

Rajshahi cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Friends Ideal Cricket School B and Innocent Cricket Academy won their respective matches of the Bir Sreshtha Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Smriti Gold Cup Cricket tournament at the Rajshahi play ground yesterday.

In the first match of the day, Friends defeated Gourahanga Ekota Sangha by eight wickets.

Winning the toss, Gourahanga batted first and went all out for 67 in 19.4 overs.

In reply, Friends reached the target (69 runs) losing only three wickets in 18.3 overs.

In other match, Innocent beat Friends by three wickets.

Sent into bat first, Friends made 146 runs for eight wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Innocent reached the target of 146 runs conceding five wickets in 23.2 overs.

In the eyes

FROM PAGE 13
a lot worse, especially if you look at the group with Argentina and England (Group F).

"Ours is a reasonable group but we must not count our chickens before they are hatched. Croatia are an important team with good technical ability."

Italy, who play all their first-phase matches in Japan, open their campaign with a match against World Cup debutants Ecuador at Sapporo on June 3.

They play Croatia, who finished third in the last World Cup, on June 8 at Ibaraki and Mexico on June 13 at Oita.

Italy, who will bid for what would be a record-equaling fourth title, will be relieved at the relatively easy draw as they traditionally struggle in the early stages but then become more powerful as the tournament progresses.

RUDI VOELLER (GERMANY)
Germany coach Rudi Voeller said Ireland would be tough to beat in the World Cup finals but he still believed the former champions would qualify from group E.

Saudi Arabia and Cameroon make up the group.

"We have the strongest team in Africa and also Ireland, who have knocked out the Netherlands in qualifying, but I think we can do it," Voeller told German television.

"Ireland may not be a top name but you have to look at their current form and from what they did in qualifying, they have to be regarded as very dangerous opponents."

"They have many players in the premier league and they will be extremely tough to beat."

Former Germany striker Juergen Klinsmann said: "You can say we were lucky because other groups, especially the one with England, are much, much tougher than ours."

"We should beat Saudi Arabia. Ireland will be tough but we can manage that. Cameroon with Cameroon's German coach) Winfried Schaefer will be very exciting. It will be fun."

BRUCE ARENA (UNITED STATES)
"Any group would be difficult. I like the group," said United States coach Bruce Arena, whose team plays an exhibition game with the Koreans on December 9 in Seogwipo, South Korea.

"Obviously we're opening against one of the top teams in the world, then we have the host country and then Poland."

"Overall, we will have a chance to advance. We have no complaints. The draw gives us some optimism."

The United States were grouped with co-host South Korea, Poland and Portugal for next year's World Cup.

The Americans, who finished last in France '98, but advanced to the 2002 World Cup out of North America, Central America and the Caribbean with one final-round qualifier remaining

Hashan raises SL's hopes



AFP, Colombo

Hashan Tillakaratne cracked a career-best 143 not out against the West Indies here on Saturday to keep alive Sri Lanka's hopes of securing their first ever clean sweep in Test cricket.

The 31-year-old left-hander's ninth century helped Sri Lanka post 477-5 in reply to their rivals' 390 on the third day of the third and final Test at the Sinhalese sports club here.

Thilan Samaraweera was unbeaten on 68 at stumps, having hit five fours in his 195-ball knock.

Sri Lanka, who have already taken a decisive 2-0 lead in the series, are hoping to make their maiden 3-0 sweep.

Tillakaratne has so far struck 17 boundaries in his second century of the current series, surpassing his previous best of 136 not out against India at this venue last August.

The West Indies were thwarted by Sri Lanka's depth in batting as Tillakaratne put on 141 for the fifth wicket with left-handed Russel Arnold (65) and 132 for the unfinished sixth with Samaraweera.

It was a frustrating day on an easy-paced pitch for the tourists, who could take just two wickets as the hosts made 284 runs to tighten their grip over the match after resuming at 193-3.

