

Good, could have been better



Asif Mujtaba, the vice-captain of the Pakistan team, follows through a cover drive during his unbeaten knock of 29 with Bangladeshi stumper Jahangir Alam looking anything but amused. Pakistan totalled 272 for four to beat Bangladesh by 62 runs at the Dhaka Stadium.

Bangladesh took the local cricket buffs on the merry-go-round of expectations and exhilaration as they conceded a 62-run defeat to visiting Pakistan in the first of the two friendly one-day matches of the Gold Leaf one-day series at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Chasing a theoretical victory target of 273 for an outright win against one of the top cricket teams and the current world champions of limited over cricket, Bangladesh, an associate member of the ICC had eventually a fairly honorable collection of 210 for five wickets from their quota of 45 overs.

On a wicket, which, despite some apprehensions of organisers Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB), turned out to be a perfect batting strip, batsmen of both teams revelled with varying degree of success and importance.

Salim Malik, the newly-appointed Pakistani captain, had his plan of giving some batting practice to his men for the upcoming tour of New Zealand fall into the place when his counterpart Faruque Ahmed called wrongly in the spin of the coin.

A real leather-hunt was the daunting prospect, looming large over the Bangladeshi bowlers and though the two left-handers — Aamir Sohail and Saeed Anwar — had their moments of initial uncertainty, particularly against left-arm new ball bowler Golam Nowsheer Prince, the Pakistani innings took the speculated chart slowly but surely.

A disdainful down the wicket lofted overhead hit for a sixer off a naive and a bit unfortunate Saiful, Prince's young partner, was the quiet announcement of visitors' intentions.

Although Sohail parted with Anwar's company with the score on 102 in 21.2 overs, adjudged leg before for 35 by umpire Mullick, Anwar displayed his tremendous onside prowess with clean timely hitting. Eager to cement his position in Pakistan's Test composition, Anwar who struck three successive centuries in a recently-held meet in Sharjah, was finally bored out by the persistent Minhazul Abedin Nannu for a punitive 88-ball 92 that contained four massive sixes and eight fours. Anwar who pocketed BCCB's cash award of Taka ten thousand for the man of the match as well as the memento of a similar award by the Bangladesh Sports Journalists' Association (BSJA), lofted the non-descript but nagging Nannu in the deep and Aminul Islam Bulbul nullified the momentary fears of a suicide spill by clasp the ball without fuss.

The baby-faced giant Inzamam, one of the stars of the last World Cup held Down Under in 1992, did not last long, going for an almighty heave at slow left-arm Ehamul Huq Moni, who foresaw the sudden rush of blood in the batsman and cleverly dropped the ball short and Jahangir, who was uninspiring behind the stumps, did one of the easiest stumping.

Although Malik underlined his reputation as a gifted timer of the ball with some classy unhurried one-side strokes off the toes and his deputy Asif Mujtaba hit splendidly in the arc of cover and long off to justify the little left-hander's emergence as one of the butresses of Pakistan batting, it was the stocky Basil Ali who stole the eye.

A dashing right-hander with immense hitting potentials as epitomised in a murderous ton against the mighty West Indies in a recent desert duel, Basil, who had toured Bangladesh with a young Pakistan team in the abandoned SAARC cricket in 1992-93, tourney yesterday showed glimpses of his quality. He took eighteen 'stroked' runs from the 37th over of the innings bowled by Saiful. He shuffled across, exposing his stumps in the process a la Mianad, to hit three absolutely thrilling fours in the arc of backward square and fine leg and then completed the mayhem of the young Bangladeshi paceman with a

Galvanised by the adrenalin pumping ambience, most inescapably characterised in the drone and din of the flag-waving partisan crowd, Bangladeshi openers — Athar Ali and Jahangir Alam — gave a dream of a start.

The tall, compact Athar set the stadium ablaze when he gloriously punched Waqar Younis, arguably the fastest bowler of the world, to the long-on fence and then followed it up with a clipped four past square-leg.

Hot under his collar, Waqar paid home with a real Waqar over but the crippling rules of instant cricket in league with an unkind pitch made a pathetic caricature of the power and reverence associated with a fast bowler.

So the march went on with Jahangir joining Athar in playing some really pleasing shots against Ataur Rehman, who

opened Pakistan's attack along with Waqar. Although Athar managed a wicket, making the most of Athar's lapse of concentration, Waqar went wicketless, giving away 34 runs from his seven overs.

Pakistan's attack which was without its kingpin Wasim Akram, the dethroned captain staying back in Pakistan due to some home obligations, had to turn to spinner Mushtaq Ahmed and the leggie struck immediately. He castled apart from the top three, pretended to be sensible, conservative to no immediate purpose.

