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# Star SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY JANUARY 31, 2005, E-MAIL: dssports@gononet.com

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## Tigers upbeat despite Saleh setback

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh suffered a blow just before the series deciding fifth and final one-day international against Zimbabwe today when it was revealed that in-form opening batsman Rajin Saleh was almost certain to miss the game because of a shoulder injury.

Saleh has been a revelation in the opening slot and has scored two fifties and a 40 in five matches in the new role and his electric fielding and effective off-spin has added a new dimension to the Tigers game.

But yesterday, he was limited to watching his teammates train from the balcony of the Bangabandhu National Stadium with his swollen left shoulder heavily strapped. Saleh hurt the shoulder while fielding in the fourth ODI which Bangladesh won by 58 runs to draw level with the tourists.

"His X-ray report was not too disconcerting but the shoulder took a jerk and it is almost sure that he will not be available for the final game. It's

a great loss for us because he was making an all-round contribution," said Tigers captain Habibul Bashar.

But coach Dav Whatmore wanted to wait till the last moment hoping for a dramatic recovery.

"Rajin will be given every chance to be fit tomorrow and it will be a very late decision with him. He has done very well in the series. And I have to say he is one player that we all admire. His enthusiastic appearance in the field is always an advantage for the team," said Whatmore.

But Saleh's condition was not going to dampen team morale as both the captain and the coach said that the Tigers were highly charged after fighting back from 0-2 down to make it 2-2.

"We beat them twice in a row. We worked hard for that. So, we will try and keep that momentum. It's something that I think everybody was hoping would happen that two all and a winner-take-all last game. It's going to be a great game I think," said Whatmore before adding, "We've done it the hard way. It's a great experience for both teams to play in a final of this nature with a full house. It will benefit the young

players of both teams."

Bashar wanted his side to get over the myth that matches can't be won batting second. In the four games, the toss winning teams have batted first and won.

"I think our mission will be completed if we can win the last game by batting second. It will not be easy on these surfaces although my personal desire is to finish the series with full satisfaction and for that to happen, we need the middle order to fire," said Bashar.

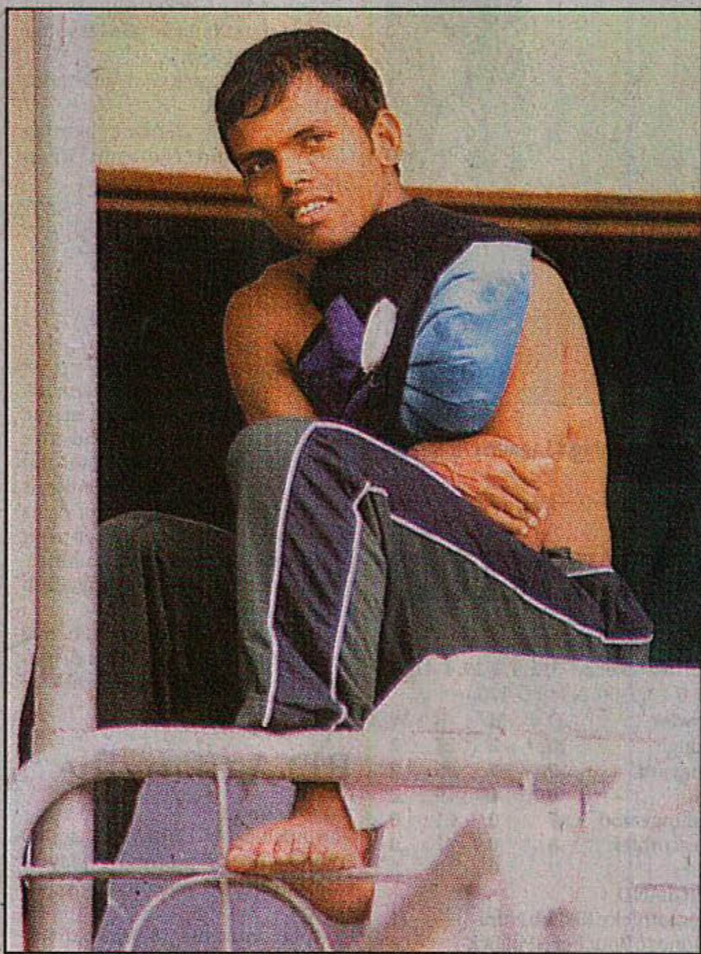
Whatmore felt the secret of standing up to the challenge and win a first ever ODI series tomorrow lay in mental strength.

"I feel we have got the talent and the ability to do it. What will matter though is the strength of the mind while chasing a total.

"Both teams have won batting first but that doesn't necessarily mean that it will follow the same pattern tomorrow. We came back after two losses. They can also come back after two losses. I think the difference between the two teams is not that much," said Whatmore.

