

Rajshahi cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Allied Club defeated Mukti Sangha by six wickets in the Premier Division Cricket League at the district stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Mukti battled first and collected 147 runs for seven in the stipulated 45 overs.

In reply, Allied reached the target (150) losing four wickets in 40.2 overs.

Meanwhile, Mahuabagan Sporting Club beat Raninagar Cricket Club by 18 runs in the First Division League at the local divisional stadium. Mahuabagan won the toss and decided to bat first. They made 149 losing all the wickets in 40.5 overs.

In reply, Raninagar were all out for 131 in 35.4 overs.

Mehrab back

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Sharif should share the new ball.

The evergreen veteran Enamul Hoque is sure to bowl the most number of overs in familiar home conditions. The slow left-arm bowler is all set to be partnered by off-spinner Fahim Muntasir.

The batting once again revolves around Habibul Bashar, who has been Bangladesh's most consistent and prolific performer at Test level.

Work would be cut out for the experienced Aminul Islam, talented right-hander Mohammed Ashraf and openers Javed Omar and Al-Shahriar against the lethal Pakistani bowling line-up.

Wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud, retained as captain by the Board on Sunday, can also be a useful batsman down the order.

Ashraf, Test cricket's youngest centurion, however will miss the second Test starting in Chittagong on January 16 as he will join the Bangladesh Under-19 team in the World Youth Cup. The Championship will be held in New Zealand from January 19 to February 9.

SQUAD

Khaled Mashud (captain), Javed Omar, Al-Shahriar, Mehrab Hossain, Habibul Bashar, Aminul Islam, Mohammad Ashraf, Sanwar Hossain, Enamul Hoque, Fahim Muntasir, Khaled Mahmud, Monjurul Islam, Mohammad Sharif and Hasibul Hossain.

Jonty enthuses

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series 3-0, so from that point of view I wouldn't have minded being here playing Test cricket.

"But if I had to do it again I would make the same decision, I've been very comfortable that I've made the right choice."

Rhodes said no pressure had been applied to him, but "there were definitely a few phone calls before the team left and even during the series here".

"They asked me during the second Test if I would consider, but obviously they were only going to consider me for the last Test if I was available for the Test series in South Africa and that's just not possible I'm afraid, even though it's at home in South Africa."

Asked about the reaction back home Rhodes said: "Everyone has been talking from September onwards about when we play Australia, so it's been a bit disappointing."

"Then obviously there was a selection rumour in Australia which captured everyone's imagination so there hasn't been a lack of spice for the media to report on."

"But I think that people initially got a real fright. We didn't realise how strong or how dominant Australia would be over us. We came here expecting to be evenly matched."

SQUAD

Shaun Pollock (captain), Nicky Boje, Mark Boucher, Boeta Dippenaar, Allan Donald, Steve Elworthy, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Justin Kemp, Gary Kirsten, Lance Klusener, Charl Langewald, Neil McKenzie, Makhaya Ntini, Justin Ontong, Jonty Rhodes.

Matt stands between 'em



AFP, Brisbane

Player-of-the-moment Matt Hayden will force selectors to split the Australian opening combination of Adam Gilchrist and Mark Waugh when the triangular one-day series begins on Friday.

Chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns Monday confirmed Hayden would be used as an opener and elsewhere in the batting order as the Australians rotate their players through the limited-over series against New Zealand and South Africa.

"We'll probably rest a batsman from time to time as we have done previously and then the batting order is shuffled around," Hohns said.

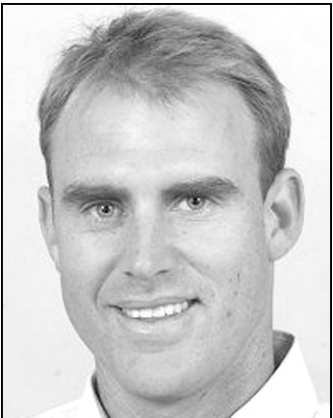
"You'll see (Hayden opening) at some stage but any decisions will be made by the selectors in conjunction with the captain."

