






Pakistanis on their mettle

Pakistan will be desperately looking for a win today to keep their hopes alive when they take on arch-rivals India in the second final of the Coca-Cola Independence Cup at the Dhaka Stadium.

India have already gone one-up in the three-match mandatory finals demolishing Pakistan by eight wickets on Wednesday.

Weather-permitting, the match will begin at 9 am. Both the state-run electronic media — Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar — will provide ball-by-ball commentary from the big bowl.

It will be the 65th one-day encounter between the two rivals since their first clash at Quetta way back in October, 1978. Although India clinched that historical affair with a sensational four-run win, it is however their traditional rivals who enjoy the statistical supremacy with 37 wins. The Indians, following their eight-wicket thrashing in the first final, extended their winning record to 23. Four other matches between them were abandoned.

Meanwhile, for Pakistan, who were twice comprehensively beaten by India in the ongoing tourney, will be on their mettle to restore their flagging image.

"It's a do or die battle for us," said Pakistan skipper Rashid Latif after his team's grueling practice session at the Dhaka Stadium last afternoon.

"We will apply a different strategy tomorrow. Our target will be to get Sachin out as soon as possible because he is making all the difference," said Latif, who was made captain in place of Wasim Akram ahead of the Dhaka tournament. Tendulkar, who lost his captaincy to Mohammad Azharuddin on January 2, rediscovered his brilliant self in the meet. The Bombay-born batting maestro

scored 54, 67 and 95 in three previous matches.

But Latif, who arrived here without the fearsome fast bowler



ing duo of Akram and Waqar, expressed his concern about the lacklustre performance of his top-order.

Aamir Sohail and Saeed Anwar will open the innings and Mohammad Hossain will play in place of Mushtaq Ahmed," said the soft-spoken stumper about the new lineup for today.

Pakistan coach Haroon Rashid, whose job is reportedly at stake, appeared optimistic.

"We will definitely try our best to do well tomorrow to remain in the competition and boys are pretty confident. We just need a victory and I hope you will see a better performance from Pakistan," said Haroon, who only wants to see two good partnerships from his top-order.

"I think 250 to 260 will be a good score to defend," added Haroon, indicating that his team would bat first if Latif calls the coin correctly.

When the Pakistanis were in combative mood, their opponents appeared to be a bit relaxed. The Indian team had its

practice in the net without three key players — Azharuddin, Tendulkar and Javagal Srinath.

"They are in top form. They don't need any practice and that's why we've decided to give them a break," said India coach Ansuman Gaekwad.

About the second final, the bespectacled former Indian cricketer said that they were not going to take the match lightly.

"It will be 1-1 if we lose tomorrow. That will give our opponents a chance to come back and win the trophy. We don't want to do that. We want to confirm the championship by winning tomorrow," said a taciturn Indian Gaekwad.

"I know they (Pakistan) are desperate to come back, we will work on that tonight and will find out a strategy for tomorrow," Ansuman added.

Today's match will be played on the number three strip. The robin league clash between teams was played on this pitch which India won by 18 runs.

Rudi Koerten of South Africa and Doug Cowie of New Zealand will officiate today's match while Zimbabwean Russell Tiffen will act as the third umpire. Nadir Shah of Bangladesh has been kept as the reserve umpire.

SQUADS
PAKISTAN: Rashid Latif (captain), Saeed Anwar, Aamir Sohail, Ijaz Ahmed, Inzamamul Haque, Shahid Afridi, Azhar Mahmood, Saeed Mushtaq, Manzoor Akhter, Aaqib Javed, Mohammad Hossain

INDIA: (from): Mohammad Azharuddin (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly, Navjot Sidhu, Ajay Jadeja, Robin Singh, Debasish Mohanty, Javagal Srinath, Siraj Bahutule, Harvinder Singh, Nayan Mongia, Hrishikesh Kanitkar and Rahul Sanghvi.

Special WC cricket India, Pakistan open against each other?

Sports Reporter

Arch-rivals Pakistan and India are likely to face each other in their first match of the ICC knockout tournament scheduled to be held in Dhaka from October 26 to November 4.

