

Pepsi Cup cricket first semifinal today

Ctg, Sylhet complete quorum

Sports Reporter

Rafiqul destroyed Dhaka with a haul of five wickets as Sylhet entered the semifinal of the Pepsi Cup 20th national cricket championship with ease at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

Not much of a bowler, but fairly useful in the fleetful, fidgety scheme of instant cricket, Rafiqul captured five wickets for 29 runs from 7.4 overs. His exploits left Dhaka all out for 125 in the span of 37.4 overs, nearly 13 short of the full quota of 50 over.

Dhaka's young skipper Halim Shah won the toss in the bright morning of a national holiday on account of the Independence Day and chose to bat first on a wicket, not really known for its assistance to the first users.

Dhaka were on the backfoot right from the word go as the experienced seamers of Sylhet reduced them to 41 for three. Habibul Bashar Sunan tried to hold the innings together with a patient 36 but Rafiqul's

arrival in the scene quashed all hopes of a recovery.

Former national cricketer Azhar Hossain Shantu with 14 and Towhid with 11 were the other mentionable run-getters for Dhaka.

While Rafiqul stole the bowling honours with a big haul, experienced Golam Faruq Suri took two for 18 while national cricketer Athar exemplified economy with figures of one for 13 from seven overs.

Sylhet scored 129 for four wickets from in 34.2 overs. Mahbubul Rahman Selim remained unbeaten on 31 as the strong Sylhet caved in to the semifinal with a six wicket win.

National cricketers Aminul Islam and Athar Ali Khan were the other significant contributors with 30 and 24.

Former national cricketer Rafiqul Alam captured two wickets for 27 runs from his quota of ten overs. Naimur Rahman and Azhar Hossain got one wicket apiece among the Dhaka bowlers.

Reigning champions Chittagong careered to a seven-wicket win against Mymensingh

at the Dhaka Stadium on the same day to set up a clash in the first semifinal billed for today at the Dhaka Stadium.

Put in to bat first, the tacky Mymensingh struggled all along against the experienced and incisive Chittagong bowlers comprising national players like Saiful and useful seasoned campaigners like Morshed and Salahuddin. They were all out for 117 in 48.3 overs with Pappu and Shariful Huq Plaban making 20 each.

While wicketkeeper Pappu took 64 balls for his 20, off spinner Palabon, who toured Kenya recently with the Bangladesh team, played 23 balls and hit a sixer and a four.

Former national cricketer Shahidur Rahman scored 38 and opener Azam 26 to make light of Chittagong's early losses of national player Akram Khan and Zahid Razzak.

One hundred and eighteen runs were posted in 42.1 overs with skipper Minhazul Abedin Nannu unbeaten on 20 as Chittagong completed a massive seven-wicket victory to brace for a defence of the title.

S Africa ride well on Rhodes

DURBAN, Mar 27: Jonty Rhodes boosted a crawling South African innings into a 53-run lead Sunday on the third day of the third and deciding Test against Australia, reports AP.

In reply to Australia's disappointing 269, South Africa wracked up 322 for six before bad light ended play with seven overs remaining.

A century stand between Rhodes and Peter Kirsten warded off a threatened collapse by South Africa, which will open play Monday with all-rounder Brian McMillan and Dave Richardson batting in an unbeaten stand of 48.

South Africa have spent more than 10 hours forging its modest lead, and unless something dramatic happens, the match may end up a tedious draw that will leave the Test series tied at one victory each.

Neither side has sought the initiative in the third Test, seeming to want to avoid defeat rather than seek a series-clinching victory.

South Africa began the day at 143 for three and lost vice captain Hansie Cronje (26) in the sixth over. The 101-run stand between Rhodes and Kirsten, lasting three hours, then saved the day.

Rhodes survived a couple of anxious moments against leg spinner Shane Warne and a dropped catch on 48. Hooking Glen McGrath, Rhodes was dropped by Craig McDermott running in from long leg with South Africa on 241 for four.

