

Tushar, Nafees shine

A good day for hosts

Cricket

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

Two brilliant knocks by Tushar Imran and Nafees Ahmed helped the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) XI post a fighting score of 316 for seven on the first day of the three-day practice match against Zimba-bwe at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Tushar could not have hoped for a better start to the New Year when the discarded one-day specialist scored an unbeaten 102 after Nafees Ahmed, dubbed a player in the making, missed the magical three-figure mark by just three runs at a venue that has just got international recognition.

The Board XI made those runs in 80 overs before captain Rajin Saleh declared. The performance of the virtual second string Bangladesh side on the first day of a new year gave an indication that better things are not far away when Habibul Bashar's men start the first Test against the inexperienced Southern African nation at the nearby MA Aziz Stadium on

January 6.

At stumps, Zimbabwe had reached 41 without loss in the remaining 10 overs with T Matsikenyeri and B Rogers unbeaten on 12 and 18 respectively.

The BCB XI got off to a bumpy start after winning the toss, losing two wickets for 47 runs. But left-handed opener Nafees and Rajin (38) led the recovery, putting on 112 runs for the third wicket.

A member of BCB Development Squad and a consistent performer for his side City Club, Nafees struck 19 sweetly timed fours in his entertaining 125-ball knock.

The home side suffered a stunning collapse starting with Nafees, who fell with the score on 179-4. And they lost three more wickets for 16 runs before Tushar and Tareq Aziz Khan built another century partnership for the undefeated eighth wicket to ensure the home team went past the 300-run mark.

Tushar dominated the 121-run stand with eight boundaries and a six. Tareq gave his senior partner good company with a defiant 29.

It was a disappointing day for Al Shahriar, who scored a two-ball

duck. Leg-spinner Matsikenyeri was most successful bowler for the tourists with four for 59.

Regarding the declaration, captain Rajin told reporters he did that hoping for a breakthrough in the day's final ten overs.

"If we can take a few early wickets tomorrow, I believe, we can go on and win this match," he said.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the first day of the three-day practice match between BCB XI and Zimbabwe at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday:

BCB XI: First innings
Nafees c Mupariwa b Matsikenyeri 97
S Rahmnan c Mupariwa b Panyangara 19
Sakib Al Hasan c Rogers b Mupariwa 34
Rajin Saleh c Sibanda b Utseya 18
Tusher Imran not out 102
Al-Shahriar c Sibanda b Matsikenyeri 0
Mushfiqur c Taibu b Matsikenyeri 0
M Sharif c Hondo b Matsikenyeri 6
Tareq Aziz not out 29
Extras: (b-2, lb-7, w-2) 11
Total: (For 7 wkts in 80 overs, dec) 316

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HEROES OF THE DAY: BCB Eleven's Tusher Imran (L) cuts one square of the wicket on way to scoring a century while Nafees Ahmed (R), who fell short of his hundred by three runs, sets off for a single on the opening day of the three-day tour match against Zimbabwe at the Divisional Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

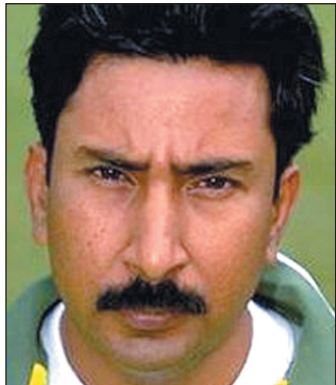


PHOTOS: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER



Did U Know?

India's total of 348-5 in the third ODI is the best ever total by any team against Bangladesh, bettering Kenya's 347 for three at Nairobi on October 10, 1997.



Salim Malik

(Banned former Pakistan cricket captain)

"I am deeply disappointed by the manner we lost both the Tests in Australia and it was mainly due to lack of maturity in boys who are otherwise very talented."



ESPN

New Zealand vs Sri Lanka
Second ODI
Live at 5:00 am

STAR Sports

South Africa vs England
Third Test, Day One
Live at 2:30 pm
Australia vs Pakistan
Third Test, Day Two
Live at 5:25 am (Monday)



Green Delta Premier Cricket League
Victoria vs Uttara SC (DCS)
Brothers vs Abahani (BNS)
Mohammedan vs Young Pegasus (FCS)
Green Delta Premier Hockey
(Super League)
Mariner SC vs Usha KC (2:45 pm)

Noor, Farhad joint leaders

SPORTS REPORTER

Noor Alam and Farhadur Emam were jointly leading the Metropolis Chess Tournament with maximum

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Double blow to Pakistan

Kasprowicz, Lehmann left out of SCG Test

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Captain Inzamamul Haq and all-rounder Abdul Razzaq Saturday plunged Pakistan into a new crisis when they withdrew from the team to play Australia in the final cricket Test starting here on Sunday.

Inzamam again succumbed to a back injury while Razzaq has not recovered from an illness which laid him low during the second Melbourne Test, which Pakistan lost by nine wickets to lose the three-match series.

Stand-in skipper Yousuf Youhana said the setbacks had forced a delay in the composition of the Pakistan team, with all-rounder Shoaib Malik and pace-man Mohammad Sami already ruled out by injuries from the Melbourne Test.

"We can't even name a team yet," Youhana said Saturday. "We have to replace four players. There will be a lot of changes."

There were hopes that Inzamam, the most experienced player in the touring side, would help ease the player shortage but he failed to come through a practice session at the nets at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday, leaving the tourists in further disarray.

Razzaq was hospitalised twice in Melbourne after complaining of dizziness and shortness of breath.

Although he batted in Pakistan's second innings he was taken back to hospital after the Melbourne Test after collapsing.

Sami has been ordered to rest because of a foot injury while Malik split the webbing on his fingers taking a catch in Melbourne.