Hayden has forced selectors to also consider him for one-dayers after his sensational scoring throughout last year, hitting 1,391 Test runs at an average of 66.23.

Captain Steve Waugh declared he could not "imagine anyone playing any better than that" after man-of-the-series Hayden began

the New Year with another Test century in the 3-0 series whitewash against South Africa.

But Hayden hasn't earned the same reputation in one-day cricket despite averaging 34.26 in his 27 matches.



MATT HAYDEN

Gilchrist and Mark Waugh are the greatest opening pair in Australian one-day history but Hayden has a chance of displacing one of them if selectors opt for a settled combination for the World Cup in South Africa in 13 months.

Hayden opened twice in the Australia's most recent one-day

outings against Pakistan and England seven months ago after opening in four of the five clashes with India on the sub-continent in March and April.

Despite his outstanding season, Hayden is no certainty to play in the opening tri-series match on Friday, when Australia meet New Zealand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Hohns said selectors were looking towards the World Cup defence but he said the champion-ship was "too far away to speculate" on any personnel changes.

"There is a lot of water to flow under the bridge before that," Hohns said.

"We're always looking towards it but plenty can happen in that time and this series is another in which we want to build the winning momentum."

Hohns said the 14-man Australian squad for the tri-series had not been selected for a particular number of matches.

That leaves Jason Gillespie with a chance of returning if he can prove his fitness when he resumes from injury for Australia A against New Zealand at the Gabba here Tuesday.

"He has two matches with Australia A to show us that he is fully fit and then we would have to reassess it from there," Hohns said.

Cairns quite confident



REUTERS, Brisbane

The New Zealand cricket team would approach the triangular one-day tournament, which starts this week, with added confidence after their drawn Test series against Australia, all-rounder Chris Cairns has said.

"There is a definite feeling of 'Yes, we can achieve something great over here this time,'" Cairns said as New Zealand prepared for their day-night match against Australia A in Brisbane on Tuesday.

New Zealand held world number one team Australia to a 0-0 draw in their three-Test series in Australia in November and December.

Returning to Australia after their Christmas break, the Kiwis start the triangular limited-overs series against Australia and South Africa with a day-night match against the home team on Friday in Melbourne.

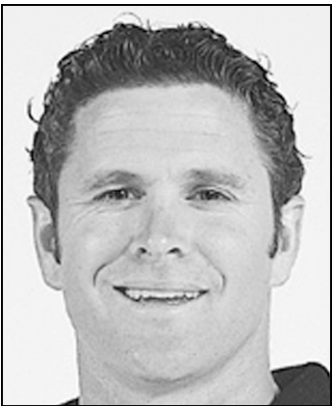
"Australia are going to bounce back pretty tough because I think they let themselves down in that series because they underestimated us," Cairns said.

"There will be none of that relaxing come Melbourne on Friday so we have to be ready for a really big battle but our guys will be buoyed by the previous results."

"There are some individuals in

the team who will be more confident ... and I certainly feel a bigger self-confidence within the whole group."

Cairns added that South Africa who have been thrashed by Australia 3-0 in the Test series which finished last week in Sydney, would be mentally scarred by the



CHRIS CAIRNS

experience.

"When you get whacked 3-0 in a Test series you're going to feel a bit down and there are some things that go beyond sporting boundaries which will be influencing them as well," Cairns said.

"It's going to be tough but (you) write South Africa off at your own peril."

Cairns, 31, regarded by the Australians as the most explosive player in the New Zealand side, said he was working hard to maintain that reputation.

"You always want to be the number one player so I put more pressure on myself to perform," he said.

"The experienced players will win the majority of games for you so it's going to be on myself, (captain) Stephen Fleming, Chris Harris and Craig McMillan to lead from the front."

"Whatever combination (Australia) puts on the ground is quite ruthless."

"But it's about pressure and as we showed in the last Test in Perth (where New Zealand fell three wickets short of victory), when pressure is placed on anybody you can get all sorts of results."