He hit 11 boundaries and benefited from Australian generosity, including an overthrow that fetched him five runs.

Warne had the final laugh with his last legitimate ball before the tea break, forcing

one through Rhodes' defence to trap him leg before wicket. Bowling well, Warne picked up two wickets and kept the South Africans off-balance throughout the day. His prize scalp was Cronje, who he eliminated for the first time in eight encounters.

Kirsten fell one short of a well-deserved half century after batting for 288 minutes and consuming 197 balls, hitting four boundaries.

Paul Reiffel and Warne finished with two wickets apiece costing them 60 and 79 runs respectively.

BOWLING: O M R W
Donald 18 1 71 3
de Villiers 24.2 5 55 2
Matthews 29 9 65 4
McMillan 19 5 56 1
Cronje 5 1 8 0
Kirsten 6 1 13 0

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (143 for three contd)
Hudson lbw b Reiffel 65
G Kirsten c Healy b Reiffel 41
Cronje c S Waugh b Warne 26
Wessels lbw b McDermott 1
P Kirsten lbw b S Waugh 49
Rhodes lbw b Warne 78
McMillan not out 35
Richardson not out 16
Extras: (lb-6, nb-4) 11
Total: (Six wickets) 322
Fall: 1-100; (Hansie) 2-117 (G Kirsten); 3-118 (Wessels); 4-155 (Cronje); 5-256 (P Kirsten); 6-274 (Rhodes).

To bat: Matthews, De Villiers and Donald.

BOWLING: O M R W
McDermott 30 9 55 1
Reiffel 22 5 60 2
McGrath 31 10 52 0
Warne 44 16 79 2
S Waugh 17 5 34 1
M Waugh 9 3 27 0
Border 3 0 8 0

Overs: 156; Minutes: 631.
Umpires: Cyril Mitchell (South African) and Mehbood Shah (Pakistan).

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard on the third day in the third cricket Test between Australia and South Africa in Durban.

Esposito steals the show

PARIS, Mar 27: Frenchman Franck Esposito troubled Olympic champion Melvyn Stewart and shattered the men's 200 metres butterfly short-course world record at a World Cup swimming meeting on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Esposito, bronze medalist behind the American at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, thrilled the home crowd a devastating performance, clocking one minute 53.05 seconds which carved more than a second from the old world mark.

Esposito, the crowd whistling and cheering him on, won by a body-length, his 1:53.55 beating the mark of 1:54.21 established by New Zealand's Danyon Loader in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on February 13, 1993.

Stewart touched second in 1:54.37 and hugged Esposito in congratulation. European long-course champion Dents Pankratov of Russia was third in 1:55.62 ceding the European short-course record to Esposito in the process.

To beat Olympic champion Melvyn Stewart and the European Champion (Pankratov) in the same race fills me with joy," Esposito said.

"Stewart is a monument for me and it's the first time I'm in front of him. It's really good for morale."

Popov won the 100 metres freestyle in 47.91 — his slowest time in five World Cup meetings but still faster than the world short-course mark at the end of 1993. He swam an unprecedented 46.54 in Gelsenkirchen the previous Saturday.

But the Russian was not to be denied a record and less than an hour after the 100 freestyle he claimed it in the 100 backstroke.

Popov's 52.56 beat the 52.54 European short-course record he set in Gelsenkirchen.

Djaburia also improved a

week-old European mark, clinching the 50 breaststroke in 27.20 — 0.04 seconds inside the time he set in Gelsenkirchen and 0.08 seconds ahead of Russia's Vasily Ivanov on the day.

Fransziska van Almsick, who won six gold medals at the 1993 European long-course championships, claimed a freestyle double.

The 15-year-old German won the 200 metres in 1:56.52 and returned to take the 50 metres in 24.97.

The two-day Paris meeting, which ends today, is the last of the seven World Cup venues in Asia and Europe.



Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshall Altaf Hossain Chowdhury giving the trophy to the winner of the 555 golf classic tournament at the Kurmitola golf club course yesterday. —Star photo

Sport

Army Reds lift Independence Day b-ball title

Sports Reporter

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While wicketkeeper Pappu took 64 balls for his 20, off spinner Palabon, who toured Kenya recently with the Bangladesh team, played 23 balls and hit a sixer and a four.

They scored 45 points against Air Force's 31 in the second session to ensure the winners' purse of Taka 3,000.

Iqbal caged 18 points for Army while teammate Shafi scored 17. However, Naimul of Air Force was the highest scorer of the day with 19 points but saw his efforts go in vain for lack of support from his peers.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeque Hossain gave away prizes as chief guest.

Bangladesh Air Force received Taka 2,000 and the runners-up trophy.

President of the Bangladesh Amateur Basketball Federation (BABF) Prof. Rashid Uddin Ahmed was also present on the occasion.

Five teams including two clubs and three service outfits took part in the six-day meet.

Tahmid holds centre stage

Sports Reporter

Syed Tahmidur Rahman left the local chess pundits in a fix as the FIDE Master, playing brilliantly, beat International Masters Mahmood Ahmed Khan Lodhi, the Pakistani favoured to win this 40-player meet, and national champion Reefat Bin Sattar to go atop the points table of the United Insurance Masters' chess tournament.

On completion of the seventh round matches at the National Sports Council chess room yesterday, Tahmid along with Lodhi, Indian Subhrajit Saha shared the top slot, having collected five and a half points each.

Harris led the scoring with a patient unbeaten 50 from 71 balls that included three boundaries and a six over long-on.

The top five New Zealand batsmen were back in the pavilion with just 34 runs on the board but Harris and Parore then painstakingly put on 52 for the sixth wicket.

Wicketkeeper Parore departed for 23, run out superbly by Tendulkar, who threw down the stumps from mid-wicket.

Kapil Dev, Jagat Singh and Salil Ankola each took two wickets and spinner Rajesh Chauhan took 3-43.

New Zealand scored a 28-run win over India in the opening match of the series on Friday in Napier. The teams now head to Wellington for the third international on Wednesday.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second one-day international between

India level one-day series with a seven-wicket win

Tendulkar torments Kiwis

Sports Reporter

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Mar 27: Sachin Tendulkar scored an explosive 82 Sunday to lift India to an emphatic seven-wicket victory over New Zealand at Eden Park in the second limited-overs cricket international, reports AP.

Tendulkar slammed his runs from just 49 balls as India reached the victory target of 143 in just 23.2 overs for the loss of three wickets.

The 20-year-old clearly relished being moved, up the order to open with Ajay Jadeja and he launched a blistering attack on the home team's bowlers.

His innings included 15 fours and two sixes.

Tendulkar's half-century came up in the 11th over off only 34 balls and the Indian hundred was raised in the 13th over for the loss of just one wicket, that of Jadeja for 18.

Tendulkar's first single was the one he ran to go to 82 in the 15th over. He was dismissed on the second ball of Matthew Hart's second over when he lobbed back a simple catch to the bowler.

The Indians scored the rest of the required runs without difficulty, losing only one wicket along the way. Vinod Kambli fell for 21 to Chris Harris with 126 on the board.

Captain Mohammad Azharuddin was unbeaten on 12 at the end, with Sanjay Manjrekar on seven. New Zealand earlier struggled to make any impact against a controlled Indian attack and was all out in the final over for 142.

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SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second one-day international between

India and New Zealand at Auckland today:

NEW ZEALAND:

	10	1	43	3
Jadeja c Rutherford b Pringle	18			
Tendulkar c and b Hart	82			
Hartford c Azharuddin b Kapil Dev	21			
Azharuddin not out	12			
Fleming c Mongia b Kapil Dev	6			
Thomson c Mongia b Ankola	1			
Harris not out	50			
Parore run out	23			

Total: (for three wkt.) 23.2 overs 143

Fall: 1-61; 2-117; 3-126.

Chauhan 10 1 43 3

INDIA:

	10	1	43	3

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