even greater pressure on Cup holders Australia, surprising losers to New Zealand in their opening match last Saturday.

man. Before the weather wiped out their practice games, Donald's performance had been far from consistent, bowling too many bad balls.



KEPLER WESSELS

With the speed and bounce of the Sydney pitch, that could prove very expensive against the vastly experienced Australians.

"We have absolutely nothing to lose playing them in their own territory, whereas if they lose another game they're really under pressure. So they'll come out angry," said Wessels. His opposing number Allan Border agreed. "They have nothing to lose. They can just go out there and give it their best," he said after a practice session on Tuesday.

"I think we have more pressure on us than anybody. Being favourites puts lots of pressure on us."

Border said there was no reason to panic over losing the first match but added it was possible Australia would play an extra quick bowler, probably meaning the inclusion of left-arm Mike Whitney.

"If we play anywhere near our strength we should be ok," he added. "But it's going to be a tough game."

Border said Australia would have to watch out for fast bowler Allan Donald.

"His extra pace is likely to catch you off guard," he said.

But South Africa are themselves worried about their potential match-winning pace-

Hick will click, Stewart predicts

MELBOURNE, Feb 25: England cricket team manager Mickey Stewart says it is only a matter of time before highly-rated batsman Graeme Hick discovers his best form in the World Cup, reports AP.

Hick, who has a first-class career average of more than 60, had a disappointing tour of New Zealand in the lead-up to the World Cup and failed again with only five in England's opening match of the tournament against India on Saturday.

England must play the West Indies, first round winners over Pakistan, at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Thursday.

Stewart said Hick was under no pressure from team management, even though his test and one-day record was poor.

"He's not put together an international score and that's what's disappointing for him," Stewart said.

"In the other first-class matches, he played excellently but his top score in the Test matches was 40-odd."

"Each time he misses out, it exaggerates his frustration a bit more."

"But it's a question of time because his general play has been good."

England squeezed past India by nine runs last Saturday and, after the West Indies, has matches against



GRAEME HICK

Pakistan and Australia. The early draw is probably the toughest of any side in the round-robin, nine-nation tournament, but Stewart said he was not worried about the start England had to face.

"You're always going to play them some time," Stewart said.

"It's the same for them because they have to play us."

England is expected to name its side for Thursday's match just before the start of play.

Lankans to seek replacements

HAMILTON, New Zealand, Feb 25: Sri Lanka suffered a second injury blow on Tuesday and are to seek permission to send for a replacement pace bowler for their remaining world cup matches, reports Reuter.

Following the shoulder injury to main strike bowler Ramesh Ratnayake before the tournament had even begun, opening batsman Arthula Samarasekera pulled a hamstring during Tuesday's defeat by New Zealand.

Sri Lanka captain Aravinda De Silva said a surgeon had ruled out Ratnayake for the remainder of the World Cup after dislocating his shoulder in a pre-tournament warm-up match against Pakistan.

Under World Cup rules, replacements are allowed only by special permission of the tournament committee.

"It seems Samarasekera will be out for a couple of weeks, so effectively we're already down to 12 men," De Silva said.

New Zealand, who won comfortably by six wickets, did not escape unscathed either.

They will have to wait until Wednesday to see if injured opening batsman John Wright will be able to play against South Africa on Saturday.

Biman sports

The two-day eleventh annual athletic meet-92 of Biman Bangladesh Airlines concluded yesterday at the Rajarbagh Police Lines ground, says a press release.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism and Chairman, Biman Board of Directors Abdul Mannan distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest.

Marketing and Sales Directorate annexed the team championships with 83 points while Customer Services Directorate finished runners-up with 36 points.

In the men's group, Nowsher Ali Mollah of Marketing and Sales became the champion with 21 points while Aliquzzaman Bhutyan of the MD's Secretariat finished runner-up with 13 points.

In the women's group, Syeda Nasima Akhter of Marketing and Sales emerged champion with 17 points while her teammate Selina Akhter was runner-up with 14 points.

A total of 800 athletes from Dhaka and different outstations participated in 28 events of the meet.

Kiwis maintain winning spree

HAMILTON, New Zealand, Feb 25: Buoyant New Zealand sustained their flying start to the cricket World Cup when they cruised to a comfortable six-wicket victory over Sri Lanka today, reports Reuter.

New Zealand, who have a 100 per cent winning record after two matches, moved smoothly to their target of 207 with 10 balls to spare after solid batting by Ken Rutherford, with an unbeaten 65, opener John Wright (57) and Andrew Jones (49).