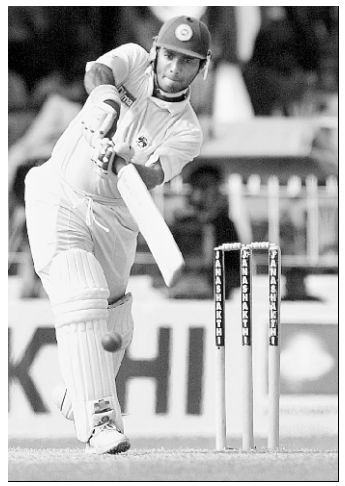
Tillakaratne and Arnold denied the West Indies success for more than a session with their contrasting knocks after Mahela Jayawardene had fallen in the day's eighth over.

Arnold grafted on way to his first half-century in 11 Test innings, while Tillakaratne played some attacking

shots against both pacemen and spinners to capitalise on a mediocre West Indian bowling.

Tillakaratne, who made an unbeaten 105 in the opening Test at Galle, completed his century in style when he firmly drove fast bowler Marlon Black for his 14th boundary in the post-lunch session.

Arnold, with 38 runs in the last two Tests, became off-spinner Carl Hooper's 100th Test victim when he was caught by wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs.



TILLEKERATNE...143 n o

There was, however, no respite for the West Indies as Samaraweera batted confidently to provide valuable support to Tillakaratne with his second Test half-century.

Paceman Mervyn Dillon struck early in the day when he got rid of Jayawardene, who added seven runs to his overnight score of 32 before being trapped leg-before

while playing across the line.

The West Indian bowlers then struggled to put pressure on the home team despite taking the second new ball in the 82nd over.

Dillon looked impressive only in his opening spell, conceding 25 in 11 overs for one wicket, while his teammates disappointed as Tillakaratne batted positively to help his team seize the initiative.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the third and final cricket Test between Sri Lanka and the West Indies at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo Saturday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 390 (B Lara 221, R Sarwan 69, C Hooper 56; C Vaas 7-120)

SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 193-3)
Atapattu c Gayle b Collins 4
Jayasuriya c Ramnarine b Black 85
Sangakkara c Gayle b Dillon 55
Jayawardene lbw b Dillon 39
Arnold c Jacobs b Hooper 65
Tillekeratne not out 143
Samaraweera not out 68
Extras: (b-5, lb-8, w-2, nb-3) 18
Total: (For 5 wickets in 154 overs) 477

Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-104, 3-179, 4-204, 5-345

To bat: Chaminda Vaas, Niroshan Bandara, Nuwan Zoysa, Muttiah Muralitharan

Bowler O M R W
Dillon 38 7 104 2
Collins 34 3 95 1
Black 24 2 108 1
R'rine 17 3 51 0
Hooper 30 5 76 1
Gayle 9 1 23 0
Sarwan 2 0 7 0

Umpires: Russel Tiffin (Zimbabwe) and Asoka de Silva (Sri Lanka).

MSC invited to Durand Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club have been invited to play in the Durand Cup Football Tournament in India. The 114th edition of prestigious tournament starts in New Delhi from January 27.

Club official Fazlur Rahman confirmed this on Saturday.

But Mohammedan, who are presently not running a camp, was yet to decide whether it would take part in one of the oldest football competitions of the region.

It was learnt that the Dhaka giants would be only the second foreign team in the meet, where eight leading Indian sides will also compete.

SAFF Tournery AML officials due Dec 11

SPORTS REPORTER

Two officials of the Asian Marketing Limited (AML), sponsors for the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship, will arrive in the city on December 11.

During their two-day stay the officials will inspect facilities available at the Sher-e-Bangla Mirpur National Stadium, which will play host to the regional football carnival.

The seven-nation meet involving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan and Bangladesh will kick off on January 26.

The AML officials will also discuss about the live coverage of the biennial event, which was last staged in the Indian City of Goa in 1999.

Defending champions India will take on Pakistan in the opening match.

Bangladesh, now training under Austrian coach George Cotta, will meet Nepal in the second match under lights on January 26.

It was learnt that the home team might include a couple of booters, who play in the semi-professional league in England.

However, the identity of the players would only be known when a delegation of London-based Asian Sports Federation Limited (ASFL) arrive here on December 21.

