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GOODBYE: Stand-in Kiwi captain Daniel Vettori obliges an autograph-hunter at the lobby of Sonargaon Hotel prior to their departure for Australia yesterday.

Champs Trophy hockey Germany down Argentina

AFP, Rosario

Athens Olympic champions Germany ground out an emphatic 2-0 win over world champions Argentina in the Champions Trophy women's field hockey championship here on Sunday.

Netherlands topped the table after scoring their second win with a narrow 2-1 win over Australia.

And New Zealand recovered from their opening 6-0 defeat to Argentina to hold China 1-1.

Kerstin Hoyer slotted home from close range to open the scoring for Germany on 40 minutes after a tight

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

Aussies now more tough

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming said Monday he was alarmed at the scale of planning Australia had put in to conquer their final cricket frontier in India.

The Australians broke through for their first series win in India in 35 years in winning the recent series 2-1.

Fleming, widely regarded as the most tactically astute captain in world cricket, rates Australia tougher opponents than the world-record breaking outfit he last met under Steve Waugh three years ago.

Fleming said the world champions were set to reach a new level of dominance because they prepared "much smarter" than when Waugh led them to a nil-all Trans-Tasman series draw here in 2001.

Ahead of next week's opening Brisbane Test of a two-match series, Fleming, 31, said he was surprised by the amount of detailed planning undertaken by Aussie coach John Buchanan to unhinge Sourav Ganguly's India team.

Fleming said Australia's meticulous homework put the down payment on a "clinical" series win.

"I was a little bit alarmed at how well they had planned for it. That's not always been one of Australia's traits," Fleming said.

"Because they have been so successful, they can usually get through any situation by their natural ability."

"But to see an Australian side that's thoroughly planned, and has been planning for some time, is a little bit alarming because it may take the side to a new level."

"John (Buchanan) is always pushing the boundaries but that was an interesting sign."

Australia adopted defensive field settings to dry up the home side's runs, used leg-spinner Shane Warne as a stock bowler and batted with more patience to register a first series victory in India since 1969.

Fleming can be seen as a model.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Tigers with a lot to think Black Caps leave Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER



The huge gap between expectation and reality was once again evident in Bangladesh's performance when the Tigers completed a disappointing home series against New Zealand.

The Tigers were whitewashed in both the Test and one-day series' almost without a fight and the root of the problem was the top-order batting. The bowling and fielding in the ODIs was probably the only positive thing that came out.

Stand-in captain Khaled Mashud has repeatedly expressed his frustration at the lack of purpose in the team's batting and was adamant that something drastic has to be

done if they are to stand up against India in the coming home series. India are expected to arrive in Dhaka on December 8 to play two Tests and three one-day internationals.

"The saddest thing is that we have frustrated the home fans who came to see the matches in big numbers in this month of Ramadan," said Mashud at a post-match briefing on Saturday after his team had gone down by 83 runs in the third and final ODI.

The 28-year old Bangladesh stumper said that the most important thing in batting was taking responsibility and playing with self-confidence but they have failed to follow that.

"But I am not ready to blame the batters because most of our top-order players are young. We have to give them time. I think there is the need for extensive discussions to

bring out the best out of them and I will give my suggestions to the Board (BCB) soon. We should stop getting out after playing one or two good shots," said Mashud, who was the only batsman to show some resistance against the Kiwis.

Mashud, deputising for regular captain Habibul Bashar who is injured, said 19-year-old Aftab Ahmed's performance with the ball was one of the pluses in an otherwise ill-fated campaign.

"Our gain in this series was the bowling and fielding. Aftab was the find of the series with his bowling capabilities and I believe he will make good contribution in the future as an all-rounder."

The New Zealand team left Dhaka yesterday for a gruelling tour of Australia but not before some words of encouragement for the Tigers.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Romesh, Avishka left out of NZ tour party

REUTERS, Colombo

Wicketkeeper-batsman Romesh Kaluwitharana and opener Avishka Gunawardene have been left out of a 20-man training squad for Sri Lanka's tour to New Zealand in December.

Off spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, recovering after shoulder surgery, has also not been named but is expected to return to the side later in the tour.

Sri Lanka are due to play five one-dayers starting on December 26, followed by two tests.

SQUAD
Marvan Atapattu (captain), Mahela Jayawardene, Sanath Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chaminda Vaas, Upul Chandana, Nuwan Zoysa, Dilhara

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Club Cup final Abahani want to put it right

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Last year's losing finalists Abahani will have a chance to erase their unhappy memories when they take on Mariner Youngs Club in the final of the fifth Club Cup Hockey Tournament today.

The final of the domestic season's curtain-raiser tournament will kick off at 2.30 pm at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium with Abahani holding an edge after a 4-2 win over the Arambagh outfit in a group encounter.