Zimbabwe captain Tatenda Taibu

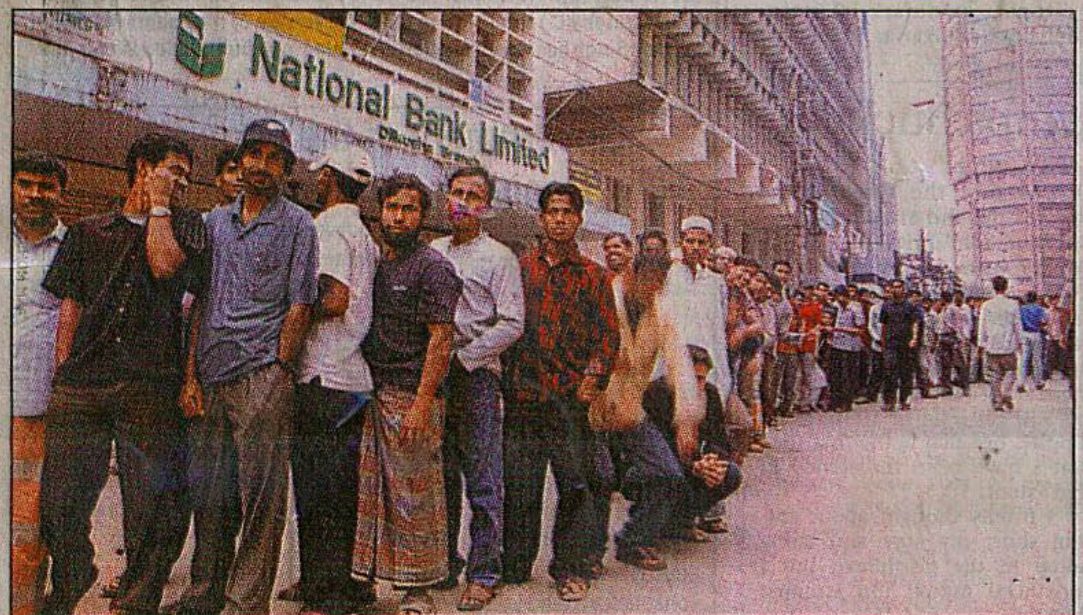
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WRONG TIMING! Rajin Saleh with his left shoulder heavily strapped with an icepack watches his teammates train. He will miss today's series decider.



CAN YOU PLAY FOR US TOMORROW? Zimbabwe skipper Tatenda Taibu (L) talks with Bangladesh's hero in the last two games Manzarul Islam at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



CAN'T MISS THIS GAME! Fans wait in a seemingly endless queue at a branch of ONE Bank yesterday for tickets to today's fifth and final one-day international between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

## Safin third time lucky

### Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

Russian Marat Safin claimed his second tennis Grand Slam with a four-set victory to shatter Lleyton Hewitt's Australian Open dream here on Sunday.

It was Safin's first Australian title after losing in two finals here over the last three years and prevented third-seeded Hewitt from becoming the first home winner of the Australian Open in almost three decades.

The 25-year-old Russian fourth-seed won 1-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in 2hrs 45min to add the Australian title to the 2000 US Open crown when he beat Pete Sampras in straight sets.

Safin was desperate not to become the ninth man in the professional era of tennis (post-1969) to lose three consecutive Grand Slam finals and surged home after looking out of it in an error-ridden opening set.

Safin lost to Roger Federer in straight sets in last year's final and was upset by Swedish 16th seed Thomas Johansson in the 2002 final.

But Safin was the favourite to win this year's first Grand Slam after his sensational five-set victory over the world number one Federer after saving match point in their showpiece semi-final.

Safin admitted he was paralysed with fear in the opening games of the final.

"The first set, you couldn't really call it tennis. I was just trying to stay in the match I was so nervous," Safin said.

"The pressure was so much, especially after going close to winning two times before. I tried to calm down but I couldn't."

"I was getting depressed. I started to think it was happening all over again, but then I started to believe."

"In the second set I was able to relax more and started making some shots."

"The Russian also paid tribute to his opponent."

"Congratulations Lleyton, you had a brilliant two weeks," Safin said after receiving the winner's trophy

from Australian great Ken Rosewall.

"You are such a great fighter and you have an amazing talent that God gave you to fight until the end."

Hewitt, who rode a wave of patriotism fuelled by his never-say-die attitude to reach his first Australian Open final, said Safin deserved to win because he had beaten world number one Roger Federer in the semifinals.

"I'd like to congratulate Marat on a hell of a tournament. He's one of the best players in the world," Hewitt said.

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SOMEONE HAD TO LOSE: New Australian Open men's singles champion Marat Safin (L) explains something to Australia's Lleyton Hewitt yesterday.