The second and final match will be today, starting from 9-15 am.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN

Aamir Sohail lbw Nannu	35
Saeed Anwar c Bulbul b Nannu	92
Inzamamul Haq st Jahangir b Moni	11
Salim Malik not out	47
Basil Ali st Jahangir b Moni	39
Asif Mujtaba not out	29
Extras: (b-1, lb-12, wb-6)	19
Total: (for four wks, 45 overs)	272
Fall of wickets: 1-102; 2-127; 3-169; 4-221	

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
Prince	9	0	33	0
Saiful	8	1	55	0
Athar Ali	4	0	31	0
Saikat	6	0	41	0
Nannu	9	0	39	2
Moni	9	0	60	2

BANGLADESH

Athar Ali c Latif b Ataur Rahman	21
Jahangir b Mushtaq	17
Faruque st Latif b Sohail	41
Salim Shahed c Malik b Mushtaq	4
Nannu rtd hurt	37
Akram Khan st Latif b Mushtaq	38
Bulbul not out	21
Moni not out	21
Extras: (lb-5, wb-6, nb-8)	19
Total: (for 5 wks, 45 Overs)	210
Fall of wickets: 1-36; 2-69; 3-69; 4-122; 5-182	

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
Waqar Younis	7	0	34	0
Ataur Rahman	7	0	42	1
Ashfaq Ahmed	7	0	38	0
Mushtaq Ahmed	9	0	31	3
Aamir Sohail	8	0	34	1
Salim Malik	6	0	18	0
Basil Ali	1	0	8	0

Reception

Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Kemal last night hosted a reception in honour of the Pakistan cricket team at the Chancery in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Partex b'ball

Sports Reporter

Angels and Eagles registered contrasting victories in the Partex First Division basketball league at the Outer Stadium wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday.

Angels rolled over Kurmitola Boys Club 180-40 after leading the first session 61-16 while Dhumketa never let up the pressure on Eagles before bowing down 61-71.

Bangladesh national cricket captain Faruque Ahmed (R) and his Pakistan counterpart Salim Malik (L) walk back to the pavilion after the toss in the first match of the Gold Leaf one-day series at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Sher-e-Bangla Cup soccer results

Sports Reporter

Six more teams — Netrakona, Comilla, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Sirajganj and Lalmonirhat — made it to the zonal finals of the 18th Sher-e-Bangla Cup national football championship yesterday.

Netrakona were stretched to tie-breaker by Gazipur in their semifinal encounter after the regulation period ended one all. Netrakona, who will take on the winners of the other semifinal between Tangail and the hosts on Wednesday, finally had the match wrapped up 4-3.

Comilla also struggle before eliminating Chandpur by a solitary goal, thanks to Shamsuddin, who netted the winner in the 78th minute. The other semifinal between Sunamganj and hosts Sylhet will be played today. The final will be held on Wednesday.

At Bagerhat, the hosts with goals from Alamgir and Bayazid knocked Projpur out 2-0 for a place in the final where they will meet the victors of the other semifinal between Barisal and Bhola.

Satkhira and Jessore had their semifinals carried over to penalty shoots-out before, the former finally prevailed 5-4. Satkhira meet either hosts Jhenidah or Kushtia.

Sirajganj and Lalmonirhat registered similar margin wins over Pabna and Nilphamari in their respective zonal semifinal matches. The scoreline in both matches was 2-0.

Sirajganj go up against the winners of the second Bogra Zone semifinal between the hosts and Naogaon, while Lalmonirhat have to get rid of Nilphamari for a place in the finals.

Maradona at the end of road?

BUENOS AIRES, Jan 23: Diego Maradona, back in the fold after a six-week lay-off with hamstring trouble, returned to the treatment table on Friday after limping off in a friendly for Newell's Old Boys against Brazilian side Vasco Da Gama, reports Reuter.

With 20 minutes remaining of a scoreless draw, Maradona left the field clutching his right leg. Reports say he had aggravated an old injury by slipping in the tunnel moments before the match started.

A bystander for much of the match as the Brazilians kept possession, Maradona laboured and looked uncomfortable with the ball at his feet.

"I see the young lads running around and the only one that cannot run is me," a depressed Maradona told reporters after the game.

Yet a lack of fitness is not Maradona's only problem — it now seems the legend of the magical midfielder is wearing thin.

"Are these injuries solely in his mind?" asked City Daily La Nacion, a remark tantamount to blasphemy in the once fiercely pro-Maradona local press.

A string of injuries since returning to Argentine soccer in October has made the 33-year-old national captain doubt whether he has the strength to play in this year's World Cup.