New Zealand now have four points, and head the table, after their shock 37-run victory over Australia in the first Cup match in Auckland on Saturday.

Sri Lanka were unable to repeat the huge 313 they scored to beat Zimbabwe on Sunday, and their bowlers were too loose and slow to defend their score of 206 for nine from 50 overs.

Wright, batting with a sore shoulder after falling during Sri Lanka's innings, and Rod Latham gave New Zealand the start they wanted, putting on 77 for the wicket before Latham was bowled.

Wright laid the foundations for victory, and Rutherford and Jones - despite getting bogged down in the middle of the innings - sealed success.

Rutherford, with his second consecutive half-century, was named man-of-the-match after smashing a four into the crowd for the winning runs.

New Zealand captain Martin Crowe, who won plaudits for his bowling and fielding tactics on Saturday, won the toss and put Sri Lanka in on what appeared to be a placid pitch.

Team coach Warren Lees said Sri Lanka were known as heavy target chasers and forcing them to bat first could put extra pressure on them.

Pace bowler Danny Morrison was brought back into New Zealand's side after being dropped on Saturday, but once again it was the medium-pacers who proved Sri Lanka's downfall by showing pinpoint accuracy.

Willie Watson ended with three for 37, while Chris Harris took three for 43, including the wickets of Arjuna Ranatunga and Roshan Mahanama in consecutive deliveries, as well as fielding superbly and being responsible for one run out.

Gavin Larsen's slow seamers also pinned down Sri Lanka's batsman for 10 overs which yielded only 29 runs.

The highlight of Sri Lanka's batting was a hard-fought 80 from opener Mahanama, who

completed his half century in 97 balls.

New Zealand started confidently, with Wright showing unusual aggression as Sri Lanka's bowlers sprayed the ball wide of the off stump.



RUTHERFORD, man-of-the-match

Off-spinner Ruwan Kalpage broke the opening stand by bowling Rod Latham for 20 with 77 on the board and



ROSHAN MAHANAMA

Wright followed him back to the pavilion 13 runs later. The opener's innings included nine fours and he reached his half century from 61 balls.

Crowe, who scored a sparkling century against Australia, was out for five but Rutherford and Jones set about building an 81-run fourth wicket partnership.

Rutherford, who escaped before he had scored when Ranatunga dropped a relatively easy catch in the slips, and Jones were bogged down for a while by Sri Lanka's off-spin dominated attack, with captain

Aravinda De Silva joining the

By the time Jones eventually departed, New Zealand had all but won the match. Rutherford selling the job through. His 65 contained a six and six fours and came off 71 balls.

The 26-year-old Rutherford, brought back into New Zealand's team after being dropped for his off-the-field antics, scored 57 against Australia.

Kalpage was the pick of Sri Lanka's poor attack, taking two for 33 from 10 overs, 10 of the runs coming from his first over.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the World Cup cricket match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

SRI LANKA:

Mahanama c and b Harris	80
Samarasekera c Wright	65
b Watson	9
Gurusinha c Smith b Harris	9
De Silva run out	31
Ranatunga c Rutherford	3
b Harris	20
Jayasuriya run out	5
Tillekeratne c Crowe b Watson	8
Kalpage c Larsen b Watson	11
Ramansinghe run out	2
Anurasi r not out	3
Wickremasinghe not out	3
Extras: (b-1, lb-15, w-4, nb-5) 25	
Total: (nine wickets-50 overs)	206
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-50, 3-120, 4-172, 5-172, 6-181, 7-195, 8-199, 9-202.	
Bowling:	O M R W
Morrison	8 0 36 0
Watson	10 0 37 3
Larsen	10 1 29 0
Harris	10 0 43 3
Latham	3 0 13 0
Patel	9 0 32 0

NEW ZEALAND:

Wright c and b Kalpage	57
Latham b Kalpage	20
Jones c Jayasuriya b Gurusinha	49
Crowe c Ramansinghe b Wickremasinghe	5
Rutherford not out	65
Harris not out	5
Extras: (b-3, w-3, nb-3) 9	
Total: (four wickets -48.2 overs)	210
Fall of wickets: 1-77, 2-90, 3-105, 4-186.	
Did not bat: D Patel, G Larsen, I Smith, W Watson, D Morrison.	
Bowling:	O M R W
Ramansinghe	9.2 0 46 0
Wickremasinghe	8 1 40 1
Anurasi r	10 1 27 0
Kalpage	10 0 33 2
Gurusinha	4 0 19 1
Ranatunga	4 0 22 0
Jayasuriya	2 0 14 0
De Silva	1 0 6 0

Result: New Zealand won by six wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Ken Rutherford.

