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Stand up and bat

SPORTS REPORTER



With the series already lost Bangladesh will get one last chance to overcome the elephantine batting problem when they take on New Zealand in the third and final RC Cola one-day international today.

When the second day-night match starts at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 1.30 pm the home crowd will desperately hope that the Tigers' batting, which has been in shambles for the last seven months, clicks for a change.

Bangladesh crashed to 146 in the second one-day at the same venue on Friday. But the bowling backed by some inspired fielding sent the holiday crowd into ecstasy before the Black Caps scrape home with a three-wicket victory and thus taking an unassailable 2-0 lead.

The Kiwis led by Daniel Vettori won the first one-day match by 138 runs at Chittagong, where Bangladesh tumbled to 86, their fourth lowest total.

Young Aftab Ahmed gave something to smile about on Friday night when the 17-year-old led an unexpected fightback with his gentle medium pace that sent shockwaves through the Kiwi camp. His 5-31, the best-ever bowling by a Bangladeshi in the abridged version of the game, gave fresh hopes that if the batsmen can put some runs on the board then the bowlers can make a match out of it.

Wicketkeeper batsman Khaled Mashud will lead the home side in the absence of Habibul Bashar, who broke his left toe in the second match and is ruled out for three weeks.

Bashar's freakish injury prompted the selectors to call up out-of-form Alok Kapali.

There was a break in training yesterday and that allowed coach Day Whatmore and some players including Mashud to enjoy a differ-

ent game of cricket at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

But Mashud was reluctant to speak to the press ahead of the final one-day.

"I can't speak to you because the team-management requested me not to say anything," said the 28-year-old stumper, who made some bold remarks after the Test series in Chittagong, in which he blamed the poor domestic structure for Bangladesh's batting woes.

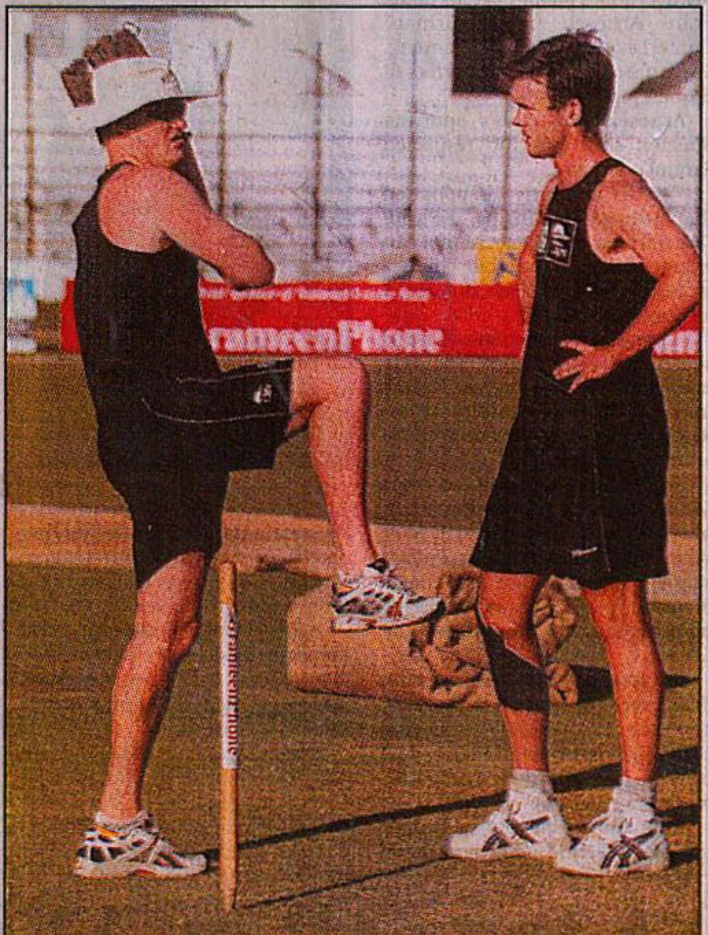
Whatmore was also tight-lipped

although it was learnt that there was no such media embargo from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

On the other hand New Zealand camp appeared very relaxed with only four players Franklin, Butler, Adams and Fulton attending a light training session supervised by coach John Bracewell.

But the New Zealand looked disturbed with the way his top-order has been doing in the two previous matches.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



TRY TO COPY MY ACTION: New Zealand coach John Bracewell (L) tries to demonstrate something to his young left-arm paceman James Franklin.

New gym for cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

Inclement weather will no longer hamper practice of country's cricketers because now they can train round the year in the newly-built indoor gymnasium at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The first complete indoor facility in the city is part of Bangladesh Cricket Board's plans to shift all cricket activities to Mirpur, which will be their new home from next year.

