



Bangladesh allrounder Enamul Huq's wild swing at a short delivery reaps no benefit as the ball eludes his bat on its way to England A keeper Keith Piper during the second day's play of the three-day exhibition cricket match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. — Star photo

Three cheers for locals

Sports Reporter

England A indulged in no-nonsense making 148 for two at the close of play but the second day of the three-day exhibition cricket match surely belonged to the Bangladeshi batsmen, who, led by Aminul Islam, revelled on an easy wicket at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Resuming on the overnight score of 168 for two from the truncated first day's play, Bangladesh, one of the ICC associate members, declared their first innings on 365 for six, their highest ever total in an innings in a three-day match which also featured the first ton by a local batsman.

Aminul Islam, who remained unconquered on 65 at the end of the first day went on to make 121. The 288-minute ripping knock, made from 223 balls with the help of 13 boundaries ended when a persevering Johnson snared his second victim making one hurry through the defence of the dark and dapper right-hander.

Together with Mighazul Abedin, unbeaten on 23 overnight, Amin made the England A attack look rather innocuous on a wicket which, contrary to the predictions and apprehensions, continued to behave in the friendliest manner to the willow wielders.

Only batsmen could get themselves out as Minhazul Abedin, the experienced right-hander and the mainstay of the Bangladesh batting in the recent years, demonstrated to herald the first success for the frustrated English bowlers.

Poised for the second hundred in a too good to believe sort of a morning for the relatively small crowd gathered at the Dhaka Stadium, Minhazul tried to cut a harmless delivery without taking his right foot across the line of the ball and Keith Piper had his lone success behind the stumps.

Minhazul, who made 81 off 104 balls with the help of nine fours, added 179 runs for the third wicket, a record in the annuals of Bangladesh in international cricket.

Left-handed Enamul Huq and young Naimur Rahman contributed substantially before skipper Akram, who once again failed with the bat, declared the innings shortly

before tea.

Opening bowler Johnson claimed two for 53 while skipper Wells, Gallian, Salisbury and Chapple took one apiece at varying costs among the nine England A bowlers in action.

The visitors went off at score in their reply making 27 runs from the five overs bowled by the Bangladesh new ball pair of left-arm Anisur Rahman and Saiful Islam.

Although Anis' angle and bounce caused few bits of discomfort on occasion both the openers — left-handed Nick Knight, the centurion in the second one-dayer and Michael Vaughan — feasted on the shortpitched stuff particularly at the far end of the wicket.

Wild cheers erupted in the stands when right-handed Vaughan was set on an unhappy walk back to pavilion adjudged caught behind off Saiful with the score on 34.

Thirty-eight runs later there was another cause for celebration in the stands when Jason Gallian, who started briskly making 20 runs with three fours, played all over a Enamul Huq delivery only to guide the ball to the stumps.

However, the next man to come in, right-handed David Hemp meant business right from the start. Hemp, who clobbered two sixes off Enam and Mohammed Rafique in his 50, stayed at the wicket with Knight until the end of the day. Knight will resume today on 65.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the second day of the three-day exhibition cricket match between England A and Bangladesh at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday:

BANGLADESH: First innings (overnight 168 for two)

Athar Ali Khan ret'd hurt	18
Javed Omar c Knight b Chapple	39
Khaled Masud b Salisbury	7
Aminul Islam b Johnson	121
Minhazul Abedin c Piper b Gallian	81
Akram Khan lbw Johnson	8
Enamul Huq c Vaughan b Wells	25
Naimur Rahman not out	34
Extras: (b-11, lb-10, nb-7, nb-4)	32
Total: (for six wickets declared)	365
Fall of wickets: 1-48; 2-98; 3-277; 4-293; 5-300; 6-365.	

Bowling:

O	M	R	W	
Glenn Chapple	14	2	50	1
Richard Johnson	19	5	53	2
Richard Stemp	14	1	48	0
Ian Salisbury	20	3	53	1

Goal drought in Sher-e-Bangla Cup football

Sports Reporter

There was a disappointing dearth of goals in yesterday's three engagements of the 19th Sher-e-Bangla Cup national football championship with each being decided in tie-breaker at different venues across the country.

The other scheduled match between hosts Kishoreganj and Netrakona was abandoned as fans indulged in violence following a controversial ruling seven minutes away from the final whistle.