STANDINGS

Standings after Tuesday's match in the world Cricket Cup (bat/lose/under played, wou, loss, tie/no result, points)

New Zealand	2	2	-	4
England	1	1	-	2
West Indies	1	1	-	2
Sri Lanka	2	1	-	2
Australia	1	-	1	0
India	1	-	1	0
Pakistan	-	1	-	0
Zimbabwe	1	-	1	0
South Africa	-	-	-	-

Nirman cricket

Sports Reporter

BCSIR School and Badda Alattunessa High School won their respective matches of the Dhaka zonal championship of the ninth Nirman schools cricket competition yesterday at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

On the western side of the DCC, BCSIR School beat Engineering University School by six wickets, thanks to Mohsin, Chapal, Zia and Sadi, the BCSIR bowlers who wrecked the opponents' batting.

Put in to bat, Engineering University School were all out for a poor 68 with extras contributing 30 and skipper Samuil making 21 off 17 balls.

Mohsin of BCSIR bagged four wickets for 11 while Chapal, Zia and Sadi took two wickets each.

Chasing the target, BCSIR School needed only 11.2 overs to score 69 for the loss of four wickets with Mohsin making 18 and Arzoo 11.

Samuil and Imran took two wickets apiece for Engineering University School.

On the eastern strip, Badda Alattunessa School registered an emphatic 66-runs victory over Mugdipara KJA School in the other match of the day.

Batting first, Badda School made 119 all out in 31.4 overs. Hero remained unbeaten with 28 while Kajal scored 20.

Chayan took three wickets while Shipon, Masum and Rumi got two each.

Despite the apparently easy target, Mugdipara KJA School were booked for a paltry 53 in 18.4 overs.

Zillu, Swapan with two wickets each and Tapu with one paved the way for Badda's victory.

Shipon of Mugdipara School scored 14 while no other batsman could reach double figures.

Lara expects to be fit tomorrow

MELBOURNE, Australia, Feb 25: Key West Indies batsman Brian Lara has made a rapid recovery from the injury and is expected to be fit to play in Thursday's World Cup cricket match against England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Thursday, reports AP.

Lara was hit on the right big toe by Pakistani pacerman Wasim Akram during Sunday's opening match of the tournament and forced to retire hurt on 88 after setting up his team's 10-wicket win.

Precautionary X-rays cleared Lara of any break but the toenail was pushed completely back, making it difficult for him to walk.

The 21-year-old left-hander was able to join net practice Tuesday and team manager Deryck Murray said he expected the West Indies would be able to nominate an unchanged team.

"The situation with Brian was much more hopeful today in that the pain seems to be gone and the swelling is down a bit," Murray said.

"The discomfort will come when he puts a boot on and it starts rubbing inside the boot."

"There are ways around that, though, and the pain has subsided enough for him to play."

Lara batted in the nets for 20 minutes Tuesday with a hole cut in his boot and said he felt certain he would be able to play.

"I can move on to my front foot and it's not affecting my shots at all," Lara said.

"It was a bit sore for a day or two but it's fine now."

The West Indies and England both have 1-0 records and are among the tournament favourites.

Murray said his squad regarded Graham Gooch's team as the main threat, along with defending champion Australia.

"We assess the competition as one where any team can beat any other team on a given day," he said.

"You might have said that Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe were weak teams, but any team that can make 300 runs, no matter the size of the ground, has to be taken seriously."

The West Indies holds a 26-18 advantage over England in one-day internationals but England has won seven of the last 10 encounters, including a 3-0 whitewash in England last year.

Baig's prescription

BRISBANE, Australia, Feb 25: India needs to tighten up its play if it is to be a contender in the World Cup cricket tournament, team manager Abbas Ali Baig said Tuesday, reports AP.

Baig said India made too many mistakes in its tournament opening loss to England, mistakes it could not afford to repeat when it faces Sri Lanka in Mackay on Friday.

"We gave away too many wickets and suffered three run-outs—although these things can happen in the heat of the moment," Baig said.

Allrounder Ravi Shastri has a bruised foot after banging it with his bat and could miss the match.

Baig said India would not underestimate Sri Lanka, despite winning a one-day series against the Islanders last year.