K'chhari cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Anirban Recreation Club and Kayamat Sporting Club won their respective matches of the Victory Day cricket tournament at local stadium yesterday.

In the first match Kayamat Sporting Club defeated Narikel Bagan Club by three wickets.

Narikel Bagan batted first and scored 95 for nine in the stipulated 20 overs.

In reply, Kayamat reached the target losing seven wickets.

In the other match of the day, Anirban beat Alo Cricket Club by 20 runs.

Ronaldo

FROM PAGE 13

"It looks a good draw to me," said the Inter Milan striker on his personal website (ronaldo.com). "Even if my Inter teammates Turks Hakan Sukur, Emre and Okan Buruk are confident about doing well in the World Cup."

"As for China I only know it as a tourist destination but I have a great memory of going to Shanghai with my wife Milene in 1999."

Unbeatable Biman

FROM PAGE 13

- 1980- Bangladesh Biman
- 1981- Mohammedan SC
- 1982- Brothers Union
- 1983- Bangladesh Biman
- 1984- Bangladesh Ansars
- 1985- Bengal Group
- 1986- Bangladesh Biman
- 1987- Brothers Union
- 1988- Brothers Union
- 1989- Brothers Union
- 1990- Bangladesh Biman
- 1991- Bangladesh Biman
- 1992- Bangladesh Biman
- 1993- Brothers Union
- 1994- Brothers Union
- 1995- Mohammedan SC
- 1996- Mohammedan SC
- 1997- Leonine Chess Club
- 1998- Bangladesh Biman
- 1999- Bangladesh Biman
- 2000- Titus Club
- 2001- Bangladesh Biman

Sorry BTV

FROM PAGE 13

details were already known through Internet and cable news channels the BTV started to show the recorded 85-minute programme at 6.10 pm.

Confused readers of The Daily Star sought explanations for being misinformed.

Feeling betrayed itself, The Daily Star Sport contacted Matra. But the response from the advertising firm was outrageously irresponsible.

"It's very much live. But if you know about the draw details then why bother watching it on television," said an irritated Matra official over phone while refusing to identify himself.

None of the BTV high-ups also could be reached through phone last night.

Kiwi bashing for Aussies



AFP, Perth

Records toppled as New Zealand's batsmen handed out a rare thrashing to Australia's much-vaunted bowling on the second day of the third and deciding cricket Test at the WACA Ground here Saturday.

Nathan Astle (156 not out) and Adam Parore (110) made it a day of object misery for Australia, unofficial world Test champions, as they propelled the Black Caps to a potentially match-winning first innings total of 534 for nine wickets declared.

Australia slipped into even further strife when ace opening batsman Matthew Hayden fell for a duck to speedster Shane Bond and Ricky Ponting (31) was trapped by Chris Martin late in the day.

The home country went to stumps with 75 for two wickets, needing another 260 runs to ensure they do not have to follow-on.

At the crease were little left-hander Justin Langer (34), who has scored centuries in his past three Tests, and Mark Waugh (five).

The third day Sunday of this engrossing encounter promises to test the mettle of Australia just a couple of weeks before they take on South Africa in a three-Test series in Australia for the unofficial world championship.

Astle predicted Saturday night that star left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori could play a crucial role for the Kiwis over the rest of the game.

"If Daniel gets his line right, he will be a handful over the next three days," he said.

Astle and Parore fashioned their centuries the day after skipper Stephen Fleming hit 105 and debutant opener Lou Vincent 104.

It was the first time four New Zealand batsmen have topped three figures in the same innings of a Test.

And it was only the second time any team had handed out such an indignity to Australia.

The first was England in 1938 when Charlie Barnett (126), Eddie Paynter (216 not out), Denis Compton (102) and Len Hutton (100) humiliated the Australian attack in the first Test at Trent Bridge.

Astle said: "I had a bit of luck, but to get 150 against these guys is big - really big."

"Once I had worked out the wicket, it was a good pitch to bat on. It did not have as much fire as I had expected it would."