At Joypurhat, Bogra moved into the final round beating the hosts 3-1 in tie-breaker in the Zone 7 final.

In a Zone 4 semifinal at Habiganj, Sylhet prevailed in penalty shoot-out over Chandpur 5-4 after the regulation period failed to produce any goal. Sylhet will now take on the hosts in the final tomorrow.

Meanwhile, at the Mirpur Stadium, Bangladesh Army moved into the Services Zone final with a 4-2 tie-break win over Bangladesh Navy.

The winners will face Bangladesh Police to decide who advance to the 12-team final leg, scheduled to begin in Naogaon next month.

Yamaha Div 1 cricket

Sports Reporter

Nadim Hossain scored an unbeaten century as Agrani Bank posted a facile 41-run win over City Club in yesterday's lone Yamaha First Division super league match on the eastern strip of the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Opener Nadim, who remained unbeaten on 131, shared 166 runs for the first wicket as Agrani Bank, sent in to bat first, compiled a huge total of 247 for three in their share of 45 overs.

Nadim's 148-ball undefeated innings included nine hits to the fence and huge sixer while his opening partner Anwar who, scored a swashbuckling 75, clubbed seven fours in his 92-ball knock.

In reply, City Club made 206 for nine before running out of overs.

Arif Hossain with 67 was the topscorer for the eventual losers followed by skipper Zakir Hossain and Islam, who contributed 31 and 29 respectively.

Sajal and veteran Dipu Roy claimed two wickets apiece for the winners.

Friendly cricket

Sports Reporter

A friendly cricket match between the National Press Club and the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board will be played on March 1 at the Dhaka Stadium, reports BSS.

The players of the National Press Club have been requested to report to skipper Partha Tanvir Naved before the start of the match.

The team: Partha Tanvir Naved (captain), Mohammad Qamruzzaman, Rouful Hasan, BD Mukherjee, Manzurul Hoque, Ajay Barua, Masud Ahmed Rumi, Afzal H Khan, Hannan Khan, Mustafaizur Rahman Mamun, Kamalur Rahman, Shahriar Ferdous, Mujtaba Danish, Syed Mamun, Badal Mustafiz, Ditu Khondakar, Arifur Rahman Babu, Raihan Rajib.

WTA's last date with Houston

HOUSTON, Feb 25: The women's tennis tour could be making its last stop in Houston, which is considered the birthplace for women's professional tennis, reports AP.

organizers of the Houston women's tennis championships, formerly the Virginia Slims of Houston, have been unable to secure a title sponsor and could move to another city after this year's tournament.

The tour began in Houston in 1970 and has played in the city each year since then.

"This event is in serious trouble," tournament director Barbara Perry told The Houston Post in a story published Thursday. "If we can't get the support of a local company willing to step in as title sponsor, the future of this event in Houston is in jeopardy."

Because of a change in marketing philosophy, Philip Morris, Virginia Slims' parent, opted to drop its sponsorship after last year's event.

Perry said despite contacts with hundreds of Houston-area businesses, none has expressed interest in becoming the title sponsor.

A title sponsor usually puts up a portion of the prize money in exchange for attaching the company's name to the event.

Perry said if a sponsor is not lined up by this year's tournament, April 10-16, she'll take the event elsewhere.



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING... England A batsman Jason Gallian survives a close call as Aminul Islam, stationed at silly point, fails to hit the stumps during yesterday's proceedings of the three-day exhibition match at the Dhaka Stadium. — Star photo

Inzamam inspires Pakistan

Sports Reporter

HARARE, Feb 25: Inzamam-ul-Haq scored a magnificent unbeaten century to help Pakistan pull off a Houdini act and win the second one-day cricket international against Zimbabwe by four wickets with nine balls to spare today, reports AFP.

The 24-year-old right-hander notched up an imperious 116 not out, his fourth one-day century, to guide the visitors to an unlikely victory and take them 1-0 up in the three-match series.

Earlier Inzamam, who has proved to be the thorn in the flesh of the Zimbabweans on this tour, could only watch helplessly as Pakistan crashed to 23 for 4 in the ninth over.

Health Streak and Bryan Strang took two wickets apiece as Zimbabwe took total control of the match and looked odds-on favourites to beat Pakistan for the first time in limited overs internationals.

But then Inzamam had found an able partner in Ijaz Ahmed and the two fashioned a superb 152-run partnership for the fifth wicket in 120 minutes which turned the game on its head.