The National Sports Council (NSC) built the 130ft long gymnasium at a cost Tk 66 lakh.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, who also the chairman of NSC, inaugurated the gymnasium yesterday.

Indoor facilities include three practice pitches and a modern gymnasium for the players.

Five more indoor gymnasiums in Bogra, Rajshahi, Khulna, Chittagong and Sylhet are already under construction.

The sports minister also inaugurated the development work on the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium that began with dismantling of the athletics track.

The BCB hoped that the stadium will be ready to stage international cricket matches in the next nine months. Board president Ali Asghar was also present on the occasion.

Two share the lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Saifuddin Lavlu and Debaraj Chatterjee were continuing their lead in the Open FIDE Rating Chess tournament after the seventh round games at the chess federation auditorium yesterday.

Lavlu beat Afzal and Debaraj beat Shafiq to secure maximum seven points from as many games.

Mehdi Hasan Parag and Mohammed Javed followed the leaders with 6.5 points each.

In the day's other matches, Javed beat Taher, Parag beat Raouf, Amin beat Shabashachi, Reza beat Enayet, Amir beat Sohul.



GOODBYE ATHLETICS: Workers start to tear off the athletic track at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. It is part of turning the 60,000 capacity venue into a full-fledged cricket stadium. It will be the home of Bangladesh cricket next year.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAJMAN

Lloyd visits Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Gg

Chittagong Divisional Stadium could stage a Test match in the near future.

Former West Indies captain Clive Lloyd made the observation after visiting the newly-built stadium yesterday.

"Everything here is quite okay. But the wicket is a little under-prepared at the moment. Besides, I found no room for a match referee to sit in," the Guyanese legend told reporters after his inspection.

He expressed satisfaction at most of the facilities in the stadium which was built at a cost of Tk 35 lakh for holding matches in the ICC Under-19 World Cup.

Lloyd will watch the final one-day international between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the Bangabandhu National today. He is going to visit the Khulna Divisional Stadium tomorrow before leaving for London on November 9 to submit his fact-finding report to the ICC.

PCB to assess Malik action

CRICINFO, undated

Shoaib Malik's bowling action will be examined today in Lahore by a three-man advisory committee representing the Pakistan Cricket Board, after the ICC received report that his action was potentially flawed.

Simon Taufel and Aleem Dar, the umpires in the PakTel Cup final in October, reported Malik's off-spinning action as suspect after the match. The match referee Jeff Crowe later referred the matter to the ICC.

The PCB set up a panel to assist Malik as part of a six-week programme which is expected to last six weeks. At the end of that period, the PCB will present a specialist report to the ICC, which will indicate any remedial action that is required.

This will be the second time that Malik, 22, has modified his action, since he made some changes when he was reported in Sharjah in 2002. And if he is cited again within a year of this report, the ICC could suspend him for one year.

Semifinal lineup drawn

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cup semifinal line-up of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League was completed yesterday when defending champions Araf Apparels and CityCell joined sponsors GrameenPhone and Bangladesh Biman in knockout phase.

Araf recorded a two-wicket win against newcomers Robintex at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium to finish third in the six-team league phase while CityCell edged past fellow cellular operator AKTEL by 11 runs at the BKSP in Savar to book the last semifinal spot.

CityCell will clash with the country's number one mobile operator GrameenPhone in the first semifinal while Araf play Bangladesh Biman in the other semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on November 9.

The final of the first-ever Twenty20 competition is billed for November 11 at the Big Bowl. GrameenPhone finished their league campaign with an all-win record when they defeated Biman at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium by five wickets.

Meanwhile, in the Plate competition, BEXIMCO, Gazi Tank, Acme Laboratories and Ispahani moved into the last four.

Beximco finished with all-win record when they inflicted an eight-wicket defeat on Partex at the Dhaka University Jagannath Hall ground.

They will meet Ispahani, which lost their last match against Acme by 28 runs at the same venue, in the first semi-final on November 9.

Gazi Tank defeated newcomer Epyllion by three wickets in the other match at BKSP and they will

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

PwC ratings Dravid retains top spot

CRICINFO, undated

Despite a disappointing series against Australia, Rahul Dravid remained at the top of the PwC Ratings for batsmen. Damien Martyn, who was adjudged the Man of the Series, moved up seven places in the rankings and was placed eighth. Another big performer in the series was Michael Clarke, one of the contenders for the Man-of-the-Series awards. This was just his debut series but he had already climbed up to 37th place.

Matthew Hayden, Ricky Ponting and Virender Sehwag slipped down in the rankings. Inzamamul Haq moved to sixth place after a fine hundred in the second Test against Sri Lanka at Karachi.

The India-Australia series was dominated by the bowlers and most of them saw an improvement in their ratings. Glenn McGrath remains the top bowler for Australia.