Abahani captain Hedayetul Islam Rajib believes that winning their earlier meeting would be an advantage in the final.

"Mariner are a strong side but we have also played very well in the tournament. That victory will give us more confidence to win the title which eluded us last year," said the Sky Blues midfielder whose side snatched a late equaliser in a 3-3 draw against Usha Kira Chakra in the semifinals before winning on penalties.

Abahani had won all their group matches but their defence had a nightmare in the semifinal without Nakib.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Corporate Cricket Knockout phase begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Araf Apparels face a daunting task as they set out to defend their title when they take on in-form Bangladesh Biman in the first Cup semifinal of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League title today.

The Araf-Biman match starts at 10 am at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, while hot favourites GrameenPhone take on fellow cellular operators CityCell in the other semi at 1.30 pm also at the Big Bowl.

Elsewhere, at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium both Plate semifinals take place. Holders Gazi Tank are pitted against Acme Labora-tories in the first semifinal at 10 am while BEXIMCO fight it out against Isphani at the same venue at 1.30 pm.

No foreign players are featuring in the knockout stages of the first ever Twenty20 competition this time

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Aushim ponders action against Kiwi captain

BBC ONLINE, undated

An Indian businessman on Monday has insisted New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming has made false claims against him relating to betting and match-fixing.

Fleming claims he was introduced to a syndicate by promoter Aushim Khetrapal during the 1999 World Cup in England.

But Khetrapal said: "My passport shows that I was in England from July 30 until August 3, 1999 whereas the World Cup was held in June the same year."

He also told the BBC he was considering action against Fleming.

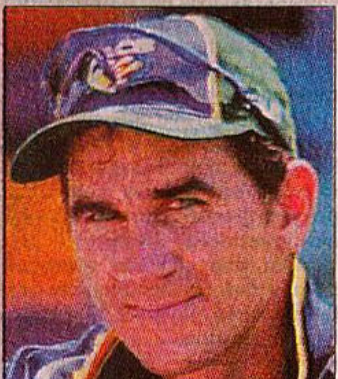
Khetrapal, who is alleged to be an associate of notorious Indian bookmaker Sanjeev Chawla, concedes he did meet Fleming, but at a different time.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



Did U Know?

The only cricketer of Chinese origin is E E Achong who played for West Indies in 1930's.



Justin Langer
(Australian batsman)

"Greenidge and Haynes -- when I was a kid they were the absolute ultimate. I don't know how many runs we are behind those guys, probably a few thousand, but who knows what could happen."



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Do you have any observation regarding sports and its management? Do you feel certain issues need to be addressed before time runs out? Then, hurry up and send us your burning questions, critical views and thoughtful suggestions not in excess of 400 words. Let your thought buzz at your corner, the Readers' zone. --Sports Editor

Cry for proper domestic cricket-I

LUTFUR RAHMAN

After recent dismal performance of our cricketers, both in one-dayers and Tests, everybody is advocating for strengthening and streamlining domestic cricket. I personally feel that non-existence of effective longer version domestic cricket tournaments on regular basis is also a contributing factor towards poor showing by the players.

From the mid-70s up to the 90s a variety of one-day and longer version tournaments were regularly organised and teams took part wholeheartedly. As a result a number of brilliant cricketers came through the system during that period.

Crickets always started with the Dama Summer Tournament followed by the highly competitive Dhaka Leagues. In between Shaheed Smriti and Independence Day Tournaments were also held.

After those one-day events over came the longer version tournaments -- the National Cricket Tournament involving teams almost from all the districts of the country, Youth National Championship was held simultaneously all over the country.

These competitions were held annually without interruption.

Different District Sports Associations staged their respective Leagues. Nirman School Cricket Tournament was undoubtedly best event for unearthing talent at the grass root level. The brainchild behind it was KZ Islam, the president of the then BCCB in the eighties.

With such a rich cricket heritage people will definitely think why are we in such a mess now?

I have tried to analyse the basic causes as follows:

(a) The BCB has not yet been able to introduce a firm yearly cricket

calendar on a regular basis.

(b) The Board is not very serious about staging competitive Dhaka League timely and last year it was not even staged.

(c) It seems BCB is rather serious and interested in international cricket than equally concentrating on domestic affairs. Here commercial interest may play a leading part. International cricket means income whereas domestic cricket means only expenditure.

(d) With the introduction of National League involving the Divisional teams, the authority discarded the most important National Cricket Championship, which featured district and services teams and had a greater number of cricketers taking part. It does not make any sense when the need of the hour is more and more longer version tournaments.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



Germany's Marion Rodewald (C) intercepts Vanina Oneto of Argentina during their Champions Trophy women's field hockey championship clash at Rosario in Argentina on Sunday.

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