Meanwhile, Auckland all-rounder Kyle Mills has been ruled out of the New Zealand team to take part in the triangular one day series in Australia after suffering a side strain over the weekend.

Wellington left-arm James Franklin, who made his international debut against Zimbabwe in 2001, replaces Mills for the series, which includes Australia and South Africa.

Mills, who played for New Zealand in Sharjah last year, suffered the injury in Auckland's one-day match against Otago.

StanChart Golf Shaffat secures title

SPORTS REPORTER

Shaffat Rahman won the Seventh Standard Chartered Grindlays Golf Tournament that was played on January 4 at the beautiful Bhatiyar Golf and Country Club in Chittagong.

He held off the challenge of Shim Ojima and Col (retd) Oli Ahmed to eventually collect 35 points.

Ojima was runner-up after finishing with 34 points the same as second runner-up Oli Ahmed.

In all, 128 golfers from all over the country took part in the prestigious event.

Later, Maj Gen Muhammad Abdul Matin, GOC, 24 Infantry Division, Chittagong and senior vice-president of BGCC, gave away the prizes.

Muhammad Aali, CEO of Standard Chartered Group (Bangladesh), was present as the special guest.

OTHER RESULTS

Senior Winner: C H Moon, **Ladies' Winner:** Mrs Kuroki, **Ladies' Runner-up:** Ms Sara, **Nearest to Pin:** Zulfikar Ali Khan, **Longest Drive:** Saad Rahim, **(Best Back Nine):** M H Murad and **(Best Front Nine):** MARahi.

No decision on

FROM PAGE 13

The PCB spokesman told Reuters that consultation was in progress between the boards of both countries in an effort to ensure the tour went ahead.

The Pakistan team is already in Bangladesh for their series against the home side and are scheduled to return home on January 26, one day after West Indies are due to arrive in Pakistan -- according to the original tour itinerary.

"We remain hopeful of having the series in Pakistan and the shortage of time does not worry us since we have completed all logistics to host the West Indies team," the spokesman said.

Pakistan practise

FROM PAGE 13

clubbed nine boundaries to score 92 from his 170-ball innings that lasted for four hours.

Three wickets in quick succession after Shadab's departure prompted Pakistan to declare their innings.

Off-spinner Fahim Mintasir and Enamul took two wickets each for the home side.

The second string made a disastrous start to their second innings losing two wickets in less than five overs with the scoreboard reading 13.

Opener Mehrab, who scored highest 57 in the first innings which eventually earned him a call-up to the national team, lost his off-stump to a fast delivery from pace demon Shoaib Akhtar for a duck. Nafees Iqbal edged into the safe hands of Younis Khan at slips after scoring only two runs. Inzamam, honing his unheard bowling skill for a change, had opener Hannan Sarkar at slips.

Young Tushar Imran topscored with 24 not out off 50 balls that included four boundaries.

Waqar meanwhile revealed that Latif's hamstring problem is not serious and he would be all right before the first Test.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the three-day match between Bangladesh A and Pakistan at the BKSP ground on Sunday:

PAKISTAN: First innings 312 for 3 in 73 overs (Younis Khan 112 retired, Youhana 101 no, Inzamam 52, Talha 2/56)

BANGLADESH A: First innings 210 all out in 85 overs (Mehrab 57, Enamul 35 n.o., Hannan 30, Nafees 29, Kaneria 7/53, Waqar 2/17)

PAKISTAN: Second innings (overnight 57 for no loss)

Taufeeq lbw b Tareq 36
Shadab c sub b Fahim 92
Rashid retired hurt 29
Razzak b Enamul 41
Waqar c Anwar b Enamul 2
Saqlain not out 19
Shoaib b Fahim 0
Kaneria b Hannan 14
Younis Khan not out 3
Extras: (b-3, lb-2, w-1) 6
Total: (for 6 wkts in 80 overs) 242
Fall of wickets: 1-62, 2-194, 3-202, 4-203, 5-206, 6-237