Nine Test playing nations — Sri Lanka, Australia, West Indies, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, South Africa, England and Zimbabwe, will feature in the special 'World Cup' organised by the game's ruling body to raise funds for its ambitious development programmes.

It was learnt that England will play the inaugural match against Zimbabwe. But details on the meet will be disclosed after a special committee meeting, scheduled to be held at a local hotel here tomorrow with ICC president Jagmohan Dalmia in the chair.

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FOCUSED: An alert Saurav Ganguly (L) practices fielding along with Debasish Mohanty (2nd from L) Robin Singh and Indian skipper Mohammad Azharuddin (back to the camera) yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium.

— Star photo

BANGLADESH v ENGLAND SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND:	M Gough c Murtaza b Sajal R Kay c Mehrab b Mushfiq Franks c Muntasir b Ahsanullah Shah b Mushfiq Peters c Murtaza b Mushfiq Flanagan st Murtaza b Muntasir Schofield b Sabbir Ahsanullah Wilton run out (Mushfiq) Grove c Sezad b Monzurul Logan not out Extras: (b-5, lb-6, w-10)	0	27
BOWLING:	O M R W		
Sajal Chowdhury	5 1 27 1		
Manjurul Islam	63 0 18 1		
Mushfiqur Rahaman	9 0 36 3		
Hannan Sarker	1 0 15 0		
Sabbir Khan	10 0 27 1		
F Muntasir	6 0 22 1		
Ahsanullah	6 0 33 2		
Al Shahriar	6 0 34 0		
Total: (all out in 49.3 overs)	223		

BANGLADESH:

Hannan c Wilton b Grove	20
Sezan lbw b Grove	17
Mehrab c Schofield b Gough	62
Al Shahriar b Napier	48
Sabbir c Schofield b Gough	17
Sajal c Logan b Napier	7
Mushfiqur run out (Gough)	0
F Muntasir not out	27
Ahsanullah not out	11
Extras: (lb-3, nb-1, w-12)	16
Total (for 7 wkt in 44 overs)	225

Did not bat: Manzurul Islam and Golam Murza.

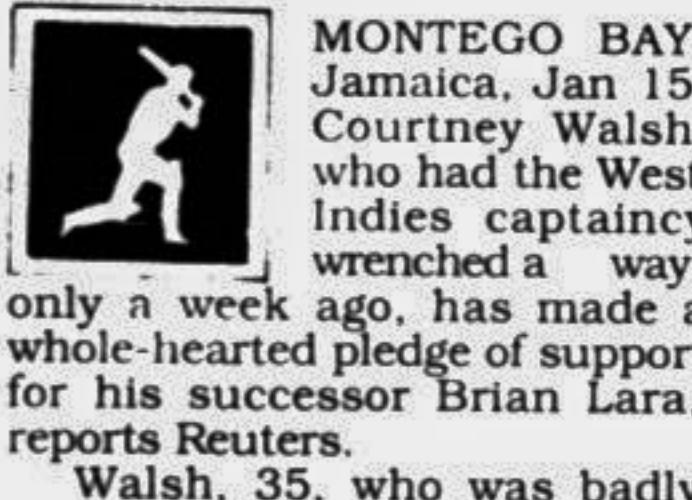
BOWLING:	O	M	R	W
J Grove	6	0	23	2
R Logan	7	0	32	0
G Napier	10	0	61	2
P Frank	6	1	31	0
Gough	10	0	42	2
Schofield	5	0	33	0

Div II cricket

Sports Reporter

Indira Road Krira Chakra, Eskaton Sabuj Sangha and Spread Eagles won their respective Acme Second Division cricket league matches played at different city venues yesterday.

At the Uttara Friends Club ground, Indira Road trounced Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Sangsta by 91 runs. Eskaton handed 86-run defeat to Rupali Bank at the Dharmondi Cricket Stadium while Spread Eagles beat Azad Boys' Club by 53 runs at the Mirpur Outer Stadium.



MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica, Jan 15: Courtney Walsh, who had the West Indies captaincy wrenched away only a week ago, has made a whole-hearted pledge of support for his successor Brian Lara, reports Reuters.

Walsh, 35, who was badly hurt by the decision to take away the captaincy, offered himself for selection for the first Test against England — on his home pitch at Sabina Park in Kingston — to avoid further controversy ahead of the series.

"I am available for selection and I am making that clear in order to bury all the talk about a rift between Brian Lara and myself," Walsh said.

After he lost the captaincy following West Indies recent 3-0 Test series thrashing in Pakistan, rumours swept the Caribbean that Walsh might retire from Test cricket immediately.

Walsh's gesture is now being seen as a big boost to West Indies' hopes of beating England in the forthcoming five-Test rubber.

The Jamaican fast bowler,

COURTNEY WALSH
sure I was doing the right thing. I felt I had questions to answer.

"But I played in Jamaica's (President's Cup) first-class match against Barbados (last weekend) and enjoyed it. I also realised that I could still com-

pete at the highest level.

"I did not want to play in the Test and perform so badly that there was a fresh outbreak of talk about me sabotaging Lara's team.

That was said about him when he played under me and it was the product of someone's imagination. I want to emphasise that I have never had any problems with Lara in my time as captain.

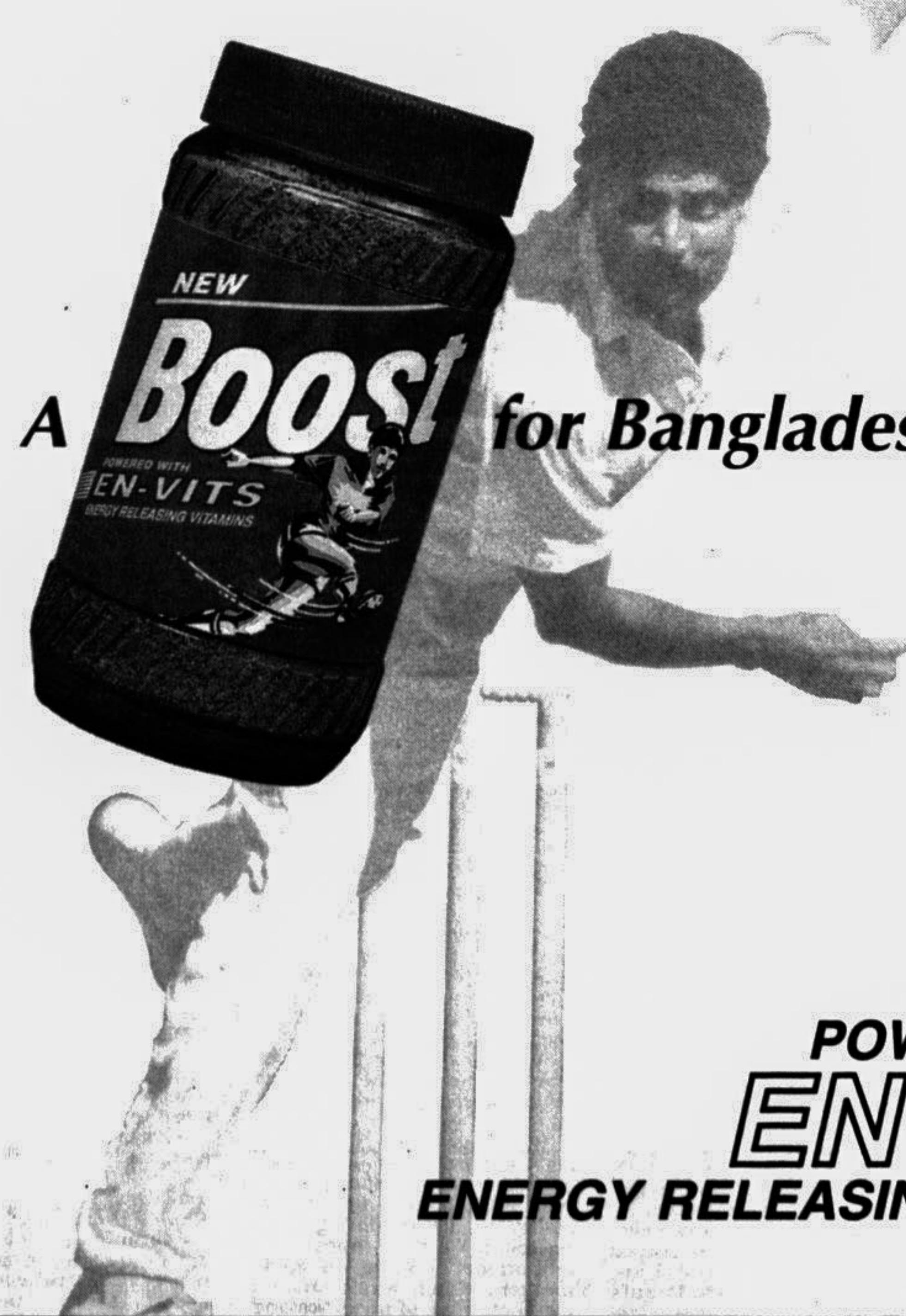
"I know that he may have a bad time from the spectators at Sabina Park but I will do anything I can to prevent him being heckled. I want him to have a good reception in his first Test as captain against England."