"My World Cup is with Newell's," Maradona said after the game. "If I cannot give them what they want from me, what chance do I have with the national team?"

Talk of imminent retirement will come as no surprise to local soccer fans, who have frequently heard the star pondering an end to his illustrious career.

Yet this time it seems the writing could be on the wall for the man who led the country to its second World Cup title in 1986.

A batch of promising youngsters, instrumental in beating world champions Germany in Miami in December, have designs on the sacred number 10 shirt and some say Maradona is losing his grip.

"Diego always seems to be making a comeback," City Daily Clarin said before Friday's match. "But we all know that this is his last chance. There will be no more."

It continued: "This match could be the springboard for an appearance in the World Cup or perhaps the end of Argentina's greatest ever footballer."

WC beckons Milla

YAOUNDE, Jan 23: Roger Milla, one of the stars of the 1990 World Cup finals, is making another comeback at the age of 42, reports Reuter.

He announced he was rejoining his old club Tonnerre Yaounde, raising the possibility that he could be considered for Cameroon's World Cup squad for the finals in the United States later this year.

Milla told a local newspaper recently that the American organisers were putting a lot of pressure on both himself and the Cameroonian authorities to play in the World Cup.



Man-of-the-match Saeed Anwar, the hard-hitting Pakistani opener who topscored in the first match of the Gold Leaf One Day series between Bangladesh and Pakistan with 92, receiving the crest from Foreign Minister and BCCB president A S M Mostafizur Rahman.

Give others a chance too

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

The Bangladesh national cricket team started its reply to Pakistan in an electrifying pace at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. The mammoth total of 272 runs, piled up in 45 overs, was awe-inspiring for the local boys, who had not too happy an experience in their recent tour of Pakistan, having lost six matches out of 10 against teams most of which can not be rated highly even by Pakistani standards.

The intention of the Pakistanis was very clear: They stuffed their side with batsmen to gain practice before they fly on to New Zealand for a full tour. In recent years internecine quarrels and top order politics have sapped the morale of the team and their low-scoring matches against the babes of ICC, Zimbabwe, were eye openers for all.

Against a top class batting order, the task of the Bangladesh bowlers became all the more weighty. The Pakistanis, after a sedate start, got the feel of the wicket and also a measure of the bowling and tore it into shreds.

The pick of the Pakistani batsmen were Saeed Anwar, the diminutive left hander whom pundits call an ideal one-day opener and the ruthless Basil Ali, possibly the most brilliant Pakistani find in their tour of West Indies. In 1993 since the majestic, Saeed Ahmad in the 1957-58 tour of

the same land under Abdul Hafiz Kardar. The visitors, particularly the batsmen, found the dead pitch at the stadium to their liking and rattled up a huge total with relish. It is a curious coincidence that the Pakistanis played their first match here beginning on the new year's day in 1955 against India and here they were again in the same month 39 years later, against a new country trying its best to rise up to the level of international cricket.

Undaunted by a mammoth figure, the Bangladesh cricket team went about their task in tremendous fashion collecting the first 50 runs in 7.3 overs against an attack which many top batsmen of the game would like to avoid. Waqar Younis in full fury supported by the 'colt' Ataur Rehman were despatched to the ropes by Atahar Ali with disdain. Waqar soon realised that what was good for the goose was good for the gander also. Intelligent as he was, he soon cut short his run up and tried all his tricks but in vain.

To tame the run glut Salim Malik soon brought in his best weapon Mushtaq Ahmad and the wily spinner soon put a spanner into the wheels of runs by dismissing Jahangir and Selim Shahed with successive deliveries. These two were crucial blows for the home team. The result, was total restraint by the middle order batsmen. Faruq who had been going along fine suddenly decided to come out to Aamir Sohail and paid the

penalty for his impetuosity. Akram Khan, known for his ability as a good hitter of the ball, and Minhazul Abedin put on their brakes which prompted Salim Malik, an occasional bowler, to try his luck and was quite successful in keeping these two quiet.

As the slog overs approached Bangladesh did neither had the batsmen nor the appetite to go for runs. The result was obvious. Aminul Islam Bulbul, without whom the home team is incomplete, could have shown a little more aggression, after all, he had nothing to lose.

In all fairness it must be said that Bangladesh were defeated not disgraced. To match the world champions, in whatever shape they might be, it takes a lot of courage and guts and our boys showed it in no uncertain terms.

To achieve a favourable result against the world champions it is well nigh impossible, if I am permitted to say so, for a team like ours. But that should not deter our selectors to give a chance to the boys who could not don the flannel yesterday. Let it not be said that everyone of the 16-member squad for the ICC trophy did not have their share of glory in playing against the world champions — a dream for every cricketer. Who knows what surprise they can produce.