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tareq	10	1	27	1
Talha	6	2	26	0
Enamul	26	2	78	2
Fahim	28	8	76	2
Mehrab	6	0	24	0
Hannan	4	1	6	1

BANGLADESH A: Second innings Hannan c Waqar b Inzamam 11
Mehrab b Shoaib 0
Nafees c Younis b Razzak 2
Tushar not out 24
Akram not out 1
Extras: (b-7, lb-2, nb-6) 15
Total: (for 3 wkts in 19 overs) 53
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-13, 3-38

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Razzak	5	0	14	1
Shoaib	5	1	7	1
Kaneria	3	0	8	0
Saqlain	3	2	1	0
Inzamam	2	1	1	1
Younis	1	0	13	0

Result: Match drawn

No hard feelings for Croft



INTERNET, London

Robert Croft says he has no regrets over his decision not to tour India with England, despite missing selection for New Zealand.

Pace bowler Andrew Caddick is the only new name in the 16-man England squad for the three-Test tour in February and March from the squad that toured India last month.

And Croft, who joined Caddick in pulling out of the India trip at the last minute over safety fears, has not been handed an immediate way back.

"I don't think regrets work in sport," Croft said. "I stand by the decision I made; this time round I felt for my family's sake it wasn't a risk I could take."

Chairman of selectors David Graveney has reassured the off-spinner that he remains part of England's plans for the future.

But he has said the Glamorgan man will have to scrap to get his place back from current incumbents Ashley Giles and Richard Dawson, both of whom are in the squad named on Thursday.

"I'm sure if we were going to an area more conducive to spin it wouldn't have been Robert Croft under pressure, Graveney told the British Broadcasting Corporation.



ROBERT CROFT

a young lad of limited experience and the selectors think it only right and proper that we should persevere with him," said Graveney.

"Robert Croft will be disappointed but he's got to accept that he will have to scrap for his place."

"His performances, particularly overseas, have been very good and he is very much part of the future."

Croft had been angered in the past after being dropped, but took comfort with the way that Graveney broke the news to him.

"I spoke to David Graveney last night and the good thing about this time round was that the channels of communication were fantastic," Croft said.

"At least when players aren't involved, all they want to know is why and when, and if not, when can they come back."

"David said the door wasn't closed and I firmly believe that."

All-rounder Andrew Flintoff is the only other addition to the squad originally named in October.

The Lancashire man, called to India as an extra man, impressed while opening the bowling in the second and third Tests but suffered poor form batting at six.

Caddick has already been named in the one-day party, which plays six matches in India in January before moving on to New Zealand.

England play five limited-overs matches against the Black Caps before their opening first-class match on 2 March.

The selectors stuck to their decision not to pick pace bowler Darren Gough, after he opted out of the India tour prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

Aussie media slam SA



REUTERS, Melbourne

South African Test cricket was in crisis following their 3-0 series loss to Australia, the Australian media has widely reported.

"Players from past and present eras have insisted that South Africa were as good as, if not better than, the great enemy," the Herald Sun newspaper said.

"It is difficult to see that happening again after this series. The past month has represented this team's heaviest defeats (by 246 runs, nine wickets and 10 wickets)."

"Most of the players have never been beaten so badly, never mind three times in a row."

Shaun Pollock's side were also rocked by controversy on the eve of the third Test when United Cricket Board of South Africa president Percy Sonn overruled selectors to promote coloured middle-order batsman Justin Ontong ahead of Jacques Rudolph.

They must now regroup for a triangular limited-overs series starting in Australia on Friday, which involves the home team and New Zealand.

"The result (of the Test series) is a level of humility they have never experienced before, a modesty that will serve them well in the future and

will almost certainly change their approach to future contests against Australia," the Herald Sun said.

South Africa host Australia in a three-Test series starting next month when they will have another opportunity to claim Test cricket's top ranking from their visitors.

But South Africa did not compare well to Stephen Fleming's New Zealand side who drew a three-Test series in Australia 0-0 in November and December, The Age newspaper reported.

"If the Kiwis surprised on the upside, as analysts put it, the Proteas fell well below expectations," The Age said.