And even though Pakistan lost Ijaz Ahmed for a well-crafted 54, his 10th half-century for his country, and then Moin Khan in the dying overs, there was no stopping Pakistan on their victory charge.

Maazoor Elahi steered Allister Campbell to third man for the winning single to bring up victory.

Inzamam deservedly won the man-of-the-match award for his 116 which came off 139 balls in 170 minutes and included nine fours and a six.

The pick of the bowlers was Bryan Strang who finished with 3 for 22 off his 10 overs.

In the morning, Zimbabwe reached 209 for 5 off their allotted 50 overs, largely thanks to a robust unbeaten 73 off 77 balls by Dave Houghton.

The Zimbabwe vice captain hit seven fours and a six and helped his side take 75 runs

INZAMAM

... m-o-m off the last 10 overs.

Washir Akram and Manzoor Elahi took two wickets apiece but the most economical bowling came from off-spinner

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of Zimbabwe-Pakistan second one-day cricket international here today.

ZIMBABWE

A Flower c Moin Khan b Akram	9
G Flower c Moin Khan b Elahi	32
M Burnester c Sohail b Elahi	17
A Campbell c Inzamam b Malik	27
D Houghton not out	73
G Whittall c Ijaz Ahmed b Akram	11
S Carlisle not out	9
Extras: (13 lb, 5 nb, 11-w)	29
Total: (for 5 wks)	209
Fall of wickets: 1-26; 2-79; 3-74; 4-130; 5-185.	

Bowling:

O	M	R	W	
Akram	10	0	40	2
Aaqib	10	1	41	0
Elahi	10	0	37	2
Raza	10	0	27	0
Sohail	6	0	30	0
Malik	4	0	22	1

PAKISTAN

A Schaaf c Whittall b Strang	7
S Anwar c Burnester b B Strang	0
Inzamamul Haq not out	116
A Muftaba c A Flower b B Strang	0
S Malik c A Flower b Strang	0
Ijaz Ahmed b B Strang	54
Moin Khan c Houghton b P Strang	19
M Elahi not out	3
Extras: (2 lb, 1 nb, 8-w)	11
Total: (for 6 wks)	210
Fall of wickets: 1-9; 2-17; 3-19; 4-23; 5-175; 6-206.	

Bowling:

O	M	R	W	
Strang	9	1	50	2
B Strang	10	0	22	3
Whittall	7	0	33	0
Burnester	4	0	21	0
P Strang	8	0	33	1
Pearl	8	0	35	0
G Flower	2	0	13	0
Campbell	0.3	0	1	0

BCCP not to let go Basit, Rashid easily

ISLAMABAD, Feb 25: Pakistani cricketers Rashid Latif and Basit Ali may be persuaded not to quit the troubled national team, a senior official said Saturday, reports AFP.

Wicketkeeper Latif and middle-order batsman Ali announced in Harare Thursday their decision to retire and return to Pakistan early from their Test series against Zimbabwe.

"It is very unfortunate," Arif Abbasi, a senior member of the ad-hoc committee looking after Pakistan's cricket affairs, said.

"Rashid is an outstanding player and very sober-minded person. It was nothing so serious that you can't solve," Abbasi told AFP by telephone from his Karachi office.

Stressing that he was by nature an "optimist" Abbasi said he was confident the players' grievances could be removed so that the "important" players would continue to play in the team.

"They also owe it to the country not to make it a laughing stock," he added.

He said the players had not left Zimbabwe. "They are very much with the team."

Abbasi dismissed as a "practical joke" rumours in Harare that another two top players Inzamamul Haq and Aamir Sohail had abandoned embattled captain Saif Malik.

"I also received a similar fax," Abbasi said adding that he had already talked to the team officials and the report was "absolutely wrong."

Press reports have said Rashid was unhappy over bribery allegations against the team while Basit is said to have had differences with captain Malik.

Press reports from Sydney earlier quoted Australian cricketers Shane Warne and Tim May as claiming that the Australian players were offered money to "throw" Tests during their Pakistan tour last year. Pakistani officials have denied the allegations.

Officials have claimed the reports are an attempt to "snatch away" the subcontinent's right to host the World Cup.

Acknowledging that there were some differences in the side, Abbasi said, "Disagreement is there but it is nothing new. Such differences do take place in other teams also," he said.

He said the players were young and perhaps reacted emotionally.