Parore said: "There is no doubt that this was the highlight of my career -- the best I have played. It is just great to get a hundred against this side."

"I think we are in a good spot, but it would be a mistake to think that there is only one team that can win this."

"They are a pretty good team and Australia contributed to their difficulties by making unaccustomed blunders in the field."

Parore was dropped at 70 and 92, while Astle had a life on 156 -- just before Fleming closed the innings.

But that was the only blemish by Astle on a day when he was almost completely in charge.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the third and deciding Test between Australia and New Zealand at the WACA Ground in Western Australia Saturday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 293-7)
Richardson b Gillespie 9
Vincent c M Waugh b Warne 104
Sinclair lbw McGrath 2
Fleming lbw Lee 105
Astle not out 156
McMillan lbw Gillespie 4
Vettori c Martin b Gillespie 2
Cairns c Gilchrist b Lee 8
Parore c McGrath b Lee 110
Bond b Lee 0
Extras: (b-4, lb-15, w-2, nb-13) 34
Total: (For 9 wickets in 162.5 overs) 534

Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-19, 3-218, 4-264, 5-269, 6-272, 7-281, 8-534, 9-534

Did not bat: Chris Martin

Bowler O M R W
McGrath 27 11 72 1
Gillespie 40 7 112 3
Lee 32.5 5 125 4
Warne 43 9 135 1
Martyn 10 0 44 0
M Waugh 6 1 26 0
Ponting 4 3 1 0

AUSTRALIA: First innings
Langer not out 34
Hayden c Vincent b Bond 0
Ponting c Parore b Martin 31
M Waugh not out 5
Extras: (lb-1, nb-4) 5
Total: (For 2 wickets in 15 overs) 75

Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-61
To bat: Steve Waugh, Damien Martyn, Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne, Brett Lee, Jason Gillespie, Glenn McGrath

Bowler O M R W
Cairns 6 1 26 0
Bond 3 0 21 1
Martin 4 0 21 1
Vettori 2 0 6 0

Umpires: Darrell Hair (Australia) and Ian Robinson (Zimbabwe).

Akram rejects wrong-doing



AFP, Lahore

Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram Saturday told a match-fixing commission that allegations his team rigged two matches at the 1999 World Cup were baseless.

The commission headed by Justice Karamat Nazir Bhandari of the Lahore High Court is investigating Pakistan's two defeats against outsiders Bangladesh and India at the World Cup in England.

"We took Bangladesh very lightly and since we had qualified for the semifinal complacency got the better of us and we lost," Akram told the commission.

He said Pakistan went into the match against India "just like war" but his team was simply outgunned on the day.

"We lost the toss in that match and after India scored 227-odd runs, I thought it would be easy for us," Akram said.

"There is no question of losing deliberately to India, but I think we got tense due to the very noisy crowd and then we lost wickets early in the run chase."

The commission has received a letter from one of the umpires in the Pakistan-Bangladesh game, New Zealander Doug Cowie, who described Akram's side as "complacent and careless".

"The Pakistan team seemed to be going through the motions while Bangladesh players fielded, bowled and batted well," Cowie wrote in the letter which was read to the commission.

The commission, appointed in May this year, has until January 15 to submit its report to the govern-

ment.

Former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief executive Majid Khan and ex-fast bowler Sarfraz Nawaz have told the commission that events before the suspect matches suggested they were fixed.

All Bacher, head of South Africa's 2003 World Cup committee, told a match-fixing commission in South Africa last year that Pakistan played two fixed games in the 1999 World Cup, but he has failed to provide evidence.

The PCB is under tremendous pressure from the International Cricket Council to investigate the allegations and submit a report.

Match-fixing allegations have rocked the game since the explosive South African inquiry, with three former captains -- Pakistan's Salim Malik, South African Hansie Cronje and Indian Mohammad Azharuddin -- serving life bans.

After an earlier match-fixing inquiry here between September 1998 and October 1999, Malik and pace bowler Ataur Rehman were banned for life, while five other players including Akram were fined.

The Bhandari inquiry is continuing.