Youhana said his team was up against it in the final match of the series after going down to Australia inside four days in both the Perth and Melbourne Tests.

"Australia don't take it lightly and we don't either," he said.

"I know they're better than us

because we have a lot of young and inexperienced players but we're still trying to win this game."

Meanwhile, Australian selectors sprung a surprise Saturday by axing Michael Kasprowicz and Darren Lehmann and bringing Shane Watson and Stuart MacGill into the Australian team for the final Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Kasprowicz, who has been one of Australia's best bowlers over the last six months, was named 12th man while the Test career of

Lehmann, who turns 35 soon, could be over after a poor sequence of scores.

Reports said that captain Ricky Ponting debated the team's make-up with selector Allan Border before and during training before announcing to the media the sacking of Kasprowicz and Lehmann despite Australia's 2-0 unassailable series lead over Pakistan.

"We think it's the best balanced

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PHOTO: AFP

I BETTER PRACTISE CATCHING: Fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar goes through the rigours of a fielding practice session of the Pakistan team in Sydney yesterday. The third and final Test between Australia and Pakistan starts here today.

Naimur shock for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani received a setback before their crucial Green Delta Premier Cricket League match against Brothers Union today with their captain Naimur Rahman being ruled out due to injury.

All-rounder Naimur, who has been in outstanding form and was under consideration for a recall to the national side, sustained an injury on his right knee while kicking a football during practice on Friday morning.

Now the former national captain has been placed under 48-hour observation to assess the extent of his injury.

Under Naimur Abahani occupy second place behind newcomers Old DOHS, which is interestingly skippered by his predecessor Akram Khan.

Naimur's absence will be definitely felt when Abahani play Brothers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Holders Victoria will take on Uttara Sporting Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium while Mohammedan will desperately look for a win against Young Pegasus at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium after four consecutive defeats.

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Russel guided Surjo Tarun Club to a two-wicket victory over Wari Club in the First Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

The number seven batsman hammered a 43-ball 47 with seven fours and two sixes as Surjo Tarun scored 207 for 8 in 43.1 overs in reply to Wari's 204 all out in 49.2 overs.

At the Jagannath Hall ground of Dhaka University, the match between Kalabagan KC and Bangladesh Boys Club ended as a tie, but the latter were declared winners by virtue of losing fewer wickets.

Battling first Bangladesh Boys scored 219 for 9 in stipulated 50 overs while Kalabagan were all out for 219 in 49.5 overs.

CityCell's luxury offer

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

CityCell has offered a luxury car for the first Bangladesh batsman who can score a century and a bowler who can claim eight wickets in a match during the two Tests against Zimbabwe.

A brand new Nissan Sunny will be on display when the first Test begins at the MA Aziz Stadium on January 6 with the home side for the first time sensing a maiden victory in the five-day game.

Apart from that special offer, the cellular company also won title sponsorship of the series that

includes five one-day internationals.

CityCell earned the right with a hefty bid of \$ 80,000, which means the Tigers will sport logos of two of the country's top mobile operators with GrameenPhone being team sponsor.

Intekhab Mahmud, CityCell's senior vice-president of sales & marketing, told reporters at a local hotel yesterday that they want to be part of Bangladesh's maiden Test when it happens.

BCB advisor and chairman of the Commercial Committee Aziz Al Kaiser informed that Grameen-Phone, Standard Chartered bank, Unilever and Rahimafrooz also bid for the title sponsorship.

Pollock crucial for Proteas

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

Key bowler Shaun Pollock underwent intensive treatment Friday but was expected to be fit to play for South Africa in the third Test against England starting at Newlands Sunday.

Pollock suffered blows on both hands while batting during the tense last afternoon of the drawn second Test in Durban Thursday.

With South Africa battling to save the match, Pollock was struck by successive balls from England fast bowler Steve Harmison. He needed treatment on the field and underwent ice therapy while the rest of his team were having a day off Friday.

The injury that most concerned the South African team management was to his right index finger but team spokesman Gerald de Kock said: "He's in a bit of pain but he will play."

Pollock is crucial to South Africa's chances of drawing level in the five-match series. England lead 1-0 after winning the first Test in Port Elizabeth.

South Africa have relied heavily on Pollock and Makhaya Ntini to take wickets during the past year when bowling opposition sides out has proved difficult.

The problem was emphasised in Durban when England were bowled out for 139 in the first innings but stormed back by scoring 570 for seven declared in their second innings to put the pressure back on South Africa.

South African coach Ray Jennings admitted that his side had missed a golden chance to win.

"We will have to think about how we use our bowling resources," he said.

There are not many options immediately available, however, because the same squad was picked

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MSC edge Ajax

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club registered a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Ajax Sporting Club in their first super-league match of the Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The victory improved the Motijheel outfit's tally to 22 points from ten matches, five behind leaders Usha Krira Chakra and three points adrift of second-placed Abahani.

On the other hand, it was no-hopers Ajax's second consecutive defeats to stay at the bottom of the six-team table with 11 points from as many matches.

Mohammedan led Ajax 1-0 at the breather with young striker Zahidul Islam Rajan scoring in the 20th minute from a penalty-corner.

Ajax bounced back after the break through a field goal by Rahat Sarwar in the 44th minute and the game was heading for a draw before Ashiquezaman salvaged Mohammedan with a 61st minute winner.



SADAT SOBHAN

Sobhan stays as Victoria advisor

SPORTS REPORTER

Prominent sports organiser Sadat Sobhan has again taken over as the chief advisor to the Victoria Sporting

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PHOTO: AFP

ALL FOR A NOBLE CAUSE: A smiling Maria Sharapova poses with two elephants at Chiang Mai in northern Thailand yesterday. Sharapova and Venus Williams play in a charity match here today to raise funds for the tsunami victims.