## BD A team fly to UAE today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh team will leave Dhaka this morning on a six-week tour of United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe minus captain Enamul Haque.

Enamul, who is in the Tigers one-day squad against Zimbabwe, will skip the UAE leg and is expected to join his teammates in Zimbabwe.

Talented left-handed batsman Shahriar Nafees Ahmed will lead the side in Enamul's absence.

The second-string national side will play four limited-overs matches in the UAE before heading to Zimbabwe for three Tests (four-day) and five more one-day matches.

The A team of the southern African nation had toured Bangladesh last year with the home side winning both the keenly contested Test (1-0) and one-day series (3-2).

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## Umps Bucknor, Dar received death threat!

REUTERS, London

Cricket umpires Steve Bucknor and Aleem Dar received a death threat on the final day of the fifth Test between England and South Africa, Bucknor has said.

Bucknor and Dar received additional security after a person made a telephone call to the management offices at Supersport Park in Centurion on Tuesday and threatened to shoot both men.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

**What to WATCH**

**BTV & ESPN**  
 Bangladesh v Zimbabwe  
 Fifth ODI  
 Live at 8.50 am

**ESPN**  
 South Africa v England  
 First ODI highlights  
 Same day delay at 5 pm  
 Sportscentre  
 Live at 8.30 pm  
 FA Cup Highlights  
 Taped version at 9 pm

**STAR Sports**  
 Primera Liga  
 Numancia Vs Real Madrid  
 Repeated at 10.30 pm  
 Australian Open Highlights  
 Repeated at 7 pm  
 Sportsline  
 Live at 8 pm

## A Pakistan win at last

AFP, Perth

A jubilant Pakistan finally found the form which had deserted them throughout their tour of Australia, defeating the host nation by three wickets in their triangular VB Series limited-overs match at the Western Australian Cricket Association Ground on Sunday.

Pakistan, beaten 3-0 in the Test series against Australia and losers in three of their four previous tri-series matches, chased down the 266 runs needed for victory, losing only seven wickets and with almost three overs to spare.

Man-of-the-match Abdul Razaq and his partner Navedul Hasan punched the air with joy as the winning runs came up off four leg byes.

In the end it was decisive knocks from Yousuf Youhana, Razaq and Shahid Afridi which set up the win,

Pakistan's first against Australia on tour.

The Australians, who had already qualified for the best-of-three finals series, paid the price for an ineffective bowling attack with spinner Brad Hogg and all-rounder Andrew Symonds proving very costly at 1-71 off 10 overs and 2-65 from 9 overs respectively.

Speedster Brett Lee also failed to extract any life from a wicket known for favouring pace and he was took for a no result, one for a bonus point.

Speedster Brett Lee also failed to extract any life from a wicket known for favouring pace and he was took for a no result, one for a bonus point.

**STANDINGS**

Standings in the limited-overs international VB Series between Australia, West Indies and Pakistan after Pakistan beat Australia by three wickets at the WACA in Perth on Sunday:

Team	P	W	L	NR	Pts
Australia	6	4	1	1	27
Pakistan	5	2	3	0	12
West Indies	5	1	3	1	9

Note: Five points for win, three for a no result, one for a bonus point.

just 1-63 from 9.2 overs.

The win didn't come as easily as it might have for Pakistan after they made a string of fielding blunders while Australia were batting.

But they finally cast aside the inconsistency which has plagued their tour while batting, with several players taking important roles.

Youhana was the keystone of the innings, making a decisive 72 before being caught by Simon Katich trying to blast an Andrew Symonds delivery over mid-off.

He and captain Inzamam-ul-Haq came together with Pakistan struggling at 49 for 3 forming a comfortable 74-run partnership until Inzamam was trapped lbw to spinner Brad Hogg for 29.

Shoaib Malik was the next to arrive at the crease but he departed almost immediately after for just one, run out by a direct hit from Symonds with the score at 125 for 5.

Youhana continued to flourish with all-rounder Abdul Razaq,

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## Munna's health worsens

SPORTS REPORTER

Monem Munna's condition worsened as the ex-national footballer could not undergo dialysis for the second successive day at the Bangladesh Medical College and Hospital (BMCH).

"His blood pressure is still beyond the required level for starting dialysis. It (dialysis) is mandatory for his recovery and if we cannot start it, his condition will deteriorate," said BMCH Medical officer Mohammed Ziaul Kabir yesterday.

The former Abahani centre back has been suffering from atypical pneumonia, septicemia, pulmonary oedema and chronic rejection of his transplanted kidney.

"We have given him maximum support and he is now under sedation. But his resistance is almost zero, which makes him vulnerable against any kind of viral or bacterial infection. He is also struggling to take oxygen even with the help of a ventilator," said the ICU duty doctor at the hospital.

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