"Experience has a lot to do with it. Stephen Fleming is an astute captain of a seasoned team; Shaun Pollock an uncertain leader of a side including players over the hill and in the early stages of their ascent."

"Clearly South Africa's successful team of the nineties has broken up."

The Australian newspaper said, while the Proteas have on-field deficiencies, the Ontong issue was evidence of off-field troubles.

"There is no escaping the fact this South African team was seriously under-resourced and inexpertly managed," The Australian said.

"There was no-one, on or off the ground, who was demonstrably in charge."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Mardi Gras
5 Conducc-tance unit
8 Congre-gational cry
12 Acknowl-edge
13 Listener
14 Mosquito attack
15 Combati-ve
17 Green-span or Cranston
18 "— Restau-rant"
19 CBe's pseudo-nym
21 Flightless bird
22 Shoppe description
23 A Smothers brother
26 PGA con-tender
28 Strength
31 Hertz rival
33 Kreskin's claim

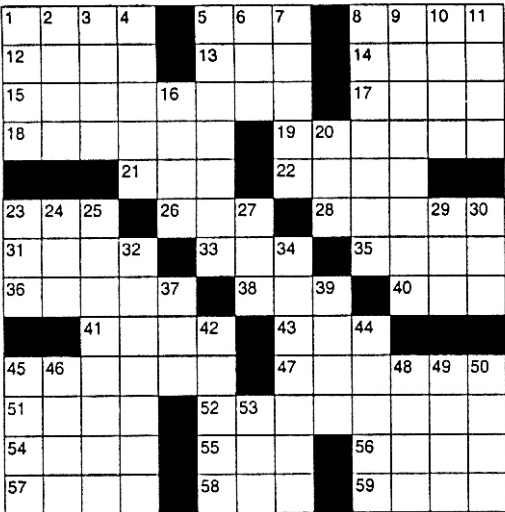
DOWN

35 Russian river
36 Role for Jackie
38 Grecian vessel
40 Pol. unit
41 Praise to the skies
43 Wet wiggler
45 Think in fear
47 Criticize severely
51 Sus-pended
52 Our galaxy
54 First victim
55 Type of poem
56 "Arsenic and Old —"

8 Leave

Solution time: 21 mins.

T I E D F I A M N A P I S
O S L O R U E O M I T T
W E I S T W I N G R O T T E
N I E E H A T S T R A W
R I G O R P E I P P E R I S
E S A U R A W O L L E O
F O R T R A I N F I L I P S
H O G B E E
H A I P H P O E S I A
A R I T A E A I S T W O O D
L E A R R I O H O M E
T A S K A R M O N I E S



CRYPTOQUIP

I Q L A H P T W L I D X L A L F

M T G Y X B H I G R Q M T G R L D

E R D W R G R U D H S L S L Y D T E L

H P T D W L D B D W U L F

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A CRUEL RED BIRD STOLE A WORM FROM A ROBIN, WOULD IT BE A CARDINAL SIN?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals A

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error

Indian Open Canas'

AFP, Madras

Top-seeded Guillermo Canas of Argentina tamed Thai giant-killer Paradorn Srichaphan to win the ATP Indian Open tennis title here on Sunday.

Canas, world number 14 last year, brushed aside the Asian champion 6-4, 7-6 in an hour and 50 minutes at the Nungambakkam stadium.

It was only the second ATP title for Canas -- the first being at Casablanca last April -- and earned him 35 points and 51,500 dollars at the start of this year's Champions race.

Paradorn, who enjoyed a dream run till he ran into Canas, gained 24 points and 30,300 dollars from his first ATP final since turning professional in 1997.

The 112-ranked Thai, a last-minute entry after Sergi Bruguera of Spain pulled out with a viral infection, had toppled fifth-seed Max Mirnyi in the first round, second-seed Thomas Johansson in the quarter-final and fourth-seed Andrei Pavel in the semi-final.

But Canas proved a tough nut to crack after the Argentine seized the initiative from the start, breaking Paradorn in the opening game of the match.