"We won a one-day series against them last year, but we are aware of their strengths and they have shown good form in the current World Cup," he said.

Baig said the Indians were feeling revitalized after a break following the team's five-Test tour of Australia.

"We put a full stop at the end of that section of our sojourn in Australia," he said.

"The players had time for a short break and are quite keyed up and enthusiastic for the World Cup."

Bowling worries skipper Houghton

HOBART, Feb 25: Zimbabwe captain David Houghton Tuesday predicted his team would cause upsets in the World Cup cricket tournament—if its seam bowlers rediscovered form, reports AP.

Houghton said the African nation was concentrating on its own play and not making plans to topple its better-credentialed opponents.

Zimbabwe suffered a narrow loss to Sri Lanka in its opening match of the tournament and faces Pakistan in its second match in Hobart on Thursday.

"Our biggest thing is just to play our own game as well as we can," Houghton said.

"It would be awesome if we started to look at the big sides and try to make plans to beat them."

"The best thing we can do is try to play our own game to 100 per cent capacity. If we can get that right then anything could happen."

Zimbabwe is playing in the World Cup for the third time

and only has won match so far—against Australia in 1983.

"On Sunday against Sri Lanka we probably batted near



DAVID HOUGHTON

to perfection, but our seamers let us down," Houghton said. "That's one area where we need to lift our game."

"Because our seamers had trouble finding their line and length—the forte of their game—then we let Sri Lanka

off the hook."

"It meant I had to introduce John Traicos, whom I regard as a world class off-spinner and the key to our attack, into the game sooner than I wanted to."

"If the seamers can get things right on Thursday then they are good line- and-length bowlers capable of making runs hard to come by. We'll be working on that in our preparation."

Houghton said his biggest concern about Thursday's match was his team's ability to withstand the Pakistan opening pace attack of Wasim Akram and Aaqib Javed.

"We just can't afford to lose early wickets to their openers," he said.

"If we can get through the first 10 or so overs with only one or two wickets down, then we have the hitters in the side capable of giving us a big score."

"Akram and Javed are world class bowlers, though, so we will have to be on our toes."

Aussies, hosts in keen race

KARACHI, Feb 25: Pakistan and Australia were running neck and neck at the end of the fifth day's play in the 14th Champions Trophy hockey tournament here, Monday each with six points from four matches, reports AP.

Pakistan's 2-0 victory over the Australians in Monday's only game sent the home side to the top of the table on goal difference, on their outstanding form in this game they

seem certain to be playing in Friday's final.

Pakistan have only Germany to play, while the Germans also have to meet the Netherlands on Tuesday. Australia with only France to play, also have every chance of qualifying for the final.

After losing 1-0 to the Netherlands on Sunday, Pakistan completely transformed their approach work against Australia. Their task was helped by the Australians who unlike the Dutch with their midfield strength, gave

Pakistan plenty of room in which to move.

The Pakistan defence blunted the Australian forward line with quick tackling, seldom allowing any Australian move to develop. Towards the end Australia seemed to tire and Pakistan came close to scoring another goal.

The tally of short corners was eight to six in favour of Australia.

Everything points to a contest between the Netherlands and Germany for the bronze medal, and between Great

LATEST RESULTS

KARACHI, Feb 25: Germany beat the Netherlands 2-0 while Olympic champions Great Britain secured their first win in the 14th Champions Trophy hockey tournament by beating France 5-2 here today, report agencies.

Britain and France for the wooden spoon.

Islahuddin, the Pakistan manager praised his team for their brilliant efforts. "Each player played his heart out and concentrated on attack."

"Despite the absence of the ill Khalid Bashir Pakistan took control of the match," he said adding, "My instructions were to go all out."

Australian manager Frank Murray said, "We had too many holes in our defence. Tight marking and covering prevented us from making a real concerted effort."

Australian defender Ken Wark collected his second yellow card of the tournament.

Sadeq sneaps Sonali Bank

Sports Reporter

Club that saw them taking a 2-1 lead after trailing newly-promoted Bangladesh Sporting Club by a goal went in vain as Mitu of the babes converted a penalty stroke that forced the two teams share points in yesterday's first match of Green Delta hockey league.

Ehtesham of Bangladesh Sporting scored a field goal in the third minute of the match. Wari's Khurshid Hossain restored parity with a field goal in the 17th minute. Taleb Reza scored another field goal to give Wari a short-lived lead three minutes later. One minute before the short whistle, Mitu drew level from a penalty stroke 2-2.