Answering a question, Abbasi ruled out cancelling the tour.

"There are comparatively petty things and international commitments must be honoured," he said.

He said ACOG is close to signing deals with Atlanta-based LaFace Records, MCA Records, EMI Latin, Virgin Records and Verve.

The CDs would carry the Olympic logo and would be in musical categories such as urban contemporary, country, Latin, world music and jazz.

No contracts have been signed with individual artists, and the musicians participating in this project would not necessarily be recording for their own label.

ACOG would receive a share of the proceeds from CD sales.

Rallying for the top two

PHILADELPHIA, Feb 25: Fellow players are endorsing the decisions by Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi, the world's top two, not to play in next month's US Davis Cup match, reports Reuter.

"I can see their problem," said Dutch Davis Cup veteran Paul Haarhuis on Friday at the US Indoor tennis tournament.

Earlier this week at the tournament, Sampras, the world number one, and Agassi, number two, announced they would skip the March 31-April 2 quarter-final Davis Cup match in Italy.

Both explained that its timing and location matched up badly with their tournament schedules since they wanted to stay sharp for their expected battle for the world top ranking throughout the year.

"Davis Cup really takes a lot out of you mentally, physically and emotionally," said Richey Reneberg, who is expected to be named as part of the US doubles team.

"I've played five times and just playing one doubles match is just exhausting."

"It took me a couple weeks to recover from the match against France," Reneberg said of the opening-round win earlier this month.

For the next round, there are problems all around.

The matches on outdoor clay in Sicily fall just days after the final of the Lipton International in Florida, a major hardcourt tournament on the ATP Tour.

"The guys are going to be playing on hardcourt now for the next weeks up to the Lipton and two days later they have to be on the clay in Italy. I understand and problem," Haarhuis said.

Sampras beat Agassi in last year's Lipton final and that's another problem for them that other don't have, according to Swede Thomas Enqvist.

"For these guys, they play so many matches every week because they go so far in the tournament," said Enqvist, ranked 43rd in the world.

The way that the Davis Cup matches are squeezed into an already crowded ATP Tour and Grand Slam tournament calendar made this issue inevitable, according to Haarhuis.

"Davis Cup, no matter where you play and what week it is, is always going to be at a difficult time," he said. "It is either leading up to a Grand Slam or just after a Grand Slam or a big tournament like the Lipton."

The players are therefore not to be blamed for being forced to make such a decision," said Reneberg.

"A hundred per cent of the criticism has been toward the players — some of that really should be directed at the people who made the schedule," Reneberg said. "It is very hard to expect guys to play Davis Cup the week after really big tournaments."

In any case, Haarhuis said, the pair's absence really is no big deal.

"The thing with the States is that they will beat Italy even if they play with the number four, five or six guys because they are still almost in the top 10," he said of other Americans like Todd Martin, Jim Courier and Michael Chang.

"In Holland we don't have that luxury," added Haarhuis, who will play next month at home against Germany.

Spurs on a remarkable run

SAN ANTONIO, Feb 25: Dennis Rodman is rebounding like mad, the San Antonio Spurs are beating the big teams and basketball fans are setting attendance records at the Alamodome as they cheer on their triumphant team, reports AP.

The Spurs have won 12 of their last 14 games, including consecutive wins, this week over Houston, the defending league champion, and Phoenix, the team with the best record in the Western Conference.

They have won 27 of 34 games since Rodman returned to the lineup Dec 10 after suspensions and a leave of absence. Rodman had an NBA-season high 30 rebounds in Tuesday's 98-97 victory at Houston and 24 rebounds in Wednesday's 105-100 win over the Suns.

What's more, Rodman has been avoiding the many technical fouls and ejections that seemed to define him last season.

"The man is special," Spurs coach Bob Hill said. "His defense is great. (Charles) Barkley (in Wednesday's game) couldn't move Dennis."

Barkley praised the Spurs but predicted their current goods fortune won't last deep into the playoffs.

"They have a decent team," Barkley said. "But I guarantee we won't play this bad the next time we are here."

Wednesday's game against the Suns was played before an Alamodome crowd of 34,215, the largest in the NBA this season.



Aminul Islam, the dark dapper allrounder of the Bangladesh national team, returns to the pavilion after scoring an authoritative 121 against the visiting England A on the second day of the three-day exhibition cricket match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. — Star photo