Let the lovers of the game, who are the heart and soul of cricket, see what we are sending to Kenya.

Mark Waugh sparkles with a superb ton as Australians square score

SYDNEY, Jan 23: A powerful century by Mark Waugh set up Australia for a comfortable 69-run win over South Africa today and squared the World Series finals at 1-1, reports Reuter.

Waugh cracked 107 from 111 balls and together with Dean Jones, who made 79, put on 175 for the third wicket as Australia scored a formidable 247 for six in their 50 overs.

South Africa never looked like matching the required scoring rate and collapsed to be all out for 178 with more than four overs remaining.

The third and deciding match will be played in Sydney on Tuesday.

"Our spinners did a great job in containing them," said captain Allan Border of Tim May (1-35) and Shane Warne (3-42).

Paceman Craig McDermott wrapped up the innings by taking the last three wickets in eight balls.

South African captain Hansie Cronje said his side's lacklustre fielding probably cost about 30 runs and they were always behind once openers Peter and Gary Kirsten were dismissed.

"We were a bit too relaxed," said Cronje, but added: "We will come back fighting on Tuesday."

Waugh and Jones linked up with the total 35 for two after Matthew Hayden (16) and David Boon (14) had fallen victim to fast bowler Allan Donald, who finished with four for 40.

Waugh, dropped in the deep by Daryl Cullinan when he had made 42, hit eight boundaries before being caught off another attempted big hit off paceman Fanie de Villiers.

Half-brothers Peter and Gary Kirsten set off briskly, putting on 50 in 11.4 overs, close to the target of 5.26 runs an over, but then a mix-up over a run cost them dear.

Peter struck the ball, set off for a run but was sent back by Gary and was unable to regain his ground before a direct throw from David Boon hit the stumps.

Gary, who scored 112 in the opening match of the finals, won by South Africa by 28 runs, was next out after making 42, caught at mid-on by Boon off May with the total on 74.

Warne, struck in three successive overs, having captain Hansie Cronje (28) stumped, Daryl Cullinan (3) caught, and Brian McMillan leg before for nought.

His spell saw South Africa slump from 102 for two to 107 Extras: (lb-7, nb-1) 8 Total: (45.5 overs) 178

Fall of wickets: 1-50; 2-74; 3-102; 4-106; 5-107; 6-156; 7-176; 8-178; 9-178.

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
McDermott	8.5	0	30	3
Reiffel	8	0	23	0
S Waugh	5	0	11	0
May	10	1	35	1
Warne	10	0	42	3
Border	4	0	21	1

Result: Australia won by 69 runs.

South Africa won the first final in Melbourne by 28 runs. The third and deciding final will be in Sydney on Tuesday.

MARK WAUGH ... 107

for five.

Jonty Rhodes showed some resistance, pulling Warne for a six as he hit a brave 52.

But by then the South Africans were hopelessly behind the required rate and McDermott stepped in to cut short their misery.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second of the best-of-three limited overs World Series Cup finals between Australia and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground today.

AUSTRALIA:

M Hayden c Snell b Donald	16
D Boon c Rhodes b Donald	14
D Jones c Cronje b Donald	79
M Waugh c G Kirsten b de Villiers	107
S Waugh b Donald	1
A Border c Richardson b de Villiers	6
I Healy not out	10
P Reiffel not out	5
Extras: (lb-5, nb-1, w-3)	9
Total (for six wickets)	247
Did not bat: S Waugh, C	

South Africa:

P Kirsten run out	11
G Kirsten c Boon b May	42
H Cronje st Healy b Warne	28
J Rhodes b McDermott	52
D Cullinan c S Waugh b Warne	3
B McMillan lbw b Warne	0
D Richardson b Border	16
R Snell b McDermott	6
P Symcox run out	12
F de Villiers not out	0
A Donald c and b McDermott	0
Extras: (lb-7, nb-1)	8
Total: (45.5 overs)	178

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
McDermott	8.5	0	30	3
Reiffel	8	0	23	0
S Waugh	5	0	11	0
May	10	1	35	1
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Lara leads from the front

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Jan 23: Captain Brian Lara scored a superlative 180 as Trinidad and Tobago gained first innings points over Jamaica on the second day of their third round Red Stripe Cup match on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Trinidad and Tobago started the day on 103 for six, still requiring 104 runs to overtake Jamaica's first innings score of 206. But guided by Lara's majestic and authoritative batting, reached 257 before they were dismissed.

The 24-year-old left hander, who hit 131 of the 154 runs scored by the Trinidadians on Saturday.