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Dalmiya comforts Sehwag

Martin comes into Indian side



REUTERS/AFP, New Delhi

Uncapped Jacob Martin will replace fellow middle-order batsman Virender Sehwag in the 14-man India squad for the first Test against England, an Indian cricket official has said.

"Martin is reaching Mohali (the Test venue) tomorrow (Sunday)," Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Niranjan Shah told Reuters by phone from the western city of Rajkot.

However, the banned Sehwag will remain part of the Indian squad for the first Test, Indian cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya said on Saturday.

"Sehwag will not play, but I want him to travel to Mohali and stay with the rest of the team so that his confidence is not shattered," Dalmiya said after speaking to the cricketer over the phone.

"I explained to him the circumstances why he was dropped and the boy understood the problem and appeared to be all right."

"I told him that the decision was taken to save cricket and he

(Sehwag) appears to have taken it sportingly," Dalmiya said.

The 23-year-old was at the centre of a crisis that threatened to split world cricket until the game's governing body and Indian authorities reached a compromise on Friday.

Under the deal, India agreed to a directive from the International Cricket Council (ICC) to keep Sehwag out of the Mohali Test in return for a review of match referee Mike Denness's decisions.

Denness, a former England captain, handed Sehwag a one-Test suspension and fined him 75 per cent of his match fee for excessive appealing during the second Test against South Africa at Port Elizabeth.

Although five other Indian players were also pulled up, including star batsman Sachin Tendulkar, Sehwag's punishment was the most severe and prompted Dalmiya to question Denness's decision.

Sehwag, who scored a century on his Test debut last month and is almost certain to be included for the second Test against England, had said he was desperate to play again.

"I don't want to be in the news for the wrong reasons," Sehwag said before the team's return from South Africa on Friday.

"I just want to get back home and start focussing on cricket again. I have taken it (the ban) in my stride."

"Right now I want to focus on the England series and forget everything else. I just want to play for India as long as I can."

Sehwag, who hails from a rural suburb of Najafgarh, near Delhi, had never been pulled up before for bad behaviour during his four seasons on the domestic circuit.

SQUAD
Sourav Ganguly (captain), Shiv Sunder Das, Connor Williams, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Vangipurappu Laxman, Jacob Martin, Deep Dasgupta, Anil Kumble, Sanjay Bangar, Harbhajan Singh, Iqbal Siddiqui, Sarandeep Singh, Tiniu Yohannan.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Executives (slang)
6 Puppeler
11 Easter topping
12 Mark Twain's burial site
14 Joiner
15 Tremble
16 Child
17 Fact
19 English river
20 Pull an all-nighter
22 Infinitesimal
23 Architect Sir Christopher Wren
24 Assaults
26 Paving material
28 Absolutely
30 -te-ching
31 Scholarly prigs
35 A Marx brother
39 Unyielding
40 Web-footed bird
42 Prophet

DOWN
1 Mexican state
2 Legendary QB Johnny
3 Passbook abbr.
4 Prepared to drive
5 First Little Pig's material
6 Dead give-away?
7 Grad
8 -
9 Yankee of noor Dandy
9 TV's Gerald
10 Philadelphia campus
11 -
12 Cassidy
13 - You Glad You're Johnny
18 1773 castoff
21 Pre-Columbian Mexican opposites
23 Giddywax opposites
25 Perfect score
27 Oom follower
29 Deprives of nourishment
31 Type units
32 Took out of context?
33 Game piece
34 Seek damages
36 Make major modifications
37 Carolina river
38 Church instrument
41 Gold measure
44 Be overly fond
45 Jousting
48 Treasure hunt aid
50 It's the word

Solution time: 23 mins.

ACROSS: 1. EXECUTIVES, 2. TEXAS, 3. CASH, 4. READY TO DRIVE, 5. LITTLE PIG, 6. PUPPELER, 7. DEAD-GIVEAWAY, 8. GRAD, 9. YANKEE OF NOOR DANDY, 10. PHILADELPHIA, 11. EASTER TOPPING, 12. MARK TWAIN, 13. CASH, 14. JOINER, 15. TREMBLE,