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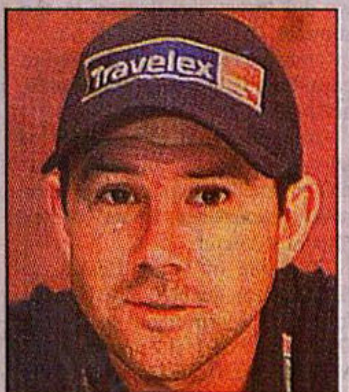
Did U Know?

The first ball of one-day international cricket was faced by Geoffrey Boycott in 1971.



What to WATCH

- BTV**
Bangladesh vs New Zealand
Third ODI
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- STAR Sports**
Football Extra
Live at 9:00 am
- Bangladesh vs New Zealand**
Third ODI
Live at 1:20 pm
- ESPN**
English Premier Football League
Bolton Wanderers vs Middlesbrough
Live at 7:55 pm
- Man United vs Man City
Live at 10:00 pm



Ricky Ponting
(Australia cricket captain)

"It's a disappointing end to a great series. Everyone knows what the wicket was like. It was disappointing for everyone, the players and the fans, that the match ended so fast."

Ganguly ready for Platinum ODI

Cricket

AGENCIES, Mumbai

India captain Sourav Ganguly has declared himself fit to face Pakistan next week in a one-day international to celebrate the BCCI's Platinum Jubilee.

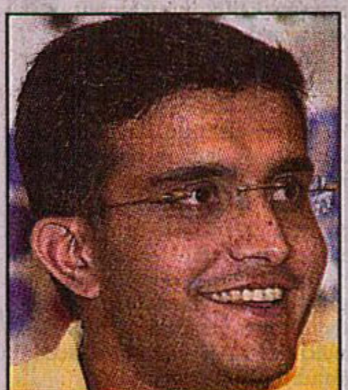
Ganguly, who missed the last two Tests of the just completed series against Australia because of a groin strain, has been included in a 15-member squad for the match to be played in Kolkata on November 13.

The 32-year-old will still undergo a fitness test on Wednesday, officials said. Rahul Dravid will lead the team if Ganguly fails to regain fitness, they added.

Batting superstar Sachin Tendulkar, who missed the Champions Trophy tournament in England in September due to an elbow injury, has been included in the one-day squad for the first time since August.

Left-arm spinner Murali Kartik, named man of the match in India's stunning victory over Australia in the fourth and final Test here on Friday, failed to find a place in the full-strength squad.

"Kartik was not picked because the top two spinners, Harbhajan (Singh) and (Anil) Kumble, have done very well," Ratnakar Shetty, secretary of Bombay's cricket association, told reporters.



SAURAV GANGULY

India's first-choice paceman Irfan Pathan also returned to the squad after missing the last two Tests against Australia due to a side strain. He is one of four pacemen selected in the 15-member squad.

"Irfan is fine now. He's playing

local matches over the next week and there'll be no fitness test for him," Shetty said.

Middle-order batsman Sridharan Sriram, who played six one-day internationals for India four years ago, has been recalled after a good run in domestic competitions. He is the only change from the Indian squad that represented India in the ICC Champions Trophy in England, replacing Rohan Gavaskar.

The one-off match will be Pakistan's first in India since 1999. India went to Pakistan earlier this year for a three-Test series, seen as a sign of improving relations between the two hostile neighbours.

In 2000, the Indian government banned all home and away cricket against Pakistan due to political tensions over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

But the policy was changed last year and Pakistan are scheduled to play a full test series in India in 2005.

Meanwhile, the Indian selectors have also announced the Board President's XI squad that will take on South Africa in their first tour game, beginning on November 14. Both Gautam Gambhir and Dheeraj

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Pathan's absence affected India

PTI, New Delhi

Former Pakistan captain Imran Khan on Friday shared the disappointment of millions of Indians over the poor performance of their national cricket team against Australia in the current home series.

Khan, one of the all-time best all-rounders, said absence of 'match-winning' bowler Irfan Pathan from the team could have contributed largely to India's 'under performance'.

He credited the 'stronger mentality' of the Kangaroos for their domination of the series while pointing out that conditions of the sub-continent were not favourable to the Aussies.

On a visit to India to participate in Hindustan Times Leadership Initiative Conference, Khan told reporters that India's performance in Pakistan in March was very impressive.

But "it was disappointing to see their performance here. They did well."

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



GRASS LOOKS GREEN HERE: Legendary West Indian and ICC inspector Clive Lloyd (C) checks the net practice facility at the newly-built Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Saturday. The Divisional Stadium is one of four venues Bangladesh is trying to get international recognition.

PHOTO: ZOAHER HOSSAIN

Eid Mubarak

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