Walsh, who needs 24 wickets to beat Malcolm Marshall's West Indies record of 376 Test victims, denied he was continuing to play just to beat Marshall's tally.

"I would like to beat the record but it will only mean anything if I can help West Indies to victory," he said.

Injury-free England will pick their team for the opening tour match against Jamaica's under-23 side, starting on Friday, when they arrive in Montego Bay later today.

India, Pakistan Battle it out in the
INDEPENDENCE CUP CRICKET 1998
in Dhaka



POWERED WITH
EN-VITS
ENERGY RELIEVING VITAMINS

NZ hoping against hope?

PERTH, Jan 15: New Zealand warned South Africa today there will be no favours when they meet in their "dead" tri-series one-day international at the WACA ground here Friday, reports AFP.

Kiwi coach Steve Rixon said New Zealand pride would enable them to recover from their 131-run thrashing at the hands of the Aussies in Sydney on Wednesday.

He said the players were prepared but stopped short of predicting any ill-feeling between the two teams, which simmered during the last ball thriller at the Gabba in Brisbane last Friday.

"We'll go in there tomorrow with a positive, aggressive attitude because we have our pride to play for," Rixon said.

The team is so tight-knit despite the losses and it will only need a couple of wins to do them a world of good," he said.

Meanwhile, champion South African fast bowler Allan Donald is almost certain to be rested from Friday's game allowing his young black African protege Makhaya Ntini make his debut in international one-day cricket.

Regular wicketkeeper Dave Richardson may also have a rare day off, with the gloves likely to be worn by his understudy, Mark Boucher, who would also be on duty for the first time in the international limited-overs stage.

SQUADS

SOUTH AFRICA: Hansie

Cronje (capt), Gary Kirsten (vice-capt), Paul Adams, Adam Bacher, Mark Boucher, Darryl Cullinan, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Lance Klusener, Makhaya Ntini, Shaun Pollock, Jonty Rhodes, Pat Symcox (to be finalised).

NEW ZEALAND: Stephen Fleming (capt), Nathan Astle, Chris Cairns, Simon Doolan, Chris Harris, Matthew Horne, Craig McMillan, Dion Nash, Shayne O'Connor, Adam Parore, Craig Spearman, Daniel Vettori, Bryan Young (to be finalised).

The 555 Subaru World Rally team's strategic assault on the 1997 FIA World Rally Championship paid rich dividends with Colin McRae, Kenneth Eriksson and Piero Liatti winning the all-important Manufacturers' Championship for Subaru for the third consecutive year. Such is the strength of this formidable combination, the 555 Subaru World Rally Team will be retaining all three drivers for the 1998 season.

SUBARU WORLD